Overview of Regional Round Table Discussions
2015 – 2016
Crafts Council

Overview of Regional Round Table Discussions 2015-2016

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Introduction

This report reflects the very wide-ranging, stimulating and positive conversations we have had across the country in a series of roundtables about the state of craft.

Why now? There have been seismic changes over the last few years that are impacting on craft: from the rise in popularity of making and increased interest in craft skills to the challenges of government policy on education and the downturn in the economy.

We set out, on this course, to take the temperature of the craft sector, to listen to people’s views of the challenges, opportunities and the issues important to them. This feedback will provide a context to the new strategic plan for the Crafts Council and, we hope, to other key players and funders.

The nine roundtables, which took place over eighteen months, were structured to give us spread across the country; to reflect a range of views from makers, curators, craft professionals, gallerists, academics and educators and others; and a mix of people we know and those we don’t. Each roundtable was based on a number of broad themes, as outlined in the report, though participants were encouraged to raise any issues they wanted and they frequently did so in what were very wide-ranging discussions.

About 170 people responded to our invitation and we would like to thank all those who gave up their time to come and contribute to the discussions which, of course, have raised as many questions as conclusions. Whilst the debate was wide-ranging it was the strength of feeling around particular issues that was most striking.

There was overwhelming concern about education and the need to sustain a future generation not only of makers but also of people who had explored materials and appreciated craft, given the lack of opportunities for young people to experience making in schools combined with the current challenges facing craft in higher education.

There was a sense of a sector coming to terms with its new found popularity and what this means for established conventions and accepted norms. How could we use this energy and dynamism around craft and making to develop new models of practice?

Thirdly, in a very fluid operating context where wider economic, social and political changes are impacting on the sector what are the right strategies to ensure we sustain the craft sector for the future?

Craft is, and always has been, a resilient sector and there is no doubt that despite these challenges the discussion was grounded in a confident and optimistic outlook. We found this enormously encouraging.

So how do we capture those conversations and act upon them? We are developing a new strategic plan for the Crafts Council and these conversations,
along with our recent research reports on craft and innovation and on the decline in formal craft education combined with consultations into our existing work, form a very helpful basis on which to determine our direction.

Working with a wide range of partners from traditional craft organizations to new collaborators we aim to build craft audiences, champion craft education and support craft businesses. Inspired by our Royal Charter our vision is to advance new making, promote craft to new audiences and inspire new makers, demonstrating how craft can transform lives.

This report is not just for the Crafts Council but to inform the sector as a whole; and we hope that others will, also, rise to the challenge and respond to the issues discussed. We intend to keep these discussions alive; and are committed to holding further roundtables each year which will also feed into our thinking and activities in the future. We very much look forward to talking to many more people and to the energy generated by the discussions.

We would like to thank Dr Nicola Thomas, Associate Professor in Cultural Historical Geography at the University of Exeter, who took all the documentation from the roundtables and has in this report given us a very helpful summation of the issues; as well as concluding with her own personal observations based on her knowledge and expertise as an academic actively engaged in the craft sector.

The Crafts Council is firmly committed to making the case for craft and playing its part in supporting and nurturing the ecosystem for craft and making. This report will assist us in making the right strategic interventions to sustain and grow the sector for the future. We hope that it will also be read – and discussed – by all those interested in ensuring the success of craft in the years to come.

Professor Geoffrey Crossick, Chair
Rosy Greenlees, Executive Director
1. Context to the regional round table discussions

The current work of the Crafts Council (supported by the 2015-2018 Business Plan) sees approximately 70% of activity delivered outside London, across five key areas:

1. Exhibitions and Collections
2. Talent Development (supporting makers)
3. Education Manifesto
4. Innovation Strategy
5. Building audiences and Diversity Strategy

During 2015 and 2016 the Crafts Council held round table forums across the English regions inviting round table participants to explore issues of current concern within the craft sector. The Crafts Council established an active listening process within the round tables, drawing on the conversations to contribute to Crafts Council planning and activity.

The round tables, chaired by Professor Geoffrey Crossick Chair of the Crafts Council, were held during a time of growth, challenge and change for the sector and Rosy Greenlees identified some of these to set the context for the discussions:

- Craft has gained a renewed public popularity within the last 10 years
- Funding cuts presenting challenges and opportunities to the sector
- Changes in education policy have shaped the sector across all levels
- Makers are working at a time of great flux (markets, public understanding, economic downturn)
- Growth of heritage craft and closer alignment of traditional skills with design
- Technology and innovation have played a role in making and how we use skills

Approach taken

Nine round table forums were held in Cambridge, Liverpool, York, Bristol, Brighton, Nottingham, London (2) and Aylesbury in 2015 - 2016. Approximately 170 people took part. Geoffrey Crossick (Chair, Crafts Council) chaired the discussion and Rosy Greenlees (Executive Director, Crafts Council).

Each round table followed the same format of a group discussion in which participants were encouraged to explore their observations, experiences and concerns around four thematic areas: making, infrastructure, education and funding. The round tables were populated by a range of individuals and organisations some of whom regularly engage with Crafts Council activities in the regions and others not. Some round tables were very tightly focused around specific aspects of the crafts sector; others were more open. Although the main themes above were highlighted and to some extent addressed in every round
table, the balance of each discussion differed and was led by the interests of the participants.

Representatives included:

- Craft development organisations, including NPOs, self-financing guilds, crafts sector exhibition, studio, education providers in 3rd sector
- Higher education institutions with specific craft research, practice and/or teaching concerns
- Craft businesses (retail, gallery, curators, workshop providers, interior design)
- Craft intermediaries: consultants with craft specific specialism
- Museums and gallery sector with crafts collections/interest
- Craft practitioners

During the meetings Crafts Council staff made notes of conversation topics and points. Dr. Nicola Thomas (Associate Professor in Cultural Historical Geography, University of Exeter) was asked by the Crafts Council to collate the notes for circulation to round table participants (see Part 2) and provide a reflection on the patterns, trends and possibilities that the recorded notes of the meetings suggested to her (Part 3).
2. Thematic summary of round table discussions

2.1 Responding to the popularity of craft

Throughout all the regional discussions there was a clear sense that craft was riding high in terms of general visibility, popularity and media coverage. It was noted ‘there is an insatiable appetite for making’, with a rise reported for recreational participation and as general consumers of the craft ‘offer’. The regional discussions indicated that while there was enthusiasm for craft, what ‘craft’ conveyed in different contexts was not consistent. There was discussion of how the ‘brand’ of craft was understood by the general public.

It was thought that members of the public did not consistently understand the varied craft practices and associated standards of skill and quality, although there was interest and appreciation of making processes. The regional discussions put forward concern around the audience’s ability to discern differences between professional and recreational makers’ work which became more obvious when professional makers sold into markets which were also occupied by skilled recreational makers or informal/emergent craft businesses. These were often referred to, in shorthand, as an ‘Etsy’ model, however it was also noted that Etsy hosts a varied range and quality of makers, including many designer makers. It was also suggested that popularity was not transforming recreational makers into becoming buyers of craft from professional makers. The conversation pointed to the continued need to educate the public to understand and experience craft practices. The role of media in highlighting skilled making was identified positively in terms of raising awareness. BBC programmes such as The Great Pottery Throw Down, were noted as positive examples of media coverage.

It was observed that the display and retail context for craft is increasingly fluid. It was noted that commercial fine art galleries were taking an interest in some disciplines (including ceramics) and displaying more conceptual craft practice which may be more experiential or performative. Alongside this, there were mixed views as to whether the increasing shift towards the experience and participatory economy for consumers was having a negative impact on the sale of craft work. This led to questioning of how commercial craft galleries (and retail craft outlets more generally) can sell object based work and what new marketing strategies were required to ensure their continued viability. For some this raised the question of how craft is positioned in the market more generally.

The popularity of craft also connected, in the round table discussions, to the sharing of new spaces of craft innovation which have reached new audiences, attracted new types of makers and is generating a new visible presence in local craft ecologies. This includes the rise of community maker spaces, fab labs, pop up opportunities for mending and making, hacker cultures and craftivism. Keying into a varied terrain of connections to political cultures of sustainability, DIY, counter capitalist movements these new spaces demonstrate the ongoing ability of craft to bridge varied social and political worlds. It was noted that such experimental spaces enable the blending of different disciplines, new multi-disciplinary opportunities, the opportunity for innovation and all contribute to the performance of new craft cultures. These spaces are further
evidence of the increasing presence of craft participation within the experience economy.

2.2 Craft livelihoods and craft retail

All regional discussions documented the challenges of making a livelihood through craft practice. Discussion revolved around the increased competition, the impact of the increased outlets for craft, the availability of accessible platforms such as Etsy and the place of craft within the luxury market. The vibrancy of a surrounding scene that supported craft participation and sales was important, with the experience and participation economy working strongly for the visibility of craft, but not always having a knock-on impact in improving craft makers’ livelihoods.

The following commentary collected the themes of this discussion, drawn across the round tables, and it is interesting that the ‘regional’ differentiation in this area was not marked. The conversation reported elements that are perhaps widely known by those in the craft sector, but nonetheless, in taking the temperature of the health of craft, the ongoing importance of these issues is important to note.

Portfolio working
The importance of portfolio working was a strong theme within the meetings. It was reported that many makers were not sustaining a viable livelihood solely through their making practice and looked to other ways of securing more fixed incomes. It was noted that portfolio income was often subsiding making, but concerns were expressed that this resulted in makers not capturing the costs of their labour or materials in the pricing of their work. This was thought to have a knock-on effect for other makers and audiences valuing the cost of hand-made goods. The necessity of portfolio work was an area that makers were not always prepared for, and that working in this way was not as varied as might be thought, and the variety of jobs often allowed little time for making within a maker’s portfolio. The ongoing challenges of scaling-up businesses were reported, but micro-businesses were also reported as growing. The precarious nature of craft income was identified by some as a cause of difficulty (stress and ill-health) whereas some argued that portfolio working was important to them and central to their practice.

The craft retail market place
The diverse routes to market within regions was broadly reported (fairs, festivals, pop-ups, open studios, retail and gallery outlets), as well as other forms of income such as teaching. However, making a viable livelihood from these was considered to be challenging. It was noted that makers were finding the market place increasingly competitive and crowded and the variable quality of craft fairs and festivals was reported. The rise of the experience and participation economy was reported as a blessing and curse. The positives include the buoyant festival cultures of craft and entertainment, making demonstrations, craft tourism and skills-based workshop teaching, diverse offers of music and food. This was an attractive offer to audiences. On the negative side it was reported that audiences might enjoy the experience of the festival but this did not translate into the successful purchase of makers’ work.
Concerns were expressed that makers were not covering costs at temporary selling events (travel accommodation, subsistence, sales pitch). Makers who did not make sales or connections at fairs and festivals were reported as experiencing loss of motivation, frustration and anxiety. It was noted that makers / makers’ representatives may need further support in sales and marketing.

It was reported that craft demonstrations continued to be an important way of selling craft and engaging audiences, however makers reported having limited capacity to ‘work for free/in-kind’ in these settings as part of an experience economy offer.

**Selling craft in retail spaces**
The regional round tables raised concern that makers’ work was underpriced and as a result some makers were in effect working well below the minimum wage. In some instances, it was suggested that makers who did not need to turn a profit or could discount their work (perhaps because they were supported by a second income stream within the family) were problematic.

The importance of craft retail galleries in educating the public about the value of craft, supporting and marketing their chosen crafts practitioners was noted. The need for some craft retail outlets to sell more commercial work to secure sales was reported, set against the feeling that many more opportunities for open studios and direct sales has affected the retail trade. It was noted that VAT and business rates create huge financial risk in running a gallery which has a knock on effect in terms of the commercial relationship with makers and the work on sale.

There were some reports of fewer galleries and retail outlets accepting craft or being under-confident selling craft vs. art, and the need for a portfolio of work for sale having a knock-on in terms of the visibility of craft in retail galleries. The costs of gallery commission were reported as challenging for makers, diminishing the affordability of selling in retail spaces for makers, and in turn, concerns around the diminishing visibility and value of craft. These fed into a conversation around the shortage of supply of selling spaces in some geographical areas, and the opportunities opened up in these spaces through maker-led networks (such as craft guilds) or independent activity (such as open studios) often filled these gaps.

There was concern more generally that periodic craft selling events were at peak capacity, with a perception that the audiences of fairs and festivals were static and not growing. There was a suggestion that the model of selling had become stagnant and was not exciting for audiences, or indeed the best way to see makers’ work. Open studios were offered as an alternative model of connecting to buyers; however these are also not without problems in terms of audiences enjoying the experience but not leading to sales. And, for some, this model actively undermined the commercial gallery infrastructure as a more long term and strategic approach to growing the market for craft.
New markets, exhibition and showcase models for craft

Much of the round table discussions focused on existing models of craft retail, however a specific thread of discussion around the commercial market was apparent. Discussions around the appropriate price of work included the place of craft vis-à-vis the contemporary art market. This then developed into a discussion of the location of craft within the luxury market and new markets for craft. The identification and emergence of niche markets to specific sets of buyers was noted as an emerging area, particularly branding craft in these sectors as ‘antiques of the future’. Selling craft alongside visual art was raised in the context of these niche markets, particularly where international audiences for craft and art were located. Ensuring the more challenging craft (including conceptual, experiential, performative) was visible was noted by some participants as important, particularly if such craft was not seen through other routes.

Niche markets were also seen to be working more strongly around commissioning craft. The important role of intermediaries, such as interior designers and craft influencers, in supporting makers to find new routes to market for private clients/customers who were not always confident in direct commissioning was discussed. It was suggested that the role of interior designers as a route to market was not being fully utilised by makers.

2.3 Changing working environments

The round table discussions on work environments, in the main, focused on the challenges of access to affordable space, the changing nature of workspaces and the need for more opportunities to access specialist equipment.

Access to studio spaces

The key challenge within London was finding affordable studio space as an individual practitioner but also for established crafts development organisations. Within London the pressures include short-term leases, competition from developers, finding appropriate spaces for different sorts of making (at large scale, access to fabrication facilities). Workspaces in London tend towards technology and digital workers, not craft practice, and the demand for studio spaces vastly outstripped supply. Well-established studio spaces were highly competitive, with studio residents increasingly established in their early career stage before they successfully apply. The importance of having makers present in the centre of the city was noted, especially for trade and retail consumers, for example jewellers being close to Hatton Garden, who value the accessibility and convenience of central London and the proximity to specialist resources and expertise.

Home/Work living arrangements remain a key way in which access to studio space is enabled. Working from home was noted as more challenging for younger generations who might not have the same access or control over their environment as a second career or more established maker. The desirable marketing qualities of visible making, makes the use of home/work spaces, or more hidden workspaces, less positive for urban audiences, than the shared studio environment.
Conversations around property prices noted the practice of relocating outside London to secure affordable shared studio spaces; however, other places e.g. Brighton and Oxford were noted as particularly challenging for the same reasons. The round tables did not offer a comprehensive review of affordability but indicate there are spatial differences in affordability in regional areas. Many vibrant studio cultures and creative clusters were reported in regional cities/centres (including Margate, Birmingham, Bristol, Plymouth and Manchester), however these are also threatened by raising rents and processes of gentrification. Some of these have been well supported by public funding coming from European, city, and local councils. Access to shared studios in rural areas was noted, with very limited supply and appropriate design being key issues. Participants raised the need for greater local planning and council support to secure low-cost spaces for creative businesses.

**Call for varied models for studio spaces and access to specialist equipment**

New models of studio access were highlighted by participants with the rising use and availability of shared-maker spaces and models of flexible occupancy. The desire for more flexible shared studio space or for long/short-term access was made. These models could enable makers to use spaces for specific projects, or to enable shared expertise. This conversation was allied to the difficulty of finding fabrication facilities which had specialist equipment that could be hired or used on a short-term basis. It was suggested that a mapping or database of infrastructure (including studio spaces) would be useful.

Supporting emerging makers and new graduates was an important topic of conversation in relation to studio space. There was a reduced expectation of sole occupancy studio model for new graduates, and reports of a more DIY ‘group studio’ model emerging where graduates clubbed together to locate themselves in shared studio spaces to reduce risk. The importance of makerspaces for innovation and emerging craft/innovation practice was strongly signaled, particularly for early graduates who were familiar with the opportunities these spaces afforded and wanted to continue to access them after graduation. Though the extent to which more established makers were using or engaging with these facilities was questioned, and whether this was due to having access to the required resources or a feeling of it ‘not being for them’. Ways in which higher education institutions could be supporting postgraduates and alumni to access infrastructure was on the agenda. Opportunities for ‘alumni access’ or ‘fellowship models’ allowing graduates to access specialist equipment or research space within higher education facilities were suggested. This would enable graduates to access the technical, skills and conceptual/innovation environment following graduation, though it was recognised that this could raise resourcing questions for higher education institutions.

**2.4 Education**

Conversation in the round tables turned to both the opportunities for young people to learn craft and access to education for makers; alongside the shifts in the further and higher education landscape; and the impact of a specific
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Craft in Schools
The regional round tables reflected on the impact of the decline of craft in schools. Issues raised included the impact of cuts resulting in fewer opportunities for makers to be in the classroom and a general decline in craft in primary schools. It was also felt that the presence of craft in schools was patchy, and largely dependent on the enthusiasm of the teacher. The timetable also offered a structural challenge with the fixed length of lessons limiting the time to teach skills. It was suggested that this could be mitigated through the increased use of lunch and after-schools provision to learn crafts which might allow more time to teach skills with less pressure, following the Craft Council Craft Club model. The regional round table conversations enabled the Crafts Council representatives to respond to some conversation points and it was noted that the Crafts Council’s research into craft education participation and course numbers as well as the Education Manifesto provided important resources for making the case for craft.

The place of craft within the curriculum was identified as an area needing increased support. It was felt that teachers might have a lack of awareness and confidence to see how creative projects could support cross-curricular teaching. This also linked to the lack of understanding of the varied ways in which craft skills appeared in different learning environments – for example in film making craft skills were apparent in designing props and sets, learning business skills as well as making. Suggestions were made to look at other models of support from elements of the creative sector which were seen as successful (Arts Council Music Hub scheme for craft with peripatetic craft teachers loaned to schools to build skills). There was a call for further advocacy to parents around the viability of craft as a career and as a source of skills needed more broadly in the economy.

The lack of visibility of craft in schools was of great concern in terms of cultivating the next generation of makers as well as the supply of craft skills across the economy. It also signaled a disconnect between the emphasis on the growth of creative industries in business and employment and the lack of creative skills being taught in school.

It was recognized that there were vibrant pockets of informal learning of craft skills happening in museums, galleries, crafts development hubs, community workshops/spaces. It was suggested that teenagers were falling off the agenda in informal learning spaces, with more provision of workshops and family activities for younger children.

Craft in Further and Higher Education
In the context of higher education round table participants noted the varied pressures of the teaching, research, administrative and impact portfolio. Elements that have shaped the environment in recent years included a decline in demand due to reduced provision of craft courses in schools; the introduction of higher student tuition fees; student and parent concerns around employability and prospects following graduation; the withdrawal of teaching funding for all but high cost STEM subjects; the development of the Higher
Education Research Excellence Framework which has focused on research, and the emergence of a strong impact agenda for research active academic staff.

It was noted that craft and making is emerging as a strong multi-disciplinary meeting place beyond traditional arts, craft and design degrees or departments. This results in interesting work happening at different interfaces across the higher education environment, which may have potential for new partnerships and opportunities emerging in the craft sector. The potential for the crafts sector to support and develop the research engagement and impact agenda was raised as an opportunity.

Participants raised concerns around very recent course closures as indicative of the pressures on the craft sector in a new higher educational landscape. These threats were also witnessed in terms of the character of the UK crafts higher education offer, with the potential broader loss of the specialist arts schools and art departments in universities. The challenge of the higher education funding model for teaching and work space and specialist technical support in determining costs and availability of courses was noted as a key reason for the loss of courses and change in culture.

There was recognition that this was a variable picture in terms of losses/growth in certain subjects: metal/silversmithing declining in one place, growing in another. Masters degrees in furniture and ceramics were growing in some places, closed in others. A trend was noted in terms of concern around falling numbers, with students coming into craft through other routes including 3D design. On the other hand, textiles were noted as being increasingly popular with fashion courses a growth area, encompassing a wide-ranging offer including marketing, retail, and design, and craft skill connections being made by students. The link was made here to the presence of fashion as an ‘A Level’ subject and the sense that students see job opportunities in fashion.

Teaching and technical roles continue to be an important element in a maker’s portfolio career. It was recognized that excellent technical skills were needed to get teaching work and opportunities for guest lecturing and technical appointments were decreasing. A turn towards a small core staff within higher education institutions was emerging with more precarious work available to support them, including the widespread use of hourly-paid labour for lecturers and technicians. Although the increasingly precarious contracts were highlighted as problematic, the availability of technician and part time teaching roles remained valuable for makers, in terms of access to equipment, fixed income, relevant portfolio work, and access to a stimulating environment to feed new creative work.

**Student curriculum and experience**
A major change in the higher education environment has been the introduction of higher student tuition fees and students graduating with the weight of debts, alongside the low expectations of craft graduates securing wage parity with their graduate peers in other disciplines. To reduce the debt burden on students a new higher education model is emerging with the Foundation Year being dropped, and students enrolling directly into the degree. It was felt that this was a loss for the students in their not gaining the benefits of the
experience of exploring different disciplines and skills, and may be riskier for students making decisions about courses. It was also having a knock-on effect in the degree courses with students lacking skills and exposure to different materials or disciplines, and the need to then create more flexibility and entry level opportunities in the first year. This flexibility is also seen more broadly in changes to the curriculum with the introduction of flexible routes to learning including part time, with bite-size options in more demand.

Within the design of the craft curriculum various regional meetings reported the challenge of achieving the right balance of conceptual thinking, learning creative processes and skills and the necessarily professional practice skills required for the creative economy. Professional Practice modules which include business, enterprise entrepreneurial and marketing skills are now routinely embedded within undergraduate courses. Professional practice module leaders in the round tables explained how they often invite creative makers and consultants in to the class room to offer expertise and another ‘voice’ as part of the craft business module teaching. It was reported that students don’t always realize they need business skills until they leave university, and don’t always value or attend business skill-based learning modules. This creates a need for ongoing continued professional development on topics that might be routinely expected to have been learnt at university.

An allied discussion was the need to raise awareness of the transferability of the skills learnt through a craft degree. The employability agenda needs to highlight that there is value in the skills, knowledge and experience gained during a craft degree, and that they are not just about making objects. There was however an ongoing concern that the reduction in practical making time in the university curriculum, compared to more conceptual knowledge-based work was reducing the level of skills the students were developing, and students were graduating without higher level skills being developed through their course programme.

It was reported that students frequently arrive on courses with what was described as an ‘Etsy’ approach (meaning general and popular). The challenge for staff and the curriculum was moving them on to create more challenging work. This, however, needed to be balanced against enabling students to build a portfolio that was more commercial to help their career and potentially secure their own livelihood. It was reported that students were searching for models of success in order to imagine their own careers. Participants suggested that students were grappling with questions such as ‘what does commercial success look like?’ and how to navigate the terrain between one-off production and large-scale batch production. It was noted that it was very rare for graduating students to have a body of work that enabled them to move immediately to be accepted by high-quality galleries, guilds or platforms such as Collect, the Crafts Council’s fair. As a result, graduates needed support during this transition period. As noted above in the discussion of studio spaces the student experience can end abruptly making the transition for graduates more challenging. Round table participants indicated that new models of alumni and fellowship schemes were being developed to enable graduates to receive the ongoing support of their institution after graduation.
**Skills Training/Apprenticeships**

During the discussion of education, there were calls for continued action to find more ways to support skills and training for the 16 plus age group through apprenticeship models. The place of informal apprenticeships was noted in the discussions as being an invaluable experience for aspiring makers; but was under pressure in a system where a formal qualification is increasingly the norm. At the same time, there was the challenge for the sector in delivering formal apprenticeships that worked in the context of micro-enterprise business models. It was noted that the Crafts Council had worked with other craft organisations and Creative and Cultural Skills on a Crafts Trailblazer and were in ongoing conversation with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and Department for Culture Media and Sport to develop a funding model which works for the micro-enterprise nature of much of the sector.

**Professional Development – Training needs**

Many of the regional discussions raised the need for ongoing continued professional development opportunities for makers. The conversations indicated that there might be a mixed model for continued professional development which needed to target a range of crafts professionals including curators, makers, facilitators and organisations with staff.

2.5 **Experiencing craft in museums, galleries and exhibitions**

In the wide-ranging regional discussions, the public visibility of crafts within the museums, galleries and public exhibition sector was discussed. The impact of funding cuts to programming and professional expertise was noted, alongside the shifts in policy agendas around audience engagement. There was a sense of great ambition within the sector, but challenges to realize it. Interesting new areas of growth included new collaborations between higher education institutions and cultural organizations were reported. These had resulted in new interpretations and audience engagement opportunities as collections/practice were explored in different ways. This was part of a general move with cultural organisations actively rethinking how to use and reframe collections to make them relevant to audiences. This positive tone was however offset by other concerns that funding cuts were affecting the accessibility of collections and the development of new opportunities.

The need for cultural organisations to develop enterprise and commercial opportunities was noted, with the importance of retail space in museums being a part of their funding landscape. It was reported that the role of galleries in the craft retail infrastructure was currently undervalued, and that museums and galleries offer a positive environment for makers to position their work within. The opportunities to develop ‘craft boutiques’ in these retail spaces was raised, although it was observed that enterprise teams of museums are not always the best advocates for contemporary craft. It was noted however that where leadership has come from local authorities in giving a policy direction to support creative businesses, this has been successfully delivered through allied institutions including the museums sector.
It was reported that cuts in local authority spending were having a knock-on impact on programming within museums and galleries, which in turn shaped the exhibition and residencies opportunities for makers. There was a loss of collections expertise and research at the curatorial level as museums shed posts, and this had an additional consequence in restricting the amount of new acquisitions being made. Being represented in a public collection is considered an important statement about a maker’s status and this was increasingly less common. Similarly, there was less access for makers to collections through residencies or commissions. Programmes increasingly focused on audience participation and targeting specific audience groups were suggested as a further reason for a decline in craft exhibitions and displays. It was suggested that curators held a perception that craft shows were not always big enough in scale to fill museum gallery spaces or could ‘carry’ the space. Some did point out that makers were increasingly able to hold career defining exhibitions in venues outside London. There was however concern that there was a lack of spaces to show non-commercial/innovative work and fewer opportunities to display within museum spaces.

2.6 Funding the crafts: accessing funding, finance and resources

The experience of funding cuts, restructuring and the economic policy environment ran through all the regional round tables. The conversations revolved around whether makers or craft organisations had enough expertise in applying for grants and therefore whether this was driving limited access to grant funding and the effects of financial cuts.

Access to grant-funding routes

It was reported that the sector had very varied experience of success in accessing different funding routes. It was noted that opportunities to apply through varied funding routes were not always being exploited. It was thought that craft is under-represented within some grant schemes (including Arts Council England’s Grants for the Arts, Leverhulme Artists in Residence, Heritage Lottery Funds, International Arts and Artists Exchange Programmes). The barriers of time, experience and a lack of confidence were also noted, alongside the high competition for diminished funding routes. The under-use of some routes suggests that there is a need for training and support in applying for funds, and accessing training in areas that are not currently exploited by the sector.

Some funds were viewed as more challenging, for example the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). It suggested that this fund was underused by the craft sector, but offers an interesting route. HLF funding is not geared towards individual applications and is an example of where makers and organisations would need to network effectively together to pitch for funding. This conversation prompted calls for exploration of ways to collaborate to seek funding.

There were reports that people and organisations with specialist knowledge of grant funding routes were not always being approached for advice or to support collaborations. However, it was clear there was expertise and this area, with models of best practice in place (including one-to-one grant workshops and collaboration networking opportunities). It was noted that some funding

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routes (e.g. Leverhulme Artist in Residence, which has in fact now been discontinued by Leverhulme) require specific forms of collaboration which may require distinctive forms of nurturing, and this was a route for higher education institutions to develop. Despite there being enthusiasm for continued professional development opportunities in this area and exploring commercial/cultural collaborations, the need for matched funding for some applications was often prohibitive. Overall the emphasis on needing active partnerships and collaborations to secure funding was made.

**Experience of cuts/changing funding environment**

Round table participants reported a very uneven experience of financial cuts: there was a clear sense of an evolving context, with change and flux as a constant. There were mixed reports of some steadying, some total losses, some retrenching. However, at a broad level the reports were of a challenging funding environment as a result of local funding restructuring, loss of staffing, reduction in teaching opportunities and workshops.

Within the public cultural sector (for example in cultural organisations such as museums) core costs were often protected, at the expense of programming costs. Non-essential services had already been cut, or continued to be at risk.

Areas that continued to receive financial support included agendas that connected to health, wellbeing, prosperity and regeneration. Activities linked to specific groups were still being funded in places (young people and the elderly being cited) which opened up new opportunities for community craft-based activity.

The strength of the evidence base in this area was noted, with Arts for Health South West pointed to as an exemplar, although the closure of Arts for Health Cornwall is evidence of the challenging environment. There was a concern that the cost-saving shift to a commissioning model (replacing a grant aid model) within some authorities resulted in people without specialist knowledge/experience/care judging and awarding the commissions.

2. 7 Leadership and networking within the regions

The round table conversations enabled the reporting of different models of good practice across all regions. There are excellent examples of innovation and longevity in maker spaces, guilds, craft development organisations, retail outlets, galleries, and in museums. It was often reported that organisations that have developed over decades ago have maintained their presence as anchors in their regions, enabling others to launch in a supported environment.

The strength of the regional networks was raised through some of the meetings. It was noted that some established networks were strongly embedded in the existing regional infrastructure. This included regional craft guild and membership organisations. Such regional craft organisations were seen to provide anchor points for practitioners, stakeholders and audiences who are otherwise geographically scattered. The role of regional network organisations in reducing practitioner isolation, sharing support, knowledge and capacity for collaboration was acknowledged, particularly for new graduates who find a
community of practice to support their transition to independent practice. Such networks also often provide access to retail and marketing opportunities which are sometimes in short supply in rural areas.

It was noted that managing membership organisations is an intensive commitment and although there are strong examples of peer-organised membership bodies, others have folded as funding has run out or through over-reliance on volunteers.

The CraftNet and Crafts Council seminars were reported as one of the few opportunities for professional networking within the regions, with some regions having generated a significant peer support network and dynamism for example in the North West. The round tables demonstrated that there were strong craft leaders in each region who were championing and supporting craft, and passionately working for their stakeholders and constituents.

The mixed nature of the participants in these discussions combined with the context of a competitive funding environment might explain the only limited discussion of significant challenges faced by craft leaders, new projects/opportunities in development, emergent models for practice being trialed, and more generally displays of change agent leadership activities. It is not therefore possible to assess whether the cuts have left craft leadership striving to secure the bottom-line, or whether additional energy for innovation and activity remains. The overall sense from the discussions does, however, point to enthusiasm for new activity that is currently significantly constrained by the challenges of delivering key strategic priorities, with fewer resources.
Part 3: Reflections on the round table discussions

In this commentary the author of the report, Dr Nicola Thomas, offers her reflections on the issues raised for her as she collated the round table discussion notes provided by the Crafts Council. The reflections are framed in the context of her own research and understanding of regional craft ecologies. Dr Thomas’s research attends to the way in which the craft sector is shaped by people, institutions, infrastructure and policy at regional and national level.

The ‘known issues’ are ever present, and require ongoing attention. The regional meetings confirmed the ongoing nature of challenges that are widely recognized within the sector, including the effects of decline in craft within higher education institutions and school education; developing practices and infrastructure that supports innovation in making; the challenges of securing viable livelihoods within the crafts sector and the nature of portfolio livelihoods for makers. The conversations reflected these challenges, and demonstrated that while these are not ‘new’, these core issues continue to be of concern, and need ongoing and sustained attention. As many of these areas have been well served by Crafts Council policy reports and are highly visible on the craft policy agenda, the reflections that follow will focus on areas which are less visible.

How are stakeholders in the region working together?
The round tables indicated that there are strong craft leaders and stakeholders in each region, with tremendous activity and energy being expended in the support of the craft sector. There were examples of projects where partners had come together to create something they could not do alone. There were many examples of participants demonstrating their delivery of a strategic direction in support of craft, for example, through partnership working, often around specific projects, grants or connected organizational priorities.

However, the collated notes also indicated that many participants were undertaking individual activities, which did not necessarily require the support of a regional network or partners. This creates a mixed pattern of strong and weak ties between the regional stakeholders which may have an impact in the ability of regional craft stakeholders being in a position to respond collectively to projects or proposals that demand collective support.

The round table conversations made me think about the ways in which stakeholders might need to mobilise in different ways to spot, or take advantage of different agendas. I also wondered where this capacity or intervention might come from. Craft-Net is a valuable route for craft leaders to come together, but the discussions let me wondering if it was working in a way to enable the deep thinking time that would enable the development of a regional craft strategy that might secure a different pathway for the collective regional craft sector?

What are the anchors within a regional craft ecology?
I was very struck by the focus within the conversations of what creative economy thinkers call ‘field configuring events’ (the circuit of fairs, festivals, trade shows, exhibitions) and the importance of permanent infrastructure of the craft sector. The round tables reflected the fact that the regional craft ecology is
secured through physical hubs, social networks, educational institutions, alongside the retail and exhibition spaces. These elements deepen the sector’s capacity and resilience. The craft sector has taken many hits through recent changes in higher education, the impact of the post-2008 financial crisis, and impacts of government austerity measures which have particularly hit local authority funding. This is clearly visible in the regions with all regional conversations indicating the challenges of the current climate. However, from those who reported at the round tables, it is clear that those in the regions are working hard for craft, that actors within the craft sector are mobilized and finding ways to navigate the current contexts, within their means and abilities.

The strengths of the regional infrastructure and skill and expertise act as critical anchors within the regional craft ecology. When this is threatened, through education course closure, or through people being pressed for time and unable to take up opportunities, the sector is weakened as a whole. In pressured times, there is a tendency to greater individualism as one turns inwards to secure the future. This may have an adverse result in not enabling conversations across the sector that may give rise to collective action. This is a potential risk to the craft sector which strong regional networks may overcome.

**Enabling the collective ambitions of the sector to be supported within the regions**

I was struck by a sense of wanting to generate change within the regional round table discussions. This was demonstrated by awareness of the range of grant funding routes, awareness of innovation occurring within other organisations, and a sense of the sector missing some opportunities because of a lack of time within organisations with limited personnel. Although the round table discussants were not asked to step into the shoes of regional change agents, there was clear identification within the regional meetings of regional barriers and pinch points that needed to be overcome to enable change.

The round table notes indicated that there was a fairly clear understanding within the discussions that people agreed with the issues that were raised (there was limited divergent opinions voiced). However, the notes from the meetings did not suggest that there was a collective sense of a coherent regional strategy to address the issues within their region, or key personnel charged with that task. This reflects the sector’s atomised composition, with sole, micro, small stakeholders, who are connected through a shared practice, but with no formal collective governance.

The round table meetings gathered the strategic regional craft personnel together, and reflected the success of networks such as Craft-net, regional organisations and intermediaries who connect different parties. The conversations reflected that the regional participants have deep knowledge, and skills to share, but there might need to be a set of different interventions for the potential of people’s suggestions to be realised.

It was noticeable, for example, that Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) were not recorded within the round table notes as partners within craft sector projects. This may well be an agenda that the regional craft sector is struggling to connect with, perhaps owing to the scale of the LEP agenda, and the need to aggregate the craft sector’s effort to make an intervention in this arena.
The Craft-Net regional networks continue to present a well-established opportunity for the sector to gather and support/enable the sector’s change agents in order to galvanize regional action. Maintaining, and preferably increasing investment in Craft-net type activities so that they can emerge as more meaningful routes to collective action, seems to be critical to support a sustainable regional craft infrastructure.

**Harnessing the opportunities within higher education**

The conversations demonstrated that the regional craft sector has very strong and valuable links across the arts and design sector. The conversations were less vibrant around relationships with academics across other disciplines who are working with ideas and practices of craft/making and who may facilitate new interdisciplinary research and initiatives. I witness this as a geographer who has become very invested in the craft sector through my own research, and see the range of ways in which higher education and the craft sector could be working in more diverse ways. Expanding this relationship agenda has potential to fund innovative new work through the impact and engagement funding routes, supported by staff within universities tasked to support these relationships.

For those who are not linked to higher education, the ‘impact’ agenda is a key feature in the current UK research funding environment. Every five years (or so) the higher education sector is reviewed through a process currently called the Research Excellence Framework (REF). In 2014 the ways in which academic research was having an effect beyond the academic community was part of the review process, and Universities had to submit ‘impact case studies’ to showcase the broader value of the research. Research Councils are also expecting academic researchers to identify clear ‘pathways to impact’ with co-design with stakeholder communities of proposed research increasingly expected, and funding being reserved within grant activity for stakeholder engagement activity. If you are interested in seeing how craft featured in the impact case studies, have a search on the online database: [http://www.hefce.ac.uk/rsrch/REFImpact/](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/rsrch/REFImpact/)

There are many potential opportunities here for craft practitioners and organisations to become embedded within these impact research agendas, with resources available to support projects, professional development, community participatory activities, the making of new work or supporting innovation through practice (and many more). To take advantage of these opportunities interested parties need to find each other and then invest time into building the relationship and develop awareness of shared interests. Time and access are often significant barriers, however many universities now have research relationship managers who are expected to facilitate the relationship with external partners and academics. These people are valuable allies for the regional craft sector in reaching academics who might unlock opportunities, but are otherwise sometimes hard to find. The higher education impact agenda is a slow burn, but should be seen as a new funding route for the sector.
How is the sector coping with financial uncertainty?
The round table conversations gave an indication of the resilience of the craft sector and the agility it possesses in responding to changing circumstances. As I read through the notes I kept in mind that the participants in the room reflected those who were able to afford the time and financial costs of attending, or who had found a way to enable themselves to be present despite the odds. The participants therefore represented a group of stakeholders who were navigating the challenging terrain and were able to invest time in the Crafts Council’s round table discussions, recognising the importance of contributing within this forum.

The conversations highlighted that the regional craft sector has a clear understanding of the dynamics of their local context, but is also ambitious, outward-looking and national/international in orientation. There were indications that the sector might not have the capacity to achieve the ambitions in the current financial climate without the investment of new capacity to enable growth. Many participants reported that they were coping with multiple cut backs and loss of capacity.

It is uncertain how Brexit and any further rounds of financial cuts are going to affect the sector, however the changing political and financial climate already appears to be placing stress on a regional crafts sector already working to, and perhaps beyond, capacity. This makes effective policy advocacy, of the kind being undertaken by the Crafts Council at a national level, increasingly important during the upcoming political shifts to enable craft to maintain on the agenda through education, innovation and higher education discussions.

Participants reported positively on European investments in infrastructure. Within the round tables there appeared to be a lack of certainty around new sources of support or knowledge/understanding of how existing funding structures might be utilized. With the likely decrease in European funding, the need for deeper relationships, particularly with local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) and regional funding routes is clear, to enable an agile, strategic response to a very fluid funding environment. This also highlights the important strategic direction that regional networks could play within this environment.

Navigating the experience economy in the current economic climate
Although the experience economy is new for some sectors of the creative economy, the craft sector has a long history of working with consumers’ desire to ‘make’ themselves by attending classes and one day and residential workshops; and through the desire to ‘peep behind the scenes’ of craft practice by visiting studios or witnessing demonstrations. ‘Pop-up culture’ also has a long history within the craft sector – the current circuit of fairs and festivals can be seen as a continuation of craft retail practice that has been honed over many decades, and is well suited to the sole/micro business nature of the sector. The craft sector has been working with the ‘experience’ and ‘participation’ economy for decades, and has, in many ways, led the field in this area, perhaps without realising it.

What has changed is that other sectors in the economy are now responding to consumers’ desire for active, participatory, experiences, which means the
The market place is increasingly crowded with a consumer audience that has increasingly high expectations. In addition, there are also an increasing number of opportunities for consumers to engage, within the craft sector and beyond. This shift is set against the downturn in the economy, which has altered the spending habits of consumers, and the uptake in digital social sharing between consumers through social networking and the opportunities that open up for marketing within these networks.

The shift to the participatory/experience economy was frequently cited as a challenge within the round table conversations, with the need for new business models to enable new revenue strands to be developed. Another conversation was around the perceived saturation of the temporary retail craft environment, and the challenge for makers in securing sales to cover their costs. Enhancing ways to compete in the crowded sector was part of the offered solution, support in telling powerful stories and calls for digital marketing expertise point to training, however, there were other solutions that emerged. I was struck by one conversation around creating stronger ties with interior design and those who act as intermediaries for client commissions. Again, this is an area that the craft sector has routinely served, however the round table conversation signaled this was an area that could have a stronger relationship. Crafts practitioners and organisations are adept at developing client relationships and nurturing deep relationships. Combining the inter-personal connection with the skills and outputs of the making process, and the ongoing engagement with education, remains the sector’s great strength. Maintaining the capacity to service these relationships, and the bandwidth to respond to changing client needs, is the ongoing challenge.

**How might the training needs for a regional sector be delivered?**
At many points in the conversations potential training needs were identified, some of the requests were routine, others more specific.

The conversations within the round tables suggested a series of training needs that might support building capacity. For example, developing skills for grant income generation was noted as a high priority, with craft leaders needing to diversify income in a competitive environment, and practitioners wishing to be more ambitious in their applications. More routine training needs for makers were also highlighted including digital marketing, financial and business planning. The continued professional development training also appeared to cut across the actors within the craft sector: makers, intermediaries, craft development leaders, craft organisation staff, curators, board members.

Reading the notes of the various conversations made me wonder what gaps existed in the sector’s continued professional development offer, how these might be met, and barriers to participation that need to be addressed. Many of the training needs discussed during the round table meetings are available in some form through online and face to face training. For example, within the creative and cultural sector some of the professional development needs have been met by the Clore Leadership Programme, and the regional craft sector leaders have routinely participated in these programmes. For many makers, the Crafts Council’s Hothouse and Injection programmes, alongside the bite-size training workshops do fulfil many of the CPD needs raised in the roundtables.
However, although routes to training may be available, overcoming barriers to participation, and widening participation, may be the larger issue.

For example, opportunities may be delivered at times, or in locations, or at a price point, which are not viable for potential participants. Overcoming these barriers requires a different sort of approach to the development of training opportunities. Developing learning resources that are flexible, useful, affordable, and represent a viable investment to develop is a complex balance of factors: identifying needs, establishing appropriate delivery mechanisms, developing appropriate content of the right quality, ensuring accessibility and sustainability.

Issues of time, distance and cost are a significant constraint that needs to be taken into account in developing and enhancing the regional delivery of training, or any form of networked activity. The costs of transport – often by car in regions with highly unsatisfactory public transport – can itself constitute significant costs for small organisations and practitioners. Those living in rural areas will be familiar with the challenge of getting to a meeting starting at 10am, with a 3-hour door to door journey ahead of them. To these distance/time barriers, there is a need to be aware of the opportunity costs incurred by taking a half day or often a full day from other activities. For those living in regions this is part and parcel of everyday logistics, but it becomes very important to maximize all opportunities to come together, and to be sensitive to the location and timeliness of regional activities. If there is a need for enhanced partnerships and working together in deeper ways, there may be a need to reassess the best ways to work for maximum value, utilizing digital platforms and tools and appropriate face to face contact. The range of training opportunities and requirements suggested through the conversations indicated that the development of what is now called a ‘blended learning platform’ that delivers digital teaching material with appropriate opportunities for face to face content, might be an appropriate investment for the crafts sector. This will however need careful development.

Development of income generation capacities and strengthening relationships between funders and the crafts sector appears to be urgently needed. Although this might face future grant applications, learning from best practice, particularly from those who have received funding from different grant bodies also appears to be needed. Identification of best practice and sharing could potentially be delivered through the development of continued professional development courses, but could also be captured in the short term through a dedicated CraftNet workshop. Such conversations would ideally include conversations around how the project came about, time, details of relationships, challenges, grant application details, how the project unfolded, learning points, next steps. When talking about projects we often turn to the positive learning outcomes and the activities that we undertook, but it would appear that the sector really needs to have a more nuts and bolts conversation about how to apply for funding, structuring applications and routes for success. The sharing of such information within a mutually supportive craft sector might be a challenge given the competition for funding, unless the sector uses the opportunity afforded by further investment or mutual support to diversify funding streams.
The place of equality and diversity within the round table conversations

The conversation points posed by the Crafts Council did not explicitly include equality and diversity agendas, however, I was interested to see how this topic emerged within the broader conversations and to consider what this might tell us. The conversations recorded the importance of creating an inclusive craft sector. Specific projects were highlighted within the regional conversations that had strong agendas to engage with diverse audiences of varied ages, including young people and senior people; and also engaged with people experiencing long-term health challenges. It was reported that the lack of ethnic diversity within the FE/HE student population was having a knock on effect on the maker population as a whole. There were no further specific conversation points recorded around other protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act 2010 (for example religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation, invisible and visible disabilities, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership status, pregnancy and motherhood). There may need to be a larger research project to provide qualitative and quantitative data that enables the sector to recognize, and challenge discrimination and promote equality of opportunity.

Learning from the regional discussions

The regional meetings enabled the established craft sector to exchange their perspectives on working within their regional context. The strong support for this consultation, demonstrated through high attendance figures, reflects that these opportunities are seen as important moments for the sector to gather, as a collective, to shape the conversation and any activity that may ensue.

Within my regional creative economy research, strategic networks are often difficult to sustain and fit to the needs of varied participants. Those taking part often have a vast range of expectations. For some the best part is always lunch, when they get to talk to someone they rarely see, for others, the content provides food for the soul which they don’t get elsewhere. Others can be frustrated by the sense of a network being a ‘talking shop with no action’. Although the regional round tables were not designed to reflect on the CraftNet activity, having thought about the composition of the participants within the round tables and the diverse conversations, I am struck by the strength of the regional craft networks that activities like CraftNet have enabled. These need to be nurtured, enabled to occur with greater frequency, and where strategic direction is missing, to be galvanized through additional support.

For those who attended the round table meetings elements of the conversations, as recorded in the notes from the meetings and collated above, no doubt will probably feel familiar. It was notable whilst reviewing the notes that similar issues emerged across all of the nine round table conversations. Whilst the round table notes were helpful to gain insights into the round table conversations, they were not intended to generate in-depth regional reviews.

The round table meetings presented an opportunity for participants to share knowledge and expertise across the sector (from higher education to the craft retail sector), and the engagement and sharing of knowledge and thinking between different stakeholders appears to have been a valuable opportunity. These regional networks might not meet very frequently, and may currently be...
underfunded, or work in different ways in different regions, however they do offer a key route for the craft sector to come together to address collective challenges.

Dr Nicola Thomas
Appendix 1

Roundtables

The following meetings were held.

- Bluecoat Centre, Liverpool, 24 June 2015
- National Rail Museum, York, 27 July 2015
- Royal West of England Academy, Bristol, 19 November 2015
- Brighton Pavilion, Brighton, 10 December 2015
- Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham, 17 February 2016
- Buckinghamshire County Museum, Aylesbury, 17 March 2016
- Jerwood Space, London, 18 May 2016
The Crafts Council would like to thank the following for their participation in the discussions:

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Kate Arnold Foster</td>
<td>The Museum of English Rural Life</td>
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<td>Diane Ashley-Smith</td>
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<td>Jivan Astfalck</td>
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<td>Felicity Aylieff</td>
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<td>Maureen Bampton</td>
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<td>Ian Byers</td>
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<td>British Ceramics Biennial</td>
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<td>Emily Chase</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard de Peyer</td>
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Tom Fisher Nottingham Trent University
Connie Flynn
Nora Fok Maker
Sue Foley
Marianne Forrest London Metropolitan University
Anne Marie Franey Great Northern Contemporary Craft Fair
Birthe Noergaard Fraser Cultural Connections
Simon Fraser Central St Martins, UAL
Zelina Garland Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery
Anna Glasbrook Anna Glasbrook
Vanessa Godfrey
Alun Graves Victoria and Albert Museum
Fiona Green York Museums Trust
Mary Greensted Gloucestershire Guild Of Craftsmen
Monica Grose-Hodge Art Workers Guild
Yvonne Hardman Leeds Museums and Galleries
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Zoe Hillyard Birmingham City University
Katie Honnor
Jason Ions
Louise Izod Artworks-MK
Caroline Jackman New Ashgate Gallery
Rebecca Jacobs William Morris Gallery
Sarah James The Contemporary Craft Fair
Sarah Jeffs
Tlws Johnson Oxfordshire Craft Guild
Katie Jones Katie Jones
Jasleen Kaur
Su Kaye Devon County Council
Chris Keenan

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Jackie Lee
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Nicola Riley
HK Jewellery
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Coombe Farm Studios
Wimbledon College of Art
CraftNet South East
Plymouth University
Contemporary Applied Arts
Kingston University
Great Northern Contemporary Craft Fair
Somarton
Creative Lancashire
Cotswold and West Oxfordshire District Councils
Gawthorpe Textiles Collection
Manchester Metropolitan University
Arts Council England South East
The New Craftsmen
Kellie Miller Art and Design
Craft Potters Association
Vessel Gallery
Arts At The Old Fire Station Ltd
Sarah Myerscough Gallery
Design Event
Tate Liverpool and Crafts Council Trustee
Northumbria University
Craft Central
Artisa Foundation
Recording the Crafts
Arts Council England South West
Schumacher College
Arts Council England Midlands
Laing Art Gallery (Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums)
Crafts Council Trustee
Cherwell and South Northants District
Councils

Judith Robinson  Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery
Jacqui Roche  Kindred Studios
Vanessa Rolf  Royal College of Art
Nicholas Rowe  RW Craft Network
Elisabeth Rutt  Nottingham Trent University
E Salter  Kindred Studios
Adrian Sassoon  Adrian Sassoon
Angelique Schmitt  Kindred Studios
Victoria Scholes  Nottingham Trent University
Lharne Shaw  Devon Guild of Craftsmen
Yanire Silva  Chica Press
Kathleen Slater  Adrian Sassoon
Helen Snell  Devon Guild of Craftsmen
Philippa Spoerry  Nottingham Trent University
Erica Steer  Devon Guild of Craftsmen
Julia Stephenson  National Glass Centre
Vanessa Swann  Cockpit Arts
Cecilie Telle  University of Exeter
Nicola Thomas  University of Exeter
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Kay Tsang  Kindred Studios
Darcy Turner  Kindred Studios
Jaime Turner  Kindred Studios
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Jacob van der Beugel  University of Exeter
Lizanne van Essen  University of Exeter
Henrietta Warner  University of Exeter
Jude Wensley  Nottingham Trent University
Alan Whittaker  Liverpool Hope University
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Janine Woods  Kindred Studios
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Rosy Greenlees, Executive Director
Andrea Nixon, Trustee and Tate Liverpool
Zoe Laughlin, Trustee and Institute of Making
Beaverley Rider, Trustee
Jo Bloxham, Trustee
Fiona Moorhead, Head of Marketing,
Maria Ingouville, Communications Coordinator
Appendix 2

Examples referenced in the round table discussions

Participants referred to a range of examples in the discussion. Many of these were recorded in the meeting notes and are listed below. This is not a comprehensive review of regional infrastructure or activity.

Training and Apprenticeship Schemes (not including examples of mentoring)

Craft Trailblazer
http://www.craftscouncil.org.uk/about/press/craft-trailblazer1/

CC Skills – example of outcome from Creative Apprenticeship model
https://ccskills.org.uk/careers/jobs/details/creative-learning-programme-assistant

Crafts Council – Hothouse and Injection
http://www.craftscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/hothouse/
http://www.craftscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/injection/

Princes Trust: Talent development
https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/help-for-young-people

Fairs, Festivals

Art in Clay
http://www.artinclay.co.uk

Art Dubai
http://artdubai.ae

Best of Britannia
http://bestofbritannia.com

Ceramic Art London
http://www.ceramics.org.uk/index.php

Collect: Crafts Council
http://www.craftscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/collect/

Contemporary Crafts Festival
http://www.craftsatboveytracey.co.uk

Great Northern Contemporary Craft Fair
http://www.greatnorthernevents.co.uk

London Craft Week
http://www.londoncraftweek.com

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Made: Brighton  
http://www.madebrighton.co.uk

MADE: London  
http://www.madelondon.org

Northern Design Event  
https://design-event.co.uk

Port Elliot Festival, in the context of growth of participatory crafts workshops demand  
http://porteliotfestival.com

Infrastructure: Craft Development Organisations and Networks (may include studio provision, CPD, exhibition and display, education, advocacy, Guilds)

Arches Studios (Southampton)  
http://www.aspacearts.org.uk/workspaces/arches-studios/#.V7XM_Us_R94

Artworks-MK  
http://www.culture24.org.uk/am432011

Bluecoat Display Centre (Liverpool)  
http://www.bluecoatdisplaycentre.com

Centrespace Gallery, Bristol  
http://www.centrespacegallery.com/studiospace/

Cockpit Arts  
http://cockpitarts.com

Craft Central  
http://craftcentral.org.uk

Craftspace  
http://craftspace.co.uk

Craft Potters Association (in relation to ‘Adopt a Potter’ scheme)  
http://www.craftpottersassoc.co.uk

Contemporary Applied Arts  
http://www.caa.org.uk/information/crafts/ceramics/

Coombe Farm Studios  
http://www.coombefarmstudios.com/about-coombe-farm-studios/

Crafted at Dartington, Totnes  
https://www.dartington.org/whats-on/classes-and-courses/crafted-dartington/
Dacorum and Chiltern Potters Guild  
http://www.thedcpg.org.uk

Devon Guild of Craftsmen  
http://www.crafts.org.uk

Hamilton House (Bristol)  
http://www.hamiltonhouse.org/hamilton-house-directory/

Gawthorpe Community Studios  
http://www.gawthorpetextiles.org.uk/communitystudio

Gloucestershire Guild of Craftsmen  
https://guildcrafts.org.uk

New Ashgate Gallery  
http://www.newashgate.org.uk

NorthWest Craft Network  
http://nwcraftnetwork.blogspot.co.uk

Making Space  
http://makingspace.org

Makerversity  
http://makerversity.org

Manchester Craft and Design Centre  
http://www.craftanddesign.com

Resort Studios, Margate  
http://www.resortstudios.co.uk

Ruthin Crafts Centre (noted as exemplar retail craft)  
http://ruthincraftcentre.org.uk

Oxfordshire Craft Guild  
http://www.oxfordshirecraftguild.co.uk

Smith’s Row  
http://www.smithsrow.org

Suffolk Crafts Society  
http://www.suffolkcraftsociety.org

Old Fire Station, Oxford  
http://www.oldfirestation.org.uk

Turning Earth (in relation to new business models and enterprise)  
http://www.turningearth.uk/about/

Yorkshire Arts Space (Sheffield)
Persistence Works, Exchange Place, Monor Oaks
http://artspace.org.uk

**Workspace**

Greater London Authority Workspace Provider
https://lep.london/content_page/london-open-workspace-providers-group

Makespace (Cambridge)
http://makespace.org

Devon Fab Lab
https://www.fablabdevon.org

The Making Rooms, Blackburn
http://blackburnisopen.co.uk/spaces/the-making-rooms/

**Networks and Organisations Working together**

Arts Council Music Education Hubs
http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/music-education/music-education-hubs

“Music Education Hubs are groups of organisations – such as local authorities, schools, other hubs, art organisations, community or voluntary organisations – working together to create joined-up music education provision, respond to local need and fulfil the objectives of the hub as set out in the national plan for Music Education”

**Education – Innovation, Projects**

Plymouth School of Creative Arts – Red House School seem as example of great creative practice
http://plymouthschoolofcreativearts.co.uk/

UCA Farnham collaborate through Studio Residency with the Watts Gallery
http://www.wattsgallery.org.uk/en-gb/learn/artist-residence/

Institute of Making, UCL
http://www.instituteofmaking.org.uk

Frances Hollis, Research on Work/Home: practices and design of working from home
http://www.theworkhome.com

The Lost Boys
Work being made in response to WW1 collections in Staffordshire Museums, showing within British Ceramics Biennial Stoke, funded by AHRC
http://www.art.mmu.ac.uk/profile/sdixon/projectdetails/793
http://www.britishceramicsbiennial.com/content/lost-boys
Two Make
http://www.wattsgallery.org.uk/en-gb/

AHRC REACT
REACT was a four year project, dedicated to getting academia and businesses working together. We connected researchers from the arts and humanities with creative businesses to make brilliant new prototype products or services.

http://www.react-hub.org.uk

Factories of the Future 2020

Tillberg Textiel Museum and Lab
http://www.textiellab.nl/en/

Maker Centric, a partnership between Craftspace, the University of Wolverhampton and SohoHouseMuseum. Part of the AHRC’s Connecting Communities programme
http://craftspace.co.uk/maker-centric/

Specific museums, gallery or exhibitions mentioned

Blackwell, the arts and crafts house, in the context of interesting retail
http://www.blackwell.org.uk

Grayson Perry: Provincial Punk, Turner Contemporary, Margate 2016
https://www.turnercontemporary.org/exhibitions/grayson-perry

Cotton to Gold

Crafts Council: Power of Making
http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/p/powerofmaking/

Craft Council: What is luxury?
http://www.craftscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/what-is-luxury/

Aspex – Portsmouth Contemporary Art Gallery, in relation to retail shop, selling local work, supporting Etsy Made Local. Runs Craft Emergency
https://www.aspex.org.uk

Centre of Ceramic Art (CoCA), York Museums Trust
http://www.centreofceramicart.org.uk

Craft Emergency
Making Space, in collaboration with Aspex

Crafts Council: Overview of Regional Round Table Discussions - 2015-2016
http://makingspace.org/craft-emergency/

Craftspace
Radical Craft
http://craftspace.co.uk/radicalcraft/

Gawthorpe Textiles Collection
http://www.gawthorpetextiles.org.uk/about

Leeds Industrial Museum at Armley Mills, example of New Expressions New Opportunities award
http://www.newexpressions.org/New-Opportunities-Award/

Manchester Art Gallery – in the context of interesting retail
http://manchesterartgallery.org

Tillberg Textiel Museum and Lab
http://www.textiellab.nl/en/

The British Arts Show
https://britishartshow8.com

Watts Gallery
http://www.wattsgallery.org.uk/en-gb/

The Whitworth Gallery
http://www.whitworth.manchester.ac.uk

Pitt Rivers Museum
VERVE programme
https://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/verve.html

The Shipley Art Gallery, Gateshead
https://shipleyartgallery.org.uk

Yorkshire Sculpture Park (in the context of interesting retail)
http://www.ysp.co.uk

Specific funds mentioned

Arts Council Grants for the Arts
http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/grants-arts

Arts Council: Catalyst
http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/catalyst-evolve

Arts Council: International Artists Development Fund
http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/artists-international-development-fund
Leverhulme Artist in Residency
https://www.leverhulme.ac.uk/funding/grant-schemes/artist-residence-grants

New Expressions Programme
http://www.newexpressions.org
New Expressions 3 establishes a national approach to collaboration between contemporary artists and museums. It explores how partnership working can be structured in the future to provide fresh approaches to collections and engaging visitor experiences across England. It builds upon the regional foundations developed by New Expressions 1 and 2 in South West England.

Arts Council Creative People and Places
http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/creative-people-and-places-fund