

# **BUILDING A FRAMEWORK**

**A REPORT ON THE WANTS + NEEDS OF  
EMERGING THEATRE-MAKERS IN SCOTLAND**

**A REPORT BY  
FRAMEWORK THEATRE COMPANY 2021**

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## **About the Report**

This report has been compiled as a result of research conducted by Framework Theatre Company Ltd. in the spring/summer of 2021.

This research will be used to inform the further development of Framework Theatre's program of support work for emerging theatre makers. We are publishing this research to emphasise the voices of emerging artists within the sector and allow others to learn about the challenges they face.

As we emerge from the Coronavirus pandemic, we have an excellent opportunity to change the way we do things. We believe it is key to listen to the voices of those coming into the sector and support them in their journey. It is our hope that this report makes it easier for other organisations to see what emerging artists are looking for, in order to develop and deliver schemes that are truly useful.

This report asks the questions, what do emerging/early-career theatre-makers in Scotland want, how can we support them, and how do they perceive the sector.

This research project has been led by Framework's Creative Producer, Emma Ruse. This report has been edited by Jennifer Galt.

## **About Framework Theatre**

Framework Theatre Company Ltd. was founded in 2018 by graduates of Performing Arts Studio Scotland. They are a female-led company with a focus on supporting emerging artists and developing new socio-political theatre.

Currently, Framework are delivering “Home: A Project for New Writers” in association with Vanishing Point. They are also supporting Moot Point Theatre and Katie Fraser with rehearsed readings of new work and are in the process of developing three new shows that create exciting opportunities for emerging artists. They are also currently planning the next iteration of Framework Festival, Scotland’s first emerging theatre-makers festival, that took place for the first time in May 2021.

## **What We Did**

We wanted to hear from as many emerging artists as possible, and so, in line with the launch of Framework Festival, we conducted a survey that allowed us to learn from early-career theatre-makers across Scotland.

The survey reached 107 people who identified as a Scottish/Scotland-based early-career or emerging theatre maker.

Questions asked focussed on the challenges emerging artists face, and what they believe would allow them to overcome these barriers. This data will allow us to develop a programme that supports them to take the next step in their careers based directly on the wants they have communicated. Every large quote within the report comes directly from an emerging artist.

## **Research Challenges**

We managed to reach 107 of Scotland’s emerging theatre makers, we are hopeful that this provides a reasonable representation of the overall group but are aware it cannot fully do so.

It is worth noting that we did not give a definition to the phrases emerging or early-career, and instead asked artists if they consider themselves to be within that bracket.

In terms of demographics:

- 71% of our responses were from female-identifying respondents.
- We have very few responses from people of colour, 96.2% of respondents were from a White background.
- Geographically, we have responses from all but 8 of Scotland's local authorities. The 8 include both Shetland and Orkney.
- We have also mainly had respondents from actors, writers, producers, and directors. This leaves us with very little representation from production and technical teams.

We ask that you consider how these facts may impact the results, and we are aware of the challenges that brings. We are considering how we improve the demographic representation for future research.

## **Key Findings**

- 96.3% of respondents felt there was not enough support for emerging/early-career theatre-makers in Scotland
- Respondents want to see more funding, more opportunities to work for existing organisations and more opportunities to create their own work.

- Respondents cited unpaid work and making industry connections as the biggest challenges for emerging + early career theatre makers.
- Paid work + opportunities geared specifically towards emerging artists was deemed to be the most useful resource for respondents.
- The biggest change sought in the industry was the need for increased accessibility and diversity across the board.
- Respondents ideal support programmes for artists would feature mentoring, a group of emerging artists working together and a creative support network.

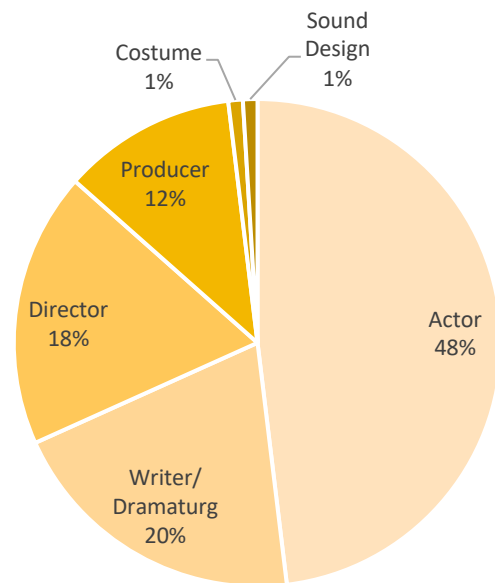
# EMERGING ARTISTS WORKING TOGETHER

## Respondents Demographics

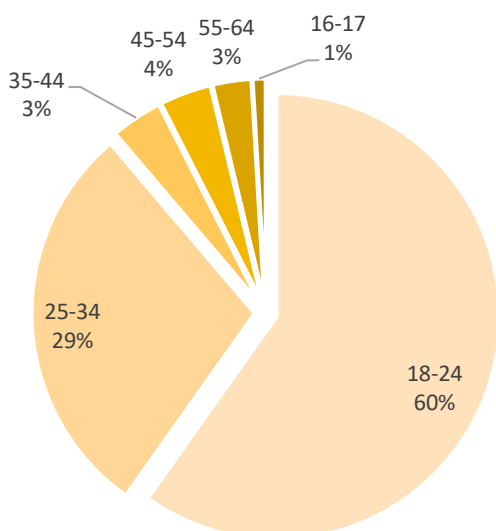
We asked a series of key questions to help us understand the information gathered through the survey. Our average respondent was a white woman, aged 18-24, based in Edinburgh and with a keen interest in pursuing an acting career.

### Which theatre-based role would you most like to pursue a career in?

*For this question we specifically asked which of these roles artists would MOST like to pursue a career in, we appreciate that within the Scottish theatre ecology many artists wear multiple hats and that is worth considering throughout the results.*



As you can see, almost half (48%) of the respondents said Actor.

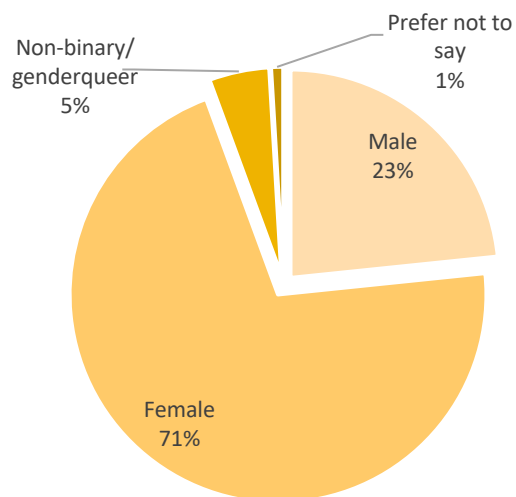


### How old are you?

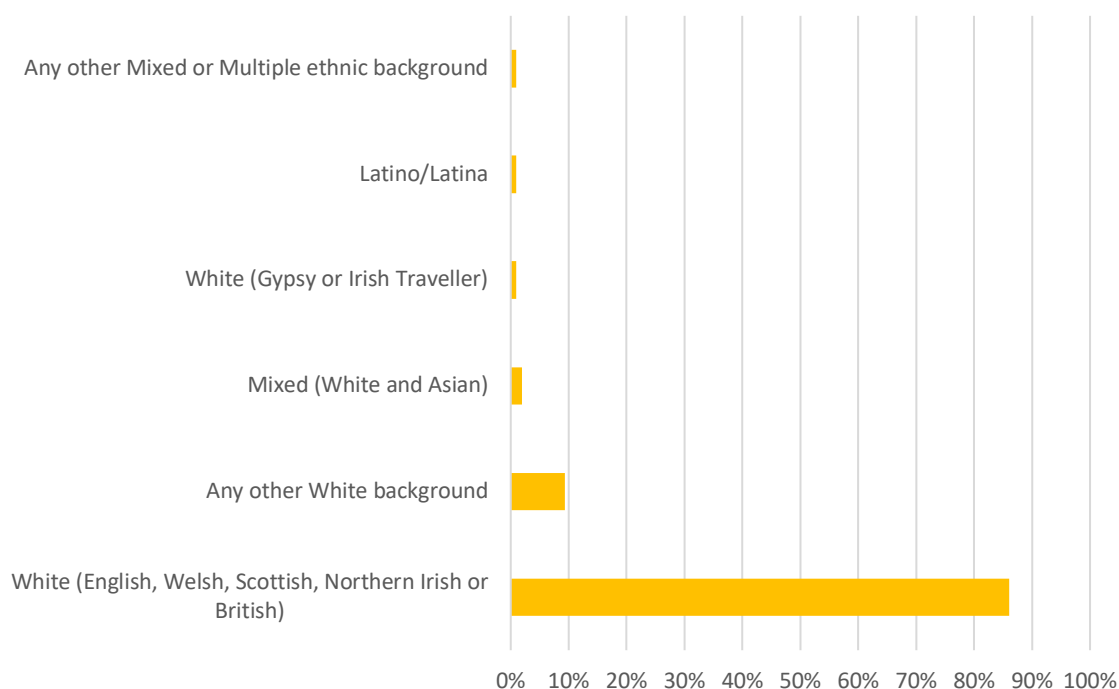
*Here it is worth noting that only 61% of participants were under 25, a very interesting note for us as a large amount of emerging artist programmes are aimed at under 25s.*

## What is your gender identity?

*A potential skewing of this data may come from the fact that Framework is female-led and primarily in the past has focused on supporting female + non-binary voices. For that reason, our reach may lean away from men.*



## Which ethnic group do you most closely identify with?

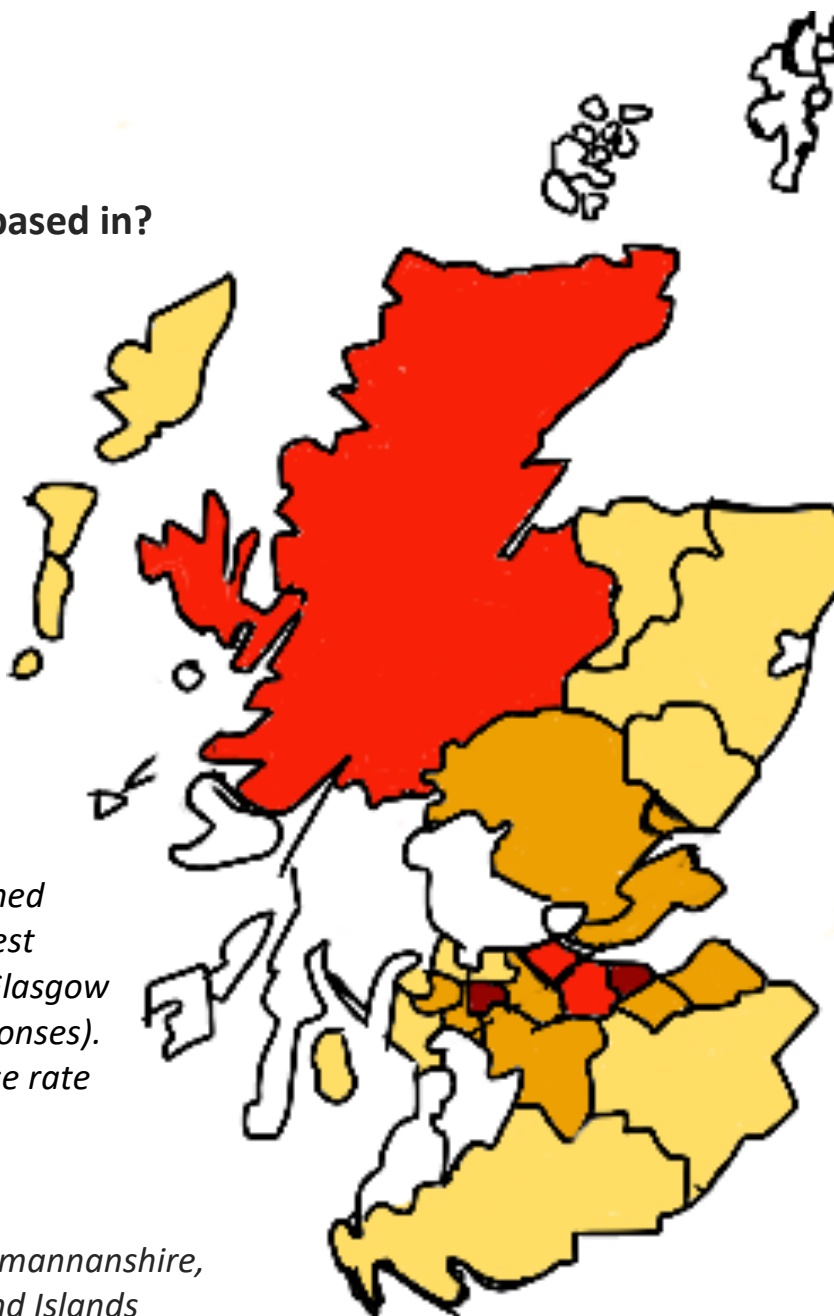
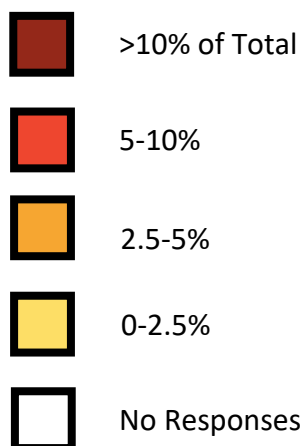


### We had no responses for the following options:

African, Any other Asian background, Any other Black, African or Caribbean background, Arab, Asian or Asian British (Bangladeshi), Asian or Asian British (Chinese), Asian or Asian British (Indian), Asian or Asian British (Pakistani), Caribbean, Mixed (White and Black African), Mixed (White and Black Caribbean), White (Irish), Othe



## Which Local Authority are you based in?



*The majority of responses are contained within the central belt, with the highest response rates from Edinburgh and Glasgow (each with over 20% of the total responses). We also had a relatively high response rate from the Highlands.*

*We are missing responses from:  
Aberdeen City, Argyll and Bute, Clackmannanshire,  
East Ayrshire, Orkney Islands, Shetland Islands  
South Ayrshire, and Stirling*

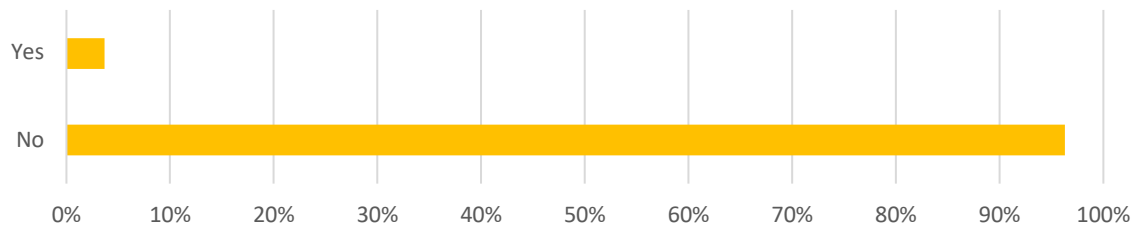
# A FOCUS ON TELLING SCOTTISH STORIES<sup>9</sup>

# BUILDING A FRAMEWORK

## Report in Detail

### 1. Do you feel there is currently enough support for early career theatre makers in Scotland?

107 out of 107 people answered this question

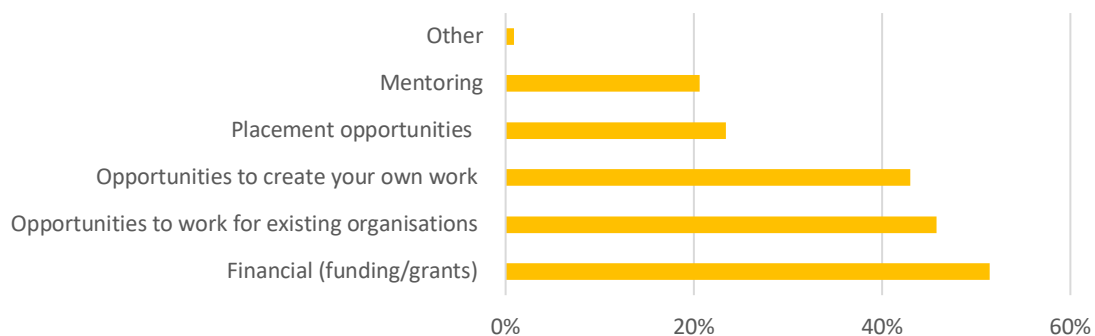


*Out of 107 theatre makers, only 4 (3.7%) felt there was enough support for early career theatre makers in Scotland. This result has shown us a real need for the work we aim to do and justified the need for this report.*

### 2. What kind of support would you like to see more of?

107 out of 107 people answered this question

(with multiple choice, participants could choose up to 3 answers)



Other

- More open script submission opportunities

*This response shows that financial support is the clear priority for emerging theatre-makers. Over half (51.4%) of respondents selected this as one of their three choices for this question.*

*This was closely followed by opportunities to work in existing organisations and to create their own work.*

### **3. What organisations do you know of that create good opportunities for emerging makers?**

98 out of 107 people answered this question

*For this question we have compiled a list of every organisation mentioned, every organisation mentioned more than once is highlighted. Other organisations are included in a list underneath. We have not analysed the quality of opportunity at any of these organisations, and there is a mix of venues, companies, venues and production/scratch nights within the list.*

#### **Organisations mentioned more than once (and how many times)**

- Scottish Youth Theatre (16)
- Traverse Theatre (14)
- The Tron (14)
- Framework Theatre (10)
- Creative Scotland (7)
- National Theatre of Scotland (6)
- Vanishing Point (6)
- The Gaiety Theatre (4)
- Playwrights Studio Scotland (4)
- Youth Theatre Arts Scotland (4)
- Edinburgh Fringe Society (4)
- Pitlochry Festival Theatre (3)
- Wonderfools (3)
- Citizens Theatre (3)
- Royal Lyceum Theatre (3)
- Eden Court (2)
- Stellar Quines (2)
- Starcatchers (2)
- Strangetown Youth Theatre (2)
- Creative Edinburgh (2)
- At The Root (2)

#### **Other Organisations (Scottish):**

Capital Theatres, Lyth Arts Centre, Catherine Wheels, Dancebase, Imagine, Waypoint-1, Persistent and Nasty, Scottish Screenwriters, The Daft Duo, Glasgow CAN, Clusterfuck circus, Southside fringe, Ice Box Arts and Music Centre, Spangled Cabaret, Scottish BAME Writers Network, Script to Stage, Speculative Books, Sonnet youth, The Diversity Quota, Allsorts Cabaret, Wee

Theatres, Workers Theatre, Free Fringe, Solar Bear, PACE Youth Theatre, Firefly Arts, Central Belters, Company of Wolves, Scottish Society of Playwrights, Queen Margaret University, Dogstar, Performance Collective Stranraer, Edinburgh University Societies, Scottish Drama Training Network\*, National Youth Arts Advisory Group, Tin Tub Theatre, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (as an ex- student)

**Other Organisations (Outside Scotland):**

The Grad Fest, Theatre Deli, New Diorama, ArtsLab, Regional Theatre Young Directors Scheme, Young Vic Directors, National Youth Theatre, Royal Court, North Wall Oxford, Company 3, New Works Playhouse, Drunken Chorus, Herlarious/Funny Women, Express yourself, Rascals, Tramshed, Plug In Girls, Bare Bones, Theatre503, Bristol Old Vic

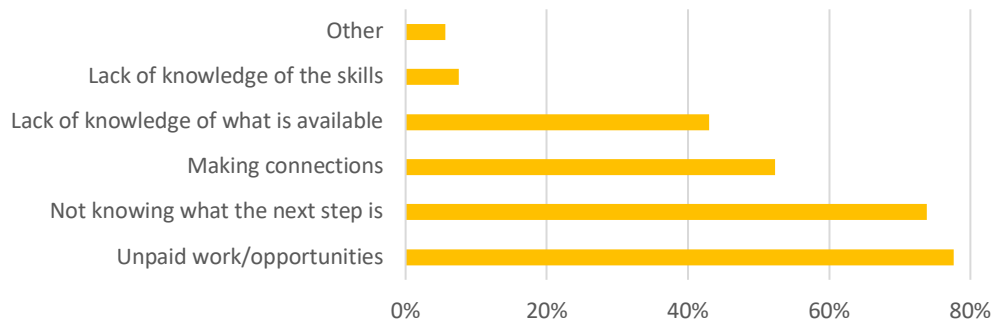
*Some answers were less specific or didn't list specific organisations, and are included here as follows:*

*(Please note, some have been edited for clarity or to fix typing errors).*

- I know none at the moment, but I am Highland based so maybe there is more opportunities near the borders but that doesn't help me.
- All assistant designer posts or schemes are in buildings down south.
- While some create good opportunities they seem to always go to the same artists or artists from the same background.
- Some schemes look great but are expensive and therefore more difficult to access. Some internships say you must have attended certain drama schools to be eligible, making it very difficult, or impossible to access.
- Honestly (I know) none that work for me and my area.
- It never occurred to me to look for support.
- I know more about English companies.

## 4. What do you think are the challenges for early career theatre makers in Scotland?

107 out of 113 people answered this question (with multiple choice, participants could select up to 3 responses)



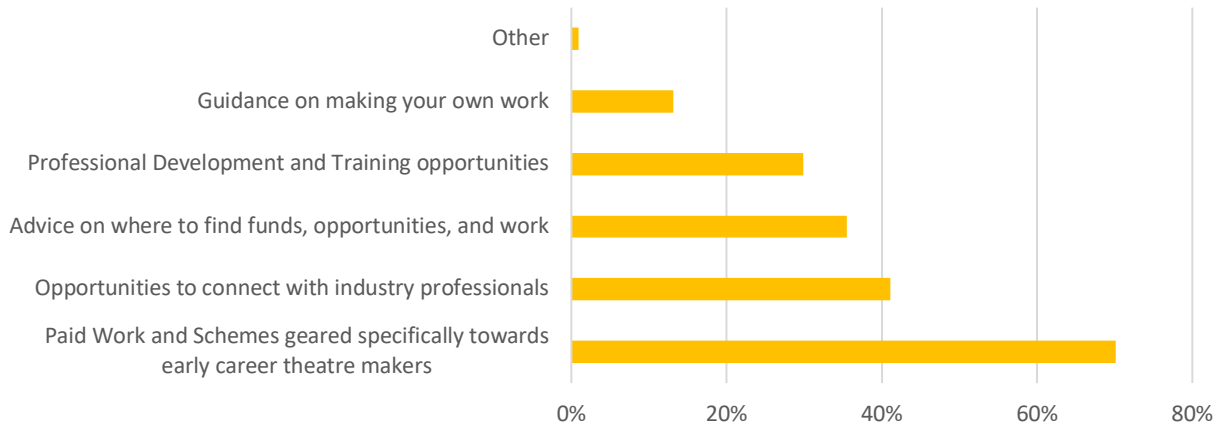
### Other

- Directors/ producers can't communicate with me, so they need communication support. I can offer so much but will they listen? *(This response was from a deaf artist)*
- Lack of support for female playwrights and other stories that decentralise the white male experience.
- I think a combination of these things perpetuates a lack of confidence to actually apply for stuff that 'might not be relevant' or 'I'm not qualified for'.
- Lack of openings for your work to be accepted by theatres.
- Being overlooked.
- Getting your first professional job.

*It is clear from this response to Q.4 that unpaid work is damaging emerging artists, this is embellished upon later in the report when respondents had a chance to use their own words. This was closely followed by emerging artists feeling they don't know what the next step is as they progress through their professional career.*

## 5. What resources would be useful to you as an early career artist?

107 out of 113 people answered this question (with multiple choice, participants could select up to two options)



### Other

- A combo of C and E!! (Professional Development and Training Opportunities + Paid Work and Schemes)

*The continual theme of this analysis is the need for emerging theatre-makers to be paid for the work they do. 70.1% of artists stated that paid work and schemes geared specifically towards emerging artists would be a valuable resource, around 30% away from the next closest response. To us, this shows a clear desire from emerging artists to receive bespoke and tailored support for their career stage. This is further justified to us in the next two questions.*

# PAID FOR OUR TIME.

## **6. As we emerge from the pandemic, what's the biggest change you'd like to see in the industry?**

103 out of 113 people answered this question

*103 out of 107 people responded to this question, with a number of responses choosing to mention multiple answers. These answers have therefore been split and added to the correct category. There were 123 individual points made in this area.*

*To assess this data, we have grouped together relevant answers into themes. Each theme will then be summarised in this document. If you would like to read through the answers as they were submitted, you can do so in our appendix document on our website.*

### **More Accessibility + Diversity**

38 responses mentioned accessibility and/or diversity as the biggest change they'd like to see in the industry. These responses included, as well as general calls for more inclusivity, desires for representation from working class, female + non-binary, deaf and young voices. Many respondents noted the change in the theatre landscape over the pandemic, allowing for more accessible and diversifying opportunities for artists. The need to learn from this, and continue was highlighted multiple times.

There was also a desire within this section to see diversity in the specific people receiving opportunities. Multiple respondents felt the same people always received work.

### **More of Specific Projects + Opportunities**

32 responses expressed the want for specific projects or an increase in opportunities that may already exist. This included a strong desire for mentoring and support opportunities for early-career artists and opportunities for graduates (in particular for those who missed out due to the pandemic either from 2020/21 or indeed the 2019 class.).

A lot of answers within this section are then embellished in the following question within the report, and as such they will be commented on further within that analysis.

### **Easier Access to Funding**

14 responses expressed a desire for change around funding. The highlights of this section included the need for more trust to be given to emerging artists to handle funding, and the desire for more transparency around the process of applying and of decision-making.

### **Less Unpaid Labour for Artists**

12 responses surrounded the need for artists to be paid for their work. The expectation that artists (specifically early career artists) work for free was a clear note. There was mention of the health impact of free labour and a discussion about ensuring freelance workers are earning enough money to make a living.

### **Better Hiring Processes**

14 responses specified current issues surrounding the way artists get work, desiring more transparency and openness around applications, hiring and auditioning. The majority of these focused on a desire for open hiring processes, with an additional note on prioritising talent over location. There was also a desire to not penalise CV gaps, particularly after 2020, as well as a need for more organisations to offer valuable feedback on applications.

### **Systemic Industry Change**

This sub-heading has 8 responses categorised under it, mostly surrounding the idea of an industry hierarchy and 'cliques' within that make it difficult for others to get work. There are also some miscellaneous responses allocated here; one around attempting to make the industry financially sustainable commercially, and one surrounding a want for better run venues that create valuable audiences who are willing to pay for performances.

### **A Change in Mindset**

The 5 responses under this heading call for more kindness instead of competition, adaptability, recognising artist value and seeing the industry be more open to working with new people.

*We feel that these responses really highlight emerging artists desire to work in a sector that is a kind, fair and enjoyable workplace for all.*

**KINDNESS AND SUPPORT  
INSTEAD OF COMPETITION.**



## **7. What would your ideal support programme for emerging artists look like?**

79 out of 113 people answered this question

*79 out of 107 people responded to this question, with a number of responses again choosing to mention multiple points. These answers have therefore been split and added to the correct category. There were 153 categorised points made in this area, a handful of which are duplicates that fell under two categories.*

*To assess this data, we grouped together relevant answers into themes, and will summarise the key points here. If you would like to read through the answers in more detail you can do so in our appendix document on our website.*

### **Mentoring**

35 of the responses mentioned mentoring in some way. Whilst some of these only stated mentoring with industry professionals, others stated a desire for this to be a paid mentorship, some wanted advice on career progression routes and others wanted mentorship from the beginning to end of a project (including funding and applications).

### **Emerging Artists Working Together**

28 responses expressed an interest in a group of emerging artists working together on a project. 8 of these expressed a desire for that to be overseen by an industry professional/mentor to support the process. All responses under this category showed a real desire for collaboration, and an even playing field.

### **A Creative Support Network**

20 of the responses focused on the desire for networking and chances to speak to other artists. This surrounded the ability to share opportunities, skills, knowledge and meet potential creative partners. The responses called for an easy and accessible platform; a one-stop shop of a support network.

### **Opportunities to Actually Make Work**

15 points focused on having the opportunity to make or develop your own work, via venues or independently. Some key ideas raised included the

importance on developing work at scale, collaboration with more experienced artists and opportunities for development such as staged readings.

### **Structured Internships + Placements for Progression**

14 responses wanted paid and well-structured internships to allow emerging artists to get experience with the industry. This included shadowing directors, placements in buildings and projects that feel more like an apprenticeship. A note from one response stated that whilst they see the value of ring-fenced schemes, there should also be opportunities that everyone can apply for.

### **Funding + Application Accessibility**

11 responses showcased a need for funding to be clearer and more accessible. They wanted assistance with applications, advice on how to fund your career as an artist and more funding options available for grassroots and early-career artists.

### **Payment for Time**

Whilst some of these also fell into other categories, 9 responses expressed a desire for paid work for early-career artists. These could be through internships, full productions, or a performance.

### **Industry Wide Changes**

These 7 responses linked well into the previous question surrounding industry change, and requested changes such as more open casting calls, better feedback from auditions and a desire for theatre programmes to prioritise new work. This category also contained a need for better mental health support.

### **Accessible Space**

6 responses wanted easily accessible, and low-cost space for artists to rent for rehearsals, productions, and development.

### **Training**

This category was quite varied, with 5 responses requesting further training in various forms. This stretched from workshops and one-week intensives to suggestions for a “university of emerging theatre makers” based in theatres rather than colleges. One response requested a 5-year programme that gives artists a hands-on experience in all aspects of theatre.

**Misc.**

This miscellaneous category has three responses, one requesting a resource of opportunities like those suggested, one surrounding creating a safe space for all backgrounds and the final requesting more opportunities all round- putting less pressure on each application.

**If you would like more detail on anything in this report, please check our appendix document and contact us at [frameworktheatre@gmail.com](mailto:frameworktheatre@gmail.com)**

**JUST A BIG BUNCH OF  
THEATRE PEOPLE  
SUPPORTING EACH OTHER.  
IN ANY AND ALL WAYS.**