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# CREATIVE AND PEOPLE PLACES

## END OF YEAR 1 REPORT

Process, progress and emerging outcomes



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*Photo credits (front cover)*

*LeftCoast (Blackpool and Wyre): SpareParts Festival. Photo courtesy of LeftCoast*

*Appetite (Stoke-on-Trent): As the World Tipped. Photo: Andrew Billington*

*Right Up Our Street (Doncaster): Only Water Between Play at Balby Community Library. Photo: James Mulkeen*

# Executive Summary

## Introduction

A core ambition for the Arts Council England 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 (CPP) programme aims to support this ambition by providing investment in 21 places<sup>1</sup> where people's involvement in the arts is significantly below the national average, with the aim of increasing the likelihood of participation.

The Arts Council has invested around £37 million across the three funding rounds. Only places which appeared in the bottom 20% of adult arts participation<sup>2</sup> were able to apply for funding. The first round of CPP Places<sup>3</sup> were announced in June 2012 (7 places), the second in May 2013 (11 places) and the third in May 2014 (3 places).

## CPP national evaluation

The Arts Council commissioned A New Direction (AND)<sup>4</sup> to manage the programme evaluation on behalf of all of the CPP areas. This is the first time that the Arts Council has outsourced its evaluation as a discrete commission, which is managed by a steering group of place representatives with the Arts Council's input.

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: 3 thematic studies to explore emergent themes around practice and process in greater depth; The CPP Story, a creative commission presented through writing and illustration; 3 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 first annual report of the 3 year national evaluation commission, which sets out the story of the CPP programme and its achievements to December 2014. It focusses on the process of establishing programmes in the places and includes a spotlight on data from Quarter 1 2014-15 collected as part of the quarterly monitoring process. This quarter is the first period where the majority of Round 1 and 2 places were set up and all Round 1 places were in the delivery phase. At time of writing this was the most complete data set to date<sup>5</sup>, allowing a glimpse of how places are starting to develop their programmes in their areas and some of the early outcomes.



*Hounslow Creative People and Places (Hounslow):  
Family Beatboxing Workshop with Maxwell  
Golden at the Watermans Fun Palaces.  
Photo courtesy of Watermans*

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

<sup>2</sup> According to the Active People Survey

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

<sup>4</sup> AND is a consortium member of CPP Barking and Dagenham in London

<sup>5</sup> Places are given two quarters grace to submit completed data returns, e.g. The deadline for CPP places to report Q1 data to the Arts Council was October 2014 and all data was analysed for this report in December 2014.

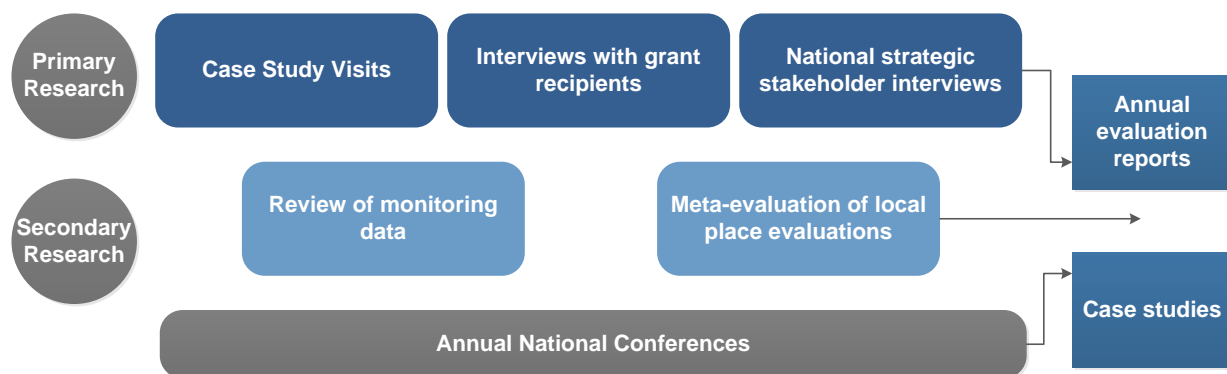


The aim of the overarching programme evaluation is to understand what worked and what did not work in the programme and to capture lessons to inform the work of the sector, with an emphasis on generating new knowledge in terms of engaging communities in the arts and culture and sharing this with practitioners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

- 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 lessons were learned?

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<sup>6</sup>. 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 will test 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 outputs<sup>7</sup>.

## Methodology



The tasks completed in the first year of the evaluation included:

- **Review of quarterly monitoring and narrative reports** submitted by places to the Arts Council
- **Appraisal and synthesis of programme documents**
- **Meta-evaluation of available local place evaluation documents**
- Semi structured interviews with grant recipients from CPP management teams in 18 places and 8 national strategic stakeholders from the Arts Council and AND
- **3 qualitative case studies** focussed on particular themes and levels to explore aspects of CPP places' activities in detail with core team members and participants/beneficiaries: partnership working and governance in Blackpool and Wyre, and contrasting community engagement approaches in Doncaster and Stoke-on-Trent. In order to provide a range of perspectives and levels of analysis, each case study focuses on one of three levels: the place as a whole (Blackpool and Wyre), a specific event/activity (Stoke-on-Trent) or an individual participant (or group of participants (Doncaster)).<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Creative People and Places: End of Year 1 Report – Process, Progress and Emerging Outcomes.

<sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>8</sup> For details please see the case studies (<http://creativepeopleplaces.org.uk>)

## CPP structure

To apply for the CPP programme, places had to set up consortiums of around five organisations with at least one to be drawn from the local community and one organisation designated as the lead (this could not be the local authority). These arrangements were designed to encourage partnership working between different types of organisations with an interest in the arts, to oversee the development of plans and, if successful in their application, to implement programme delivery.

On average, places have between three and six consortium partners (plus the lead organisation).

Consortium partners are mostly arts organisations, local authorities' arts and culture departments or similar and voluntary/community sector bodies (predominantly representative bodies like local voluntary sector councils or youth focused organisations). Some consortium partners also include housing associations, sports organisations, venues and visitor attractions, NHS, police and a church.

CPP Places are supported by a national peer learning network to explore specific themes within their programmes and practices through regular networking events for place directors, project staff, and critical friends. Places also use Basecamp as a forum for discussion and sharing learning.

Each place has had an Arts Council Relationship Manager to work with them from an early stage to provide support with aspects such as partnership development and creation of a workable and realistic business plan. The Relationship Manager also has an important ongoing role, holding quarterly meetings, reviewing monitoring information, overseeing draw-down of funding and supporting the area to deliver against the agreed business plan.

CPP places are each required to undertake a local place evaluation in addition to their quarterly monitoring requirements. By December 2014, all 7 Round 1 places had an evaluator in place. Only 2 of 11 places in Round 2 had established arrangements for local place evaluation although plans were in development. None of the Round 3 places had set out plans for evaluation as the business plans were yet to be signed off. Each place is expected to recruit a critical friend (professional in arts and academic research) to provide support and challenge around local place evaluation. In practice, the role of the critical friend has become slightly broader in some places, including advising on artistic excellence for example.

The evaluation, peer learning and communications activity is governed by a steering group consisting of the Arts Council, representatives from CPP places (including evaluation managers, project directors, and a critical friend) and network coordinators with responsibility for national programme evaluation, peer learning and communications – each managed externally by a partner in one of the CPP places (AND and Woodhorn Museum). The CPP Network Steering Group meets quarterly and monitors the central budget and programmes of activity of the network coordinators.



*Roots and Wings (Kingston upon Hull): Spellbound at Freedom Festival. Photo: Thomas Arran*

## Programme outputs and emerging outcomes

As at December 2014, all of Round 1 and 2 places were in the delivery phase, while Round 3 places were waiting for business plans to be signed off. As some places were still developing evaluation and monitoring processes, evidence of outcomes is largely based on the qualitative perspectives of interviewees.

### Outputs

The CPP programme has engaged over 108,000 physical visitors/audience between October 2013 and June 2014<sup>9</sup>, based on sample data that places submitted to the Arts Council for that period (see Table 1.1)<sup>10</sup>. This sample data is cumulative and therefore may include repeat attendances, which cannot be determined from the monitoring form.

#### Physical visitors/audience figures by quarter and in total up to Quarter 1 2014/2015<sup>11</sup>

	Q1 2014/2015	Q4 2013/2014	Q3 2013/2014	Total number of visitors
Number of visitors	46,551 (13 places)	58,865 (8 places) <sup>12</sup>	3,404 (4 places)	108,820

### Spotlight on Q1 2014/15

A focus on the most complete quarterly data set at time of writing (Q1 2014/15) shows that **164 activities were reported by 13 places in Rounds 1 and 2**. Almost half (**49%**) of recorded activities took the form of **visual arts**, followed by theatre (31%) and music (25%). Digital arts (4%) and museum/gallery (7%) were the least evident art forms.

**Just under three quarters (73%) of activities were targeted at a 'general' audience** meaning that at that stage in their programmes places were broadly targeting large numbers of people from around their local area rather than focussing on smaller, more specific target groups. However, some small pockets of targeted activity was also taking place.

**Insufficient data was provided for this quarter for audience/visitor demographics, including previous engagement with the arts and postcode analysis.** Therefore at the time of reporting it was not clear who the programme has so far successfully engaged or whether these people are relatively new to the arts for example. The quality and completeness of places' monitoring data is expected to improve over time<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> The deadline for CPP places to report Q1 data to the Arts Council was October 2014; therefore this report is not able to provide the most up-to-date picture of progress and achievements at this stage of programme delivery due to time lags in reporting and submission.

<sup>10</sup> Data was a combination of 'actual', 'estimates' and 'mixed' for different activities.

<sup>11</sup> This table does not include data provided for Q2 2013-14 because it was collected differently using an earlier version of the quarterly monitoring form provided by the Arts Council.

<sup>12</sup> This figure includes Swale and Medway's reporting on audience figures for the whole of Year 1 which we are unable to disaggregate by quarter because the original form was used (which was later adapted). Therefore this figure is very high in comparison to other quarters.

<sup>13</sup> AND has commissioned the Audience Agency to analyse and profile places' participant postcodes which will help places with this and also help to provide a national picture of the profile of participant using Audience Spectrum and Mosaic. Ecorys will draw on the outputs from this commission, where available, during reporting periods.

## Overall outcomes

Looking across all of the available evidence from the primary and secondary research in year 1, **fair progress is being made overall towards the achievement of many of the short term outcomes** set out in the programme logic model:

- More people engaged in, inspired by, and enjoying the arts (although the extent to which these people are 'new' to the arts, people who now engage regularly when they did not previously, or in fact are people who were already well engaged but are being engaged in the arts more often is as yet unknown).
- 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.
- Excellence in engaging and empowering communities.

There is evidence of **good progress being made in some places**, particularly in relation to programme reach, community engagement and empowerment (including success in engaging volunteers as community catalysts/connectors), diverse partnerships, and projects which demonstrate the power of the arts to make positive change.

Based on their perceptions and the information gathered through local place evaluations, interviewees who reported **outcomes for participants** highlighted benefits including (in brief); **new opportunities to meet people; increased confidence in commenting on and making artistic decisions; increased understanding of the arts; and higher aspirations to engage with and enjoy the arts, changing attitudes towards the arts** in the short-term at least. Anecdotally, communities were said to be benefitting in terms of increased awareness of local arts opportunities and increased sense of pride of place.

In the majority of places it was too early to assess excellence in the process of community engagement, however 2 of the 3 case studies found evidence to demonstrate the success of very different approaches to engagement (Doncaster and Stoke-on-Trent – see case studies). The peer learning network has proved so far to be a popular and effective method of sharing learning but the interview findings suggested that more could be done to learn lessons and experiment further with regards to programme excellence in the future.

The exception for the majority of places is in the achievement of the short term outcome of increased revenue for the arts. This evidence is generally lacking from the financial information provided to the evaluation team to date. It should be noted that Rounds 1 and 2 were only required to generate 10% match funding, which could include in-kind support. The proportion increased to 25% match funding for Round 3.

Some of the Round 1 places are also demonstrating good progress towards one of the programme's **medium term outcomes**, which is creative people; sustained and informed arts participation irrespective of circumstances and background. What is as yet unknown is the extent to which places are becoming creative places i.e. able to offer sustainable arts and cultural provision. While the evaluation interviews, review of programme documents and quarterly monitoring returns indicated that sustainability was high on the agenda, **in practice progress towards securing the continuation of the programme's achievements beyond the 3 year funding was variable**. However, some places have begun to explore other opportunities for funding: extending partnerships with local



*Appetite (Stoke-on-Trent): Haka Day Out, The Big Feast. Photo: Clara Lou Photography*



industries and practitioners from other sectors (e.g. health); growing audiences and local buy-in; building capacity (e.g. by looking at training needs); considering incorporating a community arm of management; and exploring opportunities for shared venues.

### *Evidence from the meta-evaluation*

In the period **up until December 2014, four places provided evaluation outputs for review as part of the meta-evaluation** of local programme evaluations (which provides an assessment of their quality and relevance to the key research questions of the national evaluation). The outputs concerned were accessible and well-grounded and were transparent about the research process used.

- The main focus was research question 1 around participation. Local place evaluations provided evidence to suggest that some targets were being met and exceeded and that people new to the arts were being engaged.
- Research question 2 (excellence) has not yet been considered in detail mirroring the interview findings which suggested that many places were still considering how best to define artistic excellence in local CPP programmes.
- Research question 3 on the identification of successes and lessons has been explored to varying degrees in local place evaluations to date.

### **Reflections on programme set up and delivery to December 2014**

According to grant recipient, national strategic stakeholder and case study interviewees, it appears that most CPP places are broadly on track with delivery. However, the amount of time involved in the planning stages has been greater than anticipated and places have made variable progress against the original work plans, which has had implications for programme delivery and evaluation.

The funding application and business planning stages were more involved and challenging than some grant recipients had anticipated but interviewees in most places found the process relatively straightforward.

Several grant recipients and national strategic stakeholders said that despite being time and resource intensive to set up, the process of developing varied consortiums with a wide range of arts and non-arts partners has brought new opportunities and helped to change attitudes among some participating organisations. Additionally the broad range of sectors involved in the consortiums represents a shift for the Arts Council, which is for the first time making links with and resourcing new organisations from outside of the arts to deliver on its goals, where it had previously only supported the arts sector.

When asked for their views on the effectiveness of the Arts Council Relationship Manager role, grant recipients had mixed experiences. However, we are aware that attempts have been made to address these issues since the interviews were undertaken. Where it worked well, Relationship Managers were said to be clear and supportive in their guidance but inconsistent messaging in the early phases of the programme brought a lack of clarity to other places.

The role of the critical friend has been implemented differently in places with some focussing as the Arts Council intended on local programme evaluation, which was said to be useful. A broader interpretation of the role in other areas has generated mixed views regarding the usefulness. On the one hand it offered places more flexibility to tailor the role to their needs, while on the other hand, some interviewees implied that local place evaluation would suffer without that support.

Across the programme, there was broad agreement that the programme's achievements must be considered in terms of the local context in which it operates. While this was not a specific focus of the national evaluation per se (the focus being governed by the 3 overarching research questions), the specifics of place and its people and the programme's ability to meet the needs of the local context is important to its success, whilst also striving for outputs that are high quality and challenge expectations.

## Successful approaches

**Programming extraordinary art in an ordinary place.** Across the board, the evidence collated and analysed for the evaluation demonstrates that when people are exposed to new and what is perceived to be high quality art in a space that is familiar to them they do become engaged, and often inspired by what they see, which can in turn lead to their continued participation in the arts, although the strength of the evidence base for sustained engagement in particular was somewhat unclear at this early stage of programme delivery and evaluation. Examples of successful approaches to programming art in an ordinary place are provided in the full report, including classical performances in people's living rooms. In year 2 the evaluation will seek to explore the impact and outcomes of these approaches.

**Developing partnerships with non-arts organisations.** To make extraordinary art possible in locations that are familiar to participants, reach new audiences and increase capacity and capability in arts provision, places have created partnerships with both arts and non-arts organisations.

**Sharing contacts and experiences to maximise learning at a local, regional and national level.** The qualitative evidence suggests that efforts to share learning have so far been beneficial; and therefore should continue in years 2 and 3 to help with programme delivery and improve impact and outcomes. The national peer learning network has received some very positive feedback at a national and local level. Some CPP Places have formalised similar arrangements locally, which in one place was considered to be invaluable as a way of getting local people involved in decision making and bringing together a mixed panel.

**Demonstrating the success of approaches by developing and disseminating the evidence base.** Places that are further ahead in programme delivery and have integrated programme evaluation are able to demonstrate the impact and effectiveness of their work to date (4 places shared evaluation outputs), which in turn is helping to answer the research questions for the national evaluation. Within the local place evaluation work there are some good examples on which to build.

## Lessons learned and suggestions for the future

During the first year, CPP Places have taken considerable steps toward the engagement and establishment of partnerships for the management and delivery of programmes that are relevant to the local context. A set of lessons learnt across the programme from year 1 are summarised thematically. The full report includes related tips put forward by grant recipient interviewees for practitioners and programmers working in similar contexts

### *Partnership formation*

- The qualitative evidence and monitoring information provided by CPP places indicates that some places have created new and exciting partnerships that have potential to achieve real and positive change in terms of engaging more people in the arts and inspiring audiences to re-engage in the arts, for example. But the process of establishing robust partnerships can be time consuming and it is challenging to achieve a common purpose across sectors and specialisms and local interests. At the time of writing, **relatively little is known about how effectively partners across the programme are coming together to create a vision and deliver activity. This needs to be addressed if new places and other practitioners are to benefit from the lessons learned about partnership working by Round 1 and Round 2 places.**

## *Planning phase*

- The **amount of time involved in the planning stages has been greater than anticipated**, even for grant recipients who found the application process relatively straightforward. This has led to **slower than anticipated progress with programme delivery, local place evaluation and achievement of early outcomes**. There are also implications for the national evaluation as the evidence base on which to draw is less extensive than might have been expected at this stage.

## *Delivery phase*

- **Allowing sufficient time to engage and involve local people in the planning and/or delivery process** is a lesson learned. However, it is too early to assess how effective methods put in place to achieve excellence in community engagement have been across the programme as a whole.
- The qualitative research carried out in year one of the evaluation found that **more guidance on the concept of artistic excellence for the CPP programme would be beneficial**, particularly as grant recipients' views on the appropriateness of the level of support they have received in this regard were mixed.
- There is a **need to establish guidance and/or a system for assessing and reporting on good practice** as although places are required to submit case studies to Culture Hive (<http://culturehive.co.uk/><sup>14</sup>), this is not yet happening and will become increasingly important in the future.
- While there is evidence to suggest that mechanisms for places to share learning are working well, according to some interviewees, **insufficient lessons are being learnt from the past**. The qualitative research this year has focussed on understanding lessons learnt from the process of becoming a CPP place, and therefore little is known regarding how well places are learning lessons from the past but this will be explored in year 2.

## *Monitoring and evaluation*

- Nationally Arts Council monitoring templates provide the framework for narrative and data returns detailing progress in key areas and outputs in the delivery phase. Over time these templates are bringing greater consistency to CPP places' reporting as the Arts Council has responded to feedback and places have become increasingly familiar with the requirements. However, as **some definitions are not provided in the guidance** (e.g. volunteers, networking), places have made various interpretations or left these fields blank, **which has brought challenges and limitations to local monitoring and evaluation, and for the national evaluation**. The national evaluation will seek to achieve an agreed definition with the Arts Council going forwards.
- At the point of reporting, only four places were in a position to share local place evaluation outputs for review; **learning in relation to the effectiveness of local place evaluation approaches and methods was therefore limited**. The outputs included evaluation questions that reflected the 3 overarching programme evaluation questions suggesting that the designs are fit for purpose in terms of contributing to the national evaluation. **Places are encouraged to learn from this first report and their peers together with the local expertise that is in place to produce and share outputs for review in year 2.**

<sup>14</sup> A resource by AMA for the arts sector

## Sustainability

- The grant recipient interviews found **variable progress in terms of planning for sustainability** as might be expected at this point in the overall programme delivery. While some places appeared to have placed sustainability at the centre of their approach and decision making processes, other places were still at the early stages of thinking about how sustainability might be addressed. **Therefore some places are ahead of others and all places need to push forward with planning for sustainability.**

## Next steps for the evaluation

In year 2:

- Ecorys will **continue to review quarterly monitoring data** and provide quarterly progress updates.
- 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.
- 4 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 Network Steering Group.
- A **sample of grant recipients and national strategic stakeholders** will be interviewed again towards the end of the year to explore progress and achievements, building on the evidence base gathered to date. Interviews will explore a range of themes including peer learning.

Overall, there will be a move away from process issues towards the impact and outcomes of the programme, including further exploration of approaches that are considered to be good practice, unpicking the building blocks for success, together with analysis of the extent to which these examples reflect the breadth of programme delivery as outlined in local area business plans. In assessing impact the evaluation will dig deeper to further substantiate the assertions set out in this report, whether and how any outcomes have been achieved as a result of the programme and for whom.

It is intended that, in the end of year 2 report the evaluation will showcase what works and why for different aspects of programme delivery and for different art forms, and consider how different aspects of approaches/models might be replicated (e.g. approach to community engagement) while being mindful of the local context in which they currently operate.



# 1.0 Introduction

This is the first of three annual evaluation reports which sets out the story of the CPP programme and its achievements to December 2014. The evidence presented is drawn from a range of sources. These include: programme documentation; quarterly monitoring reports submitted to the Arts Council England; local place evaluation outputs; and qualitative data collected through interviews with national strategic stakeholders at the Arts Council and AND, grant recipients, teams in the case study places; and participants (see 1.4 for more details). The report focusses on the process of establishing programmes in the CPP Places and includes a spotlight on data from Quarter 1 (Q1) 2014-15 collected as part of the quarterly monitoring process. This is the first quarter where the majority of Places were set up and in the delivery phase. At the time of writing this was the most complete data set to date, allowing a glimpse of how places are starting to develop their programmes in their areas and some of the early outcomes.

Local programmes in receipt of CPP grant awards are named by their region/place name throughout the report, and referred to as 'places' in a national context. They are identified by name in illustrative examples of activities and emerging good practice (the latter is based on the perceptions of interviewees). Interviewees' views on issues affecting the effectiveness of programme delivery are anonymised. Organised around three core evaluation questions, the report provides an evidence base on which to build – highlighting important learning to inform programme delivery and the focus of the evaluation in years 2 and 3.

This section provides some background to the Creative People and Places (CPP) programme and the national evaluation.

## 1.1 Creative People and Places Programme

A core ambition for the Arts Council is for more people to experience and be inspired by the arts, irrespective of where they live or their social, educational, or financial circumstances. 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.

In addition, the programme aims to empower communities to take the lead in shaping local arts provision and encourage long-term collaborations between arts organisations, museums, libraries, local authorities, the private sector and communities to develop inspiring programmes that people want to get involved in. Alongside this, the programme aims to learn lessons in relation to providing excellence in art, engaging communities and establishing sustainable arts and cultural opportunities. The Arts Council's vision for CPP funding is set out in full in the box below.



*baft (SE Northumberland): Audiences at the 150<sup>th</sup> Northumberland Miners' Picnic at Woodhorn Museum, 2014. Photo: KG Photography*

## CPP vision

- More people from places of least engagement to experience and be inspired by the arts.
- Communities to be empowered to take the lead in shaping local arts provision.
- The aspiration for excellence to be central to the activity that is supported (both excellence of art and excellence of the process of engaging communities).
- Lessons to be learned from past experiences and an environment to be created where the sector can experiment with new approaches to engaging communities.
- Lessons to be learned about how to establish sustainable arts and cultural opportunities which is made freely available across the cultural sector.
- Partnerships across the subsidised, amateur and commercial sectors to be encouraged.
- Projects to demonstrate the power of the arts to enrich the lives of individuals and make positive changes in communities.

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



*Creative Black County (Black Country): launch event. Photo by JA Digital Media*

The first round of places were announced in June 2012, the second in May 2013 and the third in May 2014 resulting in funding for a total of 21 places. The Arts Council has invested around £37 million across the three funding rounds (see Annex 1: CPP Places and funding rounds).



Only places which appeared in the bottom 20 % of adult arts participation according to the Active People Survey were able to apply for funding. Between 2008 and 2010, the Active People Survey provided the Arts Council with local authority level data on arts participation which enabled them to adopt a more focused approach to increasing participation by designing the CPP programme to target areas that had been found to have the lowest levels of engagement, rather than identifying areas using a proxy measure such as deprivation which was not necessarily correlated.

CPP was designed to test “truly joint” approaches to increasing people’s engagement with the arts through the requirement for places to work as cross-sector partnerships and to “discover latent talent”, based on the principles of action research to engage communities in planning and delivering activities. At the same time, CPP aims to deliver on the Arts Council’s mission of ‘great art for everyone’. The extent to which some places have chosen to aim for maximum programme reach while other places have focussed on producing high quality art is explored in sections 3 and 4 of this report which examine programme reach and excellence in detail.



*Ideas Test (Swale and Medway): Flying Fun Palace in Sheppey. Photo: Hope Fitzgerald*

Sustainability of activity is a key concern and, although funding is only guaranteed for three years, the Arts Council has encouraged the development of a ten year vision for the places. In interviews with national strategic stakeholders it was mentioned that communities should also be involved in observing and reflecting on progress and achievements with the aim of helping to shape programme delivery and sustaining community participation in the arts over time.

CPP was described by one national strategic stakeholder as the “key plank” around which the Arts Council seeks to explore and bring change in relation to its Goal 2 (more people experience and are inspired by the arts). Through the delivery of CPP, the Arts Council and partners are seeking to develop links with related programmes to amplify the reach and outcomes. These include: the Arts Council’s National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) programme that supports a wide variety of organisations and art forms to deliver the Arts Council’s strategic vision of great art for everyone; Bridge Organisations that use their experience and expertise to connect children and young people, schools and communities with art and culture; the Strategic Touring Programme which brings high quality art to places which rely on touring for much of their arts provision in particular; Creative Apprenticeships through the Creative Employment Programme; and Creative Destinations investment to increase tourism engagement (national strategic stakeholder interviews).

There are also links with other arts programmes outside of the Arts Council, such as the Paul Hamlyn Artworks programme, which supports the professional development of artists working in participatory settings. At a local level, some CPP places are developing connections with programmes that support other, wider agendas. For example, South East Northumberland has created a partnership with the health sector which is creating multiple pathways for people to take part in the arts. This and other examples are discussed further in section 3.4 in relation to programme sustainability.



## 1.2 CPP programme structure

### 1.2.1 Arts Council

As noted, the CPP programme was conceived by the Arts Council as a way to focus increased investment in parts of the country where engagement with the arts is significantly below the national average. Each CPP area was provided with a Relationship Manager to work with them from an early stage to provide support with aspects such as partnership development and creation of a workable and realistic business plan. The Relationship Manager also has an important ongoing role, holding quarterly meetings, reviewing monitoring information, overseeing draw-down of funding and supporting the area to deliver against the agreed business plan.

### 1.2.2 CPP Partnerships and Governance

A key aim for the programme is to encourage partnership working between different types of organisations across different sectors, with an interest in the arts and working in different ways within the community. This could include subsidised, amateur and commercial organisations.

Places were required to set up consortiums, a group of organisations working together to apply for the grant, oversee the development of plans and if successful, to implement programme delivery. The programme guidance stipulated that consortiums must consist of around five organisations with at least one member to be drawn from the local community and one organisation designated as the lead (not necessarily from an arts background). Consortiums were not to be led by a local authority, stepping away from previous funding models. The ambition is that, consortiums act as action research partnerships (see 1.2.6). The outcomes of action research will receive greater focus in year two of the evaluation.

A review of place-level documentation suggests that the majority of lead partners are arts organisations, although museums and other cultural organisations play a lead role in some areas with the public and education sectors also represented.

Although there are a wide range of different consortium partners, most are arts organisations, local authorities and voluntary/community sector bodies. Local authority involvement comes from arts and culture departments (or similar) and community and voluntary sector partners are predominantly either representative bodies like local voluntary sector councils or youth focused organisations. Consortium partners also include organisations such as local partnerships; housing associations; NHS; police; churches and venues/visitor attractions. On average, places have between three and six consortium partners (not including the lead organisation).

The broad range of sectors involved in the consortiums represents a shift for the Arts Council, who is for the first time making links with and resourcing new organisations from outside of the arts to deliver on its goals, where it had previously only supported the arts sector.

The business plans confirm that all areas share a long-term vision to make a long-lasting impact with regards to arts engagement and participation in their local areas. More specifically, aims can typically be categorised into two themes:

- People: CPP areas aim to increase arts participation, through improved provision of arts opportunities and, in turn, inspire people through arts and help to increase understanding of the value of arts.
- Places: CPP areas aim to strengthen arts provision by building an understanding of what approaches work well (and less well). They also aim to develop and build the capacity of professional and amateur arts organisations, also to build relationships and empower communities.

Business plans provide more detail about governance structures and arrangements, such as appointed directors, nominated staff, board members, working groups, sub-committees, partnership agreements and legal structures. The majority of places appear to have established some form of steering group led by the lead organisation or an appointed project director. These groups/panels are responsible for setting the strategic direction, design and delivery of the programme. Some places also have an advisory group that acts as representative of the users of the project and tend to be comprised of a broad range community members/groups and wider national strategic stakeholders.

Places use a combination of written narrative and data reporting to monitor their progress quarterly, which is a stipulation of the Arts Council. The information provided in the narrative quarterly reports suggests that a good deal of time has been invested in establishing the necessary governance frameworks and structures, and also the recruitment of key staff. However, monitoring data for Q1 2014/15 (which is the main source of data for this report because it offers the most complete dataset at the time of writing) indicates that five places experienced challenges as a result of the loss of key partners or members of staff, which often led to a need for further recruitment efforts. Such issues affecting the progress of local programmes are explored further in section 2.1.

Available monitoring information suggests that consortium meetings were held at least quarterly, with Round 2 places more likely to hold meetings more frequently at this stage. **Attendance at consortium meetings was reported to be good, generally between 70 and 100%.**

### 1.2.3 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 200 subscribers). 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 (part time role primarily to facilitate learning within the network). National peer learning events up until January 2015 have focussed on the themes of communications, monitoring and evaluation, and sustainability. There were also two Project Director Days (June and October 2014). Project Director Days happen three times a year and bring together CPP leaders who make-up the national network. Together these different aspects of peer learning support action research in the places; reflections on the effectiveness of these different aspects are provided in the remainder of this report. In addition the CPP programme aspires for places to share learning with the wider sector by disseminating learning and good practice through for example, case studies, conferences and articles. The extent to which the evidence suggests that this is happening so far is discussed in sections four and five.

### 1.2.4 Community involvement

Community engagement and involvement is an important aspect of the CPP vision. Monitoring information suggests that places are generally using a combination of different approaches to engage local communities, including marketing, audience development, arts education, participatory arts, community development and networks/partnerships. Areas also recognise the importance of developing a strong communication strategy to maximise the profile and reach of their activity.

Places have reported direct community involvement in planning of activity, selection of commissions and management. Communities have been engaged both as individuals and representative groups (e.g. youth clubs and special interest groups). In section 4, the report sets out how places are involving local communities and assesses the extent to which excellence has so far been achieved in the process. Although at this stage the analysis is predominantly descriptive, drawing on national strategic stakeholder and grant recipient interviewees' perceptions and the case study areas where we were able to explore community involvement in more depth.

### 1.2.5 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 (see 2.3). The majority of places now have a critical friend in place. 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. Interestingly, in practice, the role of the critical friend has been slightly broader than the Arts Council's original definition of this role, the nature and success of which is explored in section 2.1.

### 1.2.6 Local Place Evaluation

CPP areas are also required to undertake a local place evaluation. The grant recipient interviews suggest that all (seven) Round 1 places have put evaluation arrangements in place. There is a more mixed picture at Round 2 where only two places (of 11) had an evaluator in place at the end of 2014, while a further three places were working on the evaluation specification and one place was in the process of developing a partnership with their evaluator. At the time of writing, the business plans for Round 3 places had not yet been signed off therefore none of the three Round 3 places had an evaluator in place or had developed the specification for this work.

Where evaluators are in place, most places have commissioned an external evaluator/consultancy. Two places describe being part of research partnerships, for example working with support from a local university. Broadly, the evaluation questions are structured around the three main programme evaluation questions (see section 1.3) with locally specific angles, for example giving particular focus to the quality of the art and experience. Furthermore, some places have described additional evaluation questions, such as to what extent the programme is starting to be shaped by ambition of people that live in the area and what is the impact on the programme on people's sense of wellbeing? One place, which is in the process of revising its evaluation questions, plans to include something on how effectively they have engaged with the arts voluntary sector and created an independent arts sector and different models for arts engagement, including a particular focus on isolated urban areas. A couple of places made reference to the programme-level theory of change/logic model (see 1.3), using this as a framework to reflect on progress throughout delivery.

Those grant recipients that have appointed evaluators are making good progress, having developed and made use of their existing monitoring tools (e.g. attendance sheets, feedback forms, questionnaire, case studies, interviews, focus groups etc.). Some grant recipients are collecting/or plan to collect additional monitoring information and are using a variety of different evaluation methods such as ethnographic film making, action research, social media and bespoke models to capture detailed information on audience profiles, feedback, attitudes towards art, and ways of measuring the monetary value of jobs created and volunteer time.

In addition to collecting the monitoring data required by the Arts Council, some places are using audience profiling tools (such as Audience Finder) to provide additional insights. Some grant recipients have worked with their local place evaluation partners to develop different ways to measure outcomes, including bespoke surveys. St Helens and their evaluation partner University of Central Lancashire are looking into psycho-social models to draw out the impacts in a slightly different way, but will equally ensure that they capture softer outcomes. South East Northumberland is using the WEMWBS (Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale) in a number of their projects to ascertain the impact on people's wellbeing from taking part. **The data from this shows a positive impact, as there has been an increase in people's sense of wellbeing for all participants that have taken part in a project over 10 to 12 weeks.**

Only a couple of places have or plan to do a survey of beneficiaries at this stage, although some places are still considering this as an option. Other places are surveying event attendees for feedback.

Qualitatively, places are doing a number of things such as project review meetings with project partners, participants and staff to collect and triangulate feedback from a range of perspectives. In some areas action research has been effectively embedded into programme delivery. Core CPP teams and their partners report that they are working together to implement reflective processes of planning, action, observation, and feedback of results. This has the benefit of enabling partners to work together to make any necessary changes and be responsive to the needs and wants of local audiences. Other places will be making use of ethnographic research techniques to evaluate art from the perspectives of participants. These include ethnographic film making research techniques in Barking & Dagenham.

As noted, many CPP areas in Rounds 2 and all in Round 3 are still only in the early stages of developing plans for local place evaluations, including being in the process of defining evaluation questions, developing an evaluation brief, and appointing an evaluator.

### 1.3 CPP National Evaluation Programme: objectives and core research questions

The Arts Council commissioned A New Direction (AND) to undertake the programme evaluation on behalf of all of the CPP areas. This is the first time that the Arts Council has commissioned a third party to undertake the national evaluation of one of its programmes, which is managed by a steering group of place representatives with the Arts Council's input. It was a specification that the commissioned party was a representative of one of the CPP Places; AND is a consortium member of CPP Barking and Dagenham in London.

The aim of the CPP 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 national strategic stakeholders. The programme evaluation is underpinned by three core questions, which are outlined below.

#### 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?

The CPP Programme evaluation is comprised of a number of different projects, including a national evaluation which will provide an overview evaluation of the programme as a whole, drawing on the findings of project-level monitoring and evaluation as well as other secondary sources and primary research, to synthesise evidence of effectiveness and good practice. Ecorys were commissioned to undertake the meta-evaluation and primary research in December 2013 and this report is the first annual report of this three year commission. Other projects which will be taken forward as part of the programme evaluation include:

- Up to 3 thematic studies to explore emergent themes of interest in greater depth (e.g. programme governance and consortia working, and artistic quality and excellence in engagement)
- CPP Story, a creative research commission, drawing together themes of work across the national programme and presenting them through writing and illustration (author Sarah Butler and illustrator Nicolle Mollett have been commissioned to deliver aspects of this piece of work)
- 3 CPP annual conferences (each hosted by a different CPP area) where project teams come together to reflect, share and explore new learning
- Annual Audience Spectrum and Mosaic profiling to better understand the programme's audiences nationally

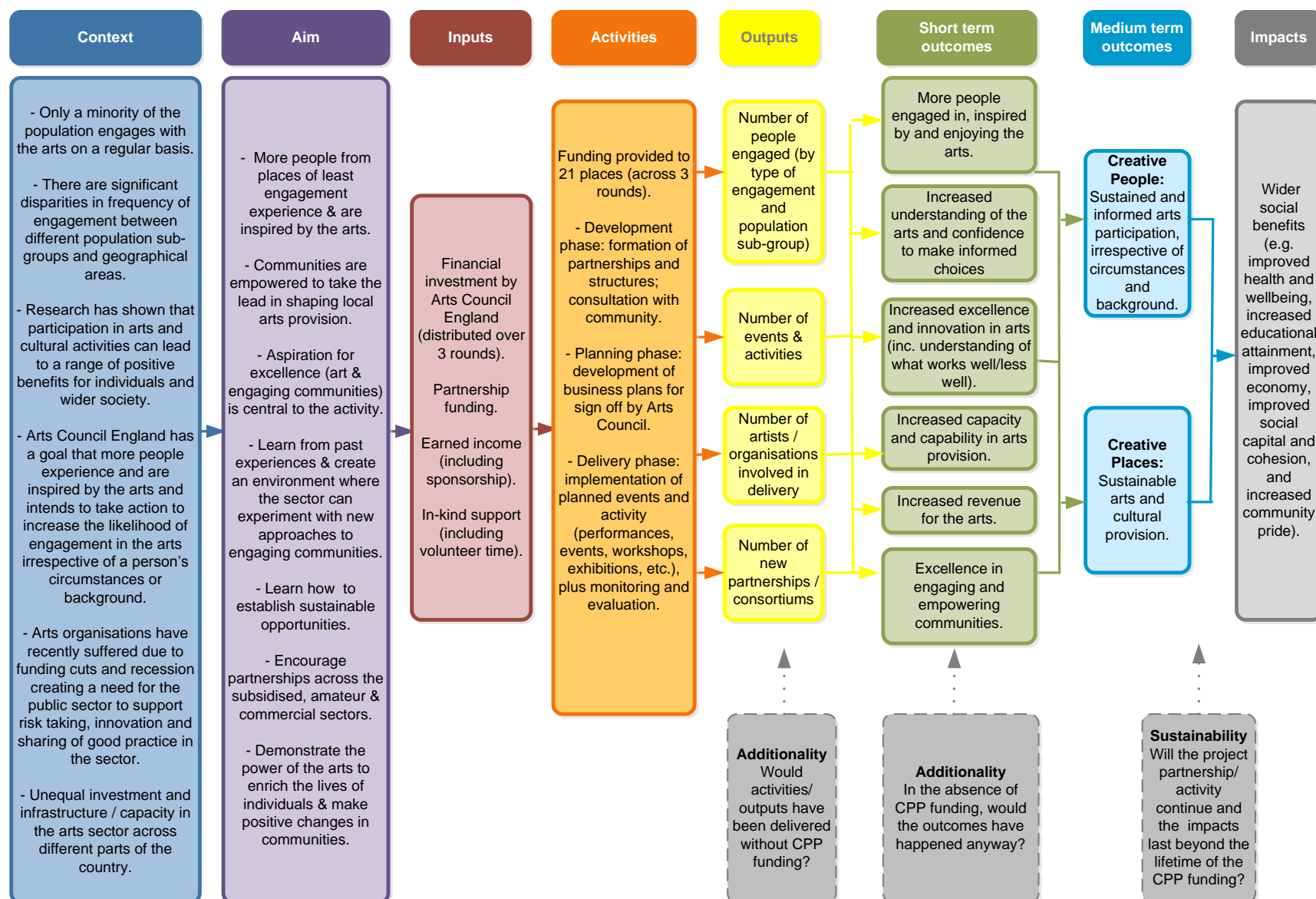


The national evaluation has taken a theory-based approach which is illustrated by the logic model shown overleaf. The purpose of the logic model is to show how the CPP intervention has been developed to address an identified need and is expected to generate a series of outputs and, in doing so, produce a range of outcomes (or changes) for those involved, ultimately contributing to wider economic and social impacts (or longer-term outcomes). Research undertaken as part of the national evaluation will test the existence of these mechanisms in the context of the CPP programme. It is intended that the national evaluation will build upon, rather than duplicate, local place evaluation efforts and therefore will use a meta-evaluation framework to systematically and comprehensively review local place evaluation outputs. This involves extracting and synthesising information that is relevant to the main national evaluation questions and also assessing the quality of local place evaluation outputs (in terms of factors such as transparency, accessibility, etc.). Using a range of different methods (see 1.4); the evaluation is highlighting commonalities across the CPP programme and also capturing the diversity of local activities and approaches. Evidence is triangulated from the different sources and findings will be disseminated regularly to facilitate learning and sharing of good practice.

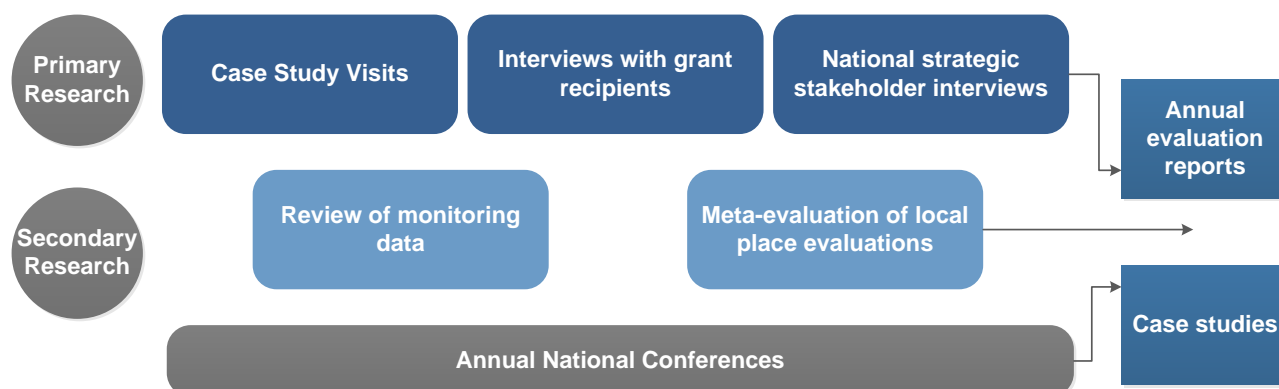
The research questions underpinning the national evaluation are set out in Annex 2. The questions are structured according to the three core evaluation questions, along with a set of questions which have been introduced to explore process aspects (at programme and place level).

To evaluate the success of CPP in increasing arts engagement, it is important to examine the challenges both the Arts Council and CPP places face in doing so. Drawing on the perspectives of national strategic stakeholder interviewees the main challenges currently facing the arts sector are: public sector funding cuts, a variable arts infrastructure at a local level and a need to better understand audiences. In section 3 (programme reach); the report explores how well CPP is addressing these challenges as well as individual barriers to engagement. In year two of the evaluation, the research will assess the extent to which any barriers to engagement have been overcome as part of a wider assessment of outcomes achieved.

**Figure 1.1 CPP programme logic model**



## 1.4 Methodology



Following completion of Ecorys' inception report in March 2014, in the first year of the national evaluation the following principal tasks have been completed:

- **Production of three progress reports** (submitted in May, September and December 2014) which have included a review of available quarterly monitoring narrative reports and data submitted by places to the Arts Council to assess progress in relation to achievement of programme outputs and facilitate learning and sharing of good practice.
- **Review of programme documents** (including application forms, business plans and reports from peer learning network meetings) to inform the development of the programme logic model and provide additional context for the interviews with grant recipients and national strategic stakeholders (see below).
- **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;
- **Completion of semi-structured interviews** with grant recipients (CPP management team) in 18 (CPP places and 8 national strategic stakeholders (senior managers at the Arts Council and AND) to explore their views on the programme rationale (at national and local level), progress with delivery, early outcomes, lessons learned and sustainability (Autumn 2014).
- **Completion of three qualitative case studies** (Autumn 2014) focussed on particular themes and levels to explore aspects of CPP places' activities in detail with core team members and participants/beneficiaries (Partnership working and governance in Blackpool and Wyre, and contrasting community engagement approaches in Doncaster and Stoke-on-Trent. In order to provide a range of perspectives and levels of analysis, the case studies focus on one of three levels: the place as a whole (Blackpool and Wyre), a specific event/activity (Stoke-on-Trent) or an individual participant (or group of participants (Doncaster)). Case study subjects were selected in consultation with the CPP Network Steering Group<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> A group made up of the Arts Council, representatives from CPP places (including evaluation managers, project directors, and a critical friend) and network coordinators with responsibility for evaluation, peer learning and communications. Chaired by AND and Woodhorn Museum. The group's remit includes support for programme evaluation, peer learning activity and communications.

It is important to note that the quantity and quality of monitoring information has been increasing over time. New monitoring templates were introduced by the Arts Council during 2014 to facilitate the collection of robust data in a consistent format. Issues that have affected the quantity and quality of the monitoring information that is provided to the Arts Council are discussed in section 2.2 – Overall programme outputs.

In year 2 of the national evaluation it is envisaged that progress reports will continue to be produced at quarterly intervals, including a review of available monitoring data and an update on the progress of the national evaluation. Local place evaluation materials will be collected on an ongoing basis for inclusion in the meta- evaluation and a further round of grant recipient interviews will be conducted along with four case studies.

## 1.5 Structure of the rest of the report

The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- **Section 2** provides an overview of the CPP programme and its progress to date in relation to the three main evaluation questions.
- **Section 3** presents evidence on the reach of the programme (evaluation question 1).
- **Section 4** considers the aspiration for excellence (evaluation question 2).
- **Section 5** sets out emerging examples of effective practice, lessons learnt and the implications for the remainder of programme delivery, including suggestions to help shape future delivery processes and provision (evaluation question 3). It also sets out the next steps for the evaluation and potential areas of focus based on the findings in year 1.

A list of funded places is provided in Annex 1, the research questions for the evaluation are set out in Annex 2, a summary of the meta-evaluation is provided in Annex 3 and the three case studies completed during year 1 are provided as separate, stand-alone documents and can be found at <http://creativepeopleplaces.org.uk>.



## 2.0 Year 1 Programme Overview

Section 2 provides a snapshot of the picture of delivery across the programme until December 2014. Included is a synthesis of the available data on key achievements, drawing on the review of quarterly monitoring data and local place evaluation outputs, interviews with grant recipients and national strategic stakeholders, and the three case studies carried out for the evaluation during this first year. Section 2 sets the scene for the discussions on programme reach, excellence, good practice and lessons that follow.

### 2.1 Overall progress against work plans

According to grant recipient and national strategic stakeholder interviewees, it appears that most CPP partnerships are broadly on track. Places have drawn down a significant amount of funding, although it was acknowledged that progress against original work plans has been “mixed” (national strategic stakeholders). The amount of time involved in the planning stages has been greater than anticipated which has had implications for programme delivery and evaluation and must be borne in mind for related programmes in the future. More often than not, while Round 1 places may now be considered to be “motoring”, some have taken longer than others to start delivering the programme. Interviews at both a national and local level found that developing the business plan and receiving sign off, recruiting the team in place for delivery, managing staff changes and evaluating progress has all taken longer than funders and places had anticipated. Progress of Round 2 places is again varied and in some areas progress is less visible than might be expected at this stage. The progress of Round 3 places is limited at this stage given that business plans are yet to be signed off. The remainder of this section explores the issues that were reported to have influenced progress against work plans together with interviewees’ reflections on the role of critical friends and Relationship Managers.

#### 2.1.1 Experiences of the funding application and business planning stages

For the most part, grant recipients had a positive experience and found the application process relatively straightforward, as highlighted in the majority of comments from grant recipients below, however, there were exceptions which highlighted that for some places, the process was more involved and challenging than they had anticipated.

*“The fund guidance was clear and good, we had lots of support and time from Arts Council Officers to imagine what might be possible in the lead up to submission, which was essential to us.”*

*“The interview process... turned out to be a very useful part of the process, flushing out some misunderstandings of what the project was and what it wasn’t.”*

*“Really good experience in comparison to other grants we apply for.”*

*“The application process was useful in the way that it helped us to bring everything together, it didn’t ask too much detail early on, it was the right level of detail.”*

*“The process of applying for funding was relatively straightforward. We found [our] relationship manager incredibly useful, they played a pivotal role as they not only acted as a translator for some of the complexities of the application process, but were also a real reality check of cutting through all of wordiness of the application.”*

*“The process was long and drawn out. It was difficult to understand what the Arts Council wanted.”*

*“It was a very difficult process and took longer than expected.”*

The main issue with the business planning stage is the length of time it took for business plan to be signed off, as it appeared that many CPP areas found the process challenging and that their business plans required more revisions than they had anticipated. Few grant recipients would claim to a good understanding or experience of doing business planning prior to CPP. Another issue raised by some grant recipients was that they strongly felt that the staff team appointed to deliver the activity should have been involved in the business planning phase. However, the Arts Council funding was not confirmed until business plans were signed off which meant that bringing in staff prior to this point on anything other than a short term contract would be a risk to the organisation concerned.

*"We think in theory it is a really good approach but in reality we had a bit of a delay regarding sign off of business plan and sign off for funding; this had a real knock on effect in terms of our timetable." (grant recipient)*

*"Writing business plan was really tricky, as we had a relatively small amount of time, we had to modify what we developed for the bid to be deliverable and for it to meet more specific Arts Council objectives." (grant recipient)*

*"Not that good to be honest. It was really difficult...It was a difficult process. It took 9 or 10 drafts before it actually got accepted by the Arts Council." (grant recipient)*

*"The most frustrating thing was receiving the most radical Arts Council feedback pretty late in the day. Certainly one if not two revisions of the business plan had been seen by the Arts Council before they queried some fairly fundamental elements of our planning... Throughout the business planning phase it felt as though the Arts Council were clearly steering them to be more like other CPP projects, and not to be experimental however this has now seemed to dissipate." (grant recipient)*

*"It was a huge amount of work to do in a very small amount of time... Was worth it though because we absolutely work to our business plan now, following it very closely and it's been a really good guide in the first year. However, that process of getting it done very quickly was quite hard work." (grant recipient)*

*"Would have liked to have put in place their staffing team straight away so that we could go through the business planning phase, but the Arts Council were very clear at the time that that couldn't happen, so that meant that we'd developed a business plan, but the staff team who were eventually going to deliver it hadn't gone through that journey, so when they were in post they had to go through a lot of that thinking themselves". (grant recipient)*

## 2.1.2 Views on the effectiveness of local programme management, governance and partnerships

When designing the programme, the Arts Council's decision that CPP consortiums would not be led by local authorities was a challenge for some places in areas where the local authority wanted to lead or could have played a key facilitative role in the creation of the consortium as lead partner. However, by having to think differently about approaches to establishing consortiums, there was a common view among national strategic stakeholders that places were developing more varied and arguably sustainable partnerships, in part because partners have had to put in more ground work. They therefore have greater buy-in to the programme and its achievements, which they believed has brought about an attitudinal shift among some partners:

*"They are moving from what's in it for me and my organisation to working together to do it" (national strategic stakeholder).*

*"Trust and partnership building has taken time... [but now] some places are realising the pain was worth it" (national strategic stakeholder).*

*"It's a huge opportunity for us to come together and do something which is much bigger than individual remits, so it's really exciting. We think it will evolve and continue to grow, there's real potential there, in terms of how it can all work together, it's about connections already starting informally between the partners." (grant recipient)*

The first thematic study commissioned in December 2014 as part of the wider programme evaluation seeks to further understand the formation of CPP consortiums, the strengths and weaknesses of different partnership working models and the key challenges and factors for success faced by consortiums. It also aims to assess the value partners from other sectors bring to a place programme<sup>16</sup>.

From the perspective of a national strategic stakeholder, an apparent benefit of the programme structure that the Arts Council set out is that partners are working together to overcome challenges (e.g. defining roles and responsibilities), when they might not have done in different circumstances. However, as CPP governance and partnerships was only explored in detail in one case study in year 1, it is not yet clear in what ways and how well places across the programme are working together to overcome challenges. Partnerships will receive greater focus in year 2 of the evaluation when exploring what constitutes effective partnership working in the context of achieved outcomes. In addition, the thematic research on programme governance and consortia working, which forms part of the programme evaluation, involves mapping the different consortiums and developing eight case studies with a view to developing a typology of CPP consortia and a management checklist for CPP places and other arts programmes where partnership and consortia working will feature.

According to one grant recipient interviewed, a good relationship with local partners (university and arts organisations) has enabled the project to come together faster. Equally, things can become complicated when working with big community groups and lots of different partners, so it is important to look at how these relationships are managed.

<sup>16</sup> Completion of research due July 2015

From a national perspective, Round 2 places were said to have been quicker to “get going”. In agreeing the legislative requirements and consortium agreements for example, Round 1 places have helped others to learn from their experiences. By recruiting staff on the basis that they would be in post if and when the bid was approved, Round 2 and 3 places were said to be able to establish core teams more quickly than those in Round 1, providing evidence to suggest that some lessons are being learnt. However, as previously highlighted, undertaking recruitment before funding was confirmed was not advised due to the associated risks to the organisation.

*“It has helped that Round 1 have set the scene and done some of the foundation work” (national strategic stakeholder)*

*“So far they are showing that with intelligence and effort you can get everywhere and just because you haven’t in the past, doesn’t mean that places can’t engage [people]” (national strategic stakeholder).*

With regards to engaging new external partners to support programme delivery, evidence gathered from the monitoring and local place evaluation reports and qualitative interviews suggests that new relationships have been created and that partners are working together to plan and deliver the programme. For example, **South East Northumberland has worked with 48 arts service providers (10% of those based in the area) and 18 other service providers (38% – source local place evaluation).** It will be important for local place evaluations and the national evaluation to explore the impact of these new relationships in year two.

A review of monitoring data submitted to the Arts Council found that **20 of the 164 activities reported in Q1 involved local amateur groups.** There was some indication of places offering start-up support in very different ways: Stoke-on-Trent and Barking and Dagenham are encouraging local amateur artist groups to apply for small scale commissions; St Helen’s is open for applications for their micro-commission programme and Stoke-on-Trent offered funding seminars. A range of non-traditional arts venues were supported during Q1 including a swimming pool, church hall, forest and a pub. Places also provided some examples of networking in the narrative monitoring reports. However, as the concept of ‘networking’ is broad and the reporting template does not include a definition, the examples provided were wide-ranging. They include: guest speakers at monthly events (Blackpool and Wyre), promoting other local arts events (Corby, Stoke-on-Trent), connecting local groups at the heart of approaches to arts programming (Doncaster, Hull, Stoke-on-Trent), regular ‘hang outs’ (Doncaster), inviting locals to comment on and help shape the local programme (East Durham), training for artists (South East Northumberland), information events (St. Helens). Several places did not complete this section of the monitoring form which makes it difficult to assess the scale and scope of networking activities.

When asked to apply a red, amber or green rating to progress in relation to partnership development, national strategic stakeholders applied a combination of amber (fair) and green (good) ratings. While some CPP places have a new and interesting range of partners, partnerships with the amateur and commercial sectors were considered to be in the early stages of development overall at a national programme level. Engagement with the amateur sector was considered to be an indication of the programme’s success that will, where it is happening, help to build a sustainable future.

A review of the monitoring data submitted to the Arts Council found that four places had a community representative on the consortium in Q1 2014/15 (Barking and Dagenham, Corby, East Durham and Swale and Medway).

A national strategic stakeholder reported that some places have struggled to secure engagement on a voluntary basis so while the voluntary sector may be involved, a representative may not attend consortium meetings.

Based on Ecorys's experience of carrying out programme evaluations, many of the main factors that have reportedly influenced the success or otherwise of management, governance and partnerships in CPP to date are true of many funded programmes in general. These include:

- The prevalence of local partnership working in general in the area. For example, in the North East, there is interest in developing local area partnerships between the different CPP places (South East Northumberland, East Durham, South Tyneside and Sunderland) to maximise peer learning opportunities and consider co-commissions and strategic touring across the region (national strategic stakeholder).
- Whether or not arts organisations have previously established working relationships with each other on the local scene. If so, trust and shared experiences have helped to overcome any challenges faced in the development of the CPP programme according to some grant recipient interviewees.
- Having a strong track record in their respective areas such as audience engagement and creating art outside of conventional spaces has also reportedly made some external organisations, such as People United, Slung Low and Wildworks, more attractive to CPP consortiums because they “resonate well with local audiences” and have proven ability to help create social change (national strategic stakeholder).
- The commitment of local partners and individuals involved. For example whether community representatives have the capacity, will and commitment to attend meetings and contribute. Whether partners are open and responsive to work towards a shared agenda and maintain their involvement over time. If committed and actively involved, local communities can help to ensure meaningful and relevant local programmes for the area, with any resulting benefits continuing over time. However, if the will or capacity to maintain community involvement is lacking in places, places will have to work hard to raise commitment and active involvement otherwise there is a risk that the potential reach and impact of local programmes will not be achieved.

Issues affecting the success or otherwise of management, governance and partnership arrangements will be considered again in year 2 of the evaluation, in relation to their impact over time. The thematic study on programme governance and consortia working will also consider these issues in greater depth in relation to consortium working and programme governance.

### 2.1.3 Reflections on the effectiveness of Critical Friend role

As reported earlier, the primary role of the critical friend as defined by the Arts Council, to support places with local place evaluations, has proved to be much wider in practice. While some places have, as planned, used their critical friend to advise them on monitoring and evaluation, such as devising a brief for the evaluators and advising on the evaluation framework / theory of change (7 places in Q1 2014/15), other CPP areas have brought on a critical friend who has a particular role around the artistic quality / excellence and the vision of the programme. And one area has several different people acting in the role of critical friend to bring in wider range of expertise (artistic, research and processes/systems). There was no notable difference between programme rounds and areas in the role taken by the critical friend.



*“The role of our critical friend has been to advise on the evaluation framework and to devise the brief for the evaluation partners, as well reviewing Arts Council monitoring and the business plan. The critical friend is really useful and we feel that they are the right person as they have a lot of relevant experience and they bring a different perspective.” (grant recipient)*

*“The role of the critical friend as we understand is very much around monitoring and evaluation, rather than a project critical friend, so we have use them as part of our monitoring and evaluation support which has been really invaluable. However, we wonder if we could have made better use them in a far wider role for lots of different things, as they don’t have much to do now we that have all our monitoring and evaluation in place” (grant recipient)*

*“We’ve met with our critical friend and evaluator three times. We would like our critical friend to be our second pair of eyes for viewing the evaluation before it gets submitted, but that hasn’t happened yet. It’s hard as it’s such a prescribed role... Also we would expect our evaluator to also be our critical friend. The role of the critical friend should be wider than just evaluation.” (grant recipient)*

*“We have identified our critical friend, but we have a slightly different definition than the Arts Council, as our critical friend will be an artist critical friend for artist excellence and the vision of the programme.” (grant recipient)*

A more general guidance role was evident in six places in a review of Q1 2014-15 narrative monitoring reports. Working with a critical friend to review the progress of CPP programmes was reported by four places during the same period, and one place also sought the guidance of the critical friend in helping individual staff members to reflect on their own performance.

National strategic stakeholder interviewees held mixed views as to how best support with local evaluation should be delivered. On the one hand, there was a perception that the role was a success in places where the critical friend was working to support robust local place evaluation but less effective where places were not. To the contrary, there was also a view that the critical friend was perhaps not the most appropriate source of local place evaluation support for places as this could have been delivered in a different way.

There was broad agreement, however, that more guidance around the role of the critical friend is necessary and suggestions that the Arts Council should have been more prescriptive; there was a clear job description but this appears to have been adhered to differently. There was also a suggestion from a national strategic stakeholder that perhaps the Arts Council could have managed the role centrally in the early stages of the programme. Work is now underway to address this issue and Relationship Managers have been tasked with the role of visiting places to reinforce the responsibilities of the critical friend, and the need for “the critical bit” as this was said to be lacking in some places. Members of the central programme management team are also working on ways to bring the critical friends in to programme events and developing opportunities for written work.

It is worth noting that a review of Q1 (2014/15) monitoring reports found that several places are still establishing the relationship with their critical friend, therefore more guidance/support is timely.

#### 2.1.4 Views on the effectiveness of the Arts Council Relationship Manager role

When asked for their views on the effectiveness of the Arts Council Relationship Manager role, grant recipients had mixed experiences. However, we are aware that attempts have been made to address these issues since the interviews were undertaken. Where the role has worked well, Relationship Managers were said to be clear and supportive in their guidance, although there appears to be scope for Relationship Managers to challenge places further.

*"That's been really good, we have met with the relationship manager on several occasions, and they have made it clear that they will be watching over the business planning phase, more than the delivery phase, which we have taken as a really good thing as we need any steer or guidance we can get. The advice has been very good. We would like to think that we are lucky that we are in the 3rd round, as the Arts Council has learnt a lot from working with groups. So they are more aware and sympathetic of the problems that we going to come across before we have even reached them. So the Arts Council has had a realistic approach to what we are doing." (grant recipient)*

*"The Relationship Manager role has worked well, [they are] passionate and they get it, although would like to see more challenge...[they] need to do more to get the community voice" (national strategic stakeholder).*

*"They need to be a balanced voice between local decision making and artistic ambition that will resonate with local audiences. The role needs to be able to support and build people's confidence so that they are ready to make decisions....They need to be able to challenge, especially at a senior level and at the business planning stage" (national strategic stakeholder).*

However, inconsistent messaging brought a lack of clarity to other places, which contributed to poor perceptions of the role.

*"Fairly poor - had a new relationship manager who didn't really understand the programme. It was around the time Arts Council restructuring was taking place. A lot of formerly key people were no longer there. It was not the kind of programme the Arts Council normally run or support, so they didn't really have the expertise to help that much." (grant recipient)*

*"The problem is we would get one set of feedback from our relationship manager which was very supportive, but then we would speak with the person in charge, and a completely different set of feedback would come back. So we were always being told slightly different things. So Arts Council need to join up their thinking a bit more before giving us feedback. Our relationship with our relationship manger wasn't great to begin with, but it has got much better now." (grant recipient)*

*"With the relationship manager it's sometimes a little inconsistent. We don't feel a strong sense of ambition from the Arts Council about the programme beyond developing audiences. Our original understanding was that the Arts Council wanted to be closely involved in the programme as partners and involved in some of commission decisions. But at a local level with their relationship manager there's quite a hands off approach in terms of providing input to that." (grant recipient)*

There was recognition amongst national strategic stakeholders that Relationship Managers should have been better prepared on starting to support CPP places and that more guidance would in turn have helped to ensure greater consistency between both the amount of support Relationship Managers gave places and the messaging they shared.

### 2.1.5 Reflections on the influence/importance of local context

Evidence gathered from the case study places and the national strategic stakeholder interviews suggests that contextual factors played a part in determining the progress of places against work plans, as well as the overall design of their approach. By responding to local context, CPP places are responding to the specifics of the places and people, including local opportunities (e.g. relative strength of existing arts infrastructure, history of community participation) and challenges (e.g. social deprivation, transport barriers). Reflections on the importance of local context was not a key focus of the grant recipient interviews but was raised by two interviewees.

According to Barking and Dagenham, their local context was challenge for them at the outset, as they had to deal with a lot of creative isolation in the borough and there was a lack of a creative network. Their cultural connector programme is all about addressing this, as there are creative people in the borough, but were said not to know each other. They have played a key role in brokering and informing people about what's going on and bringing the local community together. Going forwards it will be important that impact and key learning from this role is captured through local place evaluations (and similarly, where relevant in other places). By carrying out qualitative research with local communities, the cultural connectors themselves and members of the local partnership, places will be able to assess the significance of this role and how, if at all, it may be improved to enable other places to learn from their experiences.



*Creative Baking & Dagenham (Barking and Dagenham): Mad Hatters Tea Party on Marks Gate Estate. Photo: Sadia Ur Rehman*



*Creative Scene (Kirklees): Artist Cassandra Kilbride working with shoppers to make a textile wall hanging. Photo: Paul Floyd Blake*

In North Kirklees, there is felt to be an appetite and demand for arts, and plenty of groups and national strategic stakeholders are interested in the arts activities. Prior to CPP, there have been plenty of arts activities as because of the area's socio-economic deprivation, it has had lots of short term funding (e.g. challenge funds, European funds and SRB funds). So there is an appetite and some understanding of the processes, which has the potential to be harnessed to further generate demand and support for the arts locally. However, a lot of the old programmes depended on infrastructure to deliver them that is no longer there anymore, e.g. guidance on reporting, brokering and management from a local authority. So the challenge has been to build capacity to the voluntary

community and arts sector. Challenges such as these highlighted by places in year 1 will be picked up during the grant recipient interviews in year 2 to explore whether and how well places have been able to overcome these challenges and the impact.

Among national strategic stakeholders interviewed, the extent to which local context has so far influenced the progress of local programme delivery and the outcomes achieved was somewhat contested. On the one hand, places where the existing arts infrastructure was lacking for example, were said to require more time to understand the needs and wants of communities. On the other hand, there was a view that many of the challenges different CPP places experienced were similar, no matter where they were located in the country or what their demographics and socio-economic situation is. Issues relating to local context will be explored in more detail in discussions with all grant recipients about programme delivery, outcomes and sustainability in year 2.

## 2.2 Overall programme outputs to July 2014

This section of the report presents a sample of the output data shared by CPP places during the first year of the evaluation. The places are required to carry out monitoring of the audiences and participants that attend their events using sampling as a minimum approach. It is intended that the monitoring data provided are based on a representative sample surveyed in selected events in each CPP area. As shown in **Table 2.1**, the CPP programme has engaged over 108,000 physical visitors/audience since October 2013, based on sample data places submitted to the Arts Council for that period. This data is cumulative and therefore may include repeat attendances, which cannot be determined from the monitoring form.

**Table 2.1 Physical visitors/audience figures by quarter and in total up to Quarter 1 2014/2015**

	Q1 2014/2015	Q4 2013/2014	Q3 2013/2014	Total number of visitors
Number of visitors	46,551 (13 places)	58,865 (8 places) <sup>17</sup>	3,404 (4 places)	108,820

The remainder of this section focusses on the data submitted to the Arts Council by 16/18 Round 1 and Round 2 places for Q1 2014/15; 13 places were in the delivery phase at the point of reporting. This is the most complete set of data available to the national evaluation team at time of writing because the deadline for CPP places to report Q1 data to the Arts Council was October 2014<sup>18</sup>; therefore this report is not able to provide the most up-to-date picture of progress and achievements at this stage of programme delivery due to time lags in reporting and submission. The output data presented is a snapshot of programme activity, which participating places and national strategic stakeholders can learn from when thinking about how best to capture the content, outcomes and impact of the local programmes in the future.

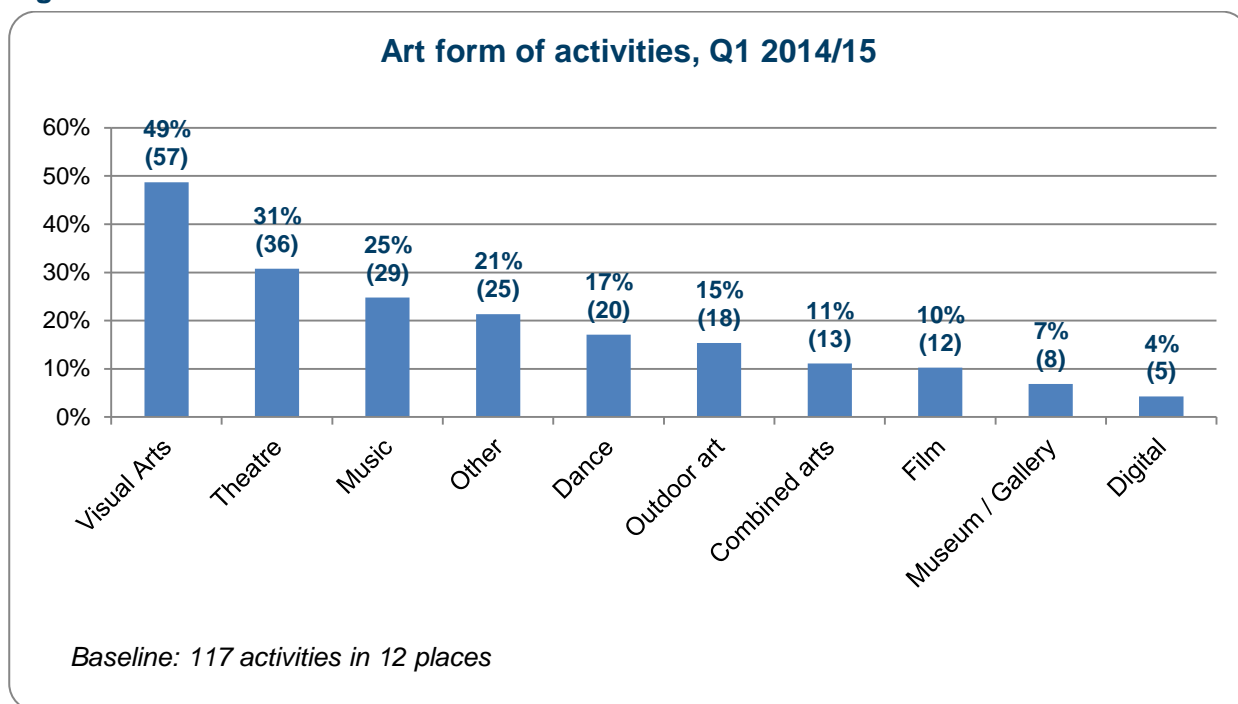
### 2.2.1 Output data for Q1 2014/15

Overall, 164 activities were reported by 13 places in Round 1 and Round 2 in Q1. The arts activities reported were very diverse and included: exhibitions, poetry writing workshops, Go See events, gigs in a pub, family fun days, burlesque performances, launch events, arts taster sessions run by artists and textile workshops. Figure 2.2 shows the different forms that the arts activities took in Q1, as defined on the Arts Council monitoring forms:

<sup>17</sup> This figure includes Swale and Medway's reporting on audience figures for the whole of Year 1 which we are unable to disaggregate by quarter because the original monitoring format was used (which was later adapted). Therefore this figure is very high in comparison to other quarters.

<sup>18</sup> CPP Places are graced with two quarters to provide data on any quarter to allow for data gathering, analysis and reporting. In practice this means that Places are two quarters behind on reporting i.e. data for Q2 2014/15 was due in January 2015.

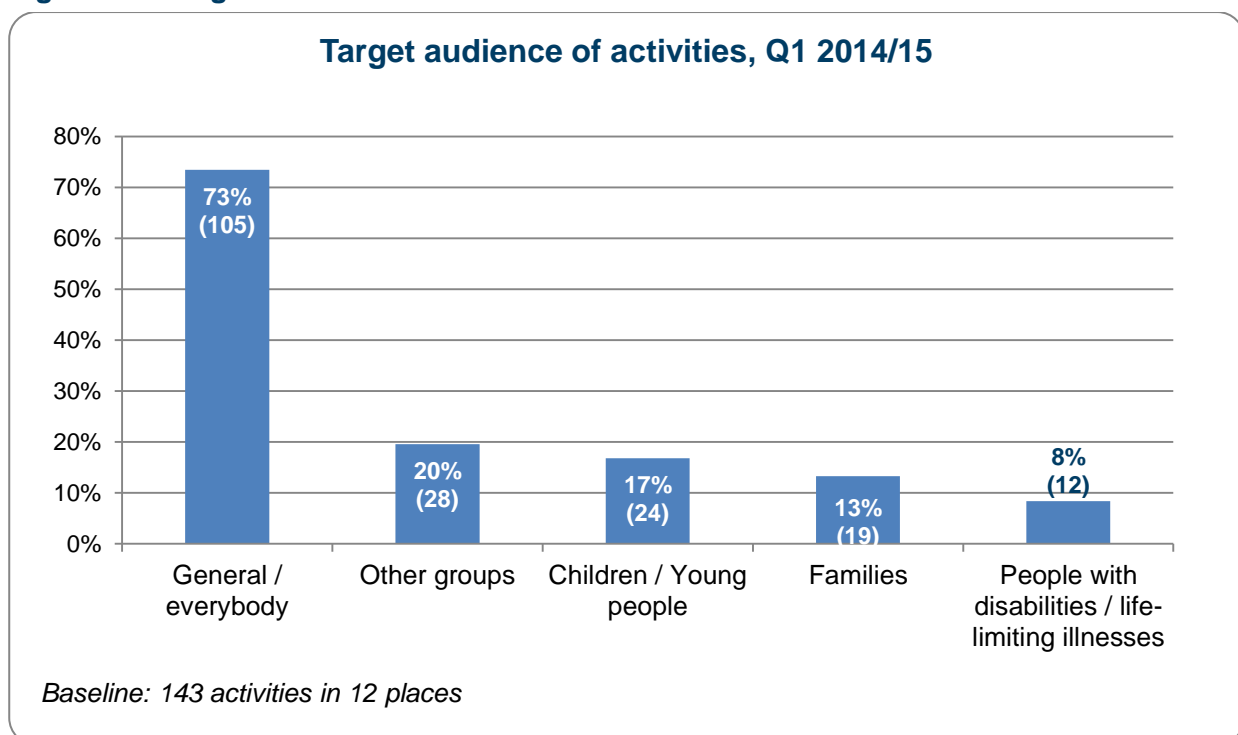
**Figure 2.1 Art form of activities in Q1 2014/15**



CPP places also reported doing a lot of planning for summer 2014 activities such as concerts and carnivals. Beyond such arts activities, some places also engaged in capacity building; running a 'funding masterclass' on how to gain funds for small scale arts projects (Barking and Dagenham and Peterborough) and workshops on how to put on your own event (Stoke-on-Trent). Several places held networking events for artists (Blackpool and Wyre, Peterborough, Stoke-on-Trent).

73% of the target audience of the events reported was 'general'. This shows that places were broadly targeting large numbers of people from around their local area rather than focussing on smaller, more specific target groups at this early stage in their programmes. However, some small pockets of targeted activity was taking place as can be seen in Figure 2.3.

**Figure 2.2 Target audience of activities in Q1 2014/15**





The reported number of people engaged in Q1 activities was 46,551 (Round 1 and Round 2 places combined). This figure includes audiences (attendees, visitors) and participants (people who actively take part in something). The scale ranged from 2 participants (during a 'Go See' event) to 5,000 (estimated number by Blackpool during a community networking and consultation event in collaboration with Wyre council). Participant numbers were 'actual' in 99 cases, 'estimates' in 30 and 'mixed' for 30 activities.

For a sample of 28 activities reported by 10 places, some demographic data was collected from the audience. The three most common age ranges of participants were 25-34 years, under 16 years and 35-44 years. From a sample of 30 activities, it appeared that slightly more females were involved in the activities than males. There is insufficient data in this quarter for further analysis.

The great majority of places did not record data on participants' ethnic background, disability, socio-economic classification, previous engagement with the arts and postcodes in Q1 2014-15, although many grant recipients said they were or would be collecting this data in time (see section 3.1). Therefore, at the end of year 1 of the evaluation it is not possible to report on the proportion of participants engaged by CPP that were new to the arts and living in the target places for the programme as a whole. Limited data was made available by a handful of places as can be seen in section 3.1.1 – programme reach. However, the quality and completeness of places' monitoring data is expected to improve over time and to support place in doing this, the programme evaluation lead (AND) has commissioned The Audience Agency to analyse and profile places' participant postcodes.

This commission will assist places with collecting some of the demographic information and will also provide a national picture of the profile of participation using Audience Spectrum and Mosaic. Ecorys will draw on the outputs from this commission, where available, during reporting periods.

### 2.2.2 Income and expenditure profile

Details of payments made by the Arts Council to the end of June 2014, shows that the amount of money drawn-down ranges from **14% to 53% of the total grant awarded for round 1 places and 10% to 24% of this amount for round 2 places.**

Where available, monitoring data for Q1 2014/15 suggests that the majority of places had underspent in this period compared to budgeted amounts. This was due to delays in getting project activity underway compared to the agreed work plan. These delays appear to largely stem from the time taken to set up the programme locally, including development of partnerships, sign off on the business plan and recruitment of key staff. At present the detailed financial data provided by areas as part of the quarterly monitoring process is incomplete (some areas have not provided details of actual expenditure/income at this stage) or, where available, provided in a variety of different formats which makes it difficult to draw comparisons. At the time of reporting, the Arts Council were considering ways of making financial reporting more consistent and a template for places that required assistance. The Arts Council is also working with places to find out how best to support places that are using their own systems.

Areas also have income targets, although only a minority of areas have reported progress towards these goals. Those areas that have provided this information report that income generation is on or close to targets set for this stage of the programme. Going forward, this will be an important area to explore in year two of the evaluation as it has implications for sustainability.

## 2.3 Early programme outcomes and strength of evidence

### 2.3.1 Programme outcomes at the end of year 1

This section summarises the main early programme outcomes in brief before providing an assessment of the strength of evidence from the meta-evaluation of local place evaluations. Programme outcomes to date are discussed in more detail in the remainder of the report.

In terms of process outcomes, CPP funding has been provided to 21 places across 3 programme rounds. All participating places have completed the development phase, formulating partnerships and structures and beginning consultation with the community. Having had their business plans signed off by the Arts Council, places have also successfully completed the planning phase and most (aside from Round 3) are now in the delivery phase; implementing the planned events and activities.

*“[The programme has] demonstrated that you can invest in areas where there is less investment. Can stimulate demand and get leadership where there is not a visible arts infrastructure. 55 per cent has gone to the North, 5 per cent to London. Different organisations are taking the lead” (national strategic stakeholder).*

Overall, the story so far is that most CPP places are broadly on track with delivery. Progress has however been mixed with delivery slower to start than anticipated for many places in Round 1 in particular. While these places now appear to be in a strong position, the Round 2 picture is still more varied and places in Round 3 are yet to have their business plans signed off and are therefore less visible at this point in time, having only received the grant award in May 2014.

Drawing on all the available evidence, fair progress is being made overall towards achievement of many of the short terms outcomes set out in the programme logic model. There is evidence of good progress being made in some places, particularly in relation to programme reach, community engagement and empowerment, diverse partnerships, and projects which demonstrate the power of the arts to make positive change, as we go on to discuss later in this report. Although, at this stage it is unclear to what extent CPP places and therefore the programme as a whole, are reaching/on track to reach target numbers. The short term outcomes which the programme is demonstrating some progress towards the achievement of are:

- More people engaged in, inspired by, and enjoying the arts (although 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 is as yet unknown).
- 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.
- Excellence in engaging and empowering communities.

Whilst the first outcome is stated as a short term aim in the logic model, it is also a key programme goal in terms of outcomes that lead into sustainability (medium term outcomes) and it is starting to be achieved.

The exception for the majority of places is in the achievement of the short term outcome of increased revenue for the arts. This information is generally lacking from the financial information provided to the evaluation team to date. It should be noted that Rounds 1 and 2 were only required to generate 10% match funding, which could include in-kind support. The proportion increased to 25% match funding for Round 3. Increasing revenue for the arts is one aspect of sustainability, progress towards which is discussed in section 3.4.

Some of the Round 1 CPP places are also demonstrating good progress towards one of the programme’s medium term outcomes, which is creative people; sustained and informed arts participation irrespective of circumstances and background. Examples are provided in section 4 of this report.

## Additionality

There was a consensus among national strategic stakeholders that the vast majority of events and activity delivered as part of the CPP programme would not have happened without the funding, particularly given local authority funding cuts. In addition, there was a view that the programme has helped to improve the focus of arts organisations in working towards these shared outcomes, and is increasingly making links with other arts programmes – offering a further route to strengthen the capacity and sustainability of the arts sector.

### 2.3.2 Meta-evaluation of local programme evaluations

A key strand of the evaluation is the meta-evaluation – an assessment of local CPP evaluations in relation to both their quality and relevance to the key research questions of the national evaluation, and a synthesis of the information they contain.

At this stage there have been only a limited number of local place evaluation outputs with materials provided by eight places. A number of places (three) have provided copies of specifications for local evaluators although these do not provide definitive details of the evaluation questions and approach to be taken. Some places provided documents such as reviews of activity or examples of forms or other research tools which provided some insight into the progress being made or approach being taken, for example Swale and Medway have completed a process review of their distribution of grant funding for small commissions, along with a copy of the ‘anti-form’ a tool which is being used to collect information from participants.

Four places provided evaluation outputs for review<sup>19</sup>. This review has found that the outputs concerned were accessible and well-grounded and were transparent about the research processes used. In three of the reports the local place evaluation questions reflected the programme evaluation questions, suggesting that the design of these evaluations is fit for purpose in terms of contributing to the national evaluation (in the fourth case the output reviewed took the form of an annual report and the design of the evaluation was not mentioned).

The review also considered the extent to which the execution of the four local place evaluations had provided relevant and useful information to answer the national evaluation questions at this stage. This assessment is summarised in tabular form in Annex 3.

It appears that research question 1 (focused on participation) has received most attention at this stage, explored through research with audiences/participants to establish the profile (including place of residence/postcode) and relationship with the arts (including existing levels of engagement). Participatory research techniques with, for and by local communities have been used to explore participants’ views about the arts on the basis that they are best placed to know what art they would like to see and how best local art can be conceived and presented to successfully engage and inspire audiences. A range of techniques have been used to collect this feedback including surveys, voting exercises, wish trees, writing on tablecloths and informal conversations. It is also encouraging to see that these places appear to have successfully put in place mechanisms to explore the reach of the programme and it is anticipated that this will remain an important line of enquiry throughout the CPP programme lifetime and something that we would expect all places to explore in their local place evaluations over time. However, at this early stage of the programme, there has been less emphasis on exploring the outcomes of participation, including the potential to inspire further participation, which will be crucial to assessing whether CPP activity has contributed to longer-term change in frequency/nature of engagement with the arts. It is known that some areas have plans for longitudinal or tracking research with local communities, or are considering this as an option, and, going forward, it will be interesting to see how these plans are enacted and what outcomes they reveal.

<sup>19</sup> Blackpool and Wyre, Doncaster, South East Northumberland and Stoke-on-Trent.

Research question 2 (focused on excellence) has not yet been considered in detail in the existing local place evaluation outputs, particularly excellence of art although there is some reflection of the success in engaging with communities. Defining excellence (of art) was the subject of much discussion at the first CPP conference given its inherently subjective nature and this may be an indication that places will take longer to develop an approach to evaluating this aspect of the programme. One place has already collected views from local people about how they would define excellence. It will be important for CPP places to consider how they will address this question in local place evaluations, particularly as more places appoint an evaluator, to ensure that this important area of research is addressed at the local level. The national evaluation will give greater focus to the concept of excellence in years 2 and 3 of the evaluation.

Identification of successes and lessons (research question 3) has been explored to varying degrees, with two of the places drawing clear findings on this theme which will be valuable in informing future programme development (see Annex 3). The remaining two areas placed less emphasis on this aspect in the reporting outputs which were made available although discussions suggests that both have adopted aspects of action learning and used these findings to inform development of their approach.

Research question 4 concerns lessons on process and delivery aspects. Three of the areas set out their findings on this theme and indicated that these lessons would be learnt. A common theme related to the process of engaging and involving communities. One area also reflected on lessons for the evaluation process in future years. The fourth report did not consider process/delivery aspects.

It will be important for places to keep the programme evaluation questions in mind when designing and implementing their local place evaluations and to continue to share relevant information with the national evaluation team. It is recognised that evaluation evidence from the local level is limited at this stage which is understandable given the need to prioritise the work required to get delivery of CPP activity underway. However, once activity has begun, it is important that areas develop a clear plan for local place evaluation to ensure that the mechanisms can be put in place to collect the required evidence.

It is anticipated that the evidence available will build over time (local place evaluations supplemented by primary research at the national level), allowing a more in-depth analysis to be undertaken across the programme and for a greater understanding of programme successes to emerge.

See Annex 3 for a review and synthesis of local place evaluations.

## 3.0 Programme reach and outcomes

Section 3 of the report explores programme reach in more detail. Drawing on the qualitative research and the meta-evaluation in particular, this section considers who the programme has reached, what motivates participants in the arts, how so, and what difference participating makes to them as individuals, members of a community, and to the arts sector as a whole. The section begins with a summary of the challenges currently facing the arts sector from the perspectives of national strategic stakeholders interviewed, to provide context for the discussions that follow.

### 3.1 Are more people from places of least engagement experiencing and being inspired by the arts?

To evaluate the success of CPP in increasing arts engagement, it is important to consider the challenges in doing so. Three main and interrelated challenges to increasing arts engagement were identified by national strategic stakeholders during the interviews. One of the great and ongoing challenges is cuts in public sector funding, coupled with variation in the extent to which people value investment in the arts (particularly during a period of austerity) can make it difficult to reach a larger audiences. They said that places need to diversify business models and move away from dependency on grants for the arts. But asking people to pay for art in a time of austerity measures is difficult, especially in areas experiencing multiple deprivations, which some of the CPP places are. There was a common view among national strategic stakeholders that to be successful, CPP places need to offer art that meets what local people want. Secondly, national strategic stakeholder interviewees highlighted that the variable local arts infrastructure means some CPP places are starting to deliver from a lower base position and have limited local organisations and networks from which to build. Furthermore, existing “divisions between the [amateur, commercial etc.] sectors” can make it difficult to develop partnerships to engage audiences. Lastly, some national strategic stakeholder interviewees highlighted a need for the arts sector to better understand audiences to be able to build them. Relatedly, one interviewee drew attention to the “invisibility” of art, commenting that “people are just not aware of the art rather than hostility towards the arts experience”. To tackle these challenges, places need to have strong leadership, which one national strategic stakeholder said was a challenge in some areas. National strategic stakeholder interviewees expected the CPP Programme to address all of these challenges by bringing investment in to areas with low arts engagement and limited infrastructure and taking innovative approaches to “stimulate latent interest”; and produce art that is relevant to local audiences, both in terms of supply and demand.

#### 3.1.1 Success in reaching target audiences

As would be expected, the success of individual places in reaching target audiences to date has been influenced by the programme Round in which they feature, and the different approaches they have taken to engagement (a theme which is introduced in section 4.2 and will be explored further in year two of the evaluation). This year, the place level analysis focuses on Round 1 (see Table 4.1<sup>20</sup>). Future evaluation reports will report on programme reach by programme rounds and areas.

<sup>20</sup> It should be noted, however, that Round 1 places account for the majority of the outputs reported at programme level at this stage (see section 3.2).



**Table 3.1 Outputs recorded by Round 1 places**

Round 1 Places – output data Q1 2014/15	
<i>Activity</i>	
	Total number of activities reported = 145.
	Of which the majority (63%) were targeted at a general audience.
	The most common art form involved was visual arts (48), followed by theatre (33).
<i>Visitors/audience</i>	
	Total number of people engaged = 43, 179 <sup>21</sup> .
	Actual figures were provided for the majority of activities (57%).
<i>Volunteers</i>	
	A total of 69 volunteers supported the activities with 1,147 hours of their time.

Again of note, is that the monitoring data places have submitted to the Arts Council to date is partial and incomplete, so while it provides a sample of the picture in an increasing number of places (monitoring updates are improving somewhat with time), it does not provide the full picture in terms of audience engagement (target numbers, whether new to the arts etc.). Notwithstanding the fact that places were asked to provide data for a sample of activities, the issue of under-reporting was also flagged by national strategic stakeholders. Given these issues, and the variable progress with programme delivery across the country, there was a view at a national level that success of the programme should not be seen in terms of numbers yet.

However, evidence from places that have shared local place evaluation data shows:

- **Targets are being met and exceeded e.g. The Taster Menu of activities programmed at the start of CPP in Stoke-on-Trent attracted over 16,000 people over a six month period, exceeding targets for individual aspects such as the Pavement Café (target 8000, actual 8727) and Picnics (target 750, actual 775). And in Doncaster, a target of 17,935 has been exceeded by the ‘N’ strand of commissions developed in year 1 with local communities reaching a total of 18,080. (See Stoke-on-Trent and Doncaster case studies)**
- **People new to the arts are being engaged in CPP activities e.g. over the 3 strands of activity in Doncaster ( D, N and A) 98%, 88% & 87% of participants respectively were Doncaster residents; 77% of A participants and 57% of N participants had not taken part in any arts activity in the previous year (see Doncaster case study).**
- **CPP activities are engaging people from across the target areas e.g. in South East Northumberland, to the end of the first quarter of 2014 the programme has delivered a total of 813 hours of activity; 12,925 audience engagements and 3,223 participant engagements.** Analysis of data from CRM (Customer Relationships Management) demonstrates that there was a very even postcode spread of people from across South East Northumberland taking part in the programme.
- **Adding art components to traditional festival reaches new audiences e.g. a festival in Blackpool and Wyre had a strong pull for bringing new visitors to the area with 33% having never been to the festival before. 55% of visitors to the festival were from local postcode areas. In addition, 75% of visitors to the Festival did not perceive themselves to have attended or participated in any arts or creative activity within the last 12 months.** This festival engaged and influenced visitor’s expectations and perceptions of art, the art was welcomed and received by non-arts audiences.

<sup>21</sup> This figure includes audiences (attendees, visitors) and participants (people who actively take part in something).

In the future it will be important for local place evaluations and the national evaluation to further develop the evidence base to better understand how targets are being met and exceeded, which approaches are providing most successful and why.

Furthermore, when interviewed, most grant recipients were very positive about the progress they have made with reaching their target audiences. **Barking & Dagenham indicated that around 50% of participants surveyed were attending arts activities for the first time in the past 12 months.** They highlighted the success they had working one-to-one or running drop in sessions with different community groups which they have identified as not having easy access to engage with the arts and working with active community groups that represent different ethnic groups or young people.



*Creative Barking & Dagenham (Barking and Dagenham): Becontree 100 project. Photo: AF Rodrigues*



*Heart of Glass (St Helens): In My Place will bring performance to the heart of peoples' homes and workplaces. Photo: Stephen King*

This provides further evidence of reaching locally specified target groups, although three quarters of audiences reportedly reached in Q1 comprised the 'general' public. In St Helens, having found that arts engagement was very low amongst the rugby club audience, they have tried a different approach to engage their target audiences by using their unique partnership mix (rugby club, housing association, local authority, and local cultural venues) to link art with sport and heritage. In Barking & Dagenham, a focus on the artistic quality of their Landmark project has successfully engaged people who were already participating in the arts, but they have reportedly struggled to reach new audiences as sometimes commissioned artists have preferred to focus work for their own target

audiences, rather than those who do not usually engage. Going forward they aim to try and reach more people that are less engaged using a range of audience engagement approaches.

During the interviews, many grant recipients indicated that they are or intend to monitor the profile of their audiences, including postcode spread and demographic information to ensure that they are reaching people who do not regularly engage in the arts (more than three times per year<sup>22</sup>). As highlighted in section 2, limited data has been shared with the evaluation team to date although work in this area appears to be ongoing. At a national and a local level, renewed emphasis must be placed on all aspects of monitoring and evaluation by the Arts Council and CPP places, with the support of AND and the national evaluation team to ensure that places are collecting this data and programme reach can be better understood in the future.

At this point, among national strategic stakeholder interviewees, there was broad agreement that the CPP programme is doing what it set out to do in terms of reaching and engaging more people from places of least engagement and delivering artistic inspiration.

*"Yes it is doing what it set out to do. Conceptually, absolutely yes. Activity is happening where there was very little before, e.g. in SE Northumberland, an area where there was no existing infrastructure and they have uncovered latent creativity and have a history of participation" (national strategic stakeholder).*

<sup>22</sup> In monitoring reports the Arts Council require places to evaluate past arts attendance by asking if they have attended more than 3 times a year

When asked to apply a red, amber or green rating to progress in this area, national strategic stakeholders applied a mixture of amber (fair) and green (good) ratings, indicating that while they were aware of some strong examples, the picture is inconsistent at present.

### 3.1.2 Success in engaging volunteers

To date, volunteers (mainly round 1 only) have been involved in a variety of volunteering opportunities, from being community catalysts or cultural/creative connectors, receiving volunteer training, and working on a research programme. South East Northumberland is doing some work with the Royal Voluntary Service training people that work in care homes with the elderly to build up their dance and movement skills. Barking & Dagenham, has **50 volunteers** known as 'cultural connectors'. Although their volunteering model is working well, it has required an additional member of staff to oversee the volunteers. The cultural connectors have already been involved in collaborations and they plan to get more volunteers involved in future public events.



bait (SE Northumberland): Royal Voluntary Service dance for older people project. Photo: Rowan Tinlin

**A review of monitoring data submitted to the Arts Council shows that 118 volunteers committed 1,427 hours across 28 events in 9 places in Q1**, however it is not clear whether places share a common understanding of what is classed as a 'volunteer'. In addition, reports on the involvement of volunteers often appeared to overlap with reports on the engagement of the local community and so they appear to be the same people. Further guidance from the Arts Council may be beneficial here to aid reporting.

In some places volunteers have been brought on board to support events, in other places volunteers appear to be able to influence the arts activity they are involved in (e.g. a choir in Corby chooses the songs they perform); or volunteers also sit on a decision-making body, which governs the wider arts programme of a place (Barking and Dagenham, Corby, Durham and Swale and Medway); however, there is not yet enough evidence to demonstrate the extent to which volunteers do in fact influence arts programming and management in practice.

In the Q1 monitoring reports, South East Northumberland, Pennine Lancashire and Peterborough indicated that they want to build in volunteer decision-making into their programmes in the future. Most of the Round 2 CPP areas are just starting to engage volunteers, some are currently in the process of recruiting volunteers, while others have offered some limited volunteer opportunities, but plan to get volunteers more involved in developing and commissioning the projects.

*"We are about to do a volunteer call out. We have worked with volunteers on a project by project basis up until now. We have 2 new volunteers joining the project steering group. We will have a big call out for rolling database of 50+ volunteers to help with making decisions, sounding board for every aspect of the programme. Up until now, we've done really well with volunteers - a group of local community members spearheaded the consultation process." (grant recipient)*

Round 3 CPP areas are still at a very early stage and have not involved volunteers yet:

*"Haven't started work with volunteers yet. [We] see the volunteers being needed in the artistic process and haven't started on this yet." (grant recipient)*

*"We will start to recruit volunteers specifically for the launch event and looking at the training programme around volunteers and work for festivals, which is very early stage at the moment as we need some additional funding to do that." (grant recipient)*

### 3.2 Motivating factors

Target audiences and volunteers are motivated to take part for a variety of reasons. Based on the views of grant recipients, motivations are linked to include a desire to get out the house, do something new, get involved with something, learn a new skill, and do something that they used to do (re-starting something). Other motivating factors are also a desire to meet people, to take part in a low cost or free programme, and to support things happening locally.

*"Motivation to see more happening where they live, see the benefits for career development...[they are] creative people who want to be involved in the network or like the idea local decision making." (grant recipient)*

In Barking and Dagenham, they have tried to make arts less intimidating and increase motivation to participate by bringing art to the people and to make it as accessible as possible, including using tactics such as approaching people in the street and using empty shop space or market stalls creatively with displays which are highly visible and invite people to come over. The most popular activities in Blackpool and Wyre were most often those which were straightforward and easy to understand, as others were deemed confusing or slightly too abstract for an audience unfamiliar with particular types of performance art (source - local place evaluation report). Success factors like these should be explored in future local place evaluations and the national evaluation in year 2.

South East Northumberland are using a wide range of channels to reach out to new audiences by working in partnerships with organisations that people know and trust, including health and social care, children's centres, community centres, public partnerships, and NHS. What has worked well is reaching out to new audiences through existing groups and finding champions to enthuse others to take part.

For St Helens, it is about aligning interests and using different routes of engagement, such as using well established entry points around heritage and sport which has been useful to encourage people to try something different.

*"Art can be in the context of health, disability, older people, local heritage etc., so not just one route of engagement / interest - art speaks to the broader society. Finding the right topic / project as a way of engaging people is just a matter of finding those different areas of interest; that's what makes it so appealing in terms of volunteering. Something along the line for everyone." (grant recipient)*



Methods of engaging communities are explored in more detail in section 4.2. In this first year, evaluating the effectiveness of places' efforts to better understand local audiences has not been a focus for investigation. As more places progress further with programme delivery, it will be important for the qualitative research to explore the success of different approaches to aid the assessment of programme reach and outcomes, and the extent to which the programme is addressing the challenges it was expected to address.



*Heart of Glass (St Helens): Merseyside Dance Initiative's programme for the St Helen's Summer Streets Festival.*  
Photo: Stephen King

### 3.3 Outcomes

This section provides a flavour of the early outcomes from the CPP programme at an individual, community and sector level. It draws on the interviews with national strategic stakeholders, grant recipients, and individuals in the case study places during year 1 of the evaluation and is largely based upon their perceptions about what outcomes have been achieved during this first year. In general, grant recipients interviewed for the evaluation felt that it was too early for them to report on tangible outcomes (mostly round 3 and 2), however some (mostly round 1) were able provide some anecdotal evidence of outcomes or benefits which they believed were already starting to take shape. National strategic stakeholders cited knowledge of "mini case studies" but were keen to highlight that these case studies are so far not showing on Culture Hive (<http://culturehive.co.uk/><sup>23</sup>), which was a funding requirement, and one which needs to be addressed moving forwards. Future evaluation reports will draw on local place evaluation outputs and will explore perceptions over time to assess how interviewees know reported outcomes have been achieved, including greater emphasis on participant feedback.

#### 3.3.1 Outcomes for individuals who have engaged with the CPP programme

For individuals, the emerging benefits are for those that have become involved in arts either through their participation in organised activities and events, or through their active engagement in the commissioning panels or workshops etc. Interviews and focus groups in the case study places showed that both participation and engagement have provided individuals with an opportunity to meet new people, build new relationships and friends. Moreover, grant recipients reported that they were starting to see how these new arts opportunities and experiences are helping individuals to develop and enhance their skills and confidence and to raise their aspirations for their local area. This perception was also shared by some national strategic stakeholders, based on what they had gleaned from contacts with different CPP places and the information that CPP places have shared through various forums, such as the peer learning network.

*"People that have taken part in the commissioning panels have benefitted from a growth in confidence about making decisions about what arts projects happen locally." (grant recipient)*

*"It's really quite extraordinary. The personal stories are remarkable. Now have people who have an interest but have not done much with it. The idea is that they're ambassadors – created a little army of creative people who are doing their own thing...It's surprised me how effective it's been in terms of the relationships that have been established and cohesion between different communities. Through coming together to paint a mural on the... estate, the people formed an incredible bond that for some was life-changing and led to pathways in to work as an artist" (national strategic stakeholder).*

<sup>23</sup> A resource by AMA for the arts sector



Drawing on the case studies and interviews carried out with grant recipients and national strategic in year 1, there was also evidence to suggest that by inspiring people to engage with and enjoy the arts, places have developed people's understanding of the arts and in doing so, changed attitudes towards art in the short-term at least.

*"Personally, blown away, magical, left me feeling I want some more, like I'd had my mind opened"*  
(case study participant).

*"Working ... [on Balby 2014] has opened up a different world... but it has been a steep learning curve"*  
(case study participant).

In changing people's attitudes towards art (including increased recognition of different art forms) and the power of art (i.e. what it can achieve), CPP was said to have brought optimism to CPP places from their perspective,

*"the buy-in is palpable" "Now the doubters have seen stuff happen and that it is positive and that there isn't a downside"* (national strategic stakeholder).

Where people had developed a different view of what art can be and what it can bring to people and places, there was a common view among grant recipients that this attitudinal shift would provide a catalyst for sustainability beyond the life of the CPP programme. Exploring how much and in what ways the programme is changing people's attitudes towards art in the long term is an important area for exploration in future local place evaluations and for the national evaluation in years 2 and 3. In being engaged with the arts (perhaps for the first time in a long time, or the first time with different art forms for example) there was a perception that participants had been open to, engaged with and inspired by what they had experienced. This perception appeared to be based on observations, first and second hand feedback as part of local place evaluations and anecdotal accounts. As a result participants were said to have been inspired to attend future events or to become more involved through formal consultation or community meetings, which in the case study areas (Doncaster and Stoke-on-Trent) has led to individual examples of sustained community participation that is helping to shape local arts programmes (case study interviews). Some case study interviewees suggested that CPP places that are able to change people's attitudes towards the arts will increase both demand for the arts and opportunities for art under the CPP programme, which together has the potential to make the arts more sustainable in the future, with the support of local communities.

### 3.3.2 Outcomes for local communities

In addition to strengthening community relations and bringing optimism to CPP places, the case study research and some of the interviews with grant recipients and national strategic stakeholders provided largely anecdotal evidence of other benefits to the local community, particularly around both a raised awareness of what local arts provision and opportunities are available among local people, and a sense of pride of place. In some places, this has provided impetus for the local community to get involved and behind the initiative. Furthermore, it has in some cases started to give the community the confidence and capacity to initiate activities under their own direction.

*"Certain projects ...have been complete self-starters. [They are] In process of setting up independent cinema which wasn't necessarily part of programme, but was spearheaded by community members who wanted to look at independent cinema status of the town, so how quickly that sense of empowerment has transferred has been a great surprise."* (grant recipient)

Another example of this is attached to the legacy ambition of the programme for building capacity to enable local community groups to continue to deliver arts projects. South East Northumberland has worked with Children's Centres with the support of Action for Children (including financial input) and a few of their projects have involved parent groups. One of the parent groups has gone on to put together a brief and elect an artist themselves to work with them, the result of which will be explored in the grant recipient interviews in year 2.

*"It has created and enabled a lot of opportunities for local people to try out ideas that they have, so people have gained in confidence that they can get funding, that they can do things, that people will support them, and that it's ok to have a go..." (grant recipient)*

### 3.3.3 Outcomes for the Arts

The main benefit for the arts sector is that there is a real sense amongst grant recipients that the CPP programme as a whole has been a major catalyst for making new things happen. In many cases, qualitative research carried out for the evaluation in year 1 suggests that it has brought a new ambition amongst different partners, national strategic stakeholders and key decision makers to not only come together and have open dialogue, but also the willingness to try different approaches to engagement and to work in consultation with communities. The scale and outcomes of these different approaches to engagement will be explored in more detail in year 2 of the evaluation and through the thematic case study on programme governance and consortia working, the outputs of which may be reviewed as part of the meta-evaluation along with other national evaluation outputs.

*"[it has indicated a] Step change in terms of ambition amongst partners and community groups in terms of willingness to try something different and explore a different way of doing things." (grant recipient)*

Furthermore, CPP is helping places to link the arts to other wider agendas, for the benefit of all involved – including potential ways to address how the infrastructure and achievements of the CPP programme might be sustained beyond the three years of programme funding to 2016. One individual, interviewed as part of the Stoke-on-Trent case study highlighted;

*"It has allowed us to get the arts around the table where we might not have been before e.g., cultural quarter debate"*

There was a common consensus among national strategic stakeholders that while the primary aim of CPP relates to the Arts Council's Goal 2; more people experience and are inspired by the arts, the programme was in fact contributing to all Arts Council goals, and therein helping to achieve a range of outcomes for the arts sector. Although national strategic stakeholders knew of few specific examples at this stage, they highlighted places that are developing leadership in the arts (such as the previously reported links with Public Health in South East Northumberland) and focus on the development of artists' talent and participatory arts practices in South Tyneside and Sunderland (Goal 4). The spectacle installation with the Cultural Spring via a Paul Hamlyn programme fed in to the BBC's Great North Passion Programme – a BBC religion and ethics commission.

National strategic stakeholders understood that many CPP places had "children at the heart" of their programming (Goal 5), and as one interviewee stated, "If children engage with the arts they are more likely to continue to engage in to adulthood too", although participation long term is also dependent upon other positive and negative influences on arts engagement experienced at home, school and in local communities.

Furthermore, the funding requirement for a 10 year plan coupled with the necessity for an arts sector-led and broad partnership delivery structure was believed to be contributing towards the achievement of Arts Council Goal 3; the arts are sustainable, resilient and innovative. However, a need was identified to connect people to existing arts venues in order to improve their sustainability.

### 3.4 Progress with planning for sustainability

It is clear from the discussions amongst the national peer learning network that sustainability is high on the agenda of all CPP areas, although in practice progress with planning for sustainability is variable – in part influenced by which programme Round places are in and the issues affecting their progress, which are discussed in section three. At the Sustainability peer learning day in October 2014, one of 6 themed events to support peer learning in year 1, CPP places came together to consider what they want to sustain, how, who needs to be involved and how all of this impacts upon current work. The notes from that meeting were reviewed as part of the review of programme documents. The notes provide an indication of progress towards sustainability in October 2014 and suggest a shared commitment to sustaining the investment (resources and money), structures (partnerships and community engagement), methods (bespoke aspects), reach (engagement levels), excellence and learning in the programme's legacy. The importance of working together, collecting and disseminating evidence, diversifying income and linking in with broader agendas has clearly been recognised and here, as in the interviews with grant recipients, it is evident that some places have already taken practical steps in planning for sustainability. For example, Barking and Dagenham have undertaken stakeholder mapping to see what other partners can offer over and above finance (e.g. connections, in-kind support) and Boston and South Holland have identified strategic partners in Public, private and voluntary sectors who stand the best chance of sustaining projects because they deliver their objectives. With Businesses this is about increasing staff morale, retention and recruitment, for Local Authorities, its capacity for large scale cultural projects and for groups its artistic expertise and empowerment.



*Transported (Boston and South Holland): Art on Lorries Parliament launch. Photo: Electric Egg*

Different examples of planning for sustainability were provided by grant recipients during the interviews and reported in local place evaluations. For some areas, sustainability was reported to be the key to their current thinking and informs their entire decision making. Several grant recipients have held legacy/sustainability meetings and workshops to help them define their thinking around sustainability.

*"Its about stepping back and having conversations with consortium members individually to develop thinking about what sustainability might look like and where they might try to develop that in terms of infrastructure, funding opportunities and ways of working, so we can start building that into the programme." (grant recipient)*

The thinking around sustainability for Round 1 places already well in to programme delivery was influenced by their experiences of the programme so far. For instance, free access to events was perceived very positively by audiences in Stoke-on-Trent but there was recognition that continuing to provide free art may not be a sustainable solution. However, mindful of the local context and the need for CPP places to respond to the specifics of the places and people, there was a perception among some CPP case study interviewees that they must ensure that the reward for engaging in the arts continue to outweigh the costs to people, not just in terms of ticket price but factoring in transport costs, time and energy commitments. They are working on the basis that by demonstrating that the arts can add to a person's quality of life, not place further demands on it, they can start to change attitudes, and therefore behaviour towards it (local place evaluation).

There has been some research at a local level exploring whether people are prepared to pay for the arts. An e-survey of audience members attending 'As the World Tipped' in Blackpool and the Wyre asked people if they would have paid to attend the event. **Although 78% of respondents to the survey had been attracted by the free tickets, 62% indicated that they would have been willing to pay for a ticket and 95% would have considered making a donation.** Asking local communities to pay for art is one of the ways in which national strategic stakeholders believed programme sustainability could be addressed, as part of wider efforts to diversify the funding/resource base.



*LeftCoast (Blackpool and Wyre): Motion House's Traction at Fleetwood Festival of Transport.  
Photo: Jill Reidy*

From one interviewee's perspective, a lack of money was not always the main barrier so clearly more research at a local level regarding people's willingness to pay may be beneficial. The notes from the Sustainability peer learning day indicate that places will start to share examples of pricing strategies and other useful documentation on Basecamp so more information should come to the fore.

Grant recipients are also exploring other funding opportunities such as Grants for the Arts and linking with large scale initiatives and arts programmes e.g., Bridge, Artsmark for schools, other opportunities to work from ground up (national strategic stakeholders). However, interviews with national strategic stakeholders reinforced that the availability of resources/funding will be the key challenge – both from the Arts Council and other partners in the places, particularly in terms of other public sector funding. There was a perception that achieving change (e.g. more people from areas of least engagement engaging regularly with the arts over time, developing sustainable arts opportunities) will be a long-term process (10-20 years) and that further support from the Arts Council and other organisations will be required.

Relatedly, links with other agendas are being explored and developed. North Kirklees has an interesting and unique approach could be replicated in other areas. It has combined both arts and wellbeing into their programme by working in partnership with a health practitioner. Over recent years, there has been a growing understanding of the impact that taking part in the arts can have on health and wellbeing, therefore North Kirklees builds on this premise and has brought together cross-cutting expertise from both the arts and the health sector.

Appetite in Stoke-on-Trent has become a Member of the City Centre Partnership, which is a group of local businesses with a vested interest in increasing footfall in the city centre. Appetite is trying to use the data as further evidence to go and speak to people and map out the connections to other funding around for e.g. health, skills development, and employability. National strategic stakeholder interviewees said there may be European Funding opportunities for places in general to explore.

In addition to the challenges of financial pressures and resources, one of the main threats to sustainability identified by grant recipients is the constant change to national and local arts landscape, which CPP areas have little or no control of, as highlighted by one grant recipient:

*"The national and local landscape is changing so much and so frequently that something that is considered a viable model today may not be in 24 months time when the landscape has completely changed. When things settle we will be well placed to make cases locally and nationally as to why this is a viable programme or model. The threat is that this constant change means it's hard to build those project champions or advocates to the right people or thread various systems into existing infrastructure or structures because things are so changeable." (grant recipient)*

The Arts Council, the peer learning network coordinator and network of project leads have key roles in encouraging CPP places to share learning, ensuring information exchange continues and messaging is consistent over time, plus offering places support and challenge so that they are well placed to respond to change. However, it is recognised that the peer learning coordinator's role is part time and primarily to support the exchange of learning within the network.

In summary, at the end of the year 1 evaluation and drawing on all the available evidence the key issues which places are focussing their efforts on to address sustainability are:

- funding opportunities (as highlighted in the above examples e.g. income generation models, set up of a local cultural fund and building links with the private sector);
- partnerships within and outside of the arts (e.g. links with local industries and health practitioners);
- growing audiences and local buy in (e.g. build confidence and engagement, and aligning with local authority priorities);
- capacity building among the existing and developing arts infrastructure that is being put in place with CPP funding (e.g. exploring and addressing the training needs of community teams to design and co-commission arts activities);
- management structures (by building in a formal community arm in to the management structure or phased withdrawal from delivery built in at the planning stage); and
- resources (e.g. shared venues that may have a primary purpose e.g. library but can be used for another e.g. community arts-based activities).

Methods for, and progress with all of these aspects will be explored further in year 2 of the evaluation.



## 4.0 Programme excellence

This section introduces the emerging evidence base in relation to the core evaluation question: to what extent was the aspiration for excellence in art and excellence in the process of community engagement achieved. Based on the local place evaluation reports received to date and the primary research, most CPP places are in the very early stages of exploring and seeking to evidence excellence in terms of both the programme content and the methods used to deliver the programme. Future reports will examine their progress and explore the concept of excellence in greater detail when it is expected that there will more evidence on which to base an assessment.

### 4.1 To what extent was the aspiration for excellence in art achieved?

At this point in programme delivery, excellence was most commonly considered by CPP places with regards to how it should be defined for the CPP programme. Most grant recipients expressed that it was very difficult to define artistic excellence as there is not a single definition that would fit the range of work or suit the specific contexts of each CPP place, despite the wealth of literature and various measures for assessing artistic excellence that exists. The use of the term artistic excellence can refer to or mean many things to different people and therefore excellence is subjective and open to ever-changing interpretations. Interviewees highlighted that professional standards in the arts sector are not always measurable or quantifiable and excellence can often be conflated with something less tangible.

*“It’s all very well saying projects need to strive towards artistic excellence but there is no one definition of that.” (grant recipient)*

When interviewed, a national strategic stakeholder expressed an “unwritten aspiration” for CPP; “that each place would aspire to be a world leader”, whether in creating art or audience development or something else. While acknowledging that the Arts Council is not measuring places’ success in this regard, this demonstrates high expectations for programme excellence in different forms. From the Arts Council perspective, excellence must be considered in terms of what do CPP and sector peers, the wider public and programme participants think, and in turn what does the local area think?

Grant recipients’ perceptions of excellence appeared to be in line with this perspective. They were highly aware that the context they are working in influences and defines what artistic excellence is. What is considered to be artistic excellence in one place is not necessarily viewed in the same way in another place. Therefore some grant recipients expressed the importance of creating their own definition of what artistic excellence is so that it reflects the context they are working in. To some artistic excellence is about setting levels of quality that they can aspire to, without being too prescriptive.

*“Artistic excellence is one of the biggest questions for the programme. It’s better that it’s more a conversation than a standard set in stone as it’s not straightforward... What we are learning is that things are changing and indicators around art are very simplistic, so there are outcomes which are not necessarily captured within that. When you look at excellence and quality you need to think about the context as well.” (grant recipient)*

By defining quality as applicable to audiences in Stoke-on-Trent, Appetite was able to start to understand what might inspire audiences and measure whether an audience defines a particular art form as quality. **A total of 1,289 votes were cast to define quality art, indicating that 429 people voted over the course of the Taster Menu. The local place evaluation report findings showed that the most popular definition of quality art was - art that is inspiring (288 votes), closely followed by art that makes people see things differently (249 votes).**

In thinking about the local context, there appears to be a tendency for grant recipients to view artistic excellence and art engagement through popular choice as a balancing act. While other art projects tend focus on one or the other, CPP is about achieving both an increase in art engagement and artistic excellence.

*"We are trying to push risk taking, we want things to have high production and performance values but equally we want things to be sustainable and replicable, so it's balancing a whole range of different criteria which is complex." (grant recipient)*

According to a national strategic stakeholder, in some places the balance has tipped towards great art, while in others, the emphasis is on reaching everyone. How well individual places and the programme as whole deliver this balance will be explored in year two of the evaluation.

As a further dimension to excellence, it was said to be important for places to consider the quality of the whole art experience from start to finish, not just the art (grant recipient). This might include the quality of the marketing and communications for an activity, the experience of entering a venue, and the quality of the other experiences that are offered as part of the arts experience such as lighting, music, refreshments and information, for example. And from a national perspective, there has not yet been much evidence of places commissioning high quality specialised art forms to date. It will be interesting to explore whether the number of specialist commissions increase in the future, and if so, what impact they have on the communities they serve.

#### 4.1.1 Views on Arts Council support to achieve artistic excellence

Grant recipients were very aware of the importance of artistic excellence to the Arts Council and that the Arts Council has emphasised the importance of artistic excellence for the programme. However, in this first year of the evaluation there were mixed views about the level of support received from the Arts Council around artistic excellence. Some grant recipients felt that they were adequately supported by their Relationship Managers in that respect (mostly round 3 and 2). One grant recipient described a strong sense that artistic excellence drives everything in the sector and that the Arts Council has been very influential in that. By contrast, a few grant recipients expressed their frustrations about the lack of practical support from the Arts Council (mainly round 1).

*"Arts Council has been aloof to enter into having an input on recommending or advising their perspective on artist excellence, its felt very hands off." (grant recipient)*

Moreover, another grant recipient was anxious that there is a lack of clarity around the definition of artistic excellence and contextual understanding from the Arts Council.

*"In terms of working with established arts practitioners who the Arts Council and many others would hold up as being examples of artistic excellence, when it comes to working in [X] context they start to flounder a little bit and don't really work. So what CPP can never be is picking up something that works elsewhere and just dumping it in any area, it's much more complicated than that." (grant recipient)*

It is however encouraging that grant recipients' reflections on the quality of Arts Council support in relation to support to artistic excellence appear to have improved over time. Still, given the ongoing discussions around what constitutes artistic excellence and how best to assess and evidence examples, it may be beneficial for the Arts Council to give more central direction on the messaging – perhaps more guidance and suggested 'excellence' criteria for the CPP programme while continuing to be mindful of the desire and need for places to create art that is respectful of and responsive to the local context. One source could be the quality metrics which are currently being piloted<sup>24</sup>. Alternatively, this might involve allowing places to define excellence for their local area, perhaps with an agreed list of common principles which places should consider for CPP.

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/research-and-data/quality-work/quality-metrics/quality-metrics-pilot/>

## 4.2 To what extent was excellence achieved in the process of engagement?

The way in which grant recipients have approached defining the concept of artistic excellence has largely been through consultation and engagement with artistic advisory groups, decision panels, artistic critical friend, and drawing on the expertise of artists, local art officers, practitioners, partners and networks. For example, Barking & Dagenham are planning to run a session for their Cultural Connectors (volunteers) on quality and excellence, while St Helens, Pennine Lancashire, North Kirklees, Hull and Blackpool & Wyre are looking to organise a joint peer learning event on artistic excellence in February 2015. At this point in the evaluation, it is too early to assess how effective these mechanisms have been but they will be revisited in year 2 of the evaluation.



*East Durham Creates (East Durham): Billy Elliot the Musical Live at Easington Social Welfare Centre. Photo: Colin Davison*

Two of the three case studies explored different methods of early community engagement with a view to understanding excellence in methods and programming decisions; putting on a Taster menu of events (Stoke-on-Trent) and grassroots community development (Doncaster) to reach and inspire local communities. Their approaches to engagement are outlined and contrasted here.



*Appetite (Stoke-on-Trent): Play Me, I'm Yours, Stoke-on-Trent. Photo: Clara Lou Photography*

Stoke-on-Trent's CPP Programme, Appetite, first began delivering on its 10 year vision by putting on a Taster Menu in summer 2013, to engage and inspire local communities in an area made up of six disparate towns with generally low levels of engagement with the arts and limited access to high quality arts productions. When designing the Taster Menu, the aim was to commission professional work at an early stage to help to build an appetite and give people something to respond to and provide inspiration. Their vision was that people would begin to think differently about art and that the Taster Menu would generate an emotional response that would help people to believe that this range and quality of art is possible in Stoke-on-Trent. As well as putting on an

introductory programme of high quality artistic content that succeeded in attracting and engaging audiences, the Get Talking Network was set up at the heart of programme activity and based on a model of participatory action research. It was used to engage people in conversations and involve them in decision-making about local issues. Members of the community were invited to sign up for training in the model to support the evaluation of Appetite and had the opportunity of working towards accreditation from Staffordshire University. Through the training, participants learned new action research skills and some gained accreditation while the Appetite team was able to benefit from the groups' input during the analysis and reporting stages. The action research process helped the team to reflect with the support of community researchers and proved popular with participants. In terms of early outcomes of engagement with the art programme, more people experienced and were reportedly inspired by the arts and attitudes towards art changed, which succeeded in raising some individual's aspirations and expectations for art in Stoke-on-Trent, in the short term at least. People interviewed for the case study had engaged more with their local communities and said there was positivity around Stoke, some of which they thought was a result of Appetite's work which started with The Taster Menu. However, it is not yet clear the extent to which wider public engagement will be sustained.

This example has successfully combined a thoughtful and inspiring arts programme that the case study research and the local place evaluation found had both engaged and inspired participants in large numbers and offered different ways for people to participate - as an audience member, research subject, and researcher. Moreover, much of the initial engagement with community researchers has continued via monthly supper clubs attracting repeat and new community members who plan and review programme activities. Work is also underway to give communities the skills and knowledge to be able to commission activities, with the support of Appetite Builders and with an eye to sustainability.

In Doncaster, the CPP Programme Right Up Our Street (RUOS) has three strands of activity: D strand - large scale performance events; N strand – a series of commissions responding to what communities want; and A strand - where professional artists work in communities as Arts Supporters to reach out and engage local people in grassroots development by supporting a group to create a programme of engaging art for the area. Each strand facilitates different levels of community decision-making and involvement. The A strand was the focus of the evaluation case study, centring on the experiences of Balby, one of the selected communities. The first step for Balby's Arts Supporter was the building of a community team to inform programming for the area.

This has involved working with a small but diverse group of local people with different skills and interests which has generated a lot of ideas and led to the formation of local arts groups, delivery of local arts projects which engage the wider community, community commissions for professional artists and use of non-arts spaces (particularly the community library). The team meet regularly to discuss and make decisions on the programme of activity for the area, including providing insights into the challenges of engaging the community and how these might be overcome, and also to evaluate past activity.



*Right Up Our Street (Doncaster): Balby Field of Poppies.  
Photo: James Mulkeen*

This approach has successfully placed members of the community at the heart of the programme of activity being delivered in Balby. This has involved working in depth with a small group of local people to build their capacity and help them to challenge perceptions about where they live and what happens there to be able to develop a programme of activity. The Arts Supporter has played a key role in this process, helping to steer and drive forward the activities by becoming a trusted friend in the community. A key lesson from this process is that establishing and maintaining a community team has helped to make links locally, helping to reach those who do not normally engage with the arts. However, it takes time to build relationships and it may be a while before the group are able to make a meaningful contribution, which can lead to frustration when people perceive that nothing is happening. RUOS has found that familiarity is key. This may be familiarity in terms of location/venue, content or art form and this provides a hook with which to engage those who would not normally take part in the arts and an opportunity to take risks and challenge perceptions.

The full case studies are available on the website <http://creativepeopleplaces.org.uk>.

More widely, evidence from the national strategic stakeholder interviews suggests that there is a mixed picture with regards to communities being empowered to take the lead in shaping local arts position. The Cultural Connectors Model in Barking and Dagenham was perceived to exhibit excellence because anecdotally more than 50 people have been recruited to be involved in helping to market the programme, make funding decisions, “act as curators and commissioners and not just consumers”.



*“So far, the decisions that have been made have resulted in fantastic work that is both engaging the community and is artistically challenging” (national strategic stakeholder).*

However, there was a view that it varies on how much power is given over. As suggested by one national strategic stakeholder, professionals working within the arts can be anxious that if they give too much prominence to communities, the quality of work will suffer, which is an assumption that the CPP programme is seeking to test and one which the evaluation will consider further in future. Opportunities for community engagement should offer a range of methods and levels of involvement (from consultation to direct involvement in the design, delivery and evaluation of activities). A range of opportunities should reflect people’s own interests/practices (whether providing creative direction, training or peer support).

When asked to apply a red, amber or green rating to progress in learning lessons from past experiences and an environment created where the sector can experiment with new approaches to engaging communities, national strategic stakeholders applied a mixture of amber (fair) and red (poor) ratings, suggesting that there is more work to do, not least in highlighting and demonstrating local achievements where CPP places believe they have achieved excellence in the process of engagement and learning from these achievements.

#### **4.3 In what ways, and how well, are local CPP places supported to achieve excellence?**

There are a number of ways in which CPP places have the opportunity to come together and share learning and can also offer support around achieving programme excellence. These include Basecamp; an online information sharing tool, national conferences and network meetings (evaluation and peer learning), and local/regional network meetings, such as those set up in the North East.

The great majority of areas that submitted monitoring documents for Q1 2014/15 had taken part in the last CPP project lead meeting in Doncaster (there have since been other meetings). The fact that people were willing to give up their time to attend was believed to be very positive (national strategic stakeholder), valuing the opportunity to connect and learn across areas, specialisms and issues.

*“The Peer learning network has been great and facilitated some very good opportunities for shared learning and reflection. This has also helped to create the feel of a professional network and cadre of leaders which I think will be powerful in the future” (national strategic stakeholder).*

CPP places considered being part of the Learning Network to be advantageous for many reasons including:

- Share and learn from others
- Explore potential for collaboration and visits between places
- Clarify the communication strategy with the national programme
- Understand the importance of gathering evaluation material and case studies

These points were further evidenced by the Sustainability peer learning meeting notes, as the meeting provided places with an opportunity to spend time thinking through the various aspects of sustainability as previously highlighted in section 3.4.

In the monitoring returns, several places also mentioned being involved in online discussions on Basecamp. The extent of peer learning was reported to have improved over the past six months since the peer learning coordinator became established in post, and Basecamp was cited as helpful in building trust between different CPP places, although over time it was said to have become almost too big which is making it harder to use.



*“Basecamp has been effective in quickly, cheaply and simply giving everyone involved in the programme a place to share information and to send out coherent messages – the take up has been very good and it has minimised the need to talk to lots of different people individually” (national strategic stakeholder).*

Notwithstanding the useful learning that has clearly been shared to date, there was a sense that in general terms more could be done to learn lessons and experiment with new approaches further in relation to programme excellence. One national strategic stakeholder cited a lack of learning from other sectors in the past, which could be considered as part of a renewed focus on peer learning Year 2. In addition, a grant recipient mentioned that they would like to see more sharing of models and approaches which are used across the places in relation to arts engagement, community decision-making, governance and evaluation.

## 5.0 Effective practice, lessons learned and implications

Drawing on all the available evidence, this final section of the report summarises what approaches have proven successful for a number of emerging themes across the programme to date. These approaches are considered to be effective practice because they have been shown to work well in local places yet their applicability to other areas, and the success or otherwise of transferable aspects is not yet known (good practice will be explored in year 2). A synthesis of the learning is presented for both local CPP places and national strategic stakeholders. Lastly, the section sets out the implications for the future delivery of CPP and the next steps for the evaluation.

### 5.1 Overall, which approaches were successful?

- **Programming art that is extraordinary in an ordinary place**

Across the board, the evidence collated and analysed for the evaluation demonstrates that when people are exposed to new and what is perceived to be high quality art in a space that is familiar to them they do become engaged, and often inspired by what they see, which can in turn lead to their continued participation in the arts (whilst difficult to evidence at this stage). Throughout this report there are different examples, including those explored in the case studies which show that this method has led to more people being engaged in, inspired by and enjoying the arts – one of the short term programme outcomes. Examples were also reported in grant recipient and national strategic stakeholder interviews, although the strength of the evidence base for sustained engagement in particular was somewhat unclear at this stage in programme delivery and evaluation. One example is the presentation of classical music in people's living rooms in Swale and Medway – described as a marriage of something which is perceived as being a difficult art form being presented in a way that does not make it difficult, delivering high quality art while taking away the barriers (grant recipient interview). There is evidence that points towards participants developing an increased understanding of the arts and confidence to make informed choices – also a short term outcome. Furthermore, in instances where extraordinary art is delivered in ordinary places and well received, other short term outcomes can also be achieved. These include excellence and innovation in the arts through the delivery of high quality art in a new or unexpected way. By bringing art in to familiar local places and spaces, excellence in engaging and empowering communities can also be achieved by establishing common ground. In adopting this type of approach, there is the potential to strike a good balance between 'great art' and 'everyone'. The national evaluation will seek to explore places' success in this regard in year 2.

- **Developing partnerships with non-arts organisations to help make that happen**

To make extraordinary art possible in locations that are familiar to participants, Places have created interesting partnerships with both arts and non-arts organisations. These include: Boston and South Holland's links with the haulage industry and employers; East Durham and partners' links with a social centre (formerly the Easington Colliery Miner's Institute), which led to the first live screening of Billy Elliot outside of a professional cinema; Doncaster's links with non-arts venues, such as the library in Balby which has become a local arts hub; and St Helen's partnership with the local rugby club, among others highlighted by national strategic stakeholders and grant recipient interviewees. In St Helens, they are approaching good practice by seeking to get the commissioning model right and finding ways for arts and communities and interests to come together as equal partners, with different skill sets and knowledge bases, to create something unique. The model they are aspiring towards has an equal emphasis on community and art, not being lead or driven by one or the other, i.e. finding harmony between two different worlds/knowledge bases. This type of approach has been suggested as one which could support sustainability by increasing capacity and capability in arts provision (another short term outcome), in partnership.

- **Sharing contacts and experiences to maximise learning at a local, regional and national level**

The qualitative evidence suggests that efforts to share learning have so far been beneficial; and therefore should continue in years 2 and 3 to help with programme delivery and improve impact and outcomes. Notwithstanding the constructive feedback, the national peer learning network has received some very positive feedback at a national and local level. Some local CPPs have formalised similar arrangements locally, which in one place was considered to be invaluable as a way of getting local people involved in decision making and bringing together a mixed panel. Swale and Medway has done some interesting work around community engagement, including an ideas testing network, where they worked with community catalysts and their non-art friends to look at what their year 2 and 3 programme might look like through a creative and fun activity. They have also tried out different ways of engaging people in the decision making process, to test what does and does not work. Their approach has been to try to empower people to find their own solutions e.g. bring together networks of artists that do not know each other, bring small companies together to do peer mentoring, and to do a show case. This has empowered people to find their own solutions in different ways. In building on the good work done to date to maximise learning, including learning from outside of CPP, places will become better equipped to achieve the short and medium term outcomes for the programme.

- **Demonstrating the success of approaches by developing and disseminating the evidence base**

As highlighted in section 2 of the report, places that are further ahead in programme delivery and have integrated programme evaluation are able to demonstrate the impact and effectiveness of their work to date, which in turn is helping to answer the research questions for the national evaluation. Within the local place evaluation work there are some good examples on which to build. These are also often the examples that national strategic stakeholders at a national level hear most about and therefore are more likely to cite as examples that are working well (and as a result are most often referred to in this report). From the meta-evaluation, it appears that questions of excellence and good practice will be explored for the first time in detail during year two of the national evaluation which is also encouraging. However, as has also been highlighted, while the evidence base for the effectiveness and outcomes of the CPP programme is developing there remain some challenges, which must be addressed. These are summarised below.

## **5.2 Lessons learned and suggestions for the future**

In this section we summarise lessons learned across the CPP programme until December 2014 and the implications for the future, drawing on all of the primary and secondary evidence collected for the evaluation in year 1. Suggestions are included for future reference, including some related top tips that were put forward by grant recipients during the interviews when asked to provide their 3 top tips. Some of the tips are for CPP peers and other tips are relevant to the wider sector.

### 5.2.1 Partnership formation

**Lesson:** The qualitative evidence and monitoring information provided by CPP places indicates that some places have created new and exciting partnerships that may achieve real and positive change in these areas in terms of engaging more people in the arts and inspiring audiences to re-engage in the arts, for example. However, to get to that point partners had to put in a lot of time and effort to establish roles and responsibilities and work towards a common purpose for CPP across sectors, specialisms and local interests. At the time of writing, **relatively little is known about how effectively partners across the programme are coming together to create a vision and deliver activity. This needs to be addressed if new places and other practitioners are to benefit from the lessons learned about partnership working by Round 1 and Round 2 places**. The Blackpool case study for this report is one example of sharing learning and the national evaluation in year two will further explore and report on the effectiveness of partnerships. Thematic research on programme governance and consortia working (1 of 3 planned thematic studies) aims to provide a management checklist to support places based on the results of a mapping exercise and the development of eight detailed case studies.

- There is also an opportunity for places to **maximise the learning from the other sectors** places are working with e.g. community engagement in the context of local regeneration, sport or health and explore new ways of engaging the community, new methods of monitoring and evaluating that engagement. This should include further developing and maintaining an awareness of the different levels of engagement achieved by methods adopted in other sectors, from consultation to community led decision making (also relevant to community engagement lesson below).
- **Related tips put forward by grant recipients' (applicable to professionals across CPP and the wider sector):** Be clear about the mission from the word go and do not assume everyone is on the same page. Learn how other partners work and what they can bring. Put in place a clear Memorandum of Understanding or similar. Partners should own aspects of delivery that they are responsible for, set out any issues on the table early on and get agreement for the approach and get the consortium on board. Allow plenty of time for staff development, especially when partners are diverse and come from a non-arts background. Recognise that some partners might need more time to get on board or carry out tasks so be flexible. Where possible, implement strong administrative support to facilitate delivery.

### 5.2.2 Planning phase

**Lesson:** The amount of **time involved in the planning stages has been greater than anticipated**, even for grant recipients who found the application process relatively straightforward. This has led to **slower progress with programme delivery than expected, local place evaluation and achievement of early outcomes**. There are also implications for the national evaluation as the evidence base on which to draw is less extensive than might have been expected at this stage (see monitoring and evaluation below).

- **Related tips put forward by grant recipients' (applicable to new CPP places in particular, and more generally the wider sector):** Be realistic about the amount of time required to plan, get staff and partners in place. Also be realistic about the pace at which places might reasonably expect to progress.

### 5.2.3 Delivery phase

#### **Community engagement**

**Lesson:** **Allowing sufficient time to engage and involve local people in the planning or delivery process** is again a key lesson learned. **It is too early to assess how effective methods put in place to achieve excellence in community engagement have been across the programme as a whole**. The case studies in Doncaster and Stoke-on-Trent illustrate that very different approaches to engaging local communities can achieve successful outcomes for participating individuals and places. However, even in these places, it is too early to say whether the evidenced outcomes have been sustained and translated into longer term change.

- Places must **continue to develop the evidence base**, recording what has been done to engage local communities, how, why and what has been achieved. It will be interesting to see the results of the longitudinal research being carried out at a local level in some areas and to see how other CPP places take these findings on board as they consider how they will assess longer term changes that may be achieved as a result of engagement with CPP.
- **Related tips put forward by grant recipients' ( applicable to professionals across CPP and the wider sector)**: Partners with less experience in developing responsive and participative relationships with audiences should be supported, bringing potential benefits to their practices and programme outcomes going forwards. Gaps in programming can be disappointing for participants highlighting the importance of programming, communications and managing the expectations of local communities when delivering events. Providing choices/options to communities based on an understanding of what they want to achieve can be helpful but it is important to be mindful that once involved communities wants may change as they are inspired by and learn from new experiences, particularly if they are new to the arts. CPP staff and partners must be visible to communities and offer different ways for people to get involved.

### Artistic excellence

**Lesson:** The qualitative research carried out in year 1 of the evaluation found that **more guidance on the concept of artistic excellence for the CPP programme would be beneficial**, particularly as grant recipients' views on the appropriateness of the level of support they have received in this regard were mixed. Even though some support mechanisms are in place (e.g. peer learning network), there appears to have been a lack of clarity on this issue and much ongoing discussion about what CPP excellence should entail. Ultimately this may slow progress in some places and mean that art produced by CPP does not meet the 'world leader' aspiration as set out by some national strategic stakeholder interviewees.

- As the programme timeline goes on, there is a **need to move away from discussions around defining quality and excellence**. This might include the development of an agreed excellence criteria for the programme, against which CPP places can consider their locally specific programmes. Alternatively, this might involve allowing places to define excellence for their local area, perhaps with an agreed list of common principles which places should consider for CPP.
- **Related tips put forward by grant recipients (applicable to professionals across CPP and the wider sector)**: High quality artistic input builds trust and enables people to take more risks. Consortiums and partnerships must take risks.

### Learning from past lessons and examples of good practice

**Lesson:** There is a **need to establish guidance and/or a system for assessing and reporting on good practice** as although places are required to submit case studies to Culture Hive, this is not yet happening and will become increasingly important in the future. One of three key national evaluation questions is - which approaches were successful and what lessons were learned? In answering this question it is necessary to be able to answer first, how effective are CPP places at identifying and adopting good practice from outside the programme and second, to what extent has the programme generated good practice (see Annex 2 – National Evaluation Research Questions). For the national evaluation to be able to do this, CPP places must have a shared understanding of what is considered to be good practice on the CPP programme, and how they should endeavour to report this.

- In the future it may be helpful to establish a system for **collating, coordinating and sharing potential examples**, which might incorporate a system for peer review, perhaps through the peer learning network.



**Lesson:** While there is evidence to suggest that **mechanisms for places to share learning are working well, according to some interviewees, insufficient lessons are being learnt from the past.** The qualitative research this year has focussed on understanding lessons learnt from the process of becoming a CPP place, and therefore little is known regarding how well places are learning lessons from the past.

- In year two, as the Peer Learning Network develops, the evaluation will seek to **explore how well the Network and other forums for sharing learning are helping places to learn lessons from the past** – what are places doing differently, why and what has been the impact? As was suggested by one grant recipient interviewee, it would be helpful if the Network of CPP places could establish/continue to develop an open culture of **sharing models and approaches** which can be used across the places in relation to arts engagement, community decision-making, governance and evaluation. This may be a role for the Peer Learning Coordinator, National Evaluation Coordinator and perhaps the Communications Coordinator.
- **Related tips put forward by grant recipients (applicable to new CPP places in particular):** Listen to Arts Council advice. Learn as much as possible from your peers. Reflective learning helps to keep important issues on the agenda.

#### 5.2.4 Monitoring and evaluation

**Lesson:** Nationally Arts Council monitoring templates provide the framework for narrative and data returns detailing progress in key areas and outputs in the delivery phase. Over time these templates are bringing greater consistency to CPP places' reporting as the Arts Council has responded to feedback and places have become increasingly familiar with the requirements. However, as **some definitions are not provided in the guidance** (e.g. volunteers, networking), places have made various interpretations or left these fields blank, **which has brought challenges and limitations to local monitoring and evaluation, and for the national evaluation.** The national evaluation will seek to agree a definition with the Arts Council going forwards.

- **There is a need for further monitoring and evaluation guidance and greater emphasis on checking the development of the evidence base.** Many of the issues identified throughout report (e.g. lack of clarity around definitions for the monitoring report) were first identified in the evaluation inception report (April 2014) and although there have been efforts to address these problems, there needs to be more and better data to demonstrate the impact and effectiveness of the programme. Section 5.3 provides more details about the next steps for the evaluation and how CPP places can best respond to this need.
- **In addition, further financial guidance is required** to support programme delivery and for a robust assessment of programme income and expenditure in the evaluation. As stated earlier, at the time of reporting the Arts Council were considering ways of making financial reporting more consistent and were exploring a template which will be shared with places. The Arts Council was also said to be working with places to find out how best to support places that are using their own systems.

**Lesson:** At the point of reporting, only four places were in a position to share local place evaluation outputs for review; **learning in relation to the effectiveness of local place evaluation approaches and methods was therefore limited.** The outputs included evaluation questions that reflected the programme evaluation questions suggesting that the designs are fit for purpose in terms of contributing to the national evaluation. **Places are encouraged to learn from this first report and their peers together with the local expertise that is in place to produce and share outputs for review in year 2.**

- It will be important for areas to **embed local place evaluation in programme delivery as soon as possible, that the methods employed are fit for purpose as per the meta-evaluation requirements, the local place evaluation questions reflect those for the programme as a whole and information is shared with the national evaluation team** (see next section).
- **Related tips put forward by grant recipients (applicable to professionals across CPP and the wider sector):** Establish an evaluation framework for your evaluation at the start and continually provide evidence that demonstrates why things have been done.

## 5.2.5 Sustainability

**Lesson:** The grant recipient interviews found **variable progress in terms of planning for sustainability** as might be expected at this point in the overall programme delivery. While some places appeared to have placed sustainability at the centre of their approach and decision making processes, other places were still at the early stages of thinking about how sustainability might be addressed. **Therefore some places are ahead of others and all places need to push forward with planning for sustainability.**

- Drawing on all of the available evidence it is clear that places are starting to take forward different ideas and would welcome further opportunities to share and learn about the sustainability issue to ensure that CPP's achievements continue beyond the life of the three year funding programme. The peer learning network has the potential to be a key mechanism for this as does Culture Hive as a repository for examples of good practice together with any systems that are put in place to support the identification and promotion of good practice across thematic areas.
- **Related tips put forward by grant recipients (applicable to professionals across CPP and the wider sector):** Think about sustainability and legacy from the start to help ensure that a range of opportunities are explored, opportunities are not missed, and a plan is in place as soon as possible to help embed sustainability and help to facilitate the CPP legacy..

## 5.3 Next steps for the evaluation

This report is the first of three annual reports which sets out the story of the CPP programme and its achievements to December 2014. The evidence presented has been drawn from a range of sources, including primary research. These include: programme documentation; quarterly monitoring reports submitted to the Arts Council; local place evaluation outputs; and qualitative data collected through interviews with national strategic stakeholders at the Arts Council and AND, grant recipients, teams in the case study places; and participants.

In year 2:

- Ecorys will **continue to review quarterly monitoring data** and provide quarterly progress updates. Drawing on available monitoring data, this will involve:
  - an assessment of programme reach by programme round and place
  - developing a better understanding of the demographic backgrounds of participants, and whether participants are in fact new to the arts, which will require CPP places to improve reporting in these areas;
  - developing a better understanding of programme inputs such as earned income and in-kind support;
  - developing a better understanding of expenditure/income.
- 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. There will be particular focus on:
  - developing a better understanding of how targets are being met and exceeded, which approaches (which partnerships or art forms for example) are proving most successful and why.
  - reviewing the documented evidence for the outcome of encouraging participation in the arts - crucial to assessing whether CPP activity has contributed to longer-term change in frequency/nature of engagement with the arts.
  - exploring whether and how the programme is helping to change people's attitudes towards the arts, among other aspects.
  - evaluating examples of action research, involving local communities throughout the research process, and participant feedback.

- assessing any systems/frameworks/guidance for the recognition, assessment and dissemination of examples of excellence.
- Four 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 Network Steering Group. Potential topics for exploration include:
  - Local methods of community engagement and what happens when local communities are given the power to shape the arts programme over time (as opposed to one off/early stage)
  - The success or otherwise of approaches to engage volunteers and sustain their involvement in local CPP programmes over time.
  - Artistic excellence, whether and how the balance between great art and everyone is being achieved.
  - What different art forms are in place and what impact they have on the communities they serve.
  - Partnerships that are developing links with other sectors e.g. health and well being.
  - Approaches to sustainability, what they look like, how they fit together, and what if any benefits they have borne to date.
- A **sample of grant recipients and national strategic stakeholders** will be interviewed again towards the end of the year to explore progress and achievements, building on the evidence base gathered to date. Interviews will explore a range of themes including peer learning.

Overall, there will be a move away from process issues towards the impact and outcomes of the programme, including further exploration of approaches that are considered to be good practice, unpicking the building blocks for success, together with analysis of the extent to which these examples reflect the breadth of programme delivery as outlined in local area business plans. In assessing impact the evaluation will dig deeper to further substantiate the assertions set out in this report, whether and how any outcomes have been achieved as a result of the programme, for whom, and what is the evidence base,

In the end of year 2 report, the evaluation will showcase what works and why for different aspects of programme delivery and for different art forms, and consider how different aspects of approaches/models might be replicated (e.g. approach to community engagement) while being mindful of the local context in which they currently operate.

## **Annex 1: CPP Places, programme activities and funding rounds**

Round	Place	Programme name	Programme activities	Funding
3	Slough	HOME	Home Programme will produce diverse, dynamic and distinctive artistic approaches, opportunities and experiences to excite, entertain and enable participation and engagement in the arts in Slough.	£625,000
3	Luton	Luton Creates	Bring Me Sunshine is a springboard for Luton to develop into a dynamic and diverse town with exceptional creativity and innovation. Creative Community Forums will be recruited through Luton's well-established Neighbourhood Governance Networks alongside artists and creative producers. With the support of Creative Leaders and Creative Hub made up of artists and creative industries. And drawing on best practice from Critical Friends. These networks will introduce inspirational activity across artforms and challenge preconceptions about what the arts can be.	£686,531
3	Fenland	Market Place	Market Place will connect seven market towns across Forest Heath and Fenland through the development of a strong, confident and ambitious arts community. Community groups, cultural leaders and artists will form Market Place Traders groups in each town to develop ambitious programmes across the voluntary, professional and commercial sectors. Local leaders will feed into a national dialogue around 'missing markets' and ways to change the arts ecology in places with limited arts infrastructure.	£964,218
2	Peterborough	Peterborough Presents	Peterborough Presents will offer small grants to applicants with ideas for arts projects. They also plan to put on large scale participatory events. 'Community Bridge Builders' will be used to engage new audiences. Each year, young people will be offered internships with professional arts organisations.	£725,046 over 3 years
2	Hounslow	Hounslow Creative People and Places	The programme is based on the creation of four hubs around the borough which build awareness of arts activities and put on local workshops and small events. Hounslow coming together conducts	£929,079 over 3 years



Round	Place	Programme name	Programme activities	Funding
			skills development for people to run projects. They also put on high-impact festivals and outdoor art events.	
2	Derbyshire (Ashfield, Bolsover, Mansfield, North East Derbyshire)	First Art	First Art will put on large scale events as well as a 'Go See' series for people to engage with the arts. The programme wants art work to tour in community venues such as schools shops and pubs. It also supports local artists and events to grow.	£1,500,000 over 3 years
2	Corby	Made in Corby	Made in Corby aims to bring iconic artists to Corby as well as commission community artists. The programme involves getting people to attend arts events in and around Corby (Big Nights Out) as well as staging events in the local community (Big Nights In).	£1,000,000 over 3 years
2	Black Country (Sandwell, Walsall, Wolverhampton)	Creative Black Country	Involving community groups, the programme will commission work which resonates with the community. The programme also aims to introduce people to the arts through workshops, debates and meeting artists as well as empowering groups to plan their own art programmes. During Shared Learning days, the public will be invited to review the arts programme so far and shape the future of it.	£2,000,000 over 3 years
2	East Durham	East Durham Creates	The programme includes activities which enable the public to get creative and see art work. East Durham Creates plans to recruit 'Cultural Champions' who will encourage more people to get involved in arts activities but will also be trained to run their own arts projects. Funds will be made available for local groups and artists to make new creative work.	£1,500,000 over 3 years
2	South Tyneside and Sunderland	The Cultural Spring	The Cultural Spring has run a number of art taster sessions. They are building an arts programme, a 'cultural calendar' full of events for people to look forward to and generate local pride.	£2,000,000 over 3 years
2	Lancashire (Blackburn, Darwen, Burnley, Hyndburn,	Super Slow Way	The activities part of this programme range from 'Go See' events and working with festivals to outdoor theatre performances and putting on family-friendly art events. New art	£1,984,722 over 3 years

Round	Place	Programme name	Programme activities	Funding
	Pendle)		work is commissioned with community involvement.	
2	St Helens	Heart of Glass	The Heart of Glass runs small events to build community interest and provide a regular art programme. The programme commissions local artists as well as organises for touring products to come to St Helens. Local arts organisations can bid for funding for new arts projects and improve their sustainability.	£1,500,000 over 3 years
2	Kingston upon Hull	Roots and Wings	Roots and Wings runs Culture Clubs to explore art and discuss barriers to engagement. The programme commissions new work with a focus on building the capacity of the local arts infrastructure, providing more opportunities for people to engage in the arts and celebrating the talent of the city. A 'Go and See' programme is also planned.	£3,000,000 over 3 years
2	Kirklees	Creative Scene	The programme plans to run group workshops and residencies, work with 'Scene Makers' who are creative leaders in their communities, put on 'Go and See' events and to commission work to tour. They also work together with festivals and put on large scale public projects.	£2,000,000 over 3 years
1	Lincolnshire (Boston and South Holland)	Transported	Transported has focussed on projects that take art to where people meet to overcome the specific challenges facing rural areas, and then identified the positive outcomes they deliver in order to recruit sustainable partners.	£2,592,183 over 3 years
1	Barking and Dagenham	Creative Barking and Dagenham	The programme recruits volunteers – 'Cultural Connectors' – who are trained to get more people engaged in the arts. They also sit on the decision-making panel of the programme. The programme puts on 'Go Sees' for people to attend arts and cultural events together and commissions a range of work. It also provides bursaries for individuals and groups to develop their skills and networks.	£838,500 over 3 years
1	SE Northumberland (Wansbeck and Blyth Valley)	bait	bait runs taster activities to build interest in the arts as well as large mass-participation events. They commission work, bring in touring art	£2,461,400 over 3 years

Round	Place	Programme name	Programme activities	Funding
			and seek to strengthen the local arts infrastructure.	
1	Blackpool and Wyre	Left Coast	Left Coast runs a 'Go See' programme, puts on creative workshops and is planning an apprenticeship programme, to enable local people to go on placements to art organisations. New art work is commissioned with community involvement and they collaborate with festivals.	£3,000,000 over 3 years
1	Swale and Medway	Ideas Test	The programme includes running 'small experiments' of art projects and involving 'Community Catalysts' to encourage art participation. Organisations and individuals can also apply for funding to implement new arts project ideas.	£1,476,000 over 3 years
1	Stoke-on-Trent	APPETITE	APPETITE has established community hubs which feed into the commissioning process. They also run taster art events, have a city-wide arts programme and facilitate capacity building for artists.	£2,999,431 over 3 years
1	Doncaster	Right Up Our Street	The programme includes three strands of work: large scale performance events encapsulating the spirit of Doncaster; commissioned work to discover local communities; grassroots development where artists work with volunteers.	£2,570,924 over 3 years

## **Annex 2: National Evaluation Research Questions**

# Research Questions

The following table sets out the research questions underpinning the national evaluation along with the main sources of evidence which will be used to answer each one.

Core question	Sub-questions	Monitoring data	Local place evaluations	Consultation	Case studies
Are more people from places of least engagement experiencing and being inspired by the arts?	How many people took part in the programme? (as participants, attendees, artists or volunteers)	✓	✓		
	What was the profile of those who took part? (age, gender, ethnicity, disability, etc.)	✓	✓		
	What motivated people to take part?	✓	✓		✓
	What proportion of those taking part were from the target areas? (those with lowest arts engagement)	✓	✓		
	What proportion of those taking part had not engaged with the arts and culture in the previous 12 months?	✓	✓		
	Did individuals change their behaviour as a result of taking part? (including intentions to engage in the arts in future, change in frequency of participation, change in awareness of the arts)		✓		✓
	What benefits did individuals experience themselves as a result of taking part? (inspiration, new skills, etc.)		✓		✓
	What wider benefits did individuals feel had resulted from the activity? (e.g. community cohesion, wellbeing, etc.)		✓		✓
To what extent was the aspiration for excellence of art and excellence of the process of engaging communities achieved?	How many new arts and cultural opportunities were created by the programme?	✓	✓		
	How successful have areas been in leveraging additional funding, attracting in-kind/volunteer support or generating revenue?	✓	✓	✓	
	How many and what type of groups/organisations have been involved in offering opportunities to engage with the arts in the areas?	✓	✓	✓	✓
	How is artistic excellence being evidenced for CPP activities?	✓	✓		✓
	What are the views of those taking part? (quality of art, satisfaction with experience, etc.)		✓		✓
	Is there a relationship between the perceived quality of the art and future intentions to participate?		✓		✓
	How successful were the CPP places at engaging local communities and the target audiences (those who have below average levels of engagement with the arts) in design and delivery? Were new approaches to engagement used?	✓	✓	✓	✓
	What support is being provided to CPP places to achieve excellence?		✓	✓	



Core question	Sub-questions	Monitoring data	Local place evaluations	Consultation	Case studies
	What is the role of the Arts Council in monitoring and maintaining excellence?			✓	
Which approaches were successful and what lessons were learned?	What has worked well/less well in the different CPP areas and why?		✓	✓	✓
	How sustainable are the opportunities/change which has been created and why?		✓	✓	
	How effective are CPP places at identifying and adopting good practice from outside the programme?		✓	✓	✓
	To what extent has the programme generated good practice?		✓	✓	✓
	Have there been any significant unexpected outcomes (positive and/or negative)?		✓	✓	✓
	How effective were the methods for sharing and disseminating learning and good practice across the CPP areas?		✓	✓	✓
	What challenges have CPP places faced and what solutions have been used to overcome these?		✓	✓	✓
	What contextual factors have inhibited or enabled success in the different CPP places?		✓	✓	✓
What lessons can be learned about process/delivery?	How effective was the approach to programme management?			✓	
	What lessons can be learned from the application process?			✓	
	What lessons can be learned from the planning and development phase?		✓	✓	
	How effective was the quarterly monitoring process?		✓	✓	
	How successful was the approach to data collection and management?		✓	✓	
	How diverse and effective were the partnerships in the different areas?	✓	✓	✓	
	How effectively did places make use of their Critical Friend?			✓	
	What can be learned from the approach to commissioning, planning and implementing local place evaluations?		✓	✓	

## **Annex 3: Review of Local Place Evaluation Outputs**

# Review of Local Place Evaluation Outputs

CPP area	RQ#1 Are more people from places of least engagement experiencing and being inspired by the arts?	RQ#2 To what extent was the aspiration for excellence of art and excellence of the process of engaging communities achieved?	RQ#3 Which approaches were successful and what lessons were learned?	RQ#4 What lessons can be learned about process/ delivery?
Area #1	Qualitative evidence suggests that people from the area are experiencing and being inspired by the arts. Areas explored include reactions to performances and resulting inspiration/effects.	In year 1, more emphasis has been placed on answering RQ1 and work has only just started to gather some findings around RQ2 & RQ3. These findings include defining quality of art from the perspective of people living in the area.	In year 1, more emphasis has been placed on answering RQ1 and work has only just started to gather some findings around RQ2 & RQ3. These findings include that initial activity has been a successful approach, attracting more than 16,000 people in 6months.	Relevant process/delivery lessons have been learnt. The process of reflection has helped to identify some key recommendations for years 2 and 3. In future the evaluation will focus on depth of data, with more emphasis on dialogue than quick fire consultations. Action planning helps to ensure that the research data collected is meaningful and also relevant to the communities involved. Another lesson learnt is that: In year 1 the evaluation has been largely researcher-led. Communities need to have a greater influence on the design, delivery, progress and direction of the evaluation programme in order for a participatory approach to research to be adopted and for communities to develop skills in research and evaluation, increasing the sustainability of the programme.
Area #2	Over the 3 strands 98%, 88% & 87% of participants respectively were local residents. Across the strands, between 57% and 77% of participants reported that they had not taken part in any arts activity in the previous year.	The themes of excellence and engagement have not yet been discussed in any of the shared outputs. Questions going forward include 'How do we assess the artistic quality of everything that is being done?'	It was noted that one strand had been particularly successful in terms of participation with 18,080 participants recorded against a target of 17,935. A further 18,882 people were reached through a radio production. Lesson learnt were not mentioned.	Relevant process/delivery lessons learnt. The programme was largely seen by those interviewed as very separate strands, working in very different ways. This was felt to have real benefits in terms of action research. Another strength was seen to be in the ability of one of the strand to work across different practices/strands. However, there was some frustration about the other two strands as a result of different working approaches and philosophies which were felt to be creating a barrier to collaboration.

CPP area	RQ#1 Are more people from places of least engagement experiencing and being inspired by the arts?	RQ#2 To what extent was the aspiration for excellence of art and excellence of the process of engaging communities achieved?	RQ#3 Which approaches were successful and what lessons were learned?	RQ#4 What lessons can be learned about process/ delivery?
Area #3	To the end of the first quarter of 2014 the programme has delivered a total of 813 hours of activity; 12,925 audience engagements and 3,223 participant engagements. Analysis of data from the CRM system demonstrates that there is a very even postcode spread of people from the area taking part in the programme.	Approach of 'working with groups that people know and trust' appears to be delivering engagement across the area. Members involved in programming decisions about events over 12 – 18 months. An unanticipated spin-off project has been identified by the committee and is now in development – bringing reading room back into usage with support from Sage plc (computers) and Akzo Nobel (paint and room renovation).	<p>Lessons learned include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexibility of artists to adapt is vital to success.</li> <li>• WEMWBS valuable as self-assessment tool for majority of projects but less appropriate for people with learning disabilities.</li> <li>• Diversity of referral pathways continues to be important in reaching new people.</li> <li>• Short, intense bursts of activity have worked best adolescents. - The physical environment has also made a big difference to level of engagement; opportunities that give people paid entry level experience within cultural sector are really valued; allowing space for unexpected developments within projects.</li> <li>• Relationships - importance of providing choices/options based on understanding of what groups want to achieve – when group is new to the arts, this may change quite quickly.</li> <li>• Approaches - approach of 'working with groups that people know and trust' appears to be delivering engagement across the area. Process of involving people – importance of personalised invitations, visual information.</li> </ul>	Challenges within people's lives – constant need to adapt and adjust the pace and delivery of programme. Time needed to build the story - with 9 months of delivery they are now in a place where the voices of people taking part can be given more of a platform, advocacy in the autumn. Allowing time for outcomes to emerge

CPP area	RQ#1 Are more people from places of least engagement experiencing and being inspired by the arts?	RQ#2 To what extent was the aspiration for excellence of art and excellence of the process of engaging communities achieved?	RQ#3 Which approaches were successful and what lessons were learned?	RQ#4 What lessons can be learned about process/ delivery?
Area #4	<p>Festival had a strong pull for bringing new visitors to the area with 33% having never been to the festival before. 55% of visitors to the festival were from local postcode areas. The majority of other visitors were from North West postcode districts, though there were individuals surveyed from across the country. 83% of visitors said that the festival was the “only reason for coming” or a “very important reason” for coming to the event.</p> <p>75% of visitors to The Festival did not perceive themselves to have attended or participated in any arts or creative activity within the last 12 months.</p> <p>Visitors were asked to rate their overall frequency of engagement with the arts on a scale of 1 to 10. 70% of all visitors scored in the lowest engagement range (a score of 4 or below) and 66% of local residents.</p>	<p>The themes of excellence and engagement have not yet been discussed in any shared outputs.</p>	<p>Successful approaches include: - spectacle/impressive feats – these have been popular and the appeal seemed to be primarily the ‘impressiveness’ of stunts performed rather than ‘artistic’ merit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• simple narratives – use of a clear and familiar narrative story that appealed to both adults and children. The nature of the story structure meant that largely people stayed for the duration.</li> <li>• Facilitators / guides / explainers - people were open to the more ‘arty’ and abstract aspects to activities, but tended to seek explanations and reassurance as to the ‘meaning’. In cases where members of staff/artists/performers were on hand to provide an explanation, people seemed much more satisfied by their experience.</li> </ul> <p>Lessons learnt around promotion and advertisement – levels of awareness were generally low. Could be made easier for people to engage through signposting, explanations and guidance.</p>	<p>Lessons about process/delivery have not yet been discussed in any shared outputs.</p>