

The Sage Gateshead Young Musicians Programme

a research-based overview

Kate Laurence • Ross Purves • Graham Welch



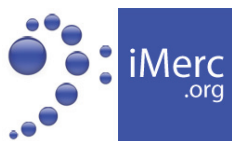
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Executive Summary

The Sage Gateshead Young Musicians Programme (YMP) forms part of a wider Learning and Participation offer at the Sage Gateshead. YMP provides a range of opportunities for musicians aged between 4 and 19 years of age and encompasses three distinct strands (Weekend School; Studios and Specialist Tuition; and Youth Ensembles). Each of these has its own distinctive focus and constituency, whilst also forming part of a coherent whole. There are currently 360 students taking part in all on-site YMP activities, with an additional 80 students learning off-site. The majority of students come from across the North East region, with a small number from further afield. In order to support participation, financial assistance and mean-tested bursaries are available from different sources.

As part of the on-going development of the Programme, a research team from the International Music Education Research Centre at the Institute of Education, University of London were invited to provide an external review of features of the Programme's organisation and quality. In addition to reviewing documentation about the Programme, opportunity was taken to interview approximately 80 stakeholders, including tutors, operational staff, a number of parents and groups of students. Teaching was also observed over one weekend.

In summary:

- Almost without exception, student participants and their parents are extremely positive about their experiences in the Programme.
- The YMP is reported as being responsive to individual needs, whilst also holistic in its approach to the development of performance, theory and aural skills.
- Tutors are very well qualified and highly motivated to provide a rich variety of music learning opportunities. Accommodation for learning and participation is also reported to be very good.
- The available evidence, drawing on data analyses of the observed teaching sessions as well as the commentaries from students and their parents, suggests that the quality of learning generally is consistently high.
- In general, the tutors see themselves as part of a collaborative team that is engaged in a shared focus to support young people's musical development in a variety of ways. Their teaching has been supported by the introduction of a Quality Framework to promote coherence and equality of experience across the various strands of provision.
- The Programme has developed extensive links with other organisations in the local community, as well as national organisations such as the Nation-

- al Youth Orchestra and National Youth Choir's Training Choir.
- Nevertheless, notwithstanding its evident strengths, the external review suggests that there are opportunities to enhance and develop the Programme. These include: enriching elements of the curriculum (such as in relation to creativity); having more focused student recruitment in particular areas of musical provision and also in terms of local underserved communities; strengthening aspects of student progression; promoting greater stylistic breadth; deepening and developing communications with parents and across the tutor team; using student data more extensively; and extending opportunities for staff development, including peer review and critical reflection on learning and participation practice.

All the core ingredients are in place in terms of the quality of staffing, accommodation and reputation to demonstrate what is possible within a national policy context in which music is seen as important. The Young Musicians Programme is ideally placed to be even more of a beacon of excellence in the provision of music learning opportunities for young people in the region, whilst also being a role model for others both nationally and internationally.

1. Introduction and context

The Young Musicians Programme (YMP) forms part of a wider Learning and Participation (LP)¹ offer at The Sage Gateshead. YMP provides a range of opportunities for musicians aged between 4 and 19 years of age, encompassing three distinct strands. These are:

- Weekend School (WS) - Centre of Advanced Music Training for 7-19 year olds;
- Studios and Specialist Tuition – comprising Endangered Instruments, Open Studio (OS), offering a range of performance and composition opportunities for 8-19 year olds; and Foundation Studio (FS), a string Programme for 4-10 year olds; and
- Youth Ensembles, auditioned and non-auditioned, including a number of large and small ensemble opportunities in Western classical, Folk, Jazz and Popular music, singing and percussion².

Some of the current provision was borne out of established ensemble work that had been based in the North East prior to the completion of the concert hall. This form of provision has continued to develop in-house ever since.

There are currently 360 students taking part in all on-site YMP activities. A further 80 pupils are involved in a strings FS programme which takes place at three Infant schools in Gateshead and South Tyneside. There are no geographic restrictions for students wishing to apply to the YMP; the Programme draws, in the main, from twelve Local Authorities in the North East³, with a small number of students travelling from as far as Cumbria and the Scottish Borders. Financial assistance and means-tested bursaries are offered to students through the Department for Education's (DfE) Music and Dance Scheme (for the Weekend School), as well as grants from Northumbrian Water (Open and Foundation Studios) and The David Goldman Programme Awards Scheme (Regional Youth

¹ For an overview of the nature of Education, Learning and Participation activities at The Sage Gateshead and similar concert halls across Europe, see the review by Welch et al (2012).

² For online access to the full and current range of activities, see <http://thesagegateshead.org/join-in/music-for-young-people/ymp/>

³ Northumberland, Newcastle, Gateshead, North Tyneside, South Tyneside, Sunderland, Co Durham (incl. Darlington) and Teesside (embracing four Local Authorities)

Ensembles).

A number of staff have been involved in the Programme since its early stages of development. Leadership and management have undergone more recent and significant change, as evidenced by new appointments in 2011 and in the major restructuring of Learning and Participation (LP) (that includes the Programme) that is currently in process. A new position 'Head of YMP' was created (Feb 2011) to oversee the Programme's strategic, operational and artistic delivery. In addition, two recently appointed Artistic Advisors (Sep 2010) have respective, specialist oversight of the Jazz/Popular and Western classical provision. An Operations Manager, four coordinators for each of the main Programme strands and an administrator, support a team of around 60 specialist tutors.

As mentioned above, the YMP is situated within a much broader Learning and Participation offer at The Sage Gateshead that is designed to cover the lifespan, i.e., from infancy and early childhood through to music programmes for older people. As part of The Sage Gateshead's commitment to young people, the YMP is closely aligned with CoMusica⁴ and the Early Years and Schools provision. The recently appointed Head of YMP has revised the Programme's mid-term strategic plan (from 2011-15), with objectives based around the themes of Commitment, Creativity, Collaboration and Courage. In addition, there are five overarching Artistic Priorities for the whole organisation during the period 2012-2015, namely a) Journeys in Music, b) Nurturing Talent, c) Inclusive Engagement, d) New Work and e) Artistic Production. These are meant to inform the creative strategy for all LP, including the YMP. As with other provision, the YMP is also required to adhere to The Sage Gateshead's Quality Framework, designed to support colleagues and promote consistency across all aspects of LP provision.

The research overview reported here has been undertaken at a time of significant context change and uncertainty in music education. One likely influence on the organisation and development of the YMP results from the major Government policy initiatives, including publication of 'The Importance of Music, A National Plan for Music Education' (DfE, 2011c) and related subsequent DfE funding changes.

⁴ 'CoMusica is one of 21 Youth Music Action Zones in England and Wales, providing music-making activities with and for young people who might not otherwise have the opportunity. Covering an area of 10,000 square miles, CoMusica works right across the North East of England with young people aged 5 to 24' [accessed from The Sage Gateshead website, 02-03-2012]

'Great music education is a partnership between classroom teachers, specialist teachers, professional performers and a host of other organisations, including those from the arts, charity and voluntary sectors. For this reason the creation of a National Plan is necessary to help us to bring together all of this expertise in a focussed way for the benefit of children and young people across the country... The Department for Education (DfE) will continue to fund music education at significant levels during difficult economic times: £77m/£65m/£60m will be available in the three years from April 2012. The vast majority of this will be invested in hubs that will also supplement and draw-in local and national funding for music – from local authorities, cultural organisations, businesses, trusts, foundations and philanthropists.' (DfE, 2011: 3-4)

Additionally, Ofsted has reignited discourse relating to the variable quality of school music (Ofsted 2009; Ofsted 2012). For example:

Inspectors found wide differences in the quality and quantity of music education across the schools visited. While some exceptional work was seen and heard, far too much provision was inadequate or barely satisfactory. Nearly all schools recognised the importance of promoting a diverse range of musical styles but far fewer had a clear understanding about how all students should make good musical progress as they moved through the curriculum in Key Stages 1 to 3... The quality of teaching and assessment in music also varied considerably... Across the primary schools visited, inspectors found considerable variation in the impact of the nationally funded whole-class instrumental and/or vocal tuition programmes, more commonly known as 'Wider Opportunities'. Survey evidence showed very clearly that some schools and groups of pupils were benefiting far more than others from these programmes.' (DfE, 2012, Report Summary: 1)

In addition, the outcome of whether or not music will remain as part of the English schools' National Curriculum is yet to be announced (expected Summer 2012), following the recent review and related responses (DfE 2011b; 2011d; 2011e). Elsewhere, music education communities, including providers of formal and non-formal opportunities, are being prompted to find ways to work more cohesively and cost-efficiently (DfE 2011a; DfE 2011c). The YMP has responded by exploring opportunities to share expertise and resources more widely through being part of a larger music education 'hub', or regional association of hubs, although the outcomes of The Sage Gateshead's discussions with the Arts Council are inconclusive at the time of writing. Broadly, being part of a music education hub (singular or plural) could support potential progression routes in the DfE Music and Dance Scheme, which currently provides bursaries for YMP Weekend School entrants and which was deemed to represent 'good value for money' in the National Plan (2011c: 19).

2. Research Framework

The Head of YMP commissioned a benchmarking study to provide the Programme team with a comparative state-of-play. A range of perspectives was sought from students and their families, delivery and operational staff and middle managers at The Sage Gateshead. These were designed to provide evidence related to two prime foci: i) the YMP's quality, including teaching and learning, progression routes, learning outcomes, inclusion, recruitment and access to potential students; and ii) the YMP's alignment within the wider Learning and Participation offer for Children and Young People at The Sage Gateshead and within a changing music education context.

A short-term, research-based evaluation was undertaken between November 2011 through to March 2012 and drew on the following principal sources of evidence:

- Observation of teaching at The Sage Gateshead over one weekend in February 2012, which included Weekend School, Open Studio, Foundation Studio and some ensemble work;
- A range of in-depth interviews with Study Leaders, Artistic Advisors and Instrumental/Vocal tutors. General feedback was also invited from all tutors and study leaders electronically (n=21 respondents);
- Analysis of YMP evaluation, monitoring and tracking procedures from the available data;
- Two focus group discussions with students from the Weekend school and Open Studio (n=23), informal discussion with Foundation Studio pupils and their families (n=12);
- Formal and informal interviews with parents whose children attended Weekend School, Foundation Studio, Open Studio and some ensembles (n=18);
- Discussion and interviews with operational and administrative staff (n=4) and with senior managers at The Sage Gateshead (n=1);
- An in-depth telephone interview with the Head of YMP.

In total, interviews were undertaken with approximately 80 different stakeholders to provide a variety of perspectives on the Programme.

3. Key Findings

3.1 Commendations

Teaching – Expertise

Educational musical environments are enhanced when tutors and delivery staff are involved in their own authentic music-making (*cf* Swanwick 2008). The biographies of the YMP teaching staff tell a story of impassioned, experienced instrumental and vocal tutors, drawn, in the main, from professional musical backgrounds. For example, a large number of tutors form part of The Sage Gateshead’s resident orchestra, the internationally acclaimed Northern Sinfonia. Jazz and Popular musicians also have exceptionally high profile careers as performers, composers and ensemble leaders. Both of the Artistic Advisors are testament to this; parents feel their profiles give ‘gravitas’ to the Programme. Folk Music has a strong presence through its regional and historical associations. In order to offer the very best expertise, tutors are recruited from both inside and outside the region. Additionally, the YMP draws on the expertise of school music classroom practitioners and lecturers working on undergraduate and post-graduate music courses.

One Weekend School study leader was observed teaching aural skills to a higher ability group of students. His biography revealed a combination of professional instrumental and performance experience, alongside a successful classroom teaching career. A range of higher order questions, relating to theory and aural skills, were used to challenge students at different levels. Connections were being made with repertoire, which went beyond the scope of the aural exam syllabus. A holistic pedagogical approach was in evidence; students were fully engaged and clearly benefiting from his range and level of expertise and experience.

Parents and students speak very highly of the expertise on offer. Their comments suggest that, by being involved in The Sage Gateshead, there is a 'stamp of quality assurance' and a pre-judged expectation of tutors' proficiency, which they believe to be comparatively unguaranteed in the same way from the normal array of private instrumental and vocal lessons, sourced outside of The Sage Gateshead.

Students in both focus groups reported that they were 'excited' and 'inspired' by their teachers' expertise. Parents felt that the YMP offered opportunities 'well beyond anything they would experience in a school setting'.

A Musical Language tutor, who had experience of teaching music on undergraduate programmes, was observed teaching student-participants aged thirteen to seventeen. As part of the session, they explored Scriabin's use of the mystic chord and analysed a Walton score.

The class included three thirteen-year-olds who were already working towards grade eight theory. The tutor was aware of the need to raise attainment for the most able and had responded to this by developing a post-grade eight exam syllabus encompassing knowledge and understanding equivalent to first and second year undergraduate study.

In the ABRSM final performance examination session of 2011, YMP candidates achieved a 100% pass rate⁵. Although the numbers were small, this compares very favourably with the national ABRSM data (see Table 1). Two out of three (64%) YMP entered candidates passed with distinction compared with one in six (16%) nationally. This is very commendable and is a strong indicator of the standard of musicianship achieved, as well as the quality of preparation⁶.

⁵ Twelve students were submitted for ABRSM exams from YMP in Session C, 2011.

⁶ It is worth noting that, whilst there was an issue with a Grade 6 Theory question in 2011 (subsequently addressed), the ABRSM Theory examination results have been consistently good, with the quality of observed teaching to be of high quality.

Table 1: ABRSM categories of pass (2011) for THE SAGE GATESHEAD and nationally

YMP candidates results for session C, 2011	National results for session C, 2011
64% gaining distinction	16% gaining distinction
27% gaining merit	35% gaining merit
9% gaining pass	46% gaining pass

Broadly, tutors are recruited on a needs basis and are subject to appointment through The Sage Gateshead's HR system. Additionally, The Sage Gateshead offers apprenticeships and traineeships that allow young people who are interested in leading participatory music making to embark on work-based training and qualifications. This offers an alternate and important route into teaching and music leadership and provides a longer-term recruitment strategy for The Sage Gateshead, which develops and nurtures talented tutors who might not have followed a traditional route into music or teaching. For example:

One ensemble leader completed The Sage Gateshead in-house community music traineeship and apprenticeship, thus building on her existing experience and skills in Youth Leadership. Seven years on, she attributes her success to the traineeship, having become a member of the tutor team and through her specialist contribution to YMP, CoMusica and 'Silvers' (over 50s programme).

Teaching – Quality, Range and Variety of Opportunities

Teaching quality and the range of opportunities on offer are identified as key strengths by parents and students. Typical responses from parents suggest that the YMP provides 'a quality start on an instrument' (Foundation Studio), 'a happy, musical experience' (Open Studio), 'inspiring tuition' (Weekend School) and 'excellence and challenge' (ensembles). Responses from students mirror these views; they believe that their tutors are prepared to spend time above and beyond the timetabled teaching sessions in preparation for performances or instrumental exams.

The socially constructed view that tutors maintain their identity as 'musician' alongside 'teacher' (Dolloff, 1999; Hargreaves et al., 2007; Hargreaves and Marshall, 2003; Adams and Laurence, 2010; Welch, Purves et al, 2011) is pivotal to the YMP families' perceptions of teaching quality. Many parents make allowances for tutors who must re-arrange lessons and

sessions, when needed, in order to honour and maintain other professional performance commitments.

All respondents valued the rich portfolio of activities on offer, including:

- 1:1 tuition on first and second study instruments;
- Bespoke small ensemble work;
- Large ensemble opportunities;
- Music language/theory classes;
- Aural classes;
- One-off events;
- Masterclasses;
- Opportunities for students to be regular audience members to their peers and tutors;
- Regular concert opportunities – informal and formal;
- Music technology skills;
- Composing and improvising;
- Collaborative projects with other high-profile young musician groups.

Parents and students feel that a holistic approach to performance, theory and aural skills, is, singly, the most important strength of the YMP, being particular evident in the Foundation and Open Studio where parents felt that the ‘joining up of activities’ was transparent. One Foundation Studio tutor described an example of how the tutor team tries to embed theory and aural skills into performance activities:

“Today we had one of the pieces for Fiddles on Tyne to learn and it’s a Reel, so we made up a dance and it was such fun for the students... they could see the structure of the dance. It had a pattern, they could see shapes we were making, keep the beat, count the bars, come in at the right time, recognize patterns, so many things. Whether or not you become a violinist, they’re great skills... we always learn the [string] ensemble pieces as songs first and also make links to these in our aural classes”

Foundation Studio Tutor

Without exception, the YMP tutors believe that sharing of practice and collaborative working, and relating these to teaching and learning, is fundamental to the quality of provision. This occurs mainly through informal dialogue between colleagues and usually within the individual Programme strands.

The percussion tutor had supported a number of young instrumentalists who were deemed to be struggling with the 'feeling and internalisation' of rhythm. He had collaborated with violin, vocal and bassoon tutors to suggest intervention strategies for these students and offer additional 1:1 support where necessary.

A balance of formal and informal pedagogical approaches give very different identities to each of three main YMP strands. Tutors associated with Open Studio, for example, celebrate its movable and flexible nature in response to individuals' abilities, instrument specialism and interests. Observation of Open Studio sessions showed students playing an important part in steering the learning and teaching. The focus group students reported that they felt empowered, being able to retain ownership over musical choices and appreciative that they were afforded creative freedom. This approach was evident in an observed session where the leader adapted ensemble parts and encouraged students to do the same, often working out parts aurally within a Folk tradition.

"The sessions change all the time which is really great and our tutor helps us all individually. We can suggest things that we'd like to do and the tutor helps us or finds something we'd like to perform. It's really relaxed and informal"

Open Studio Student

Within each strand, there are some clear and successful progression routes. A pre-instrumental year provides a strong basis for the Foundation Studio. A number of students continue their string journey at the Weekend School, with provision also being made within Open Studio. Alignment with the Early Years and Schools Programmes is evident in that Planet Music⁷ is especially strong as a progression route to Foundation Studio. The recently established Children's Choir addresses involvement

⁷ The Planet Music programme is offered at fortnightly intervals at a weekend and described by The Sage Gateshead website as 'inclusive music-making activities for 5 to 7 year olds and their families. Specialist musicians engage everyone in joyful and creative singing, movement and music' [accessed 23/03/2012].

and progression for younger singers, feeding, eventually, to the more established choirs: Quay Lasses, Quay Lads and Quay Voices. Academic progression is also considered within aural and language tuition at the Weekend School. The situation of the BMus and BA within The Sage Gateshead (validated by Sunderland University) links Higher Education provision to the Programme. Delivery staff, the Artistic Advisors and the Head of YMP are each aware of challenges in the progression route and there are reports of focused discussion to explore and address gaps in musical provision.

National and International Music Education Community Partnerships

The Sage Gateshead has a strong partnership with a number of high-profile music organisations, including a 5-year relationship (2009–13) with the National Youth Orchestra (NYO) and a 3-year relationship with National Youth Choir of Great Britain (NYCGB) (2012–14). These help to enrich the ‘local’ provision, as described by the Head of YMP:

“In 2012 the theme is ‘exploring the foot print of folk music in orchestral repertoire’. For the NYO concert itself, we have jointly commissioned Kathryn Tickell to compose a work for the orchestra and we are creating a folk day of workshops, masterclasses and performances to build up to the concert, with many of our young people taking part... In August 2012 we are jointly running an open access teenage singing project with the NYCGB Training Choir. We’ll recruit 13–18 year olds across the North East to take part in three days of rehearsals with our Quay Choirs’ conductors and the director of the NYCGB Training Choir.”

Tutors acknowledge that the relationship with these external ensembles is still at a developmental stage. Nevertheless, some YMP students have become members of the NYCGB Training Choir and the direct link with the NYO has led to five members of the Young Musicians Programme successfully auditioning for the orchestra this year.

National and local links are enhanced through international connections. One Artistic Advisor describes a recent project involving YMP ensemble, Jambone:

“‘Subway Moon’ was a youth project in which young people from New York and Tyneside combined to explore the urban myths, legends and realities of subway culture and city living. It was conceived and led by New York composer and saxophonist Roy Nathanson and comprised a large ensemble made up of teenage lyricists, rappers and musicians from both sides of the Atlantic. Local young participants included Jambone – the regional youth jazz ensemble – plus a mix of musicians, writers and aerosol artists from the Sage Gateshead’s various youth programmes. The final performance was given in Hall 1 of the Sage Gateshead as part of the Gateshead International Jazz Festival in March 2011. It was very well received and the participants thoroughly enjoyed the whole experience.”

Accessing young people

According to the interview and related data, the YMP is able to access young people who might not otherwise have the financial means to participate. The principal source of financial support comes from the DfE’s Music and Drama Scheme. Grants are also available from Northumbrian Water and The David Goldman Programme Awards Scheme. According to the data that we received:

- *Weekend School*: 72.3% of participants were in receipt of a means-tested bursary from the DfE’s Music and Dance Scheme;
- *Open Studio*: 39.4% were awarded grants from Northumbrian Water; and
- *Foundation Studio*: 21.7% were awarded grants.

Grants for Regional Youth Ensembles are also available (see Table 2):

Table 2: Financial assistance within the YMP

Youth Ensemble	Total participants	Paying full fees	Financial assistance through the David Goldman Programme	Financial assistance through DfE’s MDS bursaries
<i>Quay Voices</i>	21	11	9	1
<i>Quay Lasses</i>	29	20	7	2
<i>Quay Lads</i>	19	14	5	0
<i>Folkestra</i>	16	7	6	3
<i>Jambone</i>	18	11	5	2
<i>Young Sinfonia</i>	42	18	19	5
<i>Sinfonic Winds</i>	13	9	4	0
<i>Stringendo</i>	13	9	3	1

All interviewed parents were aware that financial assistance was available for each of the strands. Bursaries were being utilized as long and short-term financial support. The latter was in evidence from a number of parents who responded that they had found it to be a solution during challenging financial circumstances such as redundancy.

YMP Management and Leadership

Tutors and operational staff reported that they have observed a number of strategic and operational improvements since the appointment of a 'Head of YMP'. Discussions with parents, tutors and operational staff generated the following commendations:

- A longer-term strategy is emerging in relation to progression routes and the identification and addressing of gaps in musical provision. For example, tutors and Artistic Advisors are tasked with individual discipline and genre strategies for 2011-15. The research team was provided with documentation that showed where gaps in musical provision had been identified, particularly relating to genre;
- The Head of YMP is seen as keeping abreast with the changing music education context and is responsive to this. Administrators and ensemble leaders also comment that there is greater awareness of how the YMP is perceived outside The Sage Gateshead. An interview with the Head of YMP highlighted salient analyses of how the Programme could respond to the new National Plan (see above), namely in the need to consider and develop long-lasting musical connections in the North East beyond the next general election. A number of tutors believe that a more open dialogue is now in place to address historical issues with local partners and to develop more positive and sustainable partnerships with Local Authorities, schools, music leaders and funders;
- Both discussion and the YMP documentation indicate that the Head of YMP understands the Programme's role, alongside CoMusica and the Early Years and Schools Programmes, in providing opportunities to participants from deprived areas (see below), as well as to 16-18-year-olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET);
- The Sage Gateshead's Quality Framework is reported to be used reflectively and pro-actively to support and develop the Programme and its staff. The documentation suggests there is a good awareness of areas needing support, e.g. health and safety training, resource management and staff welfare;
- Some tutors commented that they feel increasingly empowered and motivated to contribute their individual ideas to the 'bigger picture' for the YMP, including greater cross-instrumental collaboration and initiatives to recruit participants where there are gaps. Ensemble leaders felt able to feed into the recruitment process where certain groups of participants were seen to be underrepresented in their groups;
- Communications between operational staff, tutors and parents are reported as improving. For example, some parents and tutors note that communication has been problematic due to the complex organisation of the Programme, but that there is a more pro-active approach to communi-

cating regular changes to teaching sessions.

Marketing

Throughout the research process, significant improvements were reported to be underway to improve the marketing of the YMP. This included revision of the The Sage Gateshead web design and content, the publication of a range of brochures and postcards to help explain the Programme more clearly, as well as access to specialist expertise through The Sage Gateshead's newly appointed Director of Marketing. The Head of the YMP reported that he is now working closely with marketing colleagues to provide a 'clearer explanation' of YMP opportunities and to look at more cost effective ways to ensure the Programme is reaching a wide audience through market research. Social media are being harnessed successfully as a way to promote the Programme.

Resources and accommodation

The Music Education Centre is a purpose-built teaching suite comprising:

- 26 practice rooms;
- Access to three grand pianos and many upright pianos;
- An instrument bank that students and tutors can use (loan schemes operate on various instruments);
- Some laptops and music technology software;
- Access to a music library for tutors to use.

The YMP students also have access to The Sage Gateshead's performance spaces and resources and are reported regularly to make use the Barbour Room and Northern Rock Foundation Hall for rehearsals. Students and tutors note the importance of being offered a 'full, professional service for concerts', including front-of-house, sound and lighting support. Being part of the performance programme is also perceived as a strength, in that there is 'always an audience' for students.

3.2 Recommendations

Weekend school

For some tutors participating in the research evaluation, the identity of the Weekend School, as a DfE Music and Dance Scheme (MDS) Centre of Advanced Training, is reported to be problematic. There is reported concern that potential future growth of Weekend School could compromise quality and that the proportion of students capable of attaining high performance goals has not increased with student numbers. Some tutors sug-

gest that Weekend School could be in danger of losing its original brief and may not be seen to be competing at the same level as that for other DfE Music and Dance Scheme providers. Greater collaboration with Music and Dance Scheme-funded schools could offer opportunities to share expertise, initiate collaborative events and develop cross-school moderation opportunities. There is one counterbalancing caveat that should be noted: a small number of tutors felt that there was a need for growth in the Weekend School in order to explore regional student potential more fully. There are currently some restrictions on growth in terms of bursaries and available physical space within The Sage Gateshead. This might be addressed through greater regional activity. Whilst it is a commendation that the Weekend School looks for potential in its participants, and regularly re-auditions students, opportunity should be taken for tutors and managers to explore ways to retain and enhance its advanced training status within a proposed new music education hub framework.

The audition process was also raised as an issue as part of a need to improve consistency and quality across instrument disciplines and to ensure that high standards were being upheld. Staff Continued Professional Development (CPD), peer-observation and moderation should be explored to address this need.

The name Weekend School was reportedly felt to be misleading by parents and some tutors, both in terms of organization (it takes place on a Sunday), what is offered over the 'weekend' (a confusion with the 'YMP' umbrella title) and, most importantly, its unique selling point as a Centre of Advanced Musical Training. New marketing brochures have come some way in explaining Weekend School. Further thought and market research might be undertaken to address this issue.

There is a perception by tutors that day-to-day decision-making is sometimes problematic. There is enormous respect for the new Head of YMP and for the administrative staff, but it is felt that short-term musical and curriculum decisions are sometimes being made without consultation. Part-time study leaders and tutors felt unable to respond quickly enough to issues and to understand why decisions were being made without their consultation. Opportunity should be taken to engage all Weekend School tutors and study leaders in discussion about the staffing structure and for there to be greater clarity and transparency in roles and responsibilities. Some tutors expressed a desire for an Academic Leadership role (e.g., Head of Weekend School) to be initiated as a way to address some of these issues.

The student focus group and a number of tutors would welcome some opportunities to develop composition and improvisation skills as part of the Weekend School programme. Currently, the provision focuses on performance, aural and theory skills. Those studying composition do so as a

'first study', or as part of compositional techniques. In one sense, this is part of a larger cultural issue in music education. There is a lack of reference to composing and creativity in the National Plan for Music Education (2011c), with concerns raised that 'Performance-based music curricula' are ingrained in English music education (Spruce, 2012). It would be prudent for the YMP to consider these views. Tutors describe instrumental and aural skills as rudimentary, but acknowledge the importance of composition and creative opportunities to bring greater 'balance' to the programme.

Open and Foundation Studios

Progression routes were raised as being the biggest concern for Foundation Studio parents and students. There was anxiety that the students had developed strong relationships with their teachers and peers and that these links would be broken once students concluded the final year. There was a perception that the most natural progression route for Foundation Studio students was to attend the Weekend School, but that this was reliant on a successful audition. This, in turn, highlighted implications for the profile of Open Studio, as Foundation Studio parents believed it to be 'too different' stylistically and musically as a progression route. One parent commented that they had 'signed up to do classical violin' and that Open Studio was about 'folk and jazz'. This raises an important point about Foundation Studio parents' attitudes towards stylistic differences and perhaps suggests (for some) a musical hierarchy that places Western classical music and formal instrumental tuition ahead of other styles and teaching methods. Tutors and the Head of YMP have suggested the possibility of developing Open Studio *Plus* to include 1:1 instrumental tuition and increase string participation. Open Studio has its own unique identity compared to Foundation Studio and it is a recommendation that it does not lose this in attempting to solve Foundation Studio progression routes.

There were very few suggestions from parents, students and tutors of ways to improve and develop Open Studio. One small issue was that, due to the fortnightly running of Open Studio, Focus Group students and their parents felt that there could be a 'dip' in progression and continuity. They felt that they preferred the fortnightly arrangement, but all students suggested they would prefer slightly longer sessions to eliminate any gaps in their individual progression. Students felt the use of a virtual learning environment, similar to those they had experienced at school, would be a good way to maintain continuity and dialogue with their peers and with tutors.

Ensembles

It was not possible to observe the vast range of ensembles over the research-evaluation weekend visit. Nevertheless, the high quality of teaching and learning and the use of challenging repertoire were a particular strength in those ensembles that were observed. Ensemble leaders were dynamic in terms of the pace and delivery and students were observed to make good progress; this was echoed by all parents and students. For example, members of the Children's Choir were encouraged to listen carefully to other harmony parts in order to improve their intonation, diction and phrasing and a great deal of progress was made in a short rehearsal. The Weekend School student focus group (who were also members of the YMP ensembles) commended the range of styles and repertoire in their respective ensembles. For example, Stringendo Players were given the opportunity to perform contemporary and folk music as well as the more traditional repertoire associated with string ensembles. Work with professional orchestras and organisations served to enhance students' experiences as evidenced from YMP student evaluations:

"...the most enjoyable was when I had the opportunity to sing at the Houses of Parliament alongside 3 other singers. Also I had the opportunity to sing Handel's Messiah with Quay Voices for the BBC Proms."

"...we performed with the Boston Children's Chorus... it was interesting working with people from a different culture and watching how they perform."

Regional Youth Ensemble student evaluations for 2010/11 highlight YMP ensembles to be fulfilling experiences:

“I welcomed the opportunity and challenge to play in a chamber orchestra as opposed to as symphony orchestra. The Sage is an impressive venue and I am now more confident playing in large concert halls. I knew that the level of coaching and teaching would be far superior to that which I had received previously. Young Sinfonia was a great opportunity for me to improve my playing and to perform in Europe.”

“I was too young to join Quay Voices and when I came across Quay Lasses it seemed perfect because I would get similar experiences to Quay Voices and be in a developing choir.”

Ensemble progression routes are especially strong for string players, singers and folk musicians. For example, a strings player’s ensemble journey can be tracked from beginner standard (Foundation Studio) and continues through two differentiated tiers of Stringendo, culminating at an advanced level in Young Sinfonia. All of the ensembles fall into two different categories: open access (non-auditioned) and Regional Youth Ensembles (audition based), which help to promote quality and inclusion. Members of the Choirs and Young Sinfonia (Quay Lasses, Lads and Voices) maintain that strong social connections are an important part of being involved in ensembles. Parents also commend the pastoral support of ensemble delivery staff. Currently, students can participate in:

Regional Youth Ensembles (Auditioned)

- Young Sinfonia – Regional Youth Orchestra, 13-19 years, grade 7/8 standard
- Stringendo - ‘minor’ and ‘major’ - two tiers of string ensembles for 8-12 years, grade 3+ and 12-16 years, grade 5+
- Sinfonic Winds - wind, brass and percussion ensemble for 12-17 years,

- grade 5 +
- Folkestra Folk - ensemble for 13-19 years
- Jambone – Big Band for 13-19 years
- Quay Choirs – ‘lasses’ 11-16 years, ‘lads’ 8-16 years and ‘voices’ 14-19 years

Open Access Ensembles – (Non-Auditioned)

- Youth Folkworks Tuesday – folk ensemble
- Rhythm Nation - percussion group - all styles – 11-18 years
- Brassy B - brass ensemble for experienced brass players and percussionists - New Orleans style music
- Volcano Juniors – Steel Pans, 8- 15 years
- Children’s Choir, 7 -11 years.

In terms of specific recommendations for Ensemble activity:

- Very few boys were participating in the Children’s Choir, which supports an official view that boys may be increasingly less involved in singing activities (Ofsted, 2012 – although this is not evidenced in schools that participated strongly in the Sing Up programme). The choir leader believes that it is possible to address this gender imbalance through her experience and connections with other regional boys’ singing activities.
- Student numbers are small in Volcano Juniors. The YMP could offer taster workshop in schools, as well as within their own Programme, e.g. recruiting from the Children’s Choir.
- String, vocal and folk progression routes are strong, but there are fewer opportunities for developing wind & brass players. This, however, is identified in the YMP’s ‘gaps in provision’ document.
- A range of styles are explored in ensemble repertoire. There is room still for further stylistic breadth particularly in relation to fusion, urban and world music.

Communications with parents

Parents note that communication from the YMP, across all strands, has improved, but feel that it could do better. Most communication issues appear to relate to lessons and weekly arrangements or schedule changes. Several parents cited anxiety of what was expected from them and were unsure of event and concert practicalities.

Delivery staff roles and Continued Professional Development

The provision for Continued Professional Development (CPD) and sharing of pedagogical practices are not consistent across the Programme. The latter relies mostly on informal dialogue between individuals. Some tutors commented that their CPD sessions relied primarily on ‘word of mouth’.

Several tutors described a sense of feeling isolated from other parts of the Programme and reported that they were unaware of what it has to offer as a whole. It is clear, for example, how theory and aural tuition are

organised within the three strands, but there appears to be a lack of clarity as to how musical progression is considered and discussed across the whole Programme, e.g., from Foundation School to Weekend School.

The standard of teaching is deemed to be very high, with some of the most respected musicians from the region. However, some tutors express the concern that the priority to maintain concert engagements can break the weekly link with students. Opportunity should be sought to canvass opinion amongst tutors and to explore a transparent policy for parents. It may also be possible to see 'gaps' as an opportunity perhaps to enrich the curricula provision in some way⁸.

Some recommendations to strengthen staff Continued Professional Development provision are as follows:

- Ensure that there is a clear and transparent peer review and observation schedule which implements target setting by and for tutors; for example, this could be a more explicit part of The Sage Gateshead's line management specifications;
- Initiate regular peer observation opportunities across the whole of the YMP (not just within each strand);
- Make formal use of a virtual learning environment (VLE) for staff to share resources (such as use of a Sage Gateshead professional 'house style' for lessons plans and resources) and to engage in discussion fora;
- Use example video lessons as prompts to support reflective practice of good teaching where time constraints and cost are an issue;
- Develop a compendium of case studies showing cross instrumental/vocal collaboration, which can be shared with all tutors;
- Consider how best to highlight the practice of tutors who are deemed to be innovative, quality practitioners;
- Hold collaborative events for all tutors and students; a number of tutors and students would welcome opportunities to work together more at Weekend School, for example;
- Clarify delivery and administrative staff roles and responsibilities and the chain of command;
- Clarify what the Artistic Advisor roles and responsibilities encompass and ensure that all staff are engaged with these;
- Implement greater transparency in terms of the recruitment process for tutors, as this was questioned by some staff;
- Consider implementing a YMP teaching and learning conference, which

⁸ Such an opportunity is available, for example, on 13th May 2012 when the YMP is holding its first Development Day for all tutors. The schedule has been designed to ensure that tutors will come together to discuss the new child protection policies and then to break out into discipline/genre groups in order to share successes and any common issues, as well as to explore further opportunities for linkage across the whole Programme. The day coincides with the Weekend Schools Activity Day in which the students go 'off curriculum' and explore a diverse range of activities, including taking part in a varied musical styles and genres, engaging in presentations and, as appropriate, preparations for Higher Education. Some of the sessions will also be open to tutors and families. There is an opportunity to engage with the BBC Young Musician Final on the Sunday with tickets being made available for YMP participants to attend.

might include bigger picture issues such as the changing context for national music education, links between instrumental and classroom pedagogies, as well as the latest research and development in relevant music education;

- Ensure that The Sage Gateshead's artistic priorities and the Quality Framework are more meaningful for staff and underpinning their practice rather than perhaps seen as 'policy documents';
- Explore accreditation for tutors as part of forthcoming National Music Educator Qualification.

Use of data to monitor existing students and to access new participants

Student data were made available throughout the research-based evaluation. Nevertheless, there is a need to develop a more systematic approach to data collection and analysis and to consider why and how data might be used meaningfully to develop short and long-term action plans. Some examples are as follows:

- The YMP should develop robust strategies for baseline assessment of participants in order to show value-added analyses and to track and evidence individual students' progression within (and, where appropriate, across) each strand;
- Gender data are available, but it is unclear how the data have been analysed and subsequently used for the benefit of young people;
- Ethnicity data are only available as a result of the DfE Music and Dance Scheme bursary applications and are not widely monitored across the programme;
- The geographical distribution of students has been mapped (using Batchgeo) since March 2012. It is a recommendation that more analysis and subsequent action takes place. For example, according to the data made available to the research team, the numbers of student participants from Gateshead show a slow decline since 2004/5. Why is this? Is this important to the YMP and, if so, in what ways? What strategies are in place to address this decline, assuming that this is a concern?;
- Instrumental data are comprehensive. It is a commendation that endangered instrument work takes place. The recommendation is that the YMP must now use the data each year to consider what constitutes 'endangered instruments', e.g. the decline in guitar numbers was raised by several tutors;
- Student and parent evaluation procedures are undertaken annually using Survey Monkey. Pupil and parents value the opportunity to evaluate the Programme, but suggest that they would welcome more regular feedback opportunities. One parent, whose child had left the Programme, was concerned that there was no data or evidence to show when a student leaves the programme mid-year for negative reasons. An exit evaluation might provide an opportunity for parents to comment on areas for development.

Additionally, it is important to use and collect data to target potential student participants whose families might not be pro-active or aware of the opportunities on offer to them. There are implications in terms of accessing students with untapped potential and those whose parents might

not actively seek out such opportunities. In particular:

- Only one student mentioned that their involvement in YMP was the result of a recommendation from their school. Alongside the Early Years and Schools Programmes activity, the YMP should identify why schools are not key in making recommendations to the Programme. Data collection and analysis of current students' pathways to the YMP could help develop strategies for targeting those with reported musical potential;
- What is the effect of mass distribution of literature as a marketing tool? Almost all the students and parents who took part in the research evaluation sought out the YMP opportunities themselves, with all of those interviewed hearing about the Programme by word of mouth;
- The YMP might consider more formal ways to target and support children from deprived areas, including those who suffer the most deprivation (see following section). These might include work with Children's Centres and through focused work in Youth Music Action Zones.

Example use of Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)

Example use of Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) data to monitor existing students and to access new participants

An analysis by the research team (based on n=322 student records, with an additional 10% not having valid postcodes) indicates that it is possible to mine the postcode data alongside other official datasets, such as the UK Government's Indices of Multiple Deprivation (DCLG, 2011), in order to explore aspects of relative deprivation in terms of the recruitment base (see Annex 1). Geographical representation is very wide, but also unevenly represented in the Local Authorities closest to The Sage Gateshead (see Table 3).

Table 3: Breakdown of YMP participants in dataset by Local Authority

Local Authority	% of YMP participants from this area
Newcastle upon Tyne	24.7
Northumberland	21.1
Durham	12.3
Gateshead	11.4
North Tyneside	8.1
Sunderland	5.4
South Tyneside	3.0
Darlington	2.4
North Yorkshire	2.1
Cumbria	2.1
Stockton-on-Tees	1.8
Hartlepool	1.2
Middlesborough	1.2
York	0.9
Scottish Borders	0.6
Highlands	0.6
Kirklees	0.3
Redcar and Cleveland	0.3
City of Edinburgh	0.3

In particular, a detailed analysis of the top six Local Authorities served by the YMP (see Annex 1) indicates that (a) the Programme tends to recruit unevenly from particular sub-areas within a Local Authority (Annex, Table 4); and (b) the Programme is often *not* drawing from groups of households that have the highest deprivation scores (Annex, Table 5). Even though a particular Local Authority might be regarded as deprived in general terms, there is often a bias in the YMP recruitment from its less deprived sub-areas (using official IMD data), i.e., the YMP tends to draw participants from households with statistically significantly better average levels of support compared with the Authority overall (Annex, Table 6).

Future pathways for YMP

The publication of the National Plan for Music Education is a defining moment for music education. The music education community, perhaps led by the newly created hubs, has the opportunity to develop a vision for music education – a new ‘Zeitgeist’, if you like – that is coherent and truly inclusive both in terms of the musical practices that it values and the centrality of the learner. The community needs to begin however by addressing some fundamental – and so far, much-avoided – questions, such as what it believes music education is for, who it is for and what it should achieve. Answering these questions will require leadership. (Spruce, 2012: 5)

In general, music education communities have responded positively to the National Plan for Music Education (2011). It has been noted that applications for hubs are meant to be relatively straightforward, although their subsequent implementation might be less so. For the YMP, the first challenge will be to gauge how the Programme might maintain its perceived quality of provision alongside growth and improved access within the region. The YMP must offer a longer-term vision, which considers more explicitly progression, range and quality for its young musicians. This will, inevitably, present strategic challenges, as responses to short-term goals and political changes could easily dominate the Programme’s strategy. It would be prudent for all the YMP tutors and managers to draw on any existing explicit mission statements under The Sage Gateshead’s Learning and Participation umbrella in order to generate a shared The Sage Gateshead mission statement for YMP (which might examine Spruce’s questions in more critical depth). For example, does a Centre for Advanced Musical Training have to conform to a model of a traditional performance-centered curriculum? What could each of the Programme strands learn from each other and how can barriers be broken down between informal and formal pedagogical approaches, such as characterize biases in the biographies of instrumentalists from different musical genres (Creech *et al*, 2008)? How can children in deprived (and underserved) areas be better supported and accessed; and how can their progress be mapped against others who appear to have greater advantage (*cf* Hallam &

Creech, 2010) on the Programme.

In general, notwithstanding any recommendations, the YMP is already providing impressive and high quality musical opportunities for young people. Whilst it is important to react and respond to political and contextual changes in music education, it is essential that music teaching and learning developments are placed at the heart of the Programme (*cf* Creech & Hallam, 2011), that all staff are nurtured in the provision of these, and that this particular national beacon of excellence and opportunity continues and thrives as an example internationally of what is possible.

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Annex 1

The UK Postcode and 'Super Output Area lower level' Systems

The UK Postcode system divides the country into 'areas', 'districts', 'sectors' and 'units'. The last of these (corresponding to the final two characters in a complete postcode) break the country down into very small areas with a mean diameter of 5.7km. Each unit contains around 15 residential or business addresses⁹. The precise latitudes and longitudes of these units are held, allowing detailed geographical pinpointing from postcode alone.

Unfortunately, since postcodes (and other boundary systems, such as electoral wards) can be changed to reflect patterns of economic and residential behaviour, they cannot be used as a long-term reference system for collating demographic data. Instead, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) has introduced 'Output Areas', which are designed to enable longer-term comparisons to be made (for instance, as a result of the ten-yearly census). Output Areas are, in turn, super-grouped into Middle and Lower Super Output Areas (e.g., LSOA). The latter have a typical population of around 1500 residents¹⁰.

The Indices of Deprivation

A major use for the LSOA system is in the collation of the Government's Indices of Deprivation. Data from the census and elsewhere are combined to form seven main strands, each measuring a different aspect of deprivation¹¹. The areas are: income deprivation; employment deprivation; health deprivation and disability; education, skills and training deprivation; barriers to housing and services; living environment deprivation; and crime. A suitably weighted composite figure – termed the 'Indices of Multiple Deprivation' (IMD) – is then calculated for each LSOA. Areas rated as more deprived across the various indices receive a higher IMD score. For example, according to the 2004 index, the most deprived LSOA

⁹ See <http://www.graticule.com/data/uk/pcdata.html> [retrieved 24th January 2006]

¹⁰ See <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/geography/soa.asp> [retrieved 24th January 2006]

¹¹ See http://www.odpm.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1128444#P18_329 [retrieved 24th January 2006]

in the country was '00BY' in Liverpool with an IMD score of 86.36. The least deprived LSOA was '24UB' in Basingstoke and Deane with a score of 0.59. The most recent IMD data set is for the year 2010 and these have been used in the analyses of the YMP data.

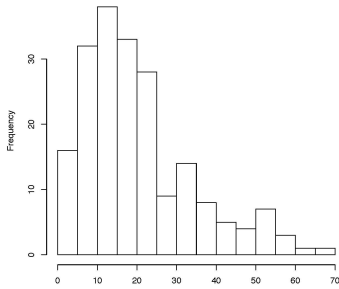
YMP Postcode data

The top six Local Authority areas served by the YMP activities in terms of the number of constituent Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) inhabited by participants are given in Table 4. For example, Northumberland has 199 LSOAs overall, with YMP participants coming from 46 (23%) of these.

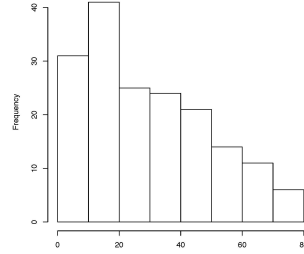
Table 4: Breakdown of LSOAs within each Local Authority and the % of YMP participants within these

	Number of LSOAs in total within the Local Authority without any YMP participants	Number of LSOAs within the Local Authority with YMP participants	% of LSOAs with YMP participants within the Local Authority
Northumberland	153	46	23%
Newcastle upon Tyne District	135	38	22%
Gateshead District	102	24	19%
North Tyneside District	109	20	16%
Durham County	285	35	11%
South Tyneside District	93	10	10%

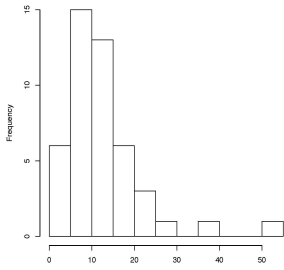
Moreover, the distribution of these YMP participant LSOAs within the Local Authority reveals a bias towards areas with lower measures of deprivation (see examples for two Local Authorities in Figure 1).



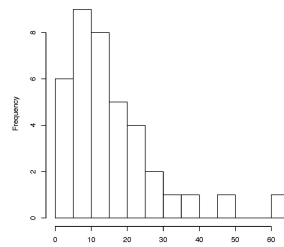
Distribution of Northumberland IMD scores overall



Distribution of Newcastle IMD scores overall



Distribution of Northumberland IMD scores for YMP participants



Distribution of Newcastle IMD scores for YMP participants

Figure 1: Example distributions of IMD scores for LSOAs in two Local Authorities, Northumberland and Newcastle (upper histograms), compared with IMD LSOAs for YMP participants in the same Authorities (lower histograms)

Furthermore, it is possible to compute the minimum, mean and maximum Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2010 values (DCLG, 2011) for each of these paired sets of LSOAs within each Local Authority (i.e., those LSOAs with YMP participants compared with those without) (see Table 5).

Table 5: A comparison of IMD scores (minimum, maximum, mean) within each Local Authority for LSOAs overall and for those with YMP participants

Local Authority		Minimum IMD	Maximum IMD	Mean IMD
Northumberland	LSOAs overall	1.93	66.3	20.2
	<i>LSOAs with YMP participants</i>	<i>1.93</i>	<i>50.1</i>	<i>12.5</i>
Newcastle upon Tyne	LSOAs overall	2.32	74.8	29.5
	<i>LSOAs with YMP participants</i>	<i>2.32</i>	<i>63</i>	<i>15.9</i>
Gateshead	LSOAs overall	5.74	71	29.3
	<i>LSOAs with YMP participants</i>	<i>5.74</i>	<i>49.7</i>	<i>20.9</i>
North Tyneside	LSOAs overall	1.74	64.3	22.3
	<i>LSOAs with YMP participants</i>	<i>4.66</i>	<i>60.3</i>	<i>16.4</i>
Durham	LSOAs overall	2.53	74.1	27
	<i>LSOAs with YMP participants</i>	<i>2.53</i>	<i>55.4</i>	<i>20.6</i>
South Tyneside	LSOAs overall	4.35	67.3	28.5
	<i>LSOAs with YMP participants</i>	<i>4.82</i>	<i>34.5</i>	<i>16.5</i>

The comparison data suggest that, in each of these authorities, the LSOAs with YMP participants tend to have lower mean IMD scores than those that do not (in line with the distributions illustrated in Figure 1). To reiterate, a lower IMD score is regarded as indicating that an area is less 'deprived', as defined within the Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2010 exercise.

Analyses by t-Tests suggest that these differences may be statistically significant (Table 6). However, because of the relatively small numbers involved in some instances, we suggest that further data processing and statistical analysis are necessary to confirm this and to provide additional interpretation of these findings.

Table 6: Statistical comparison of IMD data for the LSOAs for the Local Authority overall and for the LSOAs with YMP participants

	Mean IMD Score in LSOA overall	Mean IMD Score in LSOA with YMP participants	t-Test results
Northumberland	22.5 (SD=14.1)	12.6 (SD=8.97)	t = -20.5, df = 198, p-value < 0.001
Newcastle upon Tyne	33.3 (SD=19.5)	15.9 (SD=12.7)	t = -19.7, df = 172, p-value < 0.001
Gateshead	31.3 (SD=16.1)	20.9 (SD=12.8)	t = -20.4, df = 125, p-value < 0.001
North Tyneside	23.3 (SD=14.1)	16.4 (SD=15.7)	t = -17.3, df = 128, p-value < 0.001
Durham County	27.8 (SD=14.5)	20.6 (SD=15.3)	t = -32.7, df = 319, p-value < 0.001
South Tyneside	29.8 (SD=14.4)	16.5 (SD=9.05)	t = -19.9, df = 102, p-value < 0.001