

# the Whitworth

**PRESS RELEASE**

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**CREATIVITY IN Manchester**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **The Whitworth SECURES FUNDING TO REVOLUTIONISE EARLY YEARS CREATIVITY IN Manchester**

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Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> July, London, UK – [Youth Music](#), the UK's leading young people's music charity, has today announced the recipients of its unique £1.5million Energiser Fund, dedicated to pre-school creativity.

The fund, open to early years experts, leaders and innovators, will allow the selected organisations to accelerate change in their early years practice.

Youth Music believe that babies and toddlers are skilled and creative individuals, and should have the opportunity to influence the organisations and activities they are involved in. However, the early years sector is in crisis and funding is more important than ever. Practitioners are reporting an increase in number of settings closing down, staff shortages and ongoing retention issues, as well as the de-prioritisation of creative education when it comes to policy and resource allocation.

As a result of this, **The Whitworth** will work with Youth Music and the ten other partners nationwide to revolutionise early years creativity. The projects will benefit from a three-year grant to deliver creative programmes with 2-4-year-olds. Organisations will come together to network and reflect throughout the three years, in a bespoke learning programme.

**Support from the Energiser Fund will allow the Whitworth to explore how playful interventions and creative sessions in gallery spaces can enhance and celebrate the 2-4-year old's voice. We are excited to partner with local community led charity Afrocats, to co-create sessions with families who often face barriers to accessing traditional early years provision.**

**As part of The University of Manchester research is integral to our project, working with colleagues at LuCiD (The ESRC International Centre for Language and Communicative Development) staff and volunteers will be trained to embed language and communication learning into creative sessions and ongoing evaluation.**

**Ed Watts, Head of Civic Engagement and Education at the Whitworth said:** "We're delighted to be part of the Energiser Fund and have the opportunity to work with Youth Music and other incredible partners, to build on our brilliant early years work here at the Whitworth. Together with local families, using our gallery and park as a space to share ideas to bring art into everyday life and rethink how we use it.

We're excited to continue to collaborate with Afrocats in bringing 2-4-year-olds together through music, performance, and art. We hope to dismantle barriers to early years learning, and language development, in our community and to make a difference to families across greater Manchester and beyond!"

**Matt Griffiths, Youth Music CEO**, said: "Investing in Early Years is a matter of equity and inclusion, and with reports from early years practitioners that the suggested measures from the government feeling inadequate, it's clear that work needs to be done to support the creativity in this age group.

"We're really excited by the progressive work happening at these projects already and can't wait to work with them to change the creative landscape for early years children nationwide over the coming years."

To discover additional information on Youth Energiser Fund, please visit: <https://youthmusic.org.uk/energiser-fund>

- ENDS -

For further information, please contact: [youthmusic@ready10.media](mailto:youthmusic@ready10.media)

**NOTES TO EDITORS:**

**Full list of Energiser Fund recipients:**

Organisation	Location	Website	Programme Title	Description
<b>Magic Acorns</b>	East of England (Great Yarmouth)	<a href="https://www.magicacorns.co.uk/">https://www.magicacorns.co.uk/</a>	Building Our Belonging PlayTech	This inquiry-led reflective project explores the relevance for children (2-4y) of interactive-AVtech. As part of a learning group of colleagues, caregivers and practitioners we can know more about children's ways of knowing the world. This understanding will impact our creative process-led arts practice and its relevance for contemporary early childhood.
<b>Turned On Its Head</b>	East Midlands (Northamptonshire)	<a href="https://www.turnedonitshead.org/">https://www.turnedonitshead.org/</a>	The Dances We Dance	Three-year exploration of co-created dancing/making with children aged 2-4, their families and other significant adults at Pen

				Green/Kingswood Children's Centre and in Corby communities. Making visible and celebrating the characteristics of authentic co-creation in early years Developing new understanding/knowledge around blended approaches to dance participation and performance.
<b>The Spark Arts For Children</b>	East Midlands (Leicester)	<a href="https://thesparkarts.co.uk/">https://thesparkarts.co.uk/</a>	Small Wonders Research Collaboration 2024-27	Creative, playful and collaborative storytelling with, by and for 2-4-year-olds in children's centres and libraries in Braunstone and Belgrave, areas of high deprivation and child poverty in Leicester. Improving creativity, wellbeing, social relationships and self-regulation by centring children's voices, parent advocacy and artist diversity in early years creativity.
<b>TACO!</b>	London (Thamesmead)	<a href="https://taco.org.uk/">https://taco.org.uk/</a>	<b>BANG! SPLAT! WHOOSH!</b>	<b>BANG! SPLAT! WHOOSH!</b> is a child-led creative workspace. An experimental sound studio, publishing house, sculpture workshop, run by 2-4-year-olds. A partnership between artist-led organisation TACO!, and Better Children's Centres Abbey Wood and Thamesmead. Children and artists co-design a programme of workshops, and public outcomes for radio, print, gallery.
<b>Maines-Beasley</b>	North East (North Shields)	<a href="https://www.katemb.com/">https://www.katemb.com/</a>	Be Together: Your Space	Transforming an empty shop unit into a music and movement play space

Creative Limited				for families in North Shields. A safe, nurturing place to play, rest, dance, make music and be together, supported by two creative practitioners. The experience is centred on the 2-4-year-old in the family unit.
The Whitworth	North West (Manchester)	<a href="https://www.whitworth.manchester.ac.uk/">https://www.whitworth.manchester.ac.uk/</a>	Early Years Everyday Art School	Our proposal is to work with families to co-design a programme that brings art into everyday life, focussing on Early Years language, speech and literacy in both children and non-English speaking caregivers. Through artist led sessions, together, we will explore how art can enhance and support Early Years development goals.
Bristol Old Vic	South West (Bristol)	<a href="https://bristololdvic.org.uk/">https://bristololdvic.org.uk/</a>	Create Space	A partnership between Bristol Old Vic and Redcliffe Nursery. Working with a core group of children aged 2-4 years to co-curate spaces within the Theatre. Working with a designer and BOV's resources to be led by children's engagement in our spaces and the wider area to create playful space.
Take Art Limited	South West (Dorset & Somerset)	<a href="https://takeart.org/">https://takeart.org/</a>	Little People: Big Ideas	Taking a deep dive into Early Years (EY) creativity and co-design within Somerset/ Dorset, we will work collaboratively with children and their families, EY staff and artists, within EY settings for sustained periods.  Exploring: 'How do we effectively foster young children's creativity within

				the current early years education sector?'
<b>Whitnash Nursery School</b>	West Midlands (Leamington Spa)	<a href="https://www.whitnashnurseryschool.org.uk/">https://www.whitnashnurseryschool.org.uk/</a>	The language of creativity: "Exploring Beautiful"	Exploring Beautiful: observe and notice young children's expressive responses to inspirational creative offers and the transformational nature of 'beautiful' experiences. With a resident artist (sculptor) and music/dance teacher beside them alongside access to immersive art venues. Working co-constructively listening, responding, being led by their hundred languages of limitless creative expression.
<b>The Herd Theatre</b>	Yorkshire & The Humber (Hull)	<a href="https://www.theherdtheatre.co.uk/">https://www.theherdtheatre.co.uk/</a>	PLAY-IONEERING: A new process of devising live art with 2-4yrs through adult and child co-play	The Herd run a programme playwork with families, nurseries and artists in Hull. Artists play alongside children to co-create a touring live arts experience for 2-4-year-olds and their families. Delivered in partnership with Hull City Council, The University of Hull and Wilberforce College.
<b>Made with Music</b>	Yorkshire & The Humber (Leeds)	<a href="https://www.madewithmusic.co.uk/">https://www.madewithmusic.co.uk/</a>	My Voice Counts Too	We will co-create a creative project with two Leeds-based support groups and disabled children aged 2-4 and their carers. The project will use a mixture of creative activities, child 'voice' and evaluation tools to ensure disabled children's choices are heard, validated, acted upon and celebrated.

## **About Youth Music:**

[We are Youth Music](#). We're the UK's leading young people's music charity. And we believe that every young person should have the chance to make, learn and earn in music and wider creativity.

Yet our research shows that many can't because of who they are, where they're from or what they're going through.

We leverage our insights, investment, and influence to build a national grassroots infrastructure that ensures the future of music is more inclusive, diverse, equitable and accessible.

Youth Music is a national charity funded thanks to the National Lottery via Arts Council England, players of People's Postcode Lottery and support from partners, fundraisers and donors.

## **About the Whitworth:**

### **The Whitworth**

The Whitworth is proudly part of The University of Manchester, operating as a convening space between the University and the people of the city. Founded in 1889 for "the perpetual gratification of the people of Manchester" it continues this mission today in new contexts. The gallery, its park and gardens are home to the collection of over 60,000 works of art, textiles, sculptures and wallpapers and provides a platform for artists from around the world. The Whitworth is driven by a vision to actively seek and manifest connections between art, creativity, and their role in developing a more resilient and caring society through its exhibitions and award-winning civic engagement programme.

Gallery opening times: Tuesday to Sunday 10am-5pm, Thursday late opening until 9pm

[www.manchester.ac.uk/whitworth](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/whitworth).