



CREATIVE

PEOPLE

AND

PLACES

END OF YEAR 2 REPORT; EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Progress and outcomes



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Executive summary

Introduction

One of Arts Council England's goals is for more people to experience and be inspired by the arts, irrespective of where they live or their social, educational, or financial circumstances.

The Creative People and Places Programme (CPP) aims to support this ambition by providing investment in parts of the country where people's involvement in the arts is significantly below the national average, with the aim of increasing the likelihood of participation.

Arts Council England has invested around £37 million across three initial funding rounds¹. Only places which appeared in the bottom 20% of adult arts participation² were able to apply for funding. The first round of CPP places³ were announced in June 2012 (seven places), the second in May 2013 (11 places) and the third in May 2014 (three places). In June 2015, Round 1 CPP places were invited to apply for future CPP funds (£5.3 million was awarded in October 2015, with a further £7.5 million to be allocated in 2016). Six of the seven CPP places were awarded funds and will begin to deliver later in 2016. The second tranche of future CPP funding opened to applicants in April 2016.

The national evaluation

Arts Council England commissioned A New Direction (AND) to undertake the programme evaluation on behalf of all of the CPP places, which is managed by a steering group of place representatives. Ecorys was contracted in December 2013 to undertake the national evaluation (a meta-evaluation with primary research), one of several commissions which make up the overall programme evaluation. Other evaluation commissions include: thematic studies to explore emergent themes of interest in greater depth (e.g. artistic quality and excellence in engagement); 'More Than 100 Stories'⁴, a creative commission presented through writing and illustration; three annual CPP conferences to share learning; and, annual Audience Spectrum and Mosaic profiling to better understand the programme's audiences nationally.

This report is the second annual report of the three year national evaluation commission focussing on the progress and achievements of CPP in the period to January 2016. The aim of the overarching programme evaluation is to understand what worked and what did not work in the programme and to capture lessons to inform the work of the sector, with an emphasis on generating new knowledge in terms of engaging communities in the arts and culture and sharing this with practitioners and other stakeholders. There are three core evaluation questions set by Arts Council England, which guide the national evaluation commission:

Evaluation questions

- Are more people from places of least engagement experiencing and inspired by the arts?
- To what extent was the aspiration for excellence of art and excellence of the process of engaging communities achieved?
- Which approaches were successful and what were lessons learned?

¹ <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/apply-funding/funding-programmes/creative-people-and-places-fund/successfulapplicants/>

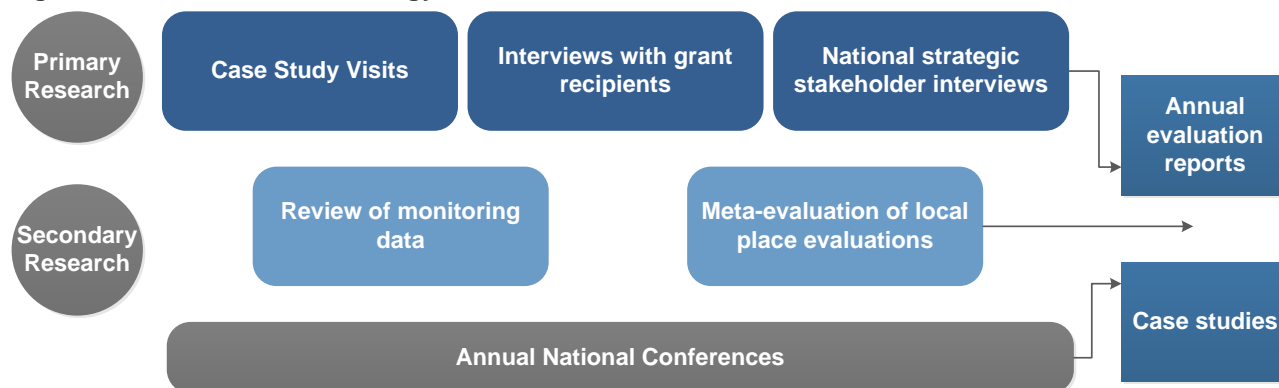
² According to the Active People Survey

³ The term used to describe the region/ geographic area successful in applying to the CPP programme

⁴ <http://www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/100-stories-blog>

To answer these questions, the national evaluation has taken a theory-based approach and developed a logic model which is detailed in the full report. This shows how the CPP programme has been developed to address an identified need, the outputs and outcomes it is expected to generate and ultimately how it will contribute to wider economic and social impacts (or longer-term outcomes). Research undertaken as part of the national evaluation is testing the model and has been designed to build upon, rather than duplicate, local place evaluation efforts, using a meta-evaluation framework to systematically and comprehensively review local place evaluation outputs⁵.

Figure 1 Evaluation methodology



Since April 2015, the following tasks have been completed for year two of the evaluation:

- **Production of four progress reports** (submitted in July, September and November 2015, and February 2016) which have included a review of available quarterly monitoring narrative reports and data submitted by places to Arts Council England to assess progress in relation to achievement of programme outputs and facilitate learning and sharing of good practice.
- **Meta evaluation** of available local place evaluation documents (e.g. annual reports/reviews, research at specific events, audience analysis or lessons learned documents) using a pro-forma which provided a framework for undertaking a consistent assessment of the quality of these outputs and extracting relevant information for the national evaluation. Thirteen places submitted evaluation material for review during year two; the nature of these outputs varied from interim evaluation reports reflecting on the local programme to reviews of specific events or case studies.
- **Completion of semi-structured interviews** with grant recipients (CPP management team) in nine (CPP places and eight national strategic stakeholders (senior managers at Arts Council England, AND, from the national steering group) to explore their views on the progress with delivery, outcomes, additionality, lessons learned and sustainability (Autumn/Winter 2015/16).
- **Completion of 4 qualitative case studies** (Autumn/Winter 2015) focussed on partnership working with non-arts partners (Transported - Boston and South Holland and Heart of Glass - St Helens) and community engagement approaches (Made in Corby and Creative Barking and Dagenham) to explore emerging themes and outcomes in greater depth and test the early findings from year one. Case study subjects were selected in consultation with the national steering group⁶.

⁵ Review of available local place evaluation documents (e.g. annual reports/reviews, research at specific events, audience analysis or lessons learned documents) using a pro-forma which provided a framework for undertaking a consistent assessment of the quality of these outputs and extracting relevant information for the meta-evaluation.

⁶ A group made up of Arts Council England, representatives from CPP places (including evaluation managers, project directors, and a critical friend) and network coordinators with responsibility for evaluation, peer learning and

CPP programme structure

Arts Council England: Each CPP place was provided with a Relationship Manager to work with them from an early stage to provide support at the development stage and with quarterly meetings, reviewing monitoring information, overseeing draw-down of funding and delivering against the agreed business plan.

CPP Partnerships and Governance: Places were required to set up consortiums to apply for the grant, supervise the development of plans and implement programme delivery. The broad range of sectors involved represents a shift for Arts Council England, who is for the first time making links with and resourcing new organisations from outside of the arts and supporting new leaders to deliver on its goals. Consortiums consist of around five organisations with at least one member from the local community and one organisation designated as the lead (not necessarily from an arts background). The majority of lead partners are arts organisations and there are a wide range of different consortium partners, although most are arts organisations, local authorities or voluntary/community sector bodies (averaging between three and six in number). Places use a combination of written narrative and data reporting to monitor their progress quarterly, as required by Arts Council England.

Peer learning network: Places are supported by a network of their peers to explore specific themes within their programmes and practices through regular networking events and use of the Basecamp virtual network forum (which has around 230 subscribers) with specific groups for marketing and evaluation. Themes are driven by places' needs and more recently project leads have begun to manage the agenda for these events in area/regional clusters, in an effort to ensure that the network is truly self supporting, whilst being facilitated by the network Peer Learning Coordinator (a part-time role primarily to facilitate learning within the network).

Community involvement: Community engagement and involvement is an important aspect of CPP. Monitoring information suggests that places continue to use a combination of different approaches to engage local communities, including regular means such as panels and closed steering groups, public meetings and community conversations and focus groups/consultations. Overall, local communities are involved in commissioning, delivering and evaluating arts programmes to different degrees in different places.

Critical friend: Places were required to appoint a critical friend (professionals in the arts and academia), primarily to support and challenge places with regards to local place evaluation. In most cases, the critical friend has played an important role in guiding and advising places, mostly in the planning stage, but also sometimes in the delivery of projects and as reported in year one, the role has had wider application in practice.

Local place evaluation: CPP areas have to undertake a local place evaluation, which according to the latest available monitoring information, is underway in at least 16 places. Most places have commissioned an external evaluator/consultancy (predominantly universities), while in two cases the evaluator is a member of the consortium. A range of evaluation methods are being used including participant surveys, participatory approaches, interviews, case studies and other techniques such as social return on investment (SROI) analysis.

CPP programme reach and outcomes

In terms of process outcomes, all of the 21 places across the three programme rounds have completed the development phase (formulating partnerships and structures and consulting with the community), the planning phase, and are now in the delivery phase and implementing the planned events and activities. The delivery of activities overall appears to be on track, according to national strategic stakeholder and grant recipient interviewees as well as monitoring information submitted by the places. Round 1 places are now "in

communications. Chaired by AND and Woodhorn Museum. The group's remit includes support for programme evaluation, peer learning activity and communications.

the thick of it” and on schedule as they move towards the final stages of Phase 1. A number of Round 2 places are also progressing well but others described delays in implementing their work plans. As this was also the case with Round 1 places in 2014, there is now a greater acceptance among all involved of the time it takes to establish CPP local programmes because there is a better understanding of the hurdles places have to overcome in the initial period after funding is approved and the impact and outcomes of the national programme are being realised. The Round 3 places are just starting to deliver with some teams in place and recruitment ongoing, but certain projects are up and running with full programming planned for delivery in 2016.

A clear theme running through the progress reports, case studies and interviews is the continued importance of partnerships that places form, either as a consortium with non-arts organisations in the public, private and voluntary sector or with each other. Many but not all of the CPP places that appear to have strong and successful consortiums are being led by arts organisations. However, there are examples of successful consortiums being led by non-arts partners. What is clear is that a breadth of perspectives is important. At this stage in programme delivery, the early lessons from working in this way are being learnt and the advantages of a consortium approach to delivery are being realised. Arts Council England is now considering whether it would welcome a consortium approach on other programmes as a result of the success of CPP to date. Places’ partnerships with organisations beyond the arts sector are proving to be very important with regards to reaching audiences, pooling expertise, building capacity and achieved outcomes. Partnership activities between CPP places were more frequent and more formal in year two. During year two of the evaluation, the peer learning network has continued to provide a forum for places to come together to share learning.

The CPP programme has achieved more than one million ‘visitor/audience’⁷ engagements to September 2015. This figure includes participants and anyone who has engaged with the programme in some way. As places are only required to submit sample data, the actual reach of the programme will be greater. This, coupled with the Audience Agency findings⁸ that the majority of participants came from within the places and 90% were from medium to lower engagement groups (see Section 3.1.2 of the main report) makes a compelling case, which is supported by the findings of the qualitative research with national strategic stakeholders and sample of grant recipients.

Table 1 Cumulative figures for three indicators - Q3 2013/14 to Q2 2015/16

	Cumulative Totals
Number of activities/ events	1,599
Activity duration (hours)	39,187
Visitor/audience engagements (Inc. participants)	1,023,158

Round 1 places account for almost three quarters (72%) of the total achieved number of visitor/audience engagements and the same proportion of activities/events, based on analysis of the monitoring data which has been provided by the majority of places each quarter. Places have taken a variety of approaches to audience development ranging from grassroots or small scale participatory activities to targeted performances, co-creation, go see events and more broad reaching events and festivals. The evidence presented so far clearly demonstrates that places now have a better understanding of how to engage local audiences as shown by the reach of local programmes and the places’ confidence in their artistic offerings and appeal, as well as audience feedback. As in year one, the qualitative research identified that people are motivated to take part in the arts if the activities/events deal with issues that are relevant to their lives, their community or society as a whole. This year, there is more evidence of sustained engagement with the arts, although this remains an area where there is currently limited data available so little can be reported on the achievements of the national programme in this regard.

⁷ Places are asked to report data for a sample of ‘visitors/audience’ for quarterly monitoring.

⁸ The Audience Agency (April 2016) Creative People and Places Profiling and Mapping – Year 2 National Report (unpublished)

As would be expected, there is a much broader evidence base on which to assess the impact and outcomes of the CPP programme at the end of year two compared with year one when grant recipients (outside of Round 1) generally felt that it was too early to report on tangible outcomes. However, there is also acknowledgement among all involved in the CPP programme, that there is scope to improve how programme outcomes are captured and disseminated.

There are some common outcomes threads being evidenced, albeit on different scales. Firstly, CPP is shifting perceptions of artistic excellence among local communities and arts professionals in a number of ways. Individuals who have engaged with CPP have increased awareness of different art forms, altered and more positive perceptions of the arts. Communities now have more opportunities to participate in arts events and activities and by doing so their views on what art is and how good it is are changing. In the arts sector and beyond, CPP has altered people's perceptions of participatory art and the quality of the outputs these methods can produce. It is clear that CPP is increasing knowledge, confidence and empowerment among the individuals, groups and organisations involved. Furthermore, CPP is shifting perceptions of artistic excellence by demonstrating the transformative power of art, which in turn is changing the local context for the arts in CPP places. It also appears that the programme is shaping Arts Council England policies by showcasing different ways in which it is possible to deliver artistic excellence and by demonstrating a different leadership model.

Secondly, CPP consortiums are increasing capacity in the arts: by being a central point of contact for local communities, artists, and interested parties; supporting smaller organisations (both arts and non-arts); helping to professionalise practice; and supporting young people into employment in the creative industries – which collectively is helping to meet local needs and grow artistic ambitions.

The final common outcome thread relates to one of the intended impacts of the CPP programme longer term, which is an increased sense of community pride. The qualitative data collected for the evaluation in year two shows that the national programme is developing an increasing sense of community pride, moving beyond the small pockets of success that it achieved in this regard in year one.

CPP programme excellence and good practice

With no single definition of excellence that suits the range of contexts and approaches being developed, each CPP place has come up with its own definition or interpretation of what excellence is. Most places now have a firm grasp of what excellence looks like in the context of their own projects and how it might be achieved in practice. After much grappling with how to articulate, ensure and measure excellence, some of the earlier rounds of places are now beginning to evidence how excellence has been achieved within their own projects and have adopted their own approaches and principles which they believe will guide them towards achieving excellence within their projects.

What is emerging across CPP is a collection of different approaches to arts programming, different processes of community engagement and different impacts and outcomes that are each indicators of excellence. CPP has given places the opportunity to pilot different approaches in order to refine their approach for achieving excellence. While Arts Council England has not specified a quality framework for CPP, it has recommended that places obtain 360-degree feedback to create a holistic picture of excellence. However, so far there is limited evidence that places have adopted this approach.

Activities identified by interviewees as being innovative or successful in terms of engaging communities have been able to sustain the engagement of local communities over time and involved finding 'meaningful' and 'relevant ways to reach out to individuals that provide a variety of ways for people to engage and enable people to shape as well as to experience art.

CPP is increasingly being recognised for its excellence in art, which has not only raised the profile of CPP, but is having a positive impact on the sector too. There is some strong evidence that there are increased levels of confidence, recognition and ambition arising from the programme. It has enabled places to be more

artistically ambitious, which is a good indication of the progress made towards excellence and demonstrates that places have grown in confidence to be more innovative and risk-taking.

Year Two programme summary

Drawing on the available primary and secondary data, all of the short-term outcomes set out in the logic model are being achieved by the national programme – to varying degrees as would be expected. The success of places appears to be relative to the programme round in which they feature, the strength of their consortium, and the breadth of partnership working. However, it is still too early to make a full assessment of the progress of Round 3 places as some are yet to start to deliver their full programmes.

The short-term outcomes which the evidence suggests the programme is achieving overall are:

- More people engaged in, inspired by, and enjoying the arts (although despite the growing evidence base, data showing the extent to which these people are 'new' to the arts, engaging more than they did previously, or in fact are people who were already well engaged could still be strengthened through quarterly progress updates and the Audience Agency work).
- Increased understanding of the arts and the confidence to make informed choices.
- Increased excellence and innovation in the arts (including understanding what works well and less well).
- Increased capacity and capability in arts provision.
- Increased revenue for the arts (in a small number of places).
- Excellence in engaging and empowering communities.

Whilst the first outcome is stated as a short-term outcome in the logic model, it is also a key programme goal in terms of outcomes that contribute to sustainability (in the medium and longer-term).

Some of the Round 1 and 2 places are also demonstrating good progress towards the programme's medium term outcomes; creative people; sustained and informed arts participation irrespective of circumstances and background (building on their achievements in year one) and building the foundations for creative places; sustainable arts and cultural provision.

Lessons learned

Many of the lessons learned in year two build upon the same themes arising in year one (partnership formation, planning phase, delivery phase, monitoring and evaluation, and sustainability). The lessons from the first round of CPP places have allowed later rounds to learn from their experiences, which has enabled some Round 2 and 3 places to hit the ground running and progress at a faster pace, albeit one which still involved spending time going through the business planning process for places to be ready to deliver CPP activities and events.

- There is greater acceptance that partnership formation can take longer than some may anticipate which will ultimately have an impact on the outcomes and how these can be evidenced within the timeframe for the national evaluation. It is therefore important to ensure that the local evaluations are in a position to capture this effectively, especially as Round 3 places have higher income targets. Places need to make sure partners have the capacity to commit to the consortium, work together to establish and maintain trust, and are flexible enough to respond and develop as the programme progresses.
- As in year one, the amount of time involved in the planning stages has been greater than anticipated; therefore a lot the evidence of outcomes has come from Round 1 and some Round 2 places. It is important that places strike a good balance in relation to time and capacity for planning and implementation.

- Allowing sufficient time to engage and involve local people in the planning and/or delivery process is another lesson learned. In year two, there are now some good examples of a variety of different approaches which have been successful in securing community engagement (see Section 4 of the main report). However, it is still too early to say whether the evidenced outcomes have been sustained and translated into longer term change. Moreover, it is not possible for the evaluation to examine all approaches in detail. Therefore Arts Council England needs to ensure that CPP places are prepared and ready to capture and share the successes and challenges of their projects. Having time to reflect and respond is key.
- Local context and project management are different in each place and some are more complex than others. This is an area where further work and learning would be beneficial to better understand what facilitates and hinders progress, and what challenges could be potentially averted based on the lessons from other places.
- Whilst improvements have been made in relation to the collation and reporting of excellence and good practice, there is a need for more places to gather full 360-degree feedback to strengthen the evidence base, showcase examples and contribute to peer learning.
- Mechanisms for peer learning are working better in year two and should continue to support further development of the evidence and new knowledge base.
- Around two-thirds of places were in a position to share local place evaluation outputs for review; therefore learning in relation to the effectiveness of local place evaluation approaches and methods was limited for some areas.
- There is insufficient evidence from across the whole programme that CPP places have made significant progress in relation to sustainability planning from year one. However, some places are actively pursuing opportunities. It is clear that places are seeking to move towards sustainability in partnership, developing an ethos of collective responsibility for sustainability.

Conclusions

The CPP programme is succeeding in its aim to engage and inspire more people from places of least engagement in the arts. The reason why programme reach is increasing is in no small part due to the range of methods places are using to create art and the quality of the resulting art they deliver.

At the end of year one, the need to better understand audiences was identified by national strategic stakeholders as a key challenge for the programme. One year on, it is clear that places are meeting this challenge. CPP is enabling places and partners to test different approaches to community engagement that is a catalyst for creativity, and artists and communities are learning from each other. The evidence base for excellence is too much stronger than at the end of year one but it tends to come from the same small number of Round 1 and 2 places and so there is clearly more that other places could do to record and share their achievements with the wider CPP programme network and beyond. All those involved with CPP appear to agree that the programme has so far succeeded in developing a “more healthy arts ecology”, which the quantitative data is starting to support to some extent. There was a common perception amongst national strategic stakeholder interviewees that the same outcomes would not have been achieved without the CPP programme, and definitely not at the same scale.

Central to this success are strong partnerships working collectively to change and evolve and respond to local needs and demands. There appears to have been a shift from places not seeing arts and culture as what they do to being a critical part of what they do. However, there were some concerns that CPP has not engaged as well as it might with existing arts providers which may have caused some tensions and could be improved upon in future. At this stage in programme delivery it appears timely to take stock of local CPP partnerships, building on the research completed to date and with sustainability in mind.

Next steps

In the third and final year of the evaluation, Ecorys will continue with each of the following tasks, whilst liaising with the national steering group and drawing on outputs from the other evaluation strands to produce the final evaluation report in January 2017:

- continue to review quarterly monitoring data and provide quarterly progress updates (July, October 2016 and January 2017);
- the meta-evaluation will continue to review available local place evaluation documents (e.g. annual reports/reviews, research at specific events, audience analysis or lessons learned documents) using a pro-forma which provides a framework for undertaking a consistent assessment of the quality of these outputs and extracting relevant information for the national evaluation (Autumn/Winter 2016);
- five further case studies will be set up to explore different themes and the work of other places in more depth. As before, the focus and location of the case studies will be agreed in conjunction with the national steering group (completed throughout 2016);
- a sample of grant recipients and national strategic stakeholders will be interviewed again to explore progress and achievements, building on the evidence base gathered to date. Interviews will explore a range of themes including peer learning (completed throughout 2016).