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CREATIVE AND PEOPLE PLACES

END OF YEAR 1 REPORT ; EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
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 places¹ 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 participation² were able to apply for funding. The first round of CPP Places³ 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 (AND⁴) 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 date⁵, 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 (Houslow):
Family Beatboxing Workshop with Maxwell
Golden at the Watermans Fun Palaces.
Photo courtesy of Watermans*

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

² According to the Active People Survey

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

⁴ AND is a consortium member of CPP Barking and Dagenham in London

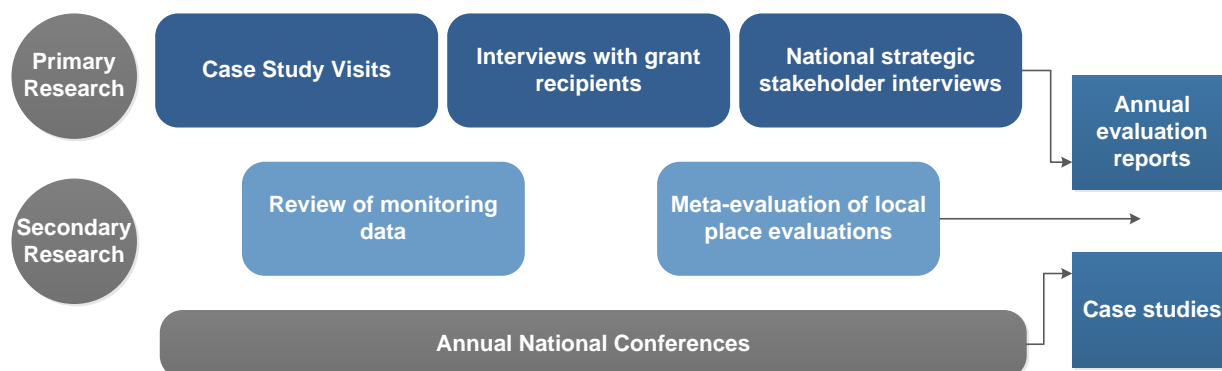
⁵ Places are given two quarters grace to submit completed data returns, e.g. The deadline for CPP places to report Q1 data to the Arts Council was October 2014 and all data was analysed for this report in December 2014.

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 report⁶. 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 outputs⁷.

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)).⁸

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

⁷ 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.

⁸ 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 2014⁹, based on sample data that places submitted to the Arts Council for that period (see Table 1.1)¹⁰. 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 2014/2015¹¹

	Q1 2014/2015	Q4 2013/2014	Q3 2013/2014	Total number of visitors
Number of visitors	46,551 (13 places)	58,865 (8 places) ¹²	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 time¹³.

⁹ 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.

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

¹¹ 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.

¹² 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.

¹³ 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>¹⁴), 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.**

¹⁴ 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.