



**Evaluation of bait
(Creative People
and Places South
East
Northumberland)**

Progress Report –
Executive Summary

February 2015

This study was commissioned by Woodhorn Charitable Trust and delivered by **Jamie Buttrick and Andy Parkinson** from **Consilium Research & Consultancy (Consilium)** in partnership with **Dr. Judith Welford** from **Public Knowledge**.

Project manager: Jamie Buttrick

Consilium Research and Consultancy

Tel: 07713 357389

Email: jamie@consiliumresearch.co.uk

Web: www.consiliumresearch.co.uk

Twitter: @ConsiliumJamie



Executive Summary

This report provides initial feedback as part of a longitudinal evaluation which will continue to assess and support the bait programme until June 2016. It is based on an assessment of programme data, discussions with stakeholders and analysis of a survey of 404 people from South East Northumberland which provided baseline data on perceptions of, and engagement with, arts activities.

The report aims to inform future evaluation activities, support strategic planning by the bait Board and inform options for ongoing project delivery. An overview of key achievements, emerging themes and recommendations for the ongoing planning and delivery of the bait programme is provided below:

Key Achievements

Programme

- The combined **skills, experience and input of the Consortium has served to support the initial development and ongoing management of the bait programme.**
- The programme has **supported a variety of arts activities** across a range of art forms, subject areas/focus (e.g. arts for health and wellbeing) and target cohorts (e.g. age and gender) which have contributed to **progress against the bait Mission and meeting the challenges outlined within the bait Theory of Change.**
- Key outputs as of the end of December 2014 include supporting over **2,500 hours of activity**, attracting approximately **26,530 audience engagements**, delivering over **5,800 participant engagements** and engaging many more through broadcast and digital media.
- An effective **combination of relatively small scale pilot/taster and engagement activities have been supported alongside follow-on activities** in line with the programme's grass roots ethos and the need to build infrastructure, capacity and demand as part of an incremental and sustainable approach to programme delivery.
- The progress made to date has been recognised by most stakeholders **within the context of the time required to build or initiate the infrastructure needed to develop arts activities from the grass roots.**
- The input of a **positive and cohesive bait team** was highlighted in discussions although communication with wider stakeholders and the communities of South East Northumberland was identified as an area to maintain the improvements witnessed during 2014.
- In terms of the Arts for Health projects, **the link between the board membership from public health and the bait Arts for Health Manager** and specifically the knowledge, existing stakeholder relationships and active partnership links she offers, are acknowledged as key strengths.

Projects

- A range of projects or delivery themes were singled out by stakeholders (Board and project representatives) as being particularly successful to date, with discussions reinforcing the fact that **there is demand for arts activities from organisations and participants alike and bait is capable of coordinating a programme of activities.**

- Initial successes included the **opportunities generated for young people** (e.g. via New Writing North and Leading Link), the **winter events and contribution to the Great North Passion** and specifically the **work undertaken linking the arts and wellbeing** (e.g. work with the Targeted Adolescent Service, Northumberland Recovery Partnership).
- Whilst the projects and particularly events will be prominent in people's minds, **the underlying ground work that is required to identify and build upon ideas and opportunities should not be underestimated**. **Intensive work with potential participants** (e.g. Creative Connectors), **relationships with link organisations** (e.g. Children's Centres) or **broadening horizons/increasing risk taking behaviour** through the involvement of quality artists (e.g. the work of The Unthanks with community choirs) are **all seen as good practice which could yield longer-term outcomes throughout and after the end of the bait programme**.

Emerging Themes

- The survey revealed a wealth of positivity towards the arts and the opportunities supported by bait - **97% of respondents stated that 'it is important to have arts in our lives'**.
- The survey highlighted a trend of **more positive perceptions of the arts and greater/more varied engagement with the arts amongst respondents who had heard of bait or taken part in a bait project**.
- At 44%, the proportion of respondents who have **attended or taken part in bait projects and increased the frequency with which they engaged with the arts in the last 12 months** was almost double the survey average of 24%.
- Analysis of attendance at arts events or activities by economic status **highlights a range of economic barriers to engaging with the arts** with a significantly lower proportion of unemployed respondents attending a range of activities including cinema, theatre, music concerts and singing performances.
- **Around two-fifths of respondents attend or participate in an arts activity at least once a week**.
- There are significant differences in attendance and participation results with **greater engagement in the arts amongst younger people, females and those in employment**.
- There is an apparent contradiction between a desire for more **'Activities which are free to take part in or value for money'** and a relatively high proportion of respondents stated that they would be **willing to pay more than £5 per session or event of an arts activity**.
- Respondents stated that **a wider range of activities would encourage them to spend more time attending or taking part in arts activities**.
- The survey identified a variety of **barriers to engagement** which relate to wider issues linked to changing perceptions and increasing access to the arts.
- Respondents providing words to describe how taking part in or attending the arts makes them feel produced relatively equal groups of words reflecting **wellbeing, creativity and positivity in line with the breadth of project activities supported by bait**.
- Responses reveal a need to **promote opportunities for people to get involved in the arts amongst those yet to engage with the bait programme**.

Recommendations

Most recommendations are focused on the challenges facing the programme, its staff and stakeholders as bait approaches a crucial stage in which the shape and focus of delivery needs to become more targeted in order to meet output, outcome and legacy objectives. The primary research also highlights areas to explore in more detail with specific cohorts of residents from South East Northumberland. Summary recommendations include:

- Focusing future, targeted programme delivery on successful project activity (e.g. building on pilot/taster activities) whilst replicating good practice in planning and delivery (i.e. effective engagement work or use of curators).
- Continuing to build the relationships and infrastructure that will help to deliver the programme to 2016, but crucially also a sustainable legacy to 2023 and beyond.
- Using the baseline data and contact details sourced through the resident survey to facilitate further, targeted research in order to help inform the approach to targeting future investment opportunities with relevant partners.
- Expanding the positive results observed from respondents to the primary research that had heard of or engaged with bait to as many people as possible by ensuring that the positive messages and opportunities available through bait are communicated effectively.
- Analysing the differences in survey results between young and older respondents, those employed and unemployed/retired and men and women.
- Exploring the apparent lack of recognition amongst respondents aged 19 or less of the potential positive outcomes for individuals and/or their communities from engaging with the arts.