



**ANGEL
SHED**

INCLUSIVITY
THROUGH
THEATRE



CREATING ORIGINAL INCLUSIVE THEATRE WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

RESOURCE PACK

INTRODUCTION

Angel Shed are specialists in inclusive performing arts. We facilitate accessible activities for children and young people of all backgrounds. We are led by young people's ideas, and they are active participants in the planning, creation, and performance of our work.

This resource pack provides an introduction to our inclusive creative process. It is designed as a blueprint for creating your own original piece of theatre with young people. Our productions *The Dig* (2023), *The Suits* (2022), *The Hunt For Inheritance* (2022), and *London Behind Closed Doors* (2021) are used as examples. There is guidance on how to facilitate inclusively throughout and many of the tasks work as standalone activities.

INCLUSIVITY

At Angel Shed, inclusivity means a safe place for young people to express themselves, develop confidence, and grow into curious, creative and courageous individuals. There are no barriers to participation, everyone's needs are supported, and all voices are listened to and valued. We adapt to the needs of individual members, meaning everyone can participate in a way which works for them.

CREATIVE PROCESS

We create original youth-led productions, ensuring young people are at the centre of the process from initial ideas through to final performances.

In this resource pack we have broken down our inclusive creative process into eight steps:

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2. Themes	page 13
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4. Detail & Production Elements	page 18
5. Devise & Improvise	page 22
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ROADMAP

Each section contains an overview of that part of the process (on a plain white background), practical activities for use in workshops (in light blue boxes), and guidance drawing on Angel Shed's many years of inclusive practice (in yellow boxes).

There is a glossary of theatre and inclusivity vocabulary at the end of the pack, alongside an appendix of useful resources used at Angel Shed. Elements included in these sections can be found in bold when referenced in the pack.

This resource pack has an accompanying video which can be found [here](#).

1. STIMULI

A range of abstract stimuli are explored through different creative tasks. This stage of research and development ensures young people's creativity is at the forefront from the very beginning. It allows their ideas and imagination to be drawn out while beginning to establish the themes and performance elements they are interested in progressing further.

Young people explore different creative exercises; the stimuli at the heart of these activities can include artwork, music, song lyrics, poetry, movement, or improvisation scenarios.

Raw responses to these exercises are performed to the whole group. It is important that young people get used to sharing material that is a work in progress; encouraging participants to perform work that isn't yet polished allows them to reflect and build on their ideas.

Young people discuss what themes and ideas emerge from the tasks. **Practitioners**, or the young people themselves, should record these (written notes, audio recordings, videos, drawings) so they can be referred to later in the process.

At Angel Shed: Group Planning

We take time to plan groups and pairs carefully in advance of sessions. This encourages participants to work outside of their immediate friendship groups, explore different relationships, and it gives consideration to those young people who may benefit from additional **peer support**. Mixing up groups for different activities also allows participants the opportunity to spend time with those they are already familiar with.

In our productions we ensure there are a variety of group sizes in different scenes, including the whole cast as an **ensemble**, mid-size groups of three or more, and pairs.

Song Lyrics as Stimuli

Blue boxes throughout this pact contain practical activities and advice.

- Practitioners prepare a selection of existing song lyrics - ideally enough so that each participant has a different song.
- Printed lyric sheets are handed out to participants who read them through.
- Participants are then paired up and asked to **devise** a conversation using only the lines on their lyric sheet. It is preferable that the individuals in each pair have lyrics to different songs.
- Participants then develop the conversation by exploring different approaches E.g. changing the order of the lyrics, playing with repetition, exploring intonation and tone.
- Practitioners ask pairs to explore what storylines & themes emerge:
 - What is the relationship between the characters? Friends, siblings, a couple, strangers?
 - What emotions are they feeling? Sad, nostalgic, anxious, happy, peaceful?
 - Where is the conversation set? In a house, in public, at a party?
 - What are the characters trying to say to each other? Asking for forgiveness, reflecting on their lives, arguing over something?
 - If you had to choose one lyric to sum up the character, what line would it be?
- Participants can then add movement, actions and **blocking** to the conversation.
- Pairs perform their conversations to the rest of the participants.
- Reflect as a group on what kind of characters and relationships emerged , making a note of any elements the participants are interested in exploring further.
- The activity can be repeated with different song lyrics and/or new pairings.

Lyrics can be chosen based on the interests or ages of the participants. When selecting songs to use, it is important to consider the suitability of themes and language. Lyrics including questions can make this task flow better and the more varied the vocabulary the better ('Around the World' by Daft Punk would not be a good option here, for example).

Objects as Stimuli

- Participants are divided into groups and each is given an object. These objects should be safe to pass around and of a shape, size, weight that can be held easily.
- It is important that the selected objects and their uses can be open to interpretation. E.g. a guitar could be hard to imagine as anything else, whereas a plant pot could be a hat, a cauldron, or a unicorn horn.
- The practitioners prepare a list of prompting questions in advance which is then given to each group. Participants are encouraged to imagine different possible stories of the object. The answers do not need to be rooted in reality - the more creative the better!
 - Where is it from?
 - When was it made?
 - What is it used for?
 - Who did it belong to?
 - How did they get it?
 - Does it have any special powers?
 - Where was it found?



Two young people jumping.

- The group chooses one set of ideas and creates three **freeze frames** with the object that shows how it's used/who it belongs to/its power.
- Each participant comes up with one line in all three freeze frames.
- The process can be repeated with a new object and/or different groups.

Example objects we used and what they became:

- A **fidjet toy** became a wig for Joe Biden
- A telescope became a cutlass for pirates to defeat monsters
- A teapot became a magic lamp that transports you to the jurassic period

An example question sheet can be found in the appendix (**p.38**).



Young people wearing masks hold placards.

At Angel Shed: Adapting Tasks

We plan all exercises and tasks so that they can be adapted to suit individual needs. Young people engage in different ways, so it is important to have alternative options for participants to respond to.

For example, instead of coming up with a line in a scene, participants can respond in different ways:

- non-verbal (using actions or **Makaton** signs)
- sound (vocalisations or **body percussion**)
- writing or drawing (on paper or digitally)
- joint response (saying the line with another person)

Tasks can be modified to suit different age groups as well. Here is an example of how to adapt the Situation as Stimuli exercise (**p. 9**) for younger participants:

- Instead of improvising a scene from scratch, participants create three freeze frames showing a beginning, middle and end.
- Participants take it in turns to add lines to develop it into a scene.

Further ways to adapt tasks to be more inclusive can be found in the Inclusive Activity Filter in the appendix (**p. 42**).

At Angel Shed: Group Discussions

Group discussion is a fundamental part of devising youth-led work and ensuring participants are at the heart of the process. Facilitating this type of idea generation, however, is not without its challenges. Here are three common scenarios and tips on how to manage them.

A young person has lots of ideas and is speaking over others.

- Go round the circle one person at a time. This ensures everyone has the opportunity to speak and is listened to equally.
- Give the young person a responsibility, such as writing down people's ideas. This can focus them and ensures their energy and enthusiasm is being harnessed positively.

A young person does not want to share any ideas.

- Go round the circle more than once. Some participants may need more time to gather their thoughts and they can be returned to. This also allows young people to open up further and become more comfortable in the discussion.
- Offer participants the opportunity to start by sharing one word, rather than whole sentences. This allows people to warm up so they can build confidence in sharing ideas.
- Offer alternative methods of sharing ideas. These could include non-verbal responses such as drawings, writing, or movement. Some participants may prefer telling a practitioner or peer their idea to share with the group.

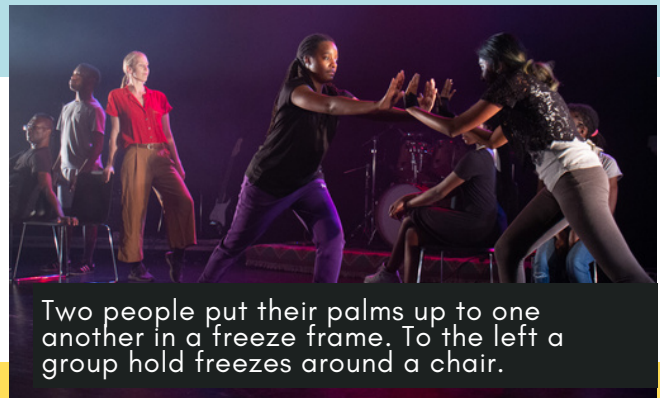
A young person talks about a heavy/triggering subject.

- Listen to the young person and thank them for sharing their ideas. Acknowledge the importance of the subject matter to the whole group.
- Allow other participants the opportunity to share their views on the subject if they want to.
- Move on to the next subject when everyone has finished sharing.
- Give space for young people to step out if needed.
- Check in with young people one-to-one if need be.

Music as Stimuli

- Play an instrumental track to the whole group.
- After listening for a short time, participants are instructed to get into an individual frozen position that demonstrates how the music makes them feel or what it reminds them of.
- A practitioner chooses a few young people and asks them one at a time for a word or line to bring their freeze to life. E.g. a young person crouching with their hands on their head says '*I'm hiding from everyone*'.
- Repeat with a different track.
- Reflect on what scenarios or characters came from the exercise. For example, the freeze frame above could be someone playing hide and seek, a thief hiding from palace guards, or an astronaut escaping aliens.

Choose music that does not have a defined genre; film music works well for this activity. A track such as Hans Zimmer's 'Cornfield Chase' could suggest a romantic setting to some, whereas others might experience the suspense of a stakeout, the wonderment of exploring a new planet, or a rush to get to an appointment on time. On the other hand, pieces with obvious associations are best avoided - 'The Good, The Bad and The Ugly', for example, is only ever likely to suggest the Wild West!



At Angel Shed: Open Numbers

When working in smaller groups, we use open numbers. E.g. 'five or six' rather than 'six'. Open numbers are inclusive as it allows everyone to be part of a group with no one left out. This is especially helpful when young people are left to choose their own groups.

Situation as Stimuli

Groups are given a situation to **improvise**. This is used to generate ideas for scenarios that can be used later on in the process. It is important that situations can be open to interpretation, with the participants choosing the parameters of the scene. You can change the size of the group depending on how many participants you have.

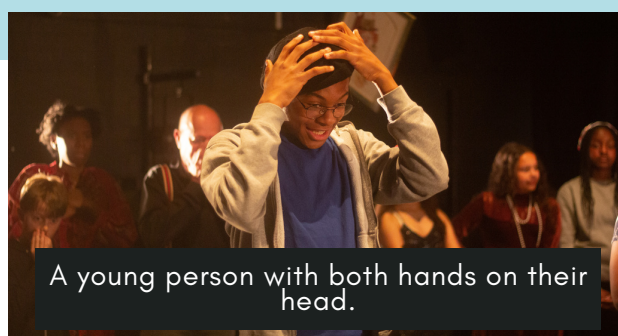
Example situation: An incident takes place which brings three small groups of people, who did not previously know each other, together.

- Decide what the incident is (e.g. car accident, celebrity visit).
- Split into small groups (pairs or threes) and decide how your characters know each other (e.g. siblings, friends, colleagues).
- Decide why they are at the incident (e.g. they crashed the car, they are fans of the celebrity).
- Improvise a scene that takes place immediately after the incident where all three groups interact (e.g. after the car crash people rush to help those in the accident, the fans try and kidnap the celebrity).
- Share back to the whole group.

Example incidents and scenes young people came up with were:

- The assassination of a prime minister - onlookers were interviewed by journalists.
- Detention at school - the students argue with the teachers as to why they are in detention.
- A chemical leak on a plane - the cabin crew try to calm everyone down before they pass out.

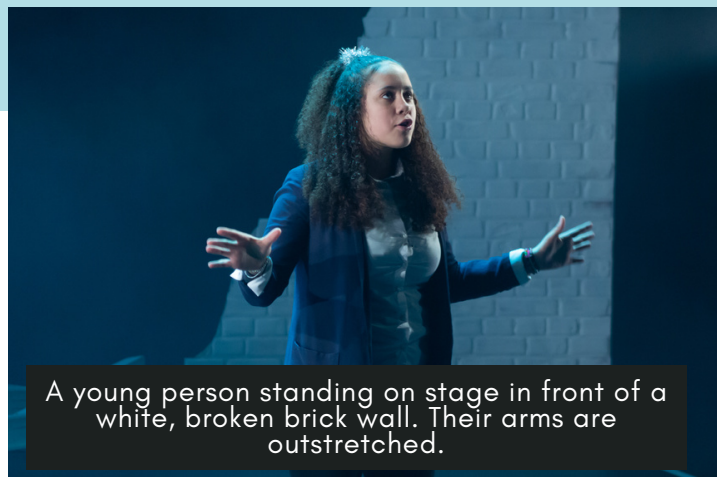
This activity led to the set-up for *The Suits* (2022), where a meeting of the global elite brings together six groups of rich and powerful characters who go on to blame each other for an explosion that takes place at the conference.



A young person with both hands on their head.

Movement as Stimuli

- Small groups are given a **set prop** that can easily and safely be sat or stood on (e.g. a table or large wooden box).
- Each person's objective is to connect with the set prop and 'claim' it as their own. Participants are encouraged to think of different ways to move onto the set prop, as well as different ways of being on it/connected with it.
E.g. One person sits on the edge of the table and then lies down, the next person lifts themselves onto the table and crouches there, a third person crawls underneath the table and hugs it from below.
- Only one person can be on the set prop at any time and the other members of the group must work to get each person off so that the next person can claim the set prop. Participants are encouraged to use movement in different ways to move off the set prop safely, with the whole group taking part in each move.
E.g. The group use a lift to get the first person safely off, the group stomps next to the box in unison followed by the next person jumping off, while the table is lifted off of the third person by the rest of the group.
- Once the full sequence has been created, with everyone having had a turn moving onto and off of the set prop, additional elements can be added such as moments of unison, slow motion, or stillness.
- Music can be played in the background to help inspire different kinds of movement. For example, a calm piano track might generate soft, gentle movements, while a track with a fast beat might generate quick, jerky movements.
- Share back movement sequences to the other groups.
- Reflect on what stories, relationships or characters emerged from the movement sequence.



A young person standing on stage in front of a white, broken brick wall. Their arms are outstretched.

At Angel Shed: Physical Contact

We recognise that a level of physical contact exists as a natural part of our creative sessions. The level of physical contact will vary depending on the context of the drama and movement work and we have a Safe Touch Policy to guide our work.

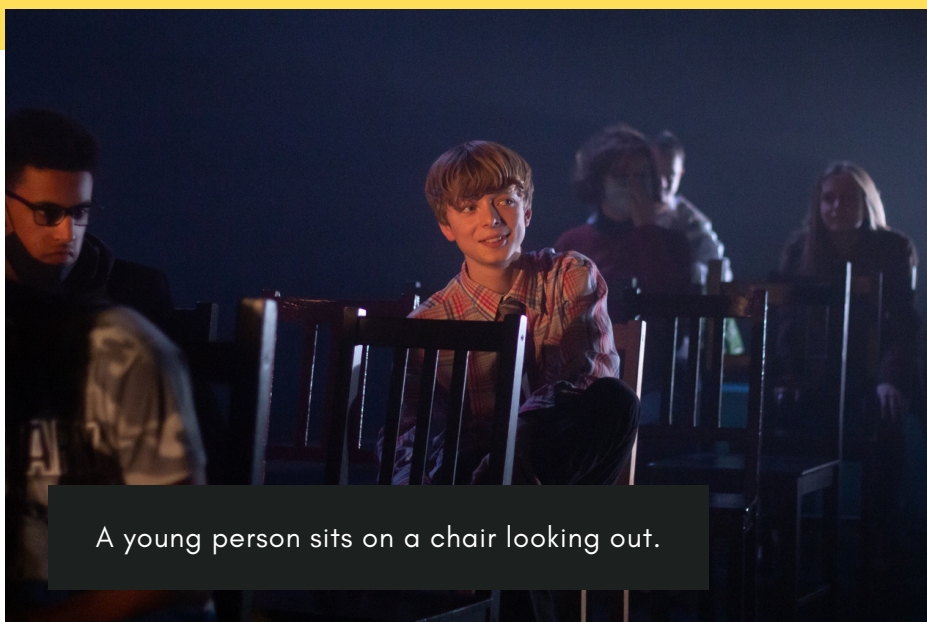
We always talk through plans before embarking on an activity involving physical contact. We always ask for consent and reinforce the importance of respecting other people's individual boundaries.

E.g. *'Can I touch your shoulder during this lift?'*

If a young person does not want physical contact, think about how you can still use movement without it.

E.g. Instead of pulling someone's arm up, mime moving it and they move their arm themselves.

We receive signed consent from parents/carers in advance with regard to safe touch being used during activities with young people. Practitioners take responsibility for monitoring the space when physical contact is used. In all other contexts, touch should be related to a young person's needs; physical contact with young people must be appropriate and never open to interpretation.



A young person sits on a chair looking out.

At Angel Shed: Accessibility

These are some of the ways in which we aim to be as accessible as possible when facilitating:

- Supporting communication with Makaton, or other actions, when speaking.
- Using accessible language when talking. E.g. Instead of 'walk around the space', say 'move around the space'.
- Communicating clearly. E.g. repeating instructions, checking everyone understands the task before starting.
- Provide a simplified copy of the plan so participants understand what is happening next. This can be written words, drawings, or symbols. Using PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System) works well.
- Having a 'break out' station to the side if a participant needs to step out of activities for a moment. This can have fidget toys, pencils, paper and other activities to help a young person focus or relax.
- Adapting exercises for different needs and ages, allowing for a range of responses at a pace that suits the participant.

Accessibility is a constant process that is always changing. It is good to review your approach regularly in response to the needs of the young people you work with.



Two young people in costume.

2. THEMES

Young people share the themes they are interested in. These youth-led discussions allow participants to go into further detail about what they want to explore. The outcomes of these discussions will be examined practically later in the process.

Practitioners can lead these discussions as open conversations, or they can be delved into with prepared questions. Using a mix of these two approaches can benefit the group as a whole as young people will respond differently to each.

At Angel Shed: Circles

Much of our work takes place in circles as they are non-hierarchical and ensure that all group members can communicate and engage with each other equally. We facilitate discussions by going round the circle and asking each person one at a time for the ideas they want to explore, ensuring everyone's ideas are heard. Young people may choose to share one-word concepts or more developed ideas.

Idea Generation

Below are examples of open discussion questions that generated initial ideas for *The Dig* (2023). Questions can be open ended or specific to generate a range of ideas. The questions may refer back to recent creative tasks, or be freestanding prompts. Young people can also come up with their own questions.

What is the best thing in the world?

What is the most exciting thing you can think of?

If you had all the money in the world, what would you do?

If you could travel in time, where would you go?

What did you want to be when you were five?

Open Conversation

An open discussion with participants could lead to suggestions for themes (racial inequality, corruption, mental health), genres (murder mystery, dark comedy), characters (villains, aliens, real-life people), or narrative devices (time travel, cliffhangers).

At Angel Shed: Peer Support

In addition to our staff practitioner team, we have volunteers in our space who support participants. One of the roles volunteers take on is providing additional support during discussions. For example, having one-to-one conversations with young people who may be shy or more anxious about sharing their ideas, or taking notes during/after exercises.

Not all settings will have capacity for this, however utilising peer support can be just as effective as well as encouraging relationships within the group.

- Participants can take responsibility for helping record or share other young people's ideas. This ensures everyone is listened to and allows people to express themselves how they would like, whether talking in groups or having a one-to-one conversation with a peer.
- During devising and rehearsing young people can direct, or co-direct, scenes.
- Participants can be paired to support each other onstage at performances. E.g. reminding when entrances, preparing to go onstage.

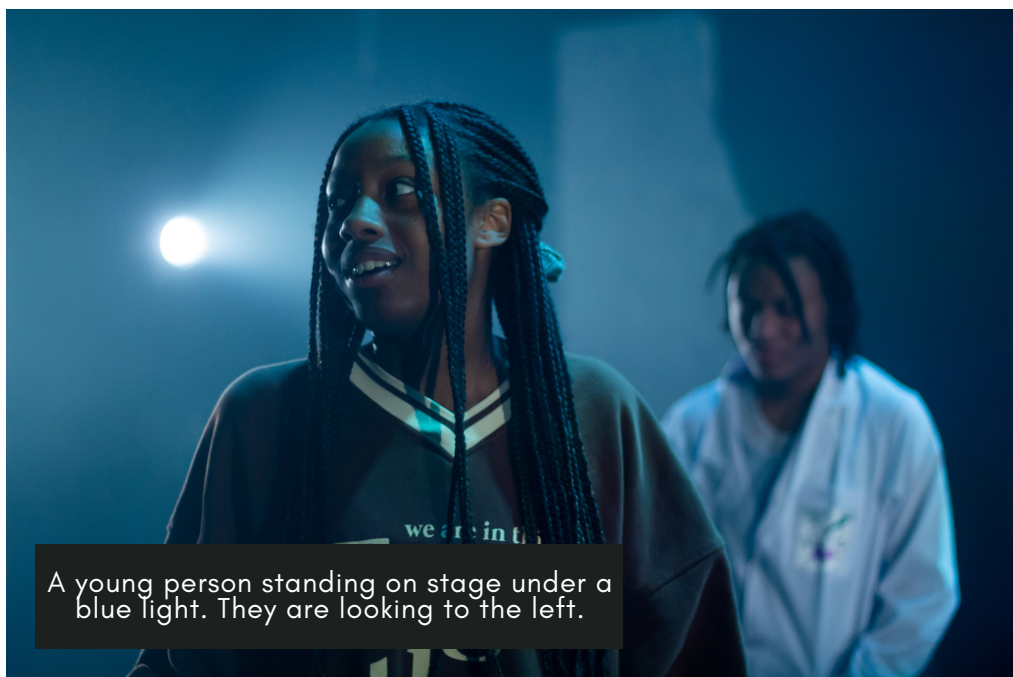
3. CONSOLIDATION & OUTLINE

Practitioners review all videos, recordings and notes that came out of the creative tasks and group discussions, looking for recurring and connected ideas. They start to pull together a framework for the show that allows for a range of themes, ideas and theatre techniques to be explored.

Questions to consider:

- Alongside dialogue, is there an opportunity to explore elements through movement, **physical theatre**, song, or spoken word?
- What setting gives the best opportunity to explore the chosen themes, genres, and characters?
- Will there be an opportunity to use **monologue**, **duologue**, group, and ensemble scenes to tell the story?

An outline is drafted and presented to the young people. Participants share their feedback which may lead to immediate changes, while other developments will arise later in the process.



A young person standing on stage under a blue light. They are looking to the left.

'The Suits' Outline

Below is the initial show outline for *The Suits* (2022).

- **The Event**

A major incident happens.

What could the incident be? Where would it take place? What would be most interesting on stage?

This idea came from the Situation as Stimuli exercise (p. 9).

- **The Aftermath**

A disparate group of individuals are brought together and interact with one another.

What types of character do you want to see? What pairings and groupings would be interesting? What clashes happen? How do people help each other?

This scene gives space for characters to be established. A common theme from the young people was wanting to play more 'villainous' and unlikeable characters.

- **The Police**

Some of those at the scene are interrogated by police.

How could this be staged? How many police vs. interviewees? What do you want to show through these scenes?

This setup allowed participants the opportunity to explore police brutality, power imbalance, and corruption – recurring themes that arose from their earlier discussions.

- **Time Jump 1**

We see those involved in the event go back to their lives and how it affects them.

Do we see people at work, school, home? In what different ways are people affected?

- **Time Jump 2**

We see the same people sometime later.

How much later? A week, a month, a year, a decade?

This idea came from a task where participants established group relationships and then explored them at different points in time e.g. family Christmases, work reunions.

- **The Reunion**

Something brings the original group of people back together.

What brings everyone back – a trial? A memorial?

Here is the eventual show structure for comparison:

- **The Explosion**

An explosion takes place at a meeting of the global elite. The explosion is shown through ensemble movement/physical theatre.

- **The Aftermath**

The attendees of the event recover from the blast and proceed to pass the blame around.

- **The Police (1 + 2)**

Two suspects are interviewed.

- **The First Aid Tent**

Group scene showing interactions between some of the characters.

- **The Police (3 + 4)**

Two more suspects are interviewed.

- **The Fallout**

A series of monologues and duologues exploring the characters and their motivations in more detail.

- **The Police (5 + 6)**

The final two suspects are interviewed.

- **The Sentencing**

One of the characters is framed for the explosion.

- **The Reveal**

The real characters responsible are revealed.



A young person looking to the right.

As you can see, the initial outline is open and flexible, giving plenty of space for new ideas as they arise. Questions are included that can be considered during the development of each section.

The 'time jumps' idea was eventually dropped in favour of more police interviews breaking up the scenes. An additional element introduced later in the process was disguised audio clips of the actual perpetrators played between scenes to help thread the narrative together.

4. DETAIL & PRODUCTION ELEMENTS

Young people give their ideas about production elements to explore. These could include: writing, directing, narration, movement, lighting, music, sound effects, songs, costumes, set design, poster design.

Performances do not need to take place in a purpose-built theatre. Schools, village halls or community centres offer alternatives, while **site-specific** performances can take place in alternative spaces, such as forests, skate parks, or office buildings. Furthermore, staging does not have to be a traditional '**end-on**' style; it is worth considering alternatives such as **immersive**, **in the round**, **traverse**, or **thrust**. It can be beneficial to decide on venues and staging earlier in the process, although productions can often be adapted later.

At Angel Shed: Costumes

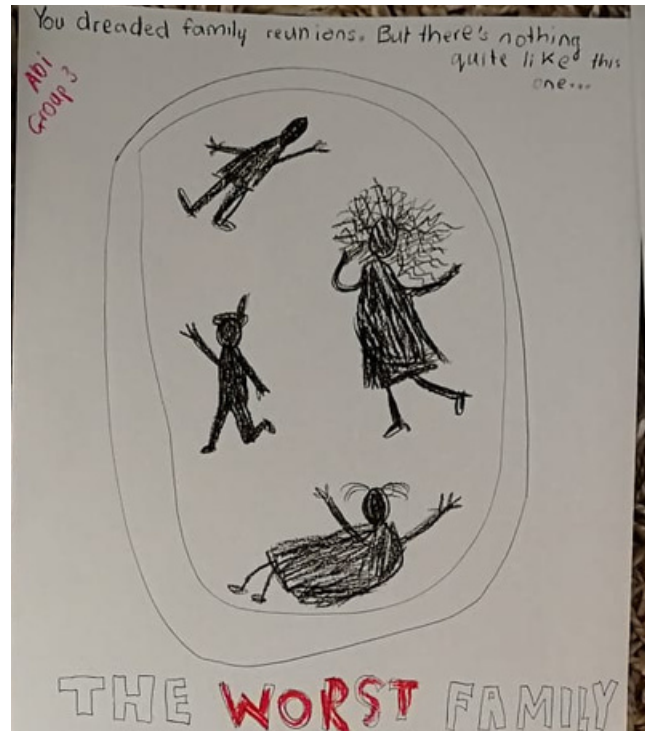
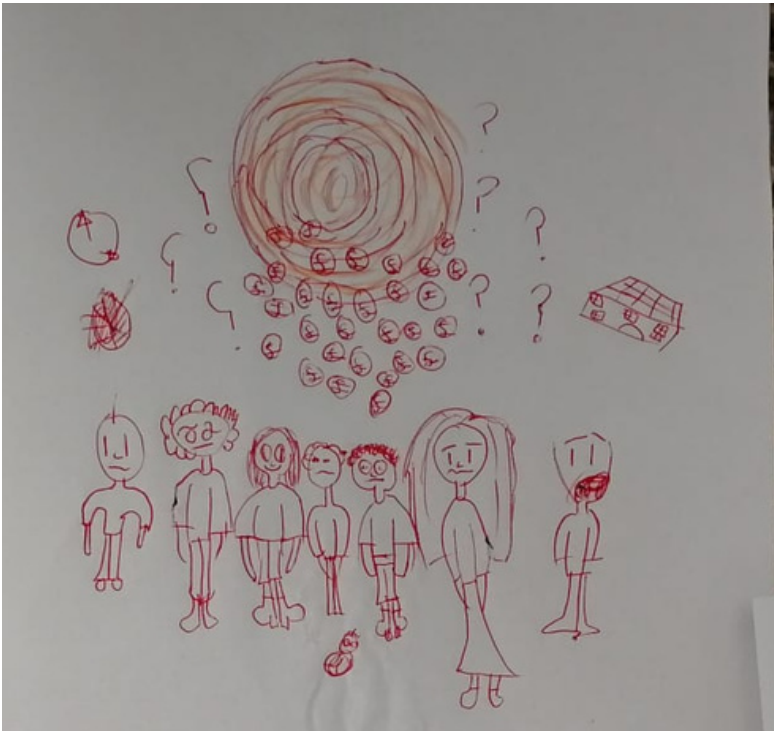
In advance of performances we give young people a costume memo. This outlines a 'base costume' which usually consists of a colour palette related to their characters and/or the theme of the show (e.g. for *The Dig* (2023) this was yellows/browns/greens).

These clothes should be ones they have at home already which they feel comfortable performing in. We never ask young people to buy new clothes and we provide additional costumes where needed.

If you need to source costumes for a production you can approach local theatre companies, schools, or colleges as they will often have a stock to borrow from. Local charity shops are good for low cost items, while other shops may have clothes they are keen to recycle or give to a good cause.

At Angel Shed: Set

We often ask participants to share ideas for set designs. For *The Hunt For Inheritance* (2022) this included a large circular portal that people could walk through. These sketches led to us borrowing a circular metal frame which was transformed into a portal for the show, pictured below.



A person standing in front of a large circular portal covered in fairy lights.

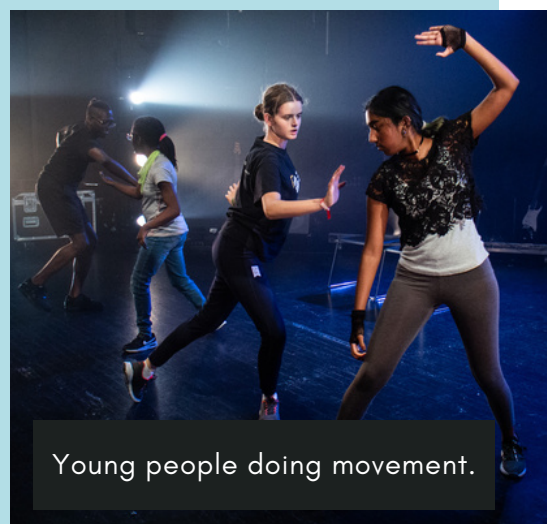
Planning a Movement Sequence

Some elements might lend themselves well to movement or physical theatre – for example travelling on a train, escaping a haunted house, or passing through a time travel portal.

The opening scene of *The Suits* (2022), for example, sets the scene by showing an explosion through movement. The young people discussed how to show such an event, which in real life is very sudden, on stage. What would each step of the explosion be if slowed down? They went on to consider how each of these moments could be shown physically, and discussed different types of movement qualities to explore.

Initial outline for the sequence:

- Sudden collective impact – falling
- Slow motion explosion – move like underwater
- Panic – fast and jerky
- Coughing, recovering – stumbling individually
- Reaching for help – hand movements
- Firefighters helping people out – lifts



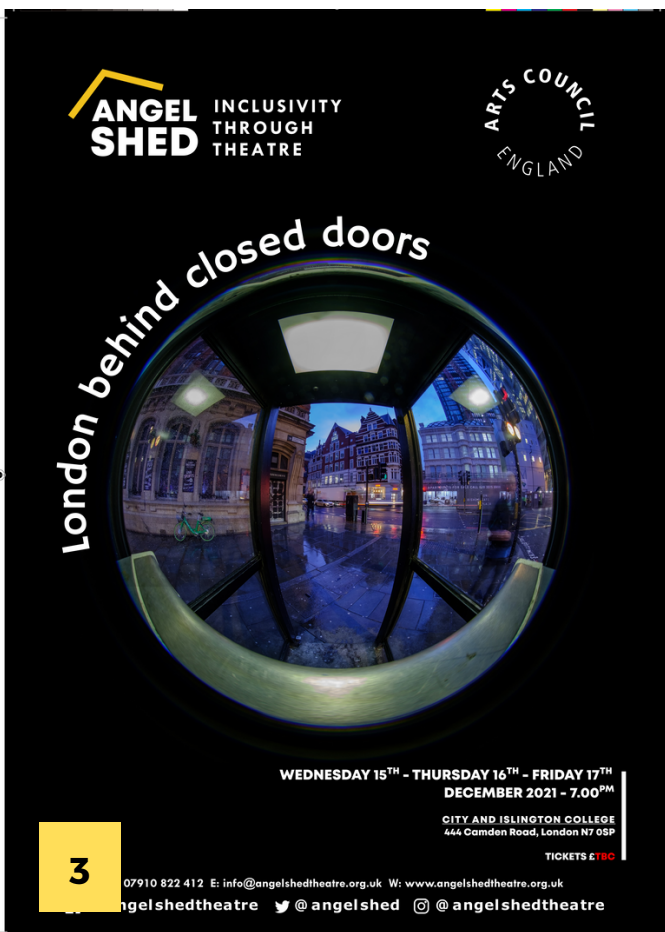
Eventually, it was decided to have the show start with everyone lifeless on the floor after the explosion, followed by a rewind to when the explosion took place. The lifts at step six were ultimately replaced with a collective moment of stillness before everyone dropped to the floor. An instrumental drum and bass track was chosen to underscore the chaos.

At Angel Shed: Poster Designs

Our young people come up with ideas for poster designs through sketches or descriptions of a concept. These ideas are consolidated into several draft posters which are shown to the young people who vote on their favourite.

Our posters are made by a volunteer graphic designer who brings the young people's ideas to life. Alternatives to this include: participants designing the posters themselves, a local artist being engaged, or using the resources of a school art department.

For *London Behind Closed Doors* (2021) the young people were presented with four poster designs. They chose design number four.



5. DEVISE & IMPROVISE

Once the show structure and themes have been decided, practitioners select exercises for devising; for each part of the outline, drama games and creative tasks are adapted to create scenes for the show.

For example, the Movement as Stimuli exercise (p. 10) could be used to create a movement sequence by adding specific instructions or scenarios to it, such as the chair is the top of a mountain and everyone wants to climb it first.

Group scenes are practical for the majority of productions as they are easier to rehearse and manage on stage. Whole ensemble scenes can be challenging and should be planned carefully to ensure all participants are engaged.



Three young people wearing white masks with menacing expressions.

Adapting Exercises

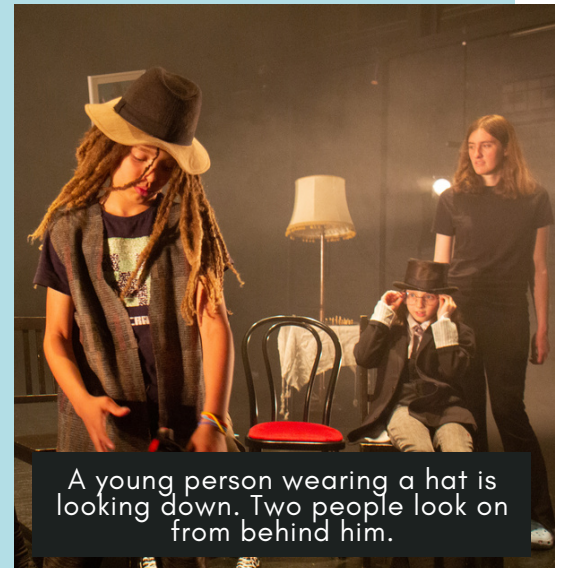
During the stimuli stage of *The Dig* (2023), the young people created lots of scenes that were set in different periods of history. To accommodate as many of these ideas as possible, we put forward a show outline where they were archaeologists on a dig who were discovering different historical artefacts.

We adapted the Object as Stimuli (p.5) exercise by asking the participants to devise a scene telling the story of an artefact they had discovered. This story could be based in reality or be entirely fictional.

Participants were organised into four groups. Each group was given a selection of three historical artefacts from the initial ideas they had come up with, of which they chose one. Practitioners gave a Question Sheet (p. 38) to groups to help them devise the scene.

The chosen objects and the scenes they devised were:

- Hieroglyphic Scroll (Ancient Egypt)
Thieves attempt to steal Cleopatra's scroll.
- Coin (Ancient Rome)
Cursed by a peasant trying to kill the Empress.
- Pocket Watch (Victorian)
Passed from person to person due to its bad luck.
- Plague Mask (Middle Ages)
A doctor pretends to cure people of the plague.



A young person wearing a hat is looking down. Two people look on from behind him.

Character Profiles

Before embarking on devising scenes, it can be helpful for participants to establish and explore their characters. Each young person fills out a character profile, deciding elements such as their character's name, personality traits, and strengths and weaknesses. These profiles can be referred to during the devising process to help young people build their characterisation, relationships and motives. Profiles can be adapted and changed by young people as the story develops.

Example character profiles can be found in the appendix (p. 39-41).

At Angel Shed: Presenting Scripts

Whilst devising, we often film the scenes so they can be scripted later by practitioners. Scriptwriting can be time-consuming, however, and may not be the most practical option for all settings. Alternatives include young people writing up their own scenes, or participants using videos from when the scenes were devised to rehearse with.



A young person stands in a crowd. She wears a red scarf around her neck and glasses on her head. Her arms are bent at the elbow.

The Blame Game

This is a circle game which also works as a devising task. The benefit of the game is that it allows participants to come up with characters on the spot or develop existing characters and their relationships.

- Everyone is in a circle.
- Person A (usually a practitioner) starts a story about a made-up incident that happened.
E.g. *'I was walking home from work when I saw that my whole house had been painted pink...'*
- They 'blame' someone in the circle (Person B) for the incident.
E.g. *'I think it was Terry who painted my house because they had pink paint on their shirt when I saw them yesterday...'*
- Person B who has been 'blamed' has to defend themselves.
E.g. *'Actually that wasn't pink paint, I'd just eaten a strawberry yoghurt.'*
- Person B then blames someone else in the circle (Person C).
E.g. *'I think it was Sadiq. They told they didn't like your old house colour...'*
- This continues in a sequence, including each participant once, until everyone has been 'blamed'.
- The activity can be repeated any number of times with a new incident.
- Remind young people that they are blaming each other in character and not as their actual selves.

This setup can easily be adapted to different scenarios. The second scene in *The Suits* (2022) was an ensemble scene that introduced all the characters through a variation of 'The Blame Game'. Each character blames someone else for the explosion that happens at the start of the show. Every accusation and defence can make reference to the characters involved.

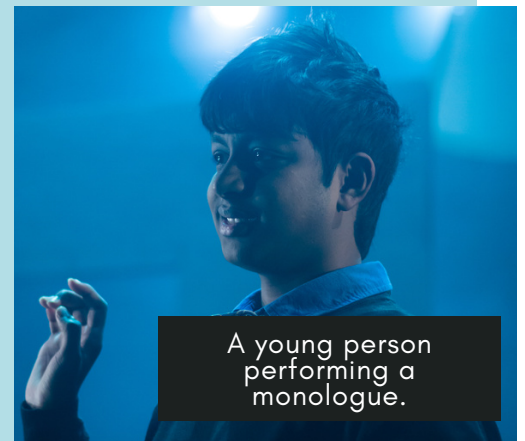
E.g. a politician passes the blame, *'I know you didn't vote for me in the last elections, but that doesn't mean you can try and blow everyone up'*, or a tech boss is accused of untrustworthiness, *'You know what tech is like these days, you can't trust it'*.

Monologues and Duologues

Monologues and duologues are a good way of getting participants to explore their characters in more depth. Practitioners can give young people prompt questions about their characters to establish what they might want to explore. For a monologue this could be 'does your character have a secret?' while for a duologue it could be 'do your characters have history?' or 'do they get on with each other?'

Young people can write their own text or they can come up a concept and ideas for a scene for practitioners to script.

In *The Suits* (2022), young people took different approaches to devising monologues and duologues. One participant wrote a whole monologue about their character's journey to becoming a politician; another came up with a detailed concept for a duologue where their character owes someone else money, which was later fleshed out by practitioners; a third young person had a one sentence idea for a monologue explaining how difficult it is being a member of the royal family which was written up by practitioners in discussion with the young person.



Keeping the devising task open allowed for young people to respond creatively in different ways, including leading to different modes of performance. For example, some monologues were performed on a 'split stage' as if taking place in different rooms, while one monologue included audience interaction.

Not everyone may be interested in scenes like this as they can be exposing, or participants may not have time to work on them. Young people who don't do a monologue/duologue could take part in an additional group scene together to ensure everyone is still equally involved.

At Angel Shed: Time Frames

The time frame for each section can be adapted depending on how long you have for creating a performance. The same process can be used for shows created over a year, a term or even a week.

At Angel Shed we generally create shows over two academic terms. Below is an idea of the timings we work to.

- **Stimuli and Themes** - four to six weeks (these two steps can run at the same time).
- **Consolidation & Outline** - one day (this can be put together by practitioners without young people present).
- **Detail & Production Elements** - one session (alternatively, this can be done one element at a time alongside Devise & Improve).
- **Devise & Improve** - four to six weeks.
- **Script** - one to two weeks (this can be done whilst the scenes are being devised, or in one go).
- **Rehearse** - four to six weeks.
- **Performance** - one week (technical and dress rehearsal on one day, performances over three days).



Two young people facing each other with their arms outstretched.

6. SCRIPT

All the scenes are written up and compiled into a script by the practitioners. Song lyrics, music, descriptions of movement sequences, and other elements, can be included alongside dialogue and stage directions. Including a character/cast list at the start of each scene makes it easier for young people to track which parts of the script they need to rehearse.

Each participant is given their own script and a deadline to learn lines. This expectation is set early on so that young people can be supported in line-learning. Choosing this deadline will depend on the young people you are working with, how familiar they are with the content, and how frequently you rehearse.

Doing a full read-through when the scripts are given out can be beneficial so that the whole cast understands the structure and how different elements of the script connect. The young people can ask questions about the script and it gets them excited for the show!

It is worth considering how to keep all participants engaged during a read-through. You could incorporate visuals so they can picture the setting, background music/sound effects to set the tone, or break up the script-read by creating freeze frames at the start of each new scene.

Script Accessibility

Generally, if something is made more accessible for a specific young person, it also becomes more accessible for all young people. Here are a number of ways a script can be made more accessible:

- Use 'Sans Serif' fonts (such as Arial or Calibri).
- Double space (between all words).
- Large print (16-18 point size).
- Print on coloured paper (e.g. light blue or green).
- Provide audio recordings of lines and video recordings of movement.

Scripting Movement

Break the movement sequence down step-by-step, with each given a simple description, including if the movement is done solo/in pairs/in groups.

This is the opening movement sequence in *The Dig* (2023) script:

1. When the music starts, enter the stage in your pair and move to your designated space.

2. Do your four 'archaeologist' actions in your pair:

Action 1: searching

Action 2: digging

Action 3: dusting

Action 4: finding

3. Freeze when you have finished your 'finding' action.

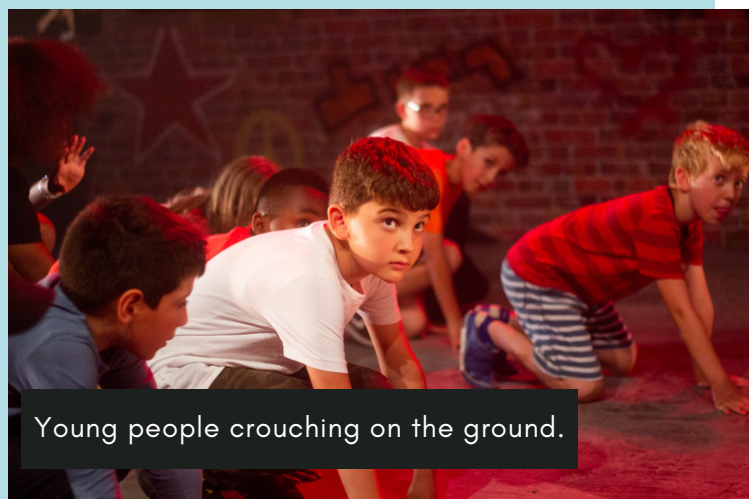
4. Once everyone is frozen, move to your group.

5. Complete your group movement sequence.

6. Once your group movement sequence is finished, return to your pair in the same space as before and repeat your four 'archaeologist' actions (step 2).

7. Exit backstage once your pair actions are finished.

More detail can be added as required – particularly if video of the movement is not also provided.



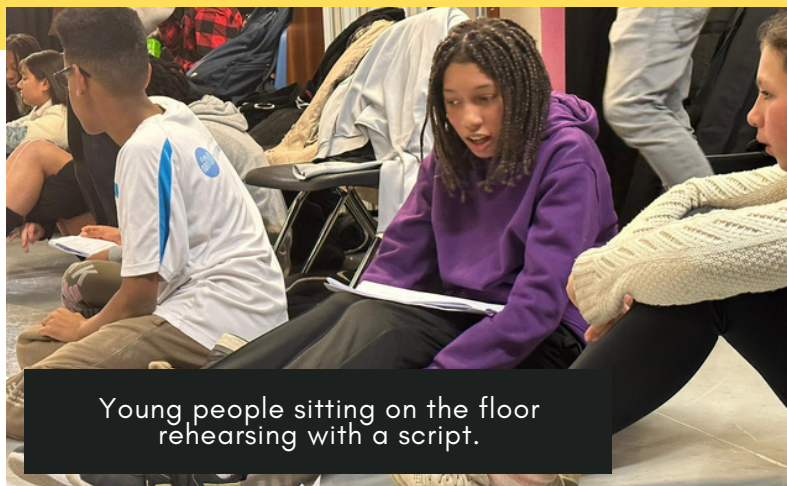
At Angel Shed: Learning Lines

It can be a challenge to learn lines; we encourage and support young people to start as soon as they receive their script. Here are some tips to help young people learn their lines at home:

- Highlight the lines said by any character(s) you play, along with any relevant lyrics, movement and stage directions.
- Say your lines out loud.
- Move around when learning lines.
- Practise your lines with another person; they can read in other characters' lines as well as check your cues.
- Record yourself saying your lines on a phone or other recording device and listen back to them while you are doing a task or as you go to sleep.
- Learn a little bit of your script every day.
- Highlight or circle the last word of your 'cue lines'; knowing the lines before your own is important so you know *when* to say your line.

At Angel Shed: Editing Scripts

The work is devised by the young people but it is important that everyone is included and that the show makes sense, both functionally and narratively. Practitioners edit the scripts for clarity and to ensure that lines are shared as equally as possible between the young people, everyone is in a similar number of scenes, and that there are no 'main' characters; there is an emphasis on the ensemble to keep the show inclusive and equitable.



Young people sitting on the floor rehearsing with a script.

7. REHEARSE

These are some things it can be helpful to consider during the rehearsal process:

Blocking

Blocking is the precise positioning of actors on stage in relation to the set and the audience. It is important to get young people used to this so that it is not a shock come the performances.

Rehearsal Space

Rehearsals may not always take place in the space the show will be performed, and set may not yet be available to rehearse with, however alternative spaces can be adapted to mimic the rehearsal space. Set a side where the 'audience' is so that young people get used to facing the same way for all scenes. You can line up a row of chairs to mimic an audience. Setting where the entrances and exits are located in the space is also important, as well as where the set is going to be; taping the floor can help young people imagine these placements and dimensions. Use stand-in props so participants can familiarise themselves with holding things while acting.

Adapt

Whilst the show is scripted at this point, there is always room for things to change and young people may still improvise and adapt elements. This should be welcomed, however it is important to set these changes into the script in advance of performances as they may affect other people on stage, or be needed to cue lighting or sound.

Perform back

Performing scenes back to the whole group during rehearsals is beneficial for a number of reasons: it allows young people to become invested in the story; they get used to performing in front of an audience as well as modelling how to be a good audience; and it gives space for positive feedback, allowing young people to reflect on their creativity and achievements.

Reallocating Lines

There are many reasons why a young person may not be able to continue working on the project. If this happens during the rehearsal process, their lines may be given to another participant who has capacity. Ideally the lines are given to another character for whom it will still make sense narratively; alternatively the lines can be edited to suit another character or a young person could play two characters.

Rehearsing Simultaneously

Multiple scenes can be rehearsed at once if scenes and groups are planned carefully during the devising and script-writing process. This makes the most of limited rehearsal time, ensures everyone is always able to rehearse, and avoids young people sitting around and waiting for others to finish before they can rehearse.

In *The Suits* (2022), the six police interrogation scenes each comprised two police officers and one suspect. The police were popular characters with our group so we chose for them to be played by different cast members in each scene; this gave more young people an opportunity to play them, as well as allowing us to rehearse all six scenes at the same time.



Three young people in a line. The person at the front is pointing.

8. PERFORMANCE

Production elements including lighting, sound, set, props and costume are added and technical and dress rehearsals take place in advance of performances. The performances are a time for young people to bring all their hard work and creativity in front of an audience; most importantly, it is a time for young people to have fun!

Technical Rehearsal

A technical rehearsal focuses on the lighting, sound and any other technological elements, including scene changes. Cues are added to the script so they can be rehearsed easily. This session can be done with or without the young people.

Dress Rehearsal

A dress rehearsal is a practice run of the whole show in full costume, with complete set, lights and sound. Young people get used to performing as if it was a real performance, ideally with no starting and stopping. It can also highlight areas where people may need extra support.

Performances

Performances are in front of an audience; this can be friends, family or members of the community. More than one performance allows young people to grow and develop through each show, build confidence, and make sure all their hard work is celebrated.

Backstage

A 'running order' of scenes and cues is written up and displayed backstage so young people know the structure of the show. If there is capacity we have multiple dressing rooms. The young people are split up according to their scenes. This gives them time to rehearse backstage.

Set

It is important to design the set so that young people can move it safely, particularly if there is no capacity for backstage staff or volunteers. Benefits to young people being responsible for this include an increased awareness of the space and further insight into the process of theatre-making. Give time for young people to rehearse moving set on and off stage; these transitions should be carefully choreographed and rehearsed like any scene.

At Angel Shed: Covering Roles

It is not uncommon for a young person to not be able to attend a performance at short notice, often due to illness. Ideally, other young people in the cast can step in to cover missing roles with additional support so that they do not feel overwhelmed.

During the three-show run of *The Suits* (2022), some cast members could not take part on the day. Those who stepped in were given a 'hidden' script to allow them to perform without needing to memorise new lines at short notice; a police officer's script was concealed inside an evidence folder, a scientist's script was on a clipboard, and another character's script was taped to a raised platform so that it could not be seen by the audience.

At Angel Shed: Managing Nerves

Everyone gets nervous when performing. Here are some ways to manage nerves:

- Playing focus games before a performance helps the cast concentrate, land in the space, and stay grounded.
- Before every performance we share positive feedback from previous audiences and practitioners share constructive notes. It is key that any notes at this stage are things that can easily be changed or improved on.
- Young people often judge how well a show is going based on audience reactions (especially whether they laugh during comedy scenes) so emphasise that people respond differently and to not let the audience reaction affect their performance.
- Encourage peer support if someone forgets their lines or blocking. Other young people can step in and help the scene continue.
- If someone does not want to go on stage during the show, for example due to nerves, then other participants can fill in last minute. The scene can be adapted to support the young person who is filling in.
- If a young person fidgets a lot and gets distracted on stage, we give them a prop to hold. This helps them stay grounded and focused, and prevents them from distracting other young people during the performance.

At Angel Shed: Q&As

For *London Behind Closed Doors* (2021) and *The Suits* (2022), the cast did a post-show Q&A. This allowed the audience to find out more about the show and its devising process. Participants were able to reflect on the journey of the production, explain their ideas and creativity, show how their participation was at the centre of the process, and feel pride in their work.

We ran a 'test' Q&A before the first performance, with practitioners asking participants questions so they would be comfortable answering on stage.

Here are examples of questions that were asked during the Q&A:

- How did you come up with the idea for the show?
- What was your favourite scene?
- If you could play another character, who would it be?
- How did you choose your costumes?

Young people's involvement in the process can be shared in other ways: on social media, in the show programme, or displayed front of house before shows.



A young person holding a microphone answering questions.

GLOSSARY

Blocking

A term to describe where the performers are on stage and any movements they make. These are decided in rehearsals and can be annotated in the script. E.g. 'Sadiq crosses (moves) downstage left'.

Body Percussion

Sounds made by body parts such as the hands, feet, fingers, and mouth. These include stomping, patting, clapping, and clicking.

Devise

A method of theatre-making where the performance is created collaboratively by an ensemble. Devised performances are created from scratch and often start by improvising scenes.

Duologue

Part of a play with speaking roles for only two actors; often a conversation between two characters.

End-on

When the audience are situated on one side of the stage only, facing it in the same direction.

Ensemble

A group of performers. An ensemble is non-hierarchical, with all members of the cast being of equal importance and working together as one. Ensemble members often multi-role, playing lots of different characters.

Fidget Toys

Self-regulation tools to help with focus, attention, calming, and active listening. They are often small objects such as a squishy ball, a pop-it, or spinner.

Freeze Frame (or Still Image)

Made when performers hold their positions in place at a certain point in a story or to show a picture - as if a film has been paused. Typically there are no lines spoken in a freeze frame.

Immersive

A production where there is no traditional stage and the audience take part in some way, often moving around and interacting with the performers.

Improvisation

Where most (or all) of what is performed is unplanned or unscripted, created spontaneously and collaboratively by the performers.

In The Round (or Arena Theatre)

Where the stage is in the centre and the audience surrounds it on all sides (most commonly four).

Makaton

A language programme that uses signs, symbols and speaking to further communication. When using Makaton, you speak and sign at the same time. Visit [The Makaton Charity](#) for more information.

Monologue

A piece of text performed by a single character. This can be delivered directly to the audience or to other characters.

Peer Support

A type of support where people with similar experiences help each other. In this resource pack it refers to young people helping other young people.

Physical Theatre

Where physical movement is the primary method of storytelling. There is often little or no dialogue, with movement being the focus of the performance. It may incorporate techniques such as mime, gesture, or modern dance.

Practitioner

A person who works with young people. In this resource pack the term can be used interchangeably with teacher, facilitator, or youth worker.

Set Prop

A larger prop that is placed on set that performers interact with. These are often pieces of furniture, such as a chair or table.

Site-specific

A type of performance that takes place in a location that is not a traditional theatre. The performance is adapted to suit the location. This could be in a field, a car park, an abandoned factory.

Thrust

A type of staging where the stage extends out. The audience is seated on three sides of the stage.

Traverse

A type of staging where the audience sit on two sides of the stage, facing each other. It is also known as a 'runway' or 'catwalk' stage.

APPENDIX

Object as Stimuli Question Sheet

Below are examples of questions to use when devising scenes from an object. These can be adapted depending on the objects or the aim of the task.

Write what you see

What colour is it? Shape? Size? What does it feel like? Is it old or new?

What is it used for?

How do you use it? Does this object have a name?

Where did it come from?

Past? Present? Future? A different world?

Who did it belong to?

What is their name? Age? Where do they live? Are they human?

How did they get it?

Did they buy it? Find it? Someone give it to them?

What special power does the object have?

What can it do?

Where is this set?

What is your location? When is it? Now? The Past? The Future?

Character Profiles

Below are three different character profile sheets to show how the questions can be adapted depending on the types of characters or objectives you want to achieve:

***The Hunt For Inheritance* (2022) character profile**

What is your character's name?

What is your character's job/profession?

What does your character like?

What does your character dislike?

What are your character's personality traits?

(e.g. friendly, nervous, adventurous)

How does your character move? Do they have any mannerisms?

(e.g. often have hands in pockets, walk quickly)

***The Dig* (2023) character profile**

Occupation:

Archaeologist

Title:

(e.g. Professor, Doctor)

Character Name:

Character Traits:

(e.g. honest, loyal, generous, impatient, nervous)

Specialty:

(What does your character specialise in?)

Skills:

(What are your character's skills?)

Best Discovery:

(What is the most interesting thing your character has discovered?)

Fears:

(What is your character afraid of?)

Anything else about your character?:

***The Suits* (2022) character profile**

Character Name:

Job/Profession:

Skills:

Character Traits:

Worst thing you've done:

Mannerisms/gestures:

Strength(s):

Weakness(es):

Who else do you want to meet at the event and why?:

Inclusive Activity Filter

This activity filter can help you think about how to adapt a game or activity to be more inclusive and accessible.

Overview

- What is your activity?
- What is its purpose?
- How long should it last?

Explain Activity

- Do you think all participants will understand this explanation?
- How could the language be changed to be more inclusive?
- Can the activity be physically or visually demonstrated?
- Who might potentially not enjoy or feel a part of this activity? Why?
- Can your activity be adapted? Will it work for an inclusive group?
- Is the activity at all competitive? Can creative elements replace a competitive element?
- How will the achievements of the participants be presented? What can be highlighted with praise?
- How could this activity be developed?
- What could it lead to?
- How could you add in extra challenges for the group?

Thank you for reading this resource pack. We hope it is useful for creating your own original piece of inclusive theatre with young people. Whether you used one exercise or created a whole production, we would love to hear about your work with young people! Get in touch or tag us on social media.

This resource pack has an accompanying video which can be found [here](#).

Live performance recordings of all productions referred to in this pack can be found on our [YouTube channel](#)

We offer bespoke training in inclusive practice. If you would like to find out more or book a training session, please contact us at info@angelsheadtheatre.org.uk

Thank you to Arts Council England for their support in creating this resource pack.



info@angelsheadtheatre.org.uk



07910 822 412