

OUTSIDE

Year One Evaluation Report

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1. Introduction

OUTSIDE is an Arts Council England (ACE) funded Creative People and Places project in the Staffordshire Moorlands. The lead organisation is Support Staffordshire (the Voluntary Services Organisation for the county), and the consortium of organisations overseeing the project consists of Support Staffordshire, Buxton & Leek College, Staffordshire Moorlands District Council and B Arts.

OUTSIDE is one of the newest of the 39 CPP projects, and they began delivering activities in Spring 2023. This report evaluates the first year of OUTSIDE's activities, and is written by OUTSIDE's independent evaluator.

1.1 The Staffordshire Moorlands

The Staffordshire Moorlands consists of 225 sq miles of predominantly rural landscape made up of dramatic and bleak gritstone moorlands and rocky crags rising over 500m above sea level. This is a place of wild beauty and with a long history of hard and sometimes fragile living. The moorlands were home to some of our earliest settlers and is one of the putative locations for England's 14th century poetic masterpiece, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight.

From Axe Edge Moor, the hills fall away into the Manifold, the Dove, the Goyt and Dane river valleys. It is these river valleys that frame a later story of the mixed economies of farming and industry. The packhorse and drovers' roads, provide evidence of quarrying, lime kilning, coal mining, iron smelting, while canals and stone-carrying railways, intersect with a mosaic of grassland, woods and farmsteads together feeding the growing industries and their workers in the cities nearby. The three market towns of Leek, Cheadle, and Biddulph, house the mills and homes that housed the industry and workers dyeing and weaving silk threads and textiles. There is extensive evidence of the influence of late Victorian aesthetics via William Morris, William Sugden and Augustus Pugin.

The district has a predominantly white population (97.5%) and a large, and growing number of older people aged 65+. Isolation is a key issue for residents, and travel across the Moorlands area is difficult; a diminishing bus service, and no train service mean having a private car is essential. Even with the use of a car travelling across the district is complex and lengthy.

There has been limited cultural investment in the Staffordshire Moorlands; in the five years prior to the establishment of OUTSIDE there was a total of £109,217 ACE funding received (through grants for the arts/project grants and strategic grants). There are no other ACE NPO's in the area, although 'Live and Local' tour to several Moorlands villages.

Despite this limited cultural infrastructure and funding, Staffordshire Moorlands is home to a thriving community of individual (voluntary) creatives and a vibrant community infrastructure, along with a pride and passion for the stories and heritage of this distinctive place.

1.2 OUTSIDE vision and mission

OUTSIDE aims to respond to this unique environment and these particular challenges and opportunities with a radically new approach to arts programming and delivery. This rural arts revolution will support a thriving cultural ecology that everyone can participate in and identify with.

Vision

Everyone in the Staffordshire Moorlands has the opportunity to live a creative life and participate in high quality arts and cultural activity. Arts and culture are embedded as a useful tool to help respond to the challenges of life in our rural community.

Mission

To make a lasting change in the way local communities take part in, make, and experience the arts. Creating extraordinary moments that allow the residents of the Moorlands the opportunity to come together for transformative experiences and celebrations of this distinctive place. OUTSIDE will be pervasive across the Staffordshire Moorlands, we will support both people and places, being individually empowering and socially useful. We will pose questions about what it means to live in a rural community, using culture as a lens to look at our way of life, we will reflect communities back to themselves and create visibility for those often unseen and unheard. Together we will reimagine what a confident, cohesive and collaborative rural community and regenerative future looks like, unearthing more fertile ground across the Moorlands.

1.3 The OUTSIDE programme

Arts Programme

As a new CPP, OUTSIDE has, in its first year, been hosting a wide range of conversations, meetings, consultations and workshops as well as testing and piloting events with a view to better understanding the communities and opportunities. Informed by residents and community partners the programme of activity in Year One has focused around themes of:

- Environment
- Connectivity
- Wellbeing
- Place & Heritage

With a variety of art forms and formats it has included one off events tied into traditional festivals eg. Halloween and Christmas, as well as regular weekly activity and longer duration thematic projects that have built up over months.

It has involved a wide range of art forms but particularly Outdoor Arts, Film, Murals and Heritage Crafts. Events and activities have varied in terms of pricing, with some free but ticketed, some drop in, some paid for tickets and some unticketed as well as activity that has taken place within existing groups or other organisation's events.

Programming is shaped by the OUTSIDE team working closely with communities in the following ways

An OUTSIDE Advisory group

Consisting of local residents, with no experience of working in arts and culture, this group feeds into the overall project. Meeting monthly they evaluate activities, commission work, go on trips to see inspiring projects, undertake training and often volunteer. The group named themselves OUTSIDERS, and two representatives from this group sit on the consortium board.

A Youth Advisory Group

Consisting of local residents aged 14-18 years, this group took slightly longer to establish but now that it's up and running it mirrors the adult advisory group. Run by the OUTSIDE project officer it takes on a similar role and two representatives from this group sit on the consortium board.

Local Steering groups

The planning and delivery of large scale events in the programme is guided by a time limited local steering group established for each event. Steering groups consist of local residents, organisations and other stakeholders who meet regularly to develop and deliver the activity. In 2023/24 these were:

- Polish Heritage Steering
- Books Steering Group
- Textile Steering Group
- Cheadle Moon Steering Group

Artists have responded to a variety of open calls and commissions. Applications for opportunities have increased dramatically as the profile and reach of the project has grown. A call out in Spring 2023 for a mural artist to work on the Skate Park saw only 2 applications, whereas a call out for a mural artist to work at the Women's refuge in Winter 2023 saw 53 applications. Selection of artists has most frequently taken place by the community in which the work sits, in these two examples the young people who use the skate park and the families who live in the refuge were supported through a creative consultation to score and appoint their preferred artist.

Sector support

As well as the artists commissions noted above, OUTSIDE has supported the local creative community in a number of other ways.

1 to 1's

Individuals can book a 1-2-1 with the Director of OUTSIDE Sarah Bird. These sessions are free to creatives across the Moorlands. They can be used to explore ideas or seek advice, for people who are creating an event, looking for fundraising advice, developing their creative practice, building partnerships and new networks, or looking for information on organisational management, business or just fancy a catch up and chat about the cultural sector. To date 6 formal 1-2-1's have taken place, with many more meetings and advice session are built in more informally.

Sessions were released in February and immediately booked up until end of May showing a real appetite for more opportunities to connect and have encouraged the launch of a Moorlands wide creative networking session, the first of which will take place in April 2024.

Training

OUTSIDE have delivered a variety of training which has been attended by artists, volunteers and community organisations, this has included:

- An Online Training Session in July 2023 on *Top Tips for a successful ACE application to the Developing Your Creative Practice Fund*
- Oral Histories Training Session in March 2024
- Film Camp Training at Midlands Arts Centre in May 2023

Seed Funding

A first round of small scale Seed funding was held in Feb/March 2024. A call out for artist, community group or organisations based in and delivering creative activities with communities in the Staffordshire Moorlands, saw 56 applications. The Advisory Group and Youth Advisory group scored the eligible applications and awarded 17 grants with a total value of £9,200.

2. The OUTSIDE evaluation approach

At the start of the programme two Story of Change workshops were held with the OUTSIDERS (OUTSIDE Advisory Group) and with the Consortium, facilitated by the evaluator. The aim of these sessions was to involve a range of people in thinking about what success would look like for OUTSIDE; to help shape a series of outcomes the programme hoped to achieve. These local outcomes would then complement the national ACE CPP outcomes and provide the framework for the evaluation.

2.1 OUTSIDE Objectives

There are three over-arching Arts Council England objectives for all CPPs, these are:

- More people from places of least engagement are experiencing and inspired by arts and culture
- To what extent was the aspiration for excellence of art and culture and excellence of the process of engaging communities achieved?
- Which approaches were successful and what have we learnt

The local OUTSIDE objectives are

- Staffordshire Moorlands residents are at the heart of decision making, to better understand and respond to their needs; resulting in increased cultural engagement and the wide range of social benefits it brings.
- Young people in the Staffordshire Moorlands are at the heart of decision making, to better understand and respond to their needs
- People - both artists and residents - have developed and shared their skills
- People feel more connected to each other
- Residents of the Staffordshire Moorlands are excited and proud of this place
- OUTSIDE activities provide an escape from the everyday

These objectives provide the structure of this report, with the addition of sections looking at other outcomes: creative sector impacts; volunteering; funding; and environmental sustainability.

2.2 Data collected

Qualitative and quantitative data collected during the first year of the programme has informed this report, and consists of:

Quantitative data - surveys

Audiences/participants at a sample of events across the programme were surveyed, using either Illuminate (to collect demographic data) or Insight & Impacts toolkit (to collect quality of experience data). Collecting demographic data across a sample of audiences using Illuminate is mandatory for all CPPs, and they are also expected to use the Insights and Impact toolkit to evaluate at least four

events per year. A series of optional survey questions are also available on both platforms, and some of these were also used.

Illuminate demographic data

There is a total of 1422 survey responses for the 2023/24 programme, the majority of which comes from three events:

Cheadle Moon 1020
Luminarium 233
24 Doors, Leek's Live Advent Calendar Carols 116

There are also a range of other events included in the data, all of which have survey responses of less than 15:

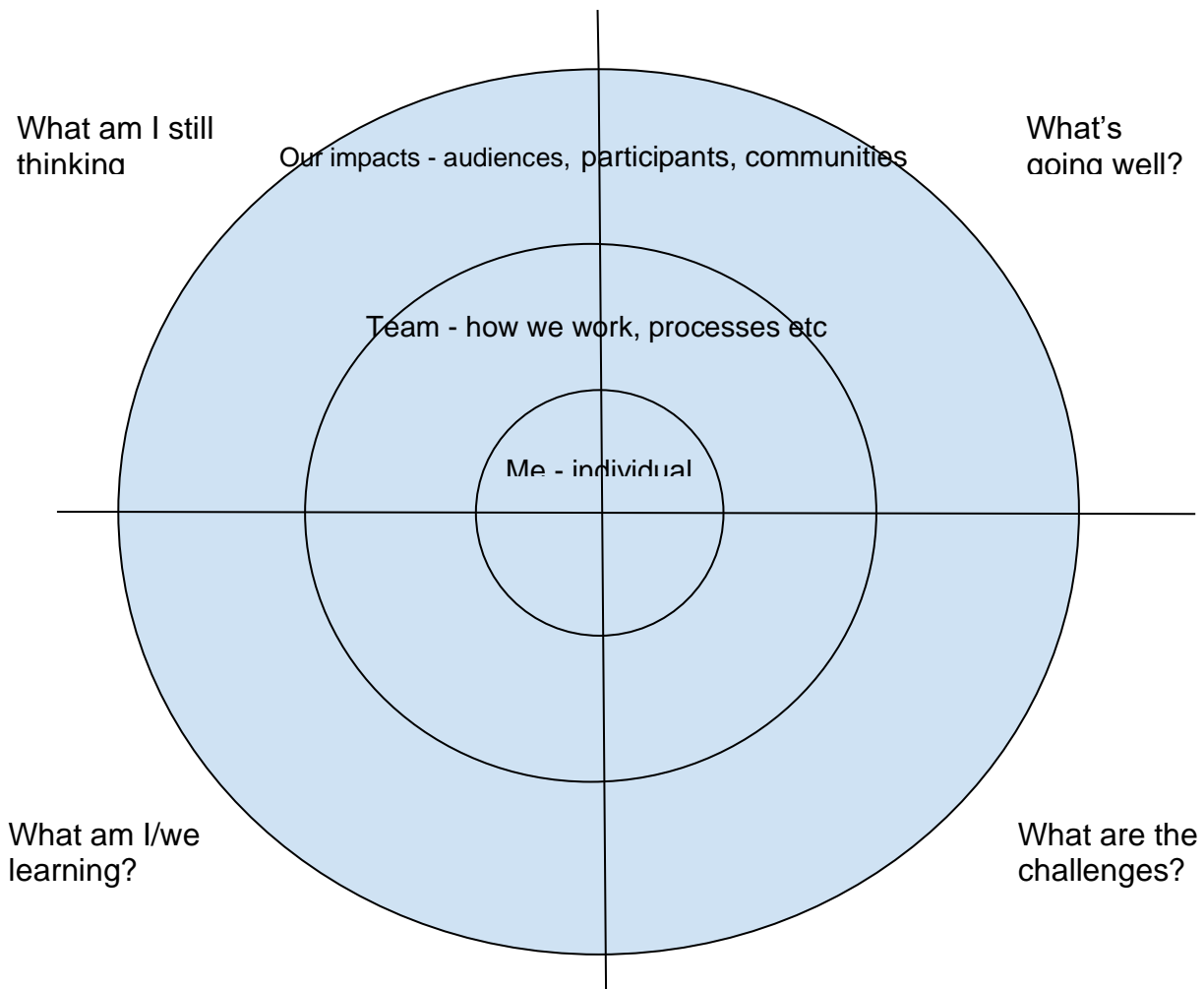
Flag Making with Kinetika
Lanterns at Chester Zoo Go See
24 Doors Celebration Event
Net Flicks Super Mario Bros
British Textiles Biennial Go See
Brilliant Books Steering Group
Oral History training
Telling Tales Ipstones
TREES Leek and Biddulph

Insights and Impacts quality of experience data

Luminarium 265
24 Doors, Leek's Live Advent Calendar 116
Cheadle Moon exhibition 376
Cheadle Moon events 904
Trees Biddulph & Leek 18

Qualitative data - self reflection

The independent evaluator facilitates regular learning and reflection sessions for the OUTSIDE team, which are a chance to think about what has happened in the last three months; to identify what's gone well and what the challenges have been; and to explore the implications and learning. These took place online in July 2023, and face to face in October 2023 and April 2024. A consistent visual approach is used to capture and discuss learnings, as illustrated below:



These sessions also include a focused discussion of an individual learning moment presented by a member of the team using the structure - what happened/so what/what next.

One face to face self reflection session has been held with the OUTSIDERS which took place in October 2023, using a simplified version of the same exercise.

Qualitative data - community feedback

A public feedback event for stakeholders, artists, volunteers, and participants, entitled Inside OUTSIDE was held in Leek in November 2023. The evening included short presentations from individuals involved in different OUTSIDE projects; a storytelling session; learning a Christmas Carol for Leek; and evaluation session. The evening was compered by a host, who also welcomed guests with ice breaker games, and supper was provided. Approximately 50 guests attended.

Evaluation activity

The evaluation part of the evening comprised three interactive exercises – based on the following questions:

- What difference is OUTSIDE making? - to me and more widely in the Staffordshire Moorlands - guests added their comments to a write-on tablecloth using an outcomes pyramid
- What is going well? and what could be improved? guests completed and shared green post its for going well, and red for could be improved

- What else would you like to say? guests noted anything else they wanted to say on a piece of paper, and snowballed it to the host

Guests were allocated to one of six tables based on their relationship with OUTSIDE and who they were, to therefore identify if there were different themes in the feedback from different groups of people. For example, artists and freelancers were on the same table, organisational stakeholders were together, and advisory group members were together.

Each table was hosted and facilitated by a member of the OUTSIDE team, following on-line facilitation training provided a couple of weeks before the event, and a face-to-face briefing on the evening.

Qualitative Data – OUTSIDERS and YAG feedback

The evaluator also facilitated two opportunities for steering groups to reflect on their experiences. OUTSIDERS took part in a face to face creative feedback session in October 2023 exploring the differences that being involved in the programme has made to them. Two young people involved in the Young Advisory Group took part in an equivalent online discussion in April 2024, and one person sent reflections via e-mail.

3. The Findings

3.1 ACE CPP Objectives

3.1.1 Are more people experiencing and inspired by arts and culture?

OUTSIDE achieved the following public attendances in Year One:

Q1 28 Events 4724 attendances
 Q2 22 events 1952 attendances
 Q3 47 events 7877 attendance
 Q4 52 events 10254 attendances

Total 149 events and 24,807 attendances

Events

Events	No of Audience/participants
Telling Tales – Flash Village Hall	93
Winds of Change - Biddulph Library community garden	339
Colours of the Moorlands - Luminarium	3572
Kite making workshops - Moorlands Climate Action	91
Hug Festival - Moorlands Climate Action	111

Percussion workshops for Biddulph Flashmob	194
Creative Community Producer Community meetings - Haregate	8
Flashmob at Biddulph Arts Festival parade	1500
Geli printing Equal Base Workshops	24
Telling Tales – Biddulph Moor Village Hall	134
BYCZ Mural spray paint and consultation Workshops	20
Cheadle Skate Park consultation Workshops	58
Biddulph Garden Launch	43
Telling Tales – Greatwood Village Hall Tean	90
Net Flicks @ Leek Town Football Club	125
Cheadle Skate Park Launch	107
24 Doors Early Xmas party	21
Leek Scouts	14
BYCZ Halloween	280
Haregate Halloween Walkabout	492
Haregate Halloween Craft Session	299
24 Doors A Live Advent Calendar x 24 events	6405
Moon Making Workshops	37
24 Doors Volunteer Party	12
Kinetica Flag Making Workshops	32
Trees Schools Workshops	60
Trees in Biddulph	136
Trees in Leek	508
Growing Connections - Marble Run	224
Growing Connections - Willow Weaving	11
Growing Connections - Wild Singing	9
Growing Connections - Land Art	35
Growing Connections - Celebration and Poetry	9

BYCZ Film workshops and screening	20
Cheadle Moon Exhibition (until 31 st March)	8181
Telling Tales in Ipstones	109
Right to Play Biddulph Church Road	33
Right to Play Biddulph Moor	60
Cheadle Moon Silent Disco	92
Cheadle Moon Discovery Group Talk	87
Cheadle Moon - Life the Universe and everything Nick Lister	58
Cheadle Moon Moonwatch with Jodrell Bank	127
Telling Tales in Ipstones	44
Telling Tales in Ipstones	65
Cheadle Moon Yoga	13
Cheadle Moon Gong Bath	25
Cheadle Moon Family Yoga	14
Cheadle Moon: Moonwalk	11
Cheadle Moon Paul Cromford	44
Cheadle Moon Storytelling	18
Cheadle Moon British Astronomical Society Talk	86
Cheadle Moon Poetry Workshop	10
Cheadle Moon Poetry/Music Keisha Thompson	62

Decision making groups

In addition to these public attendances, there were also the following attendances at decision making forums:

OUTSIDERS: 10 Meetings – 22 participants and three Go Sees

Youth Advisory Group: 7 Meetings – 13 participants and three Go Sees

Local Steering groups

Polish Heritage Steering Group: 5 meetings - 33 participants

Books Steering Group: 5 meetings - 12 participants 1 x site visit

Textile Steering Group: 4 meetings - 35 participants 1 Go See

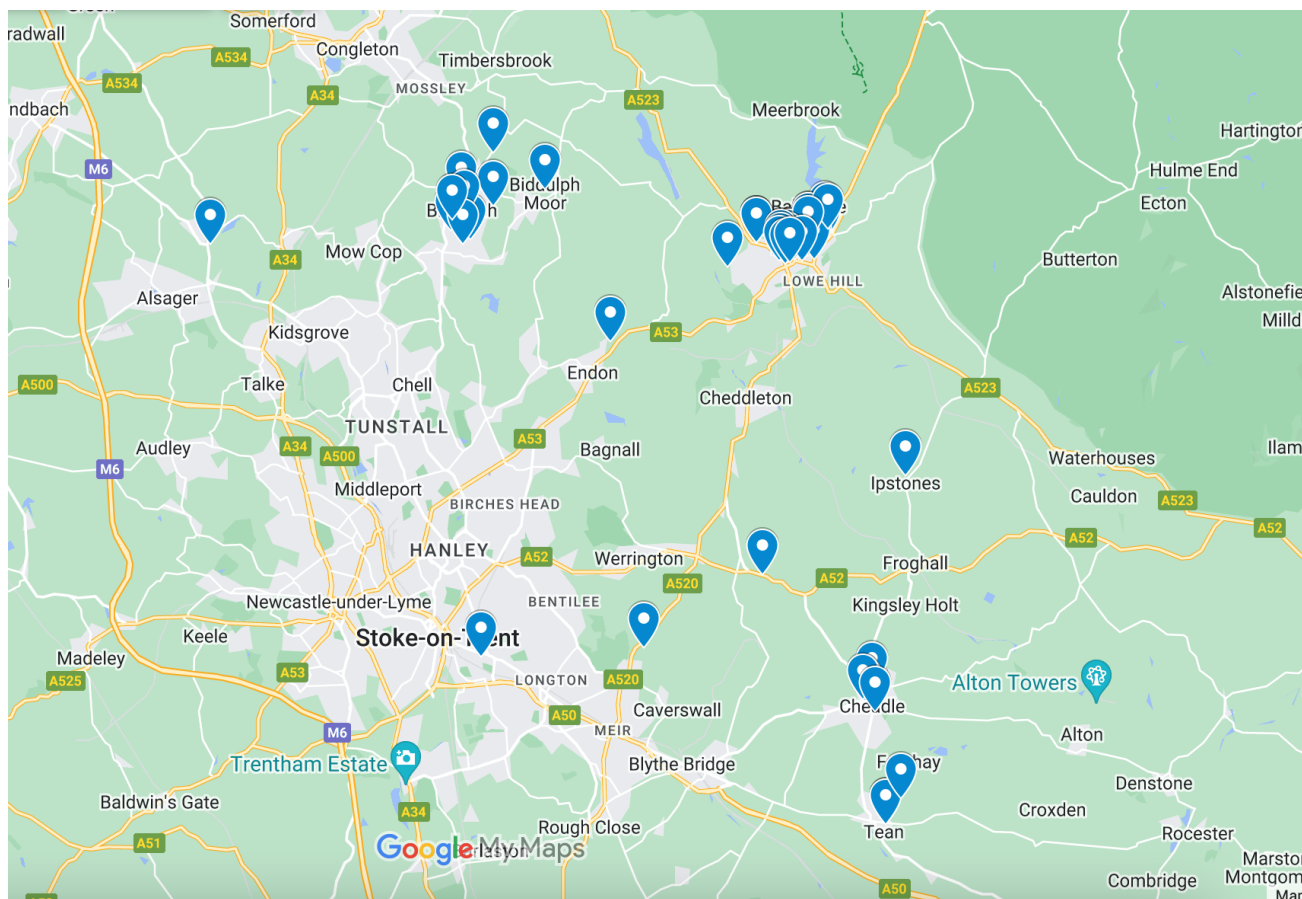
Cheadle Moon Steering Group: 7 meetings - 32 participants

Volunteers

OUTSIDE worked with over 100 volunteers, who contributed a total of 1167 volunteer hours in Year One.

Where has OUTSIDE delivered activity?

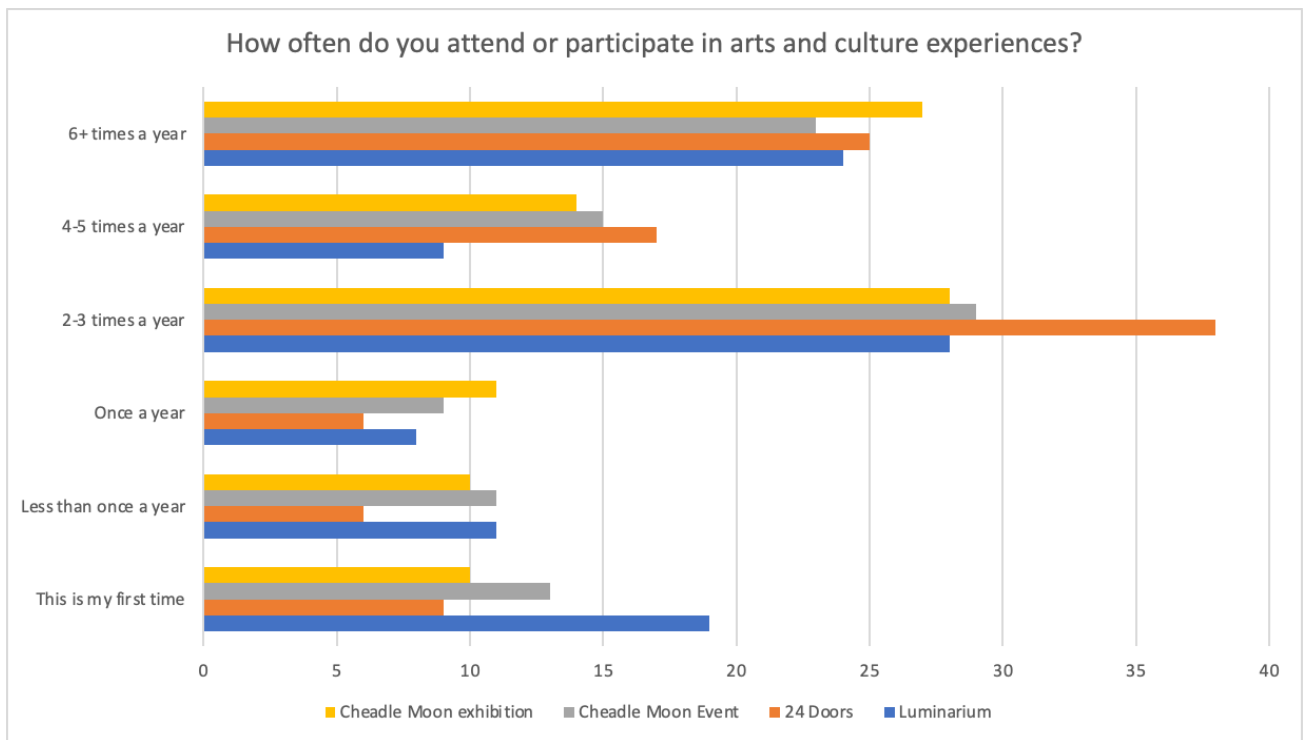
OUTSIDE Programme locations 2023/23



The above map illustrates the locations of OUTSIDE activity in 2023/24 (locations within the Staffordshire Moorlands). Whilst activity has been concentrated in the main towns of Leek, Biddulph and Cheddle, there have also been events in more rural areas (for example Telling Tales in village halls).

Who is OUTSIDE reaching?

Arts attendance (from Insights and Impact)



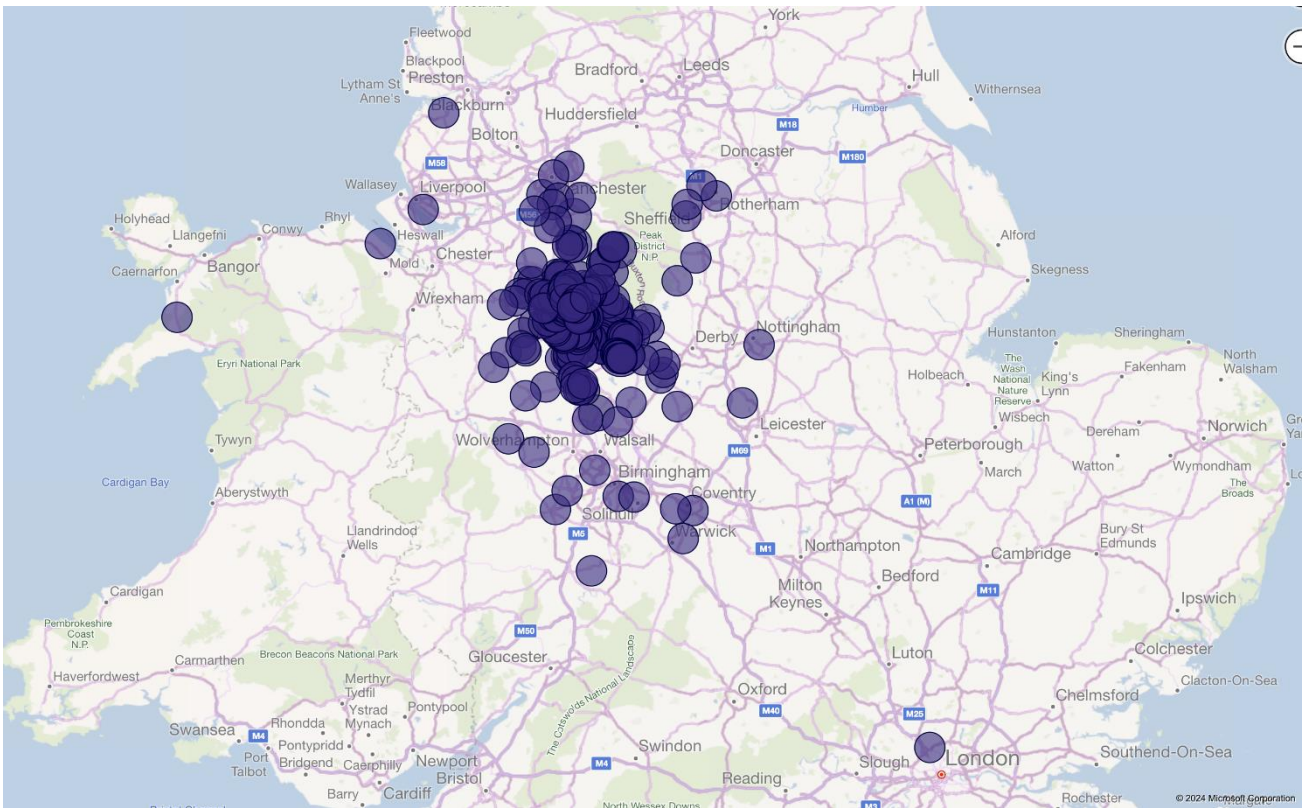
OUTSIDE events are, on the whole, attended by existing arts attenders, with the majority of audiences attending arts and culture events 2-3 times a year or more frequently.

The Luminarium attracted the highest proportion of new arts attenders (19%).

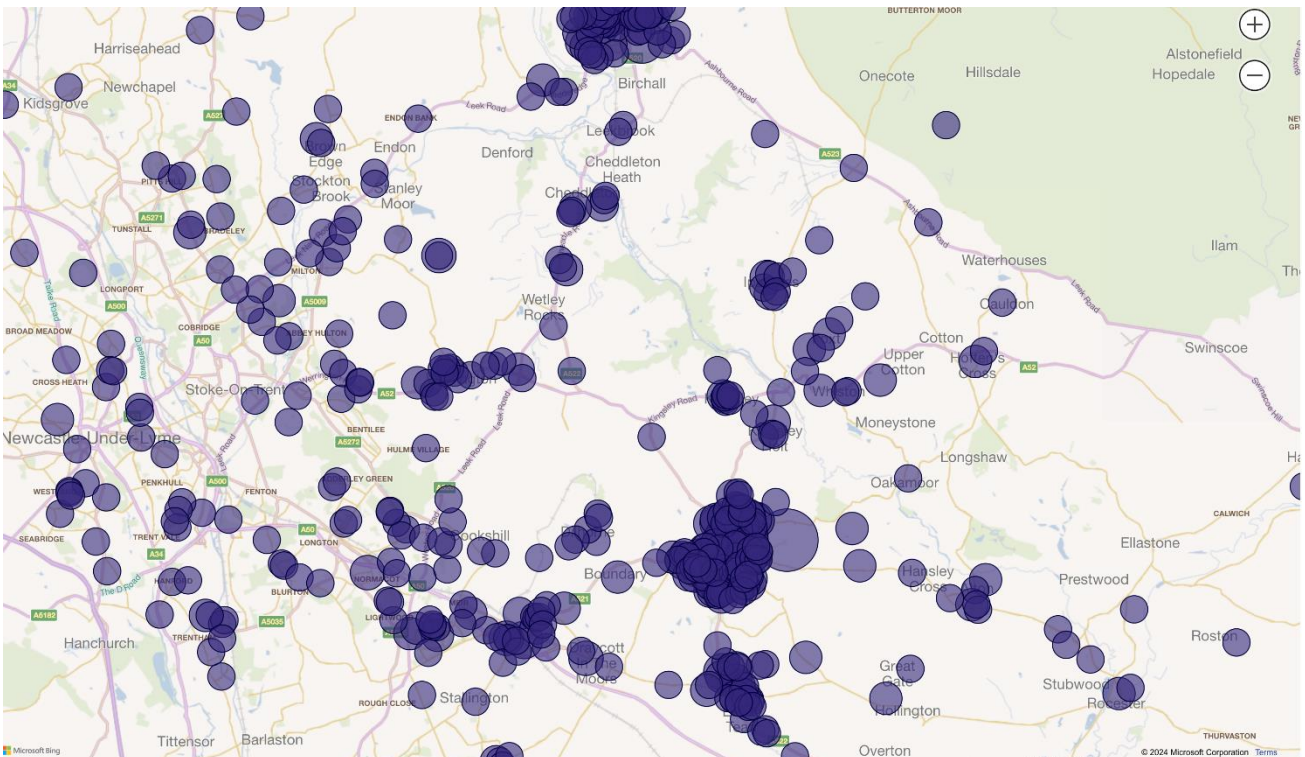
Where do audiences live?

The following maps show the postcodes of audiences for a sample of OUTSIDE events.

Cheadle Moon

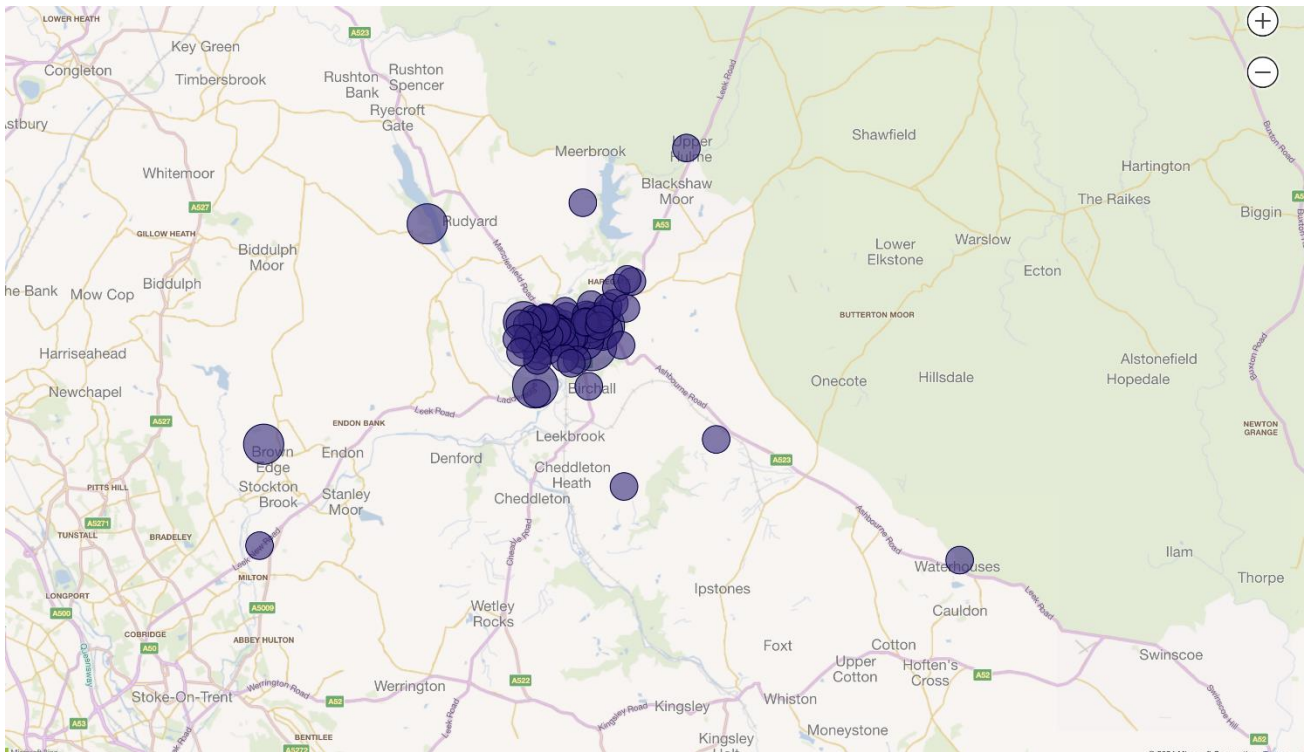


This large scale map illustrates that Cheadle Moon attracted audiences from a wide geographical area.



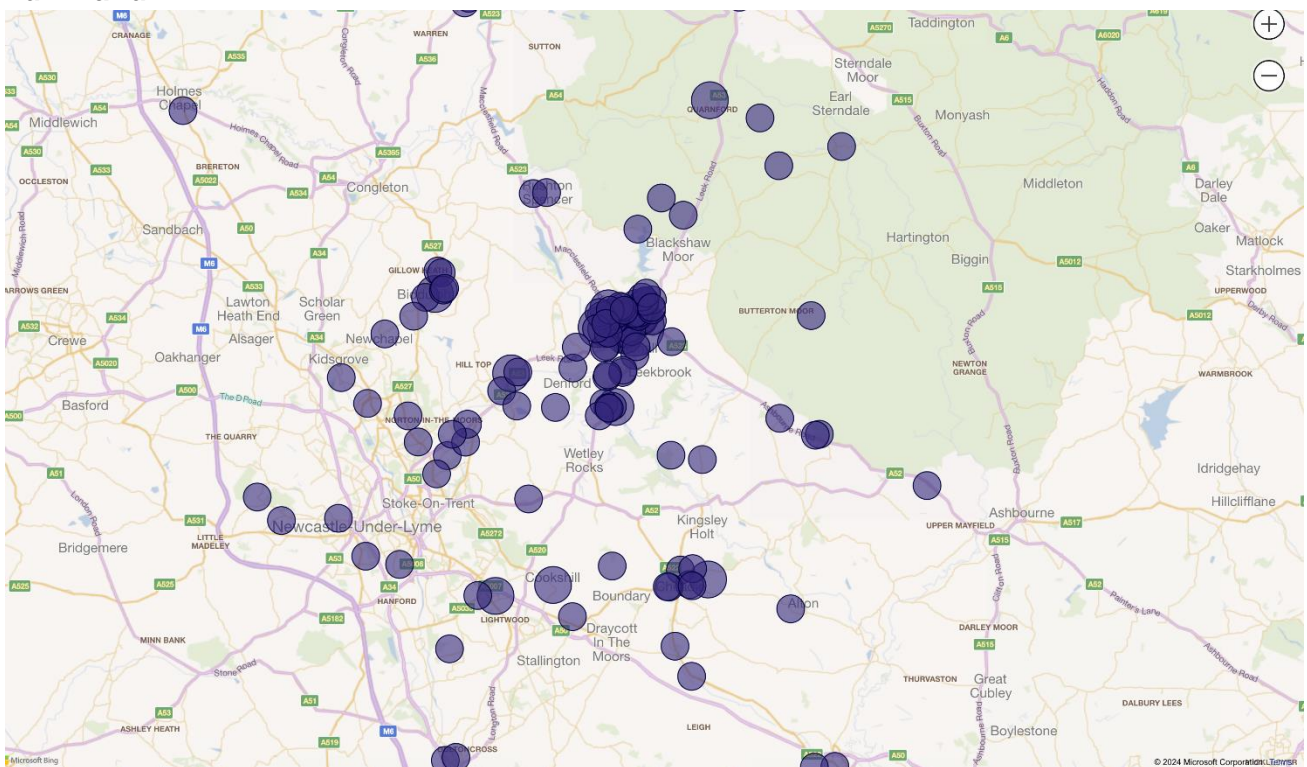
Zooming in, we can see that although there is a concentration of audiences from Cheadle, people travelled from across the Staffordshire Moorlands, including a significant number from Leek.

24 Doors



In contrast, 24 Doors, Leek's live advent calendar attracted a much more local audience.

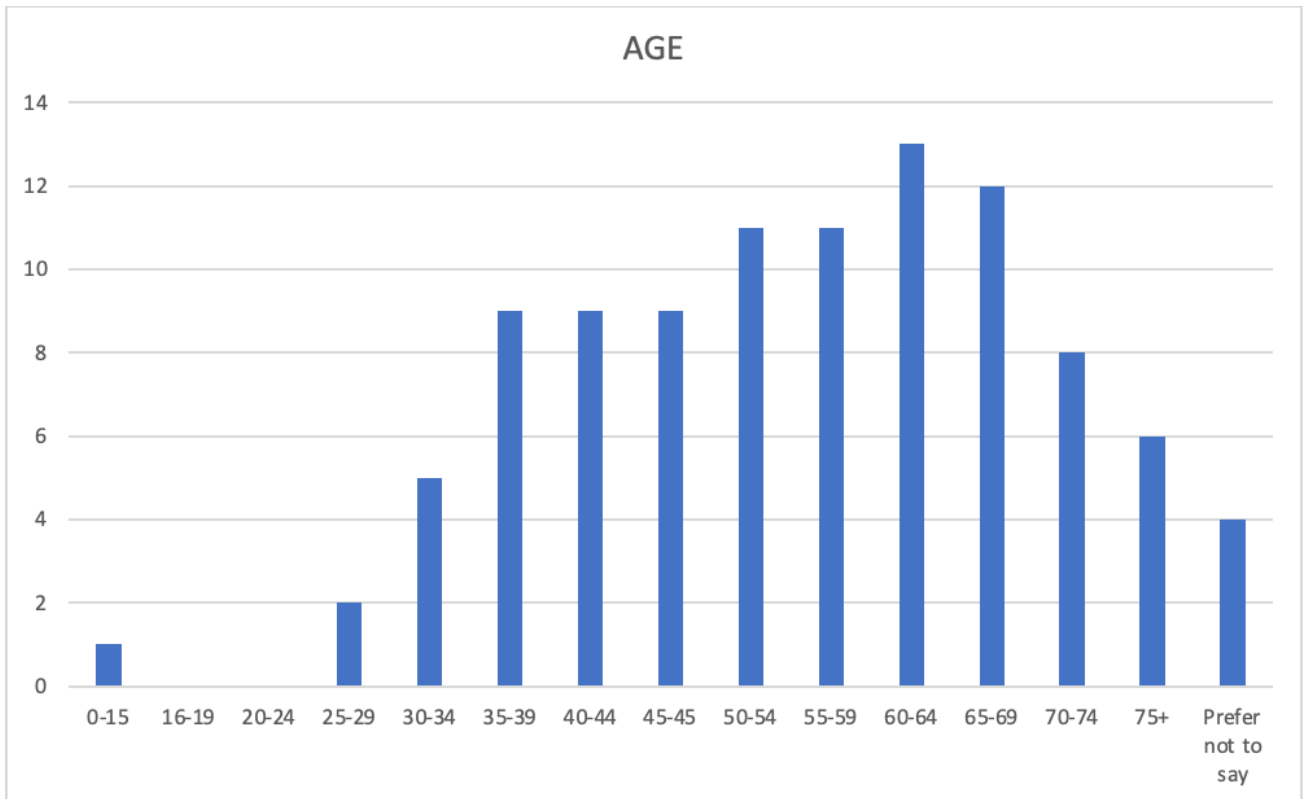
Luminarium



The Luminarium, which was OUTSIDE'S first large scale public event attracted a good spread of audiences from across the Moorlands. Although audiences were mainly local to Leek, people also travelled from Cheadle and Biddulph.

Demographics (from Illuminate)

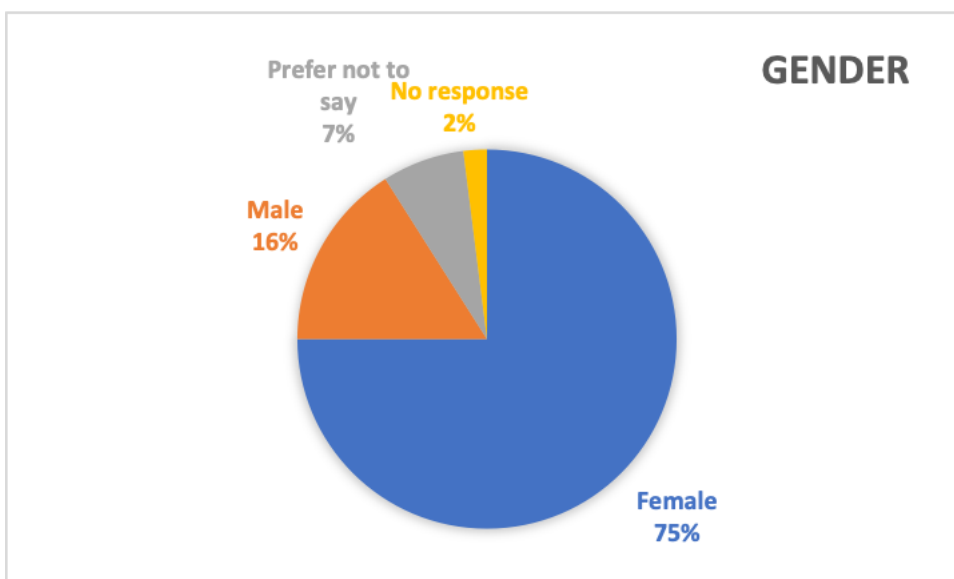
Age



OUTSIDE is successfully reaching audiences aged 30 plus, and there is a fairly even spread across all age groups. The most under represented age group is young people aged 16-29.

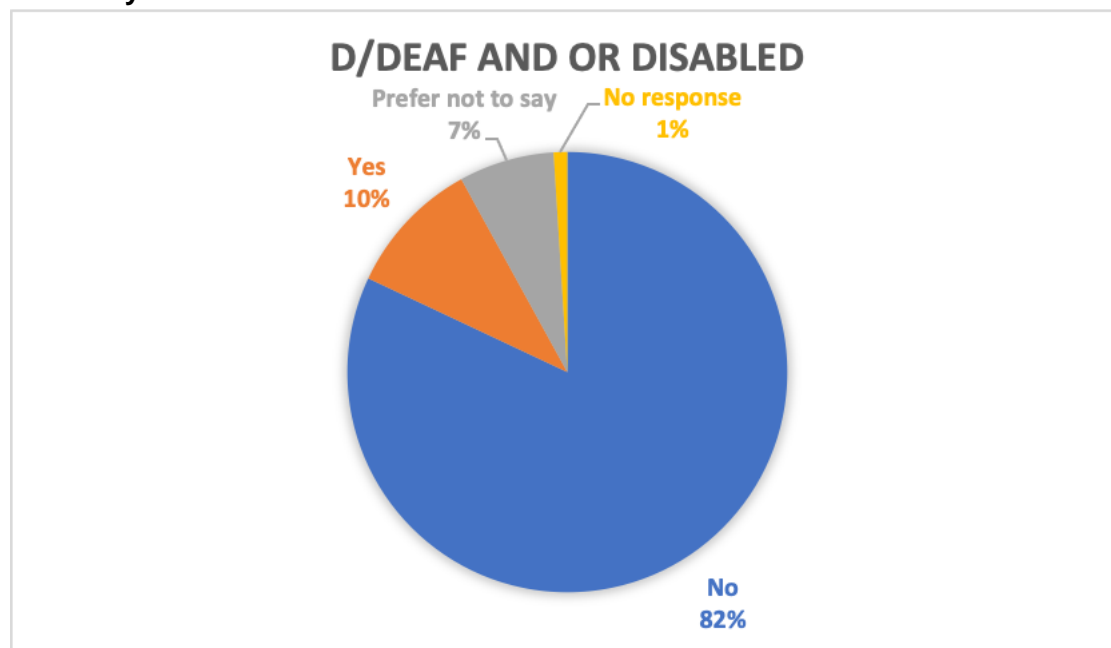
It is important to note that young people are also less likely to complete surveys, so may be under represented in this data, and that the age profile at particular events aimed at young people (for example Net Flicks Super Mario Bros), is significantly younger, but the sample size of survey responses at these events is too small to be meaningful. There are also a number of other events that attracted a large number young people (for example Cheadle Skatepark and Biddulph Youth & Community Zone Film Workshops but these were not surveyed.

Gender



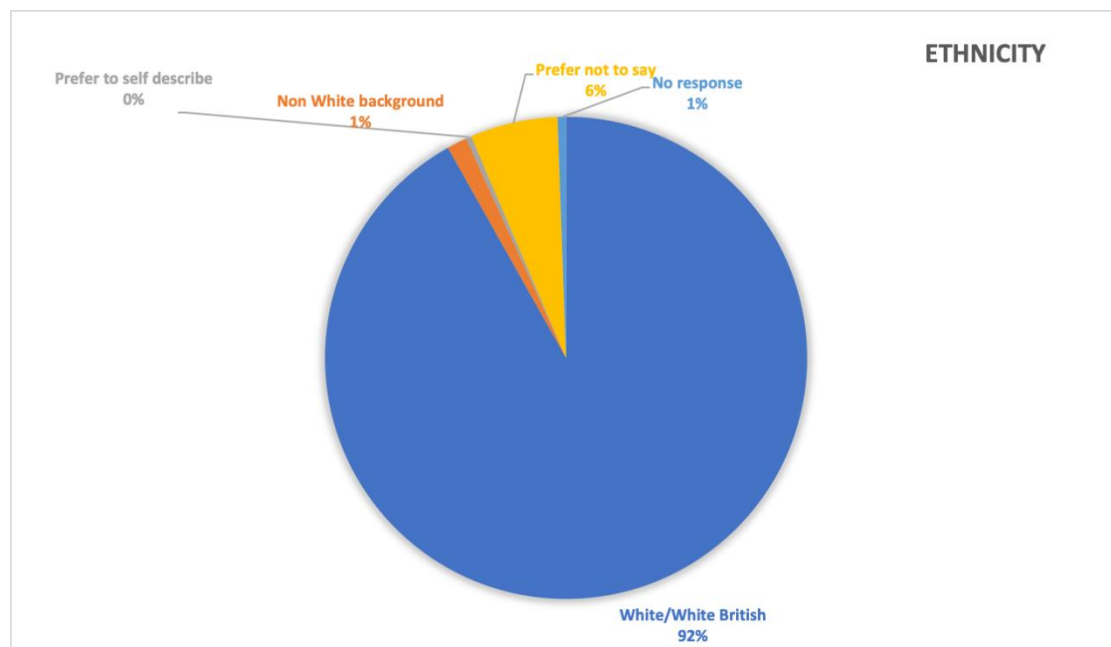
There is strong skew towards female audiences (though it is worth noting that women are, on the whole, more likely to participate in audience research).

Disability



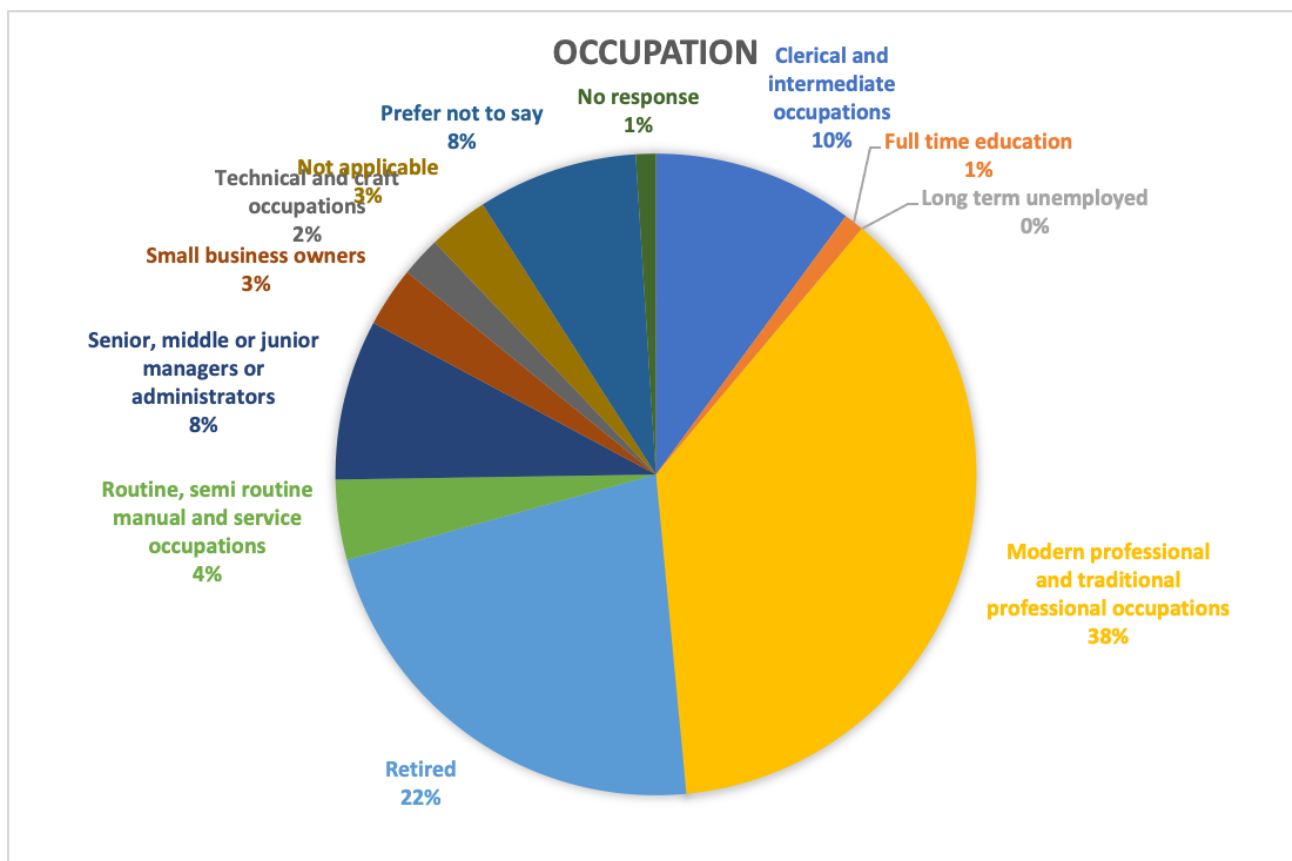
10% of audiences consider themselves to be D/deaf or disabled.

Ethnicity



The vast majority of OUTSIDE audience are White British, which is reflective of the Staffordshire Moorlands demographic (in the 2021 Census 98% of residents described their ethnicity as White.)

Occupation



Over 1/3 of OUTSIDE audiences are professionals, and a further one in four are retired. Again, this data doesn't fully represent the programme's level of engagement with different demographics. Specific place based activities such as work done by the CPPs on the Haregate estate and at the Biddulph Youth and Community Zone have reached significant numbers of people from lower socio economic groups who are facing significant disadvantage.

3.1.2 To what extent was the aspiration for excellence of art and culture and excellence of the process of engaging communities achieved?

Excellence of arts and culture

The Insight & Impact toolkit includes a series of questions to measure different dimensions of 'excellence' of the artistic experience. Respondents are asked to what extent they strongly agree or strongly disagree, using a sliding scale, with the following statements:

Cultural Contribution: It provides an important addition to the cultural life of the area

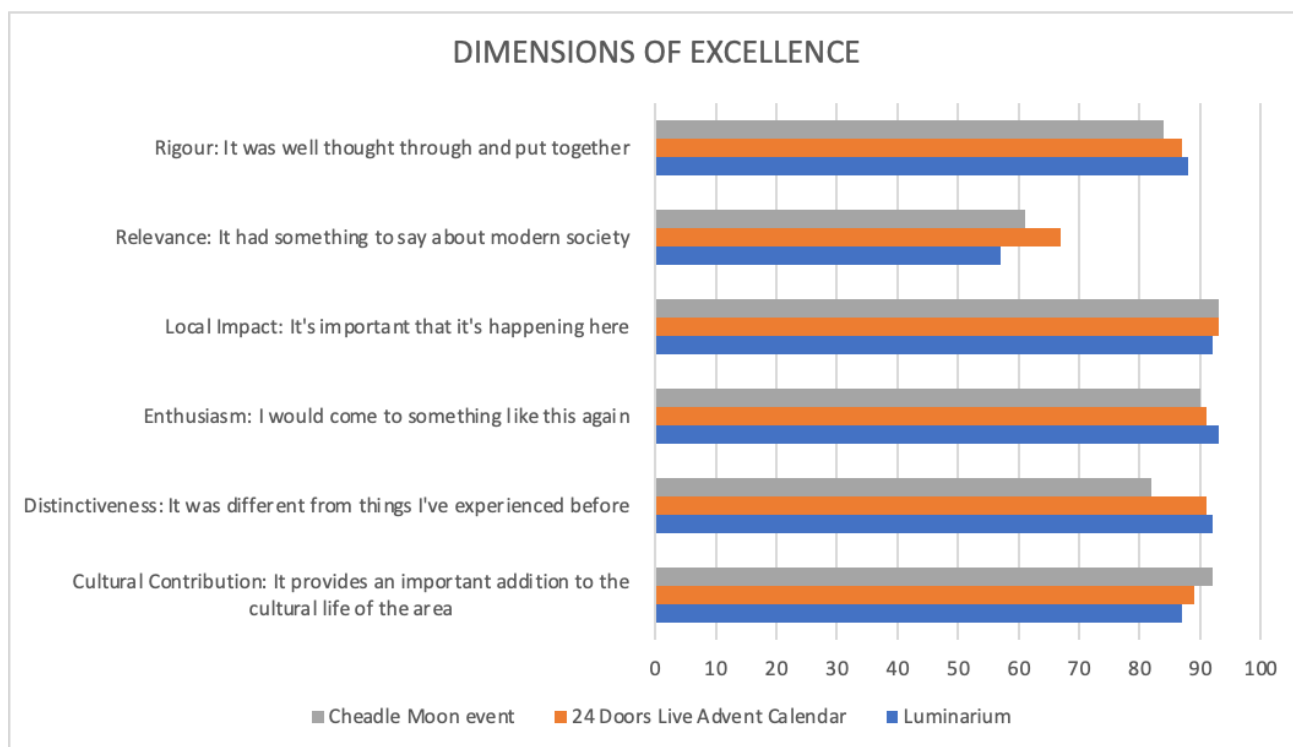
Distinctiveness: It was different from things I've experienced before

Enthusiasm: I would come to something like this again

Local Impact: It's important that it's happening here

Relevance: It had something to say about modern society

Rigour: It was well thought through and put together



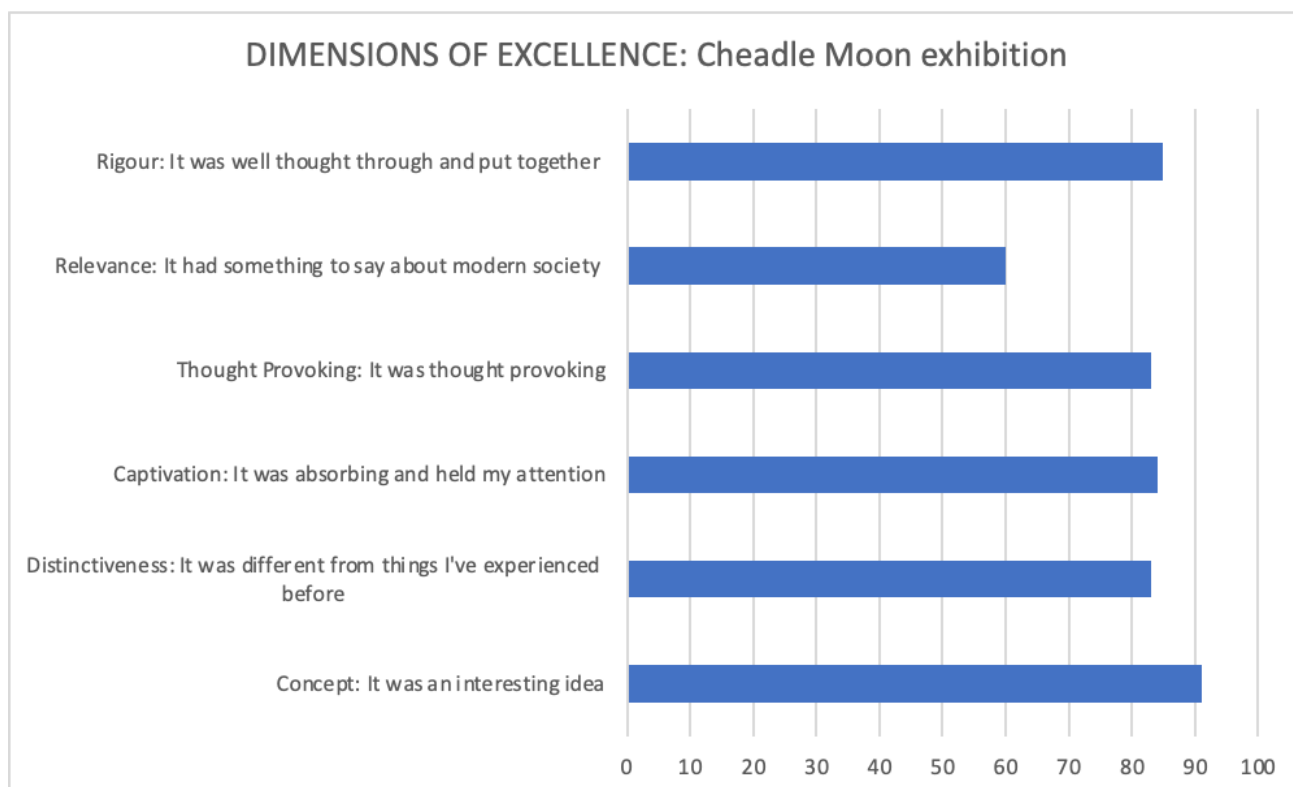
OUTSIDE have consistently high scores across most dimensions, particularly Local Impact, and Enthusiasm. In common with other CPPs, scores for Relevance are lower; this appears to be partly because respondents don't fully understand the question.¹

2

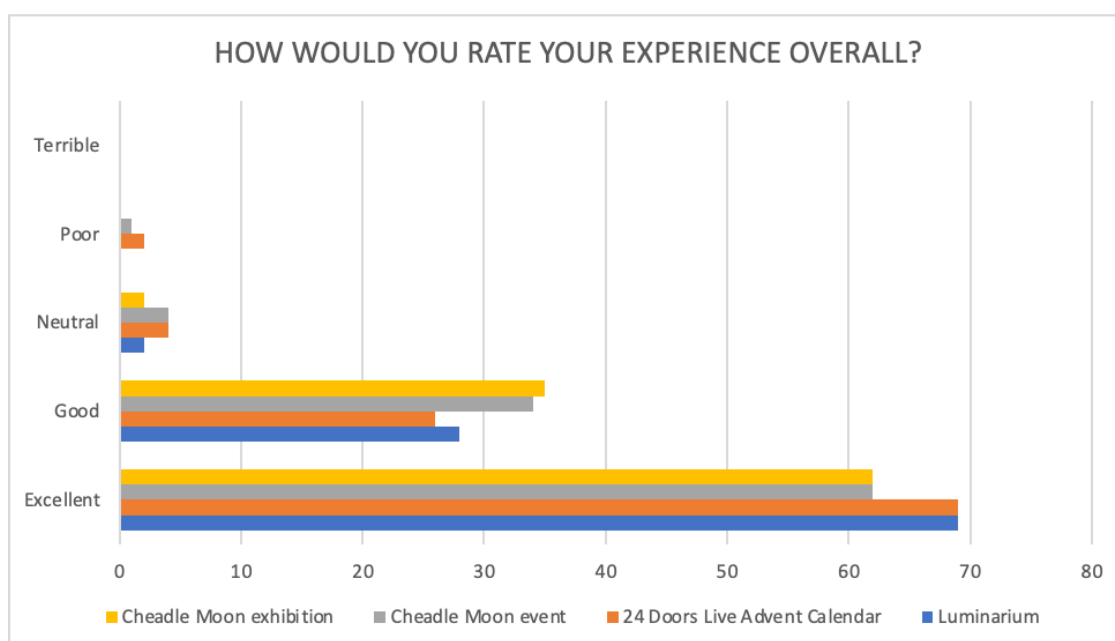
Concept: It was an interesting idea *new
Captivation: It was absorbing and held my attention* new
Thought Provoking: It was thought provoking* new
Distinctiveness: It was different from things I've experienced before
Relevance: It had something to say about modern society
Rigour: It was well thought through and put together

These were used for the survey at the Cheadle Moon exhibition, which received a similarly positive response, in particular for Concept and Rigour.

¹ Counting What Counts, developers of the Insight and Impact toolkit are aware of this, and are reviewing this particular dimension



Quality of experience



Looking at the overall experience, whilst ratings were generally high, respondents at the Luminarium and 24 Doors were most positive.

There was also consistent positive qualitative feedback at the Inside OUTSIDE event about the quality of the programme. In particular attendees described how activities so far were

Creating a buzz, making a splash and providing moments of ‘magic *“Feeling the local area transform as the result of an event eg Telling Tales created an essence of magic in Flash”*

Providing something **fresh, new, and different** *“Introducing new ideas/events to the area – the element of surprise and wonder”*

Inspiring *“I’m thinking about new things that might work in my community. I’ve been inspired and surprised by the ideas and events”*

Changing perceptions of art and culture *“Personal interaction with Ian and Jo Douglas has shown me that art is all around us in many forms, and despite my ignorance, I have enjoyed forms of art all my life!”*

Ambitious *“You never think something like [The Luminarium] is going to come to somewhere like Leek... it was in Barcelona, it's been all over Europe, it's coming to Leek, like this Leek. Why, why? And then they sold out of tickets and you couldn't get any more people in, and that speaks volumes.”*

Excellence in the process of engaging communities

Embedding local decision making into OUTSIDE has been a key ambition from the start of the programme, and this happens at different levels, and in different ways, throughout the programme.

Advisory Groups

One of the first activities was to recruit a local advisory group to work alongside the team in the planning and delivery of the overall programme. A core team of 8 regular attendees who to date have attended a number of Go Sees, volunteered on a variety of events and activities, fed into programming, designed activities, selected applications for Seed Funding, fed into marketing plans, participated in an advisory group advocacy video and participated in theory of change and reflection sessions.

Development of the Youth Advisory group was initially undertaken by Urban Wilderness who ran a number of workshops around recruitment but then handed over relationship building and longer term management of the group to the OUTSIDE team, to hold directly in parallel to adults group. This is now led by Project Assistant Charlotte Murfin. In addition to Go See trips, volunteering, programme design, and seed funding application shortlisting, this group have also attended a local Youth Governance conference.

Local steering groups

In addition to these programme wide groups, local people have been invited to take part in time limited steering groups to support specific parts of the programme. In year one there were 4 of these groups:

Polish Heritage Steering Group 5 meetings - 33 participants

Books Steering Group 5 meetings - 12 participants 1 x site visit to Biddulph Old Hall

Textile Steering Group 4 meetings - 35 participants 1 Go See Visit to the British Textile Biennial

Cheadle Moon Steering Group 7 meetings - 32 participants

Community Creative Producers

The OUTSIDE team initially included three Community Creative Producers (CCPs), each working one day per week in a specific neighbourhood, where residents face particularly significant barriers to taking part in arts and culture. These were:

- The Haregate estate in Leek North
- Biddulph East - including Biddulph Youth & Community Zone
- Cheadle - no single place as there's no community centre so more in partnership with groups eg. equal base, women's refuge, skate park.

The CCP's have been working 1 day a week in their place Cheadle, Biddulph & Leek. Their approaches are varied depending on their experience and own practice. Participation in regular team meetings allows them to support each other, sharing expertise in consultation, production, youth led work etc...

Key community partners engaged with CCP's include:

- Biddulph Youth & Community Zone
- Biddulph Library
- Haregate Centre
- Your Housing Job Club
- Equal Base
- Womens Refuge
- Cheadle Town Council Community Officer

Marketing approach

Marketing and comms activity is aligned with the principles guiding the OUTSIDE programme:

- Socially useful
- Creative
- Exploring what it means to live in a rural community
- Listening to those who are often unseen and unheard

A framework for marketing and communications intends to involve different voices from the community. Workshops, toolkits and templates are provided to help develop marketing skills and training for people involved in the activity.

Opportunities to volunteer are offered to further develop marketing experience and expertise, and embed this within the community, and comments and feedback from the community are invited across all communications.

Accessibility is at the forefront of communications activity, in terms of the content (captioning, layout/legibility) and channels (online, print, outdoor displays).

Circular framework – key steps:

- Campaign planning and targets
- Content creation and testing
- Distribution and updates
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Learnings to inform next campaign...

There is a community voice element in each stage where everyone can have their say / their voice is heard.

To what extent do people feel listened to?

A clear theme in the discussion at Inside OUTSIDE was that people feel listened to; that the project is responding to local needs and ideas and that the team is open to feedback and suggestions.

"I can see suggestions I have made being turned into experiences people in my community can join and enjoy"

"Recognition of what local communities want"

"Open and eager to collect feedback"

"I felt valued, giving my input, felt listened to, not just heard"

It is interesting to note that over 50 people attended the Inside OUTSIDE event, including some whose experience of the project so far has been less positive than others, but who felt able to come along and share their views.

An evaluation discussion with the OUSTIDERS explored to what degree they feel their voices are heard in the project. Whilst overall they did consider they felt listened to, they also expressed that this was quite hard to answer; one person commenting *"I think it's quite hard to quantify really, but I certainly don't feel not listened to."*

One person considered that it felt more like giving feedback on decisions that have already been made, rather than being involved earlier in the process. Whilst another didn't consider it particularly important, and was frustrated with a consortium conversation that seemed to be unnecessarily drilling into this question.

"He was asking all these really hard questions. And I'm thinking what's up with you? It just is, this is it, and it brings joy to people. And does it matter whose idea it was in the first place?"

The role of the OUTSIDE Team

Another strong theme at the Inside OUTSIDE event was positive feedback about the OUTSIDE team who were described as welcoming, kind, equitable and respectful; all vital qualities needed for effective community engagement.

"All staff/those involved have been incredibly kind/knowledgeable"

"It's not usual to work with an arts organisation that makes you feel instantly equal and welcome – there is often a financial/cultural agenda"

"Volunteers made to feel welcome"

"Everyone has a voice and valued opinion. Respect is felt in all aspects of communication. Everyone is excited"

3.1.3 Which approaches were successful and what have we learnt?

Team and OUTSIDER reflections

The OUTSIDE team is committed to feedback, reflection and learning; key themes from the three reflection sessions held in year one are:

What's going well

- The programme - successfully delivering a large number of events

- Audience engagement - the programme is reaching both a large number, and a wide range of people
- The external public profile of the project is growing all the time, and there is a strong and clear OUTSIDE brand
- Connections with communities, partners, and stakeholders are growing and deepening all the time. The Creative Community Producers (CCPs) in particular, have made real progress in establishing relationships and trust with communities, particularly considering they only work one day per week.
- Community decision making structures such as the OUSTIDERS, the Youth Advisory Group, and project based steering groups are working well.
- OUTSIDERS themselves describe how they have fun, make new connections, and appreciate the diversity of the group. Involvement with the programme is prompting members of the group to think differently about arts and creativity; it is sparking their own creative ideas, exposing them to new experiences, and expanding their understanding of how wide the concept of creativity can be. They are also thinking differently about where they live; realising the range of people and groups already active. Go-sees are described as 'inspirational' and 'mind expanding'.
- The team - there is a positive team culture, and flexible structures that enable people to do their best work. Different members of the team have complementary skills, and everyone is working together well. There is a shared commitment to, and enthusiasm for, learning.

What have the challenges been?

- Time and capacity are ongoing challenges. The team is very busy delivering a huge amount of activity, and there is a tension between the ambitions for the project and the time available.
- There is also a recognition of the time it takes to build trusted community relationships; navigating 'gatekeepers' is a challenge, and there is still more to be done to deepen community relationships and develop groups' understanding of the project.
- OUTSIDE planning and admin processes aren't working as effectively as they could, and the Support Staffordshire finance system were very labour intensive to begin with
- Evaluation is a challenge - how best to collect consistent data from audiences and participants
- The project could be better at telling its story externally
- Internal communications, and with the OUTSIDERS could be better
- There are some frustrations amongst OUTSIDERS that meeting attendance isn't as consistent as it could be across all members, but an understanding of the reasons why this isn't always possible.

What's the learning?

- Everyone is learning all the time - about the principles of this practice; about tools and approaches; and about the people and the place of the Staffordshire Moorlands.
- Acknowledging this work takes time - and recognising that we do have that time

Specific reflections on the marketing and comms approaches

From a standing start, over the course of 2023 subscribers and followers have built up well. Digital marketing activity has been well received with high engagement so we're regularly reaching large numbers online. However, offline marketing has been more sporadic. There's a clear need for more visibility of projects and events for the less digital savvy/non internet users, particularly older people.

To this effect, we shouldn't always go for a digital first approach but consider offline options for all projects at the outset. It would be good to establish a network of community comms champions to support this on-the-ground / word of mouth or explore how we could involve the OAG/YAG. On the other hand, to appeal to younger people we need to be active on the channels they use (eg TikTok). As well as considering channels, we should look at the content we're creating. While it's been well received, the majority of our content has been news and updates. Going forward, now that numerous projects and events have been completed, we could mix up content more by incorporating case studies, Q&As and reflections to demonstrate impact and learning, and make it more inclusive with more input from those we're working (artists, community groups, residents). This type of content would work well on the website, newsletter, social media, and could also be mirrored in our PR activity. While we've achieved great press coverage over the past year, most of it has been in the 'what's on' area. As OUTSIDE is now well established with the local media, we can and should be more ambitious with media opportunities and start pitching for opinion and insight pieces, to sit alongside our regular news and updates.

Consortium reflections

In March 2024 OUTSIDE undertook a Consortium review with existing Consortium members. A short e-survey included questions around logistics, effectiveness, future planning, as well as the opportunity for open responses. There were 6 completed surveys.

A more comprehensive review around consortium membership will be undertaken in March 2025.

- 100% of respondents said that quarterly meetings were preferred
- 66% of respondents thought that the meetings were the right length of time.
- Overall feeling was that Buxton & Leek College is a good venue but there was recognition that moving the meetings around the district could help inform understanding of challenges of the area and change conversations.
- Missing voices at the table included freelance artist, conservation group, youth voice (prior to youth advisory group representation), protected characteristics
- Effectiveness 83% of respondents thought the board was rooted in a common goal.
- Ability to make clear decisions received a varied response rate - 66% agreed.
- As a board we are open to diverse entities and voices - 83% agree.
- The board felt unsure about whether we had the right skills on the board and suggested a skills audit might be useful
- The board are flexible and responsive to learning 83%
- Members work for the good of the collective 66% agreed
- Board able to tolerate conflict – unsure, feel this hasn't been tested.

There was Consortium representation at 79% of events in 2023/24

3.2 OUTSIDE Objectives

3.2.1 Staffordshire Moorlands residents are at the heart of decision making, to better understand and respond to their needs; resulting in increased cultural engagement and the wide range of social benefits it brings.

As noted in the previous section, residents are at the heart of decision making in the project; they feel valued and listened to.

It is too early to tell at this stage if overall levels of cultural engagement have increased across the Moorlands, but the signs are positive.

In terms of the social benefits of the programme, attendees at Inside OUTSIDE talked a lot about how they thought that:

The programme is **reaching people who don't normally have access to arts and culture** *"Events right in the heart of communities – accessibility to the arts"*

It is **creating and strengthening connections** - between artists, partners and stakeholders, communities, and individuals *"Giving me the opportunity to work creatively, meet other creative people and get involved with exciting ideas and projects"*
"Bringing different ages together, entertaining, something new and different"

It is building **community pride** *"Giving locals a voice and heritage to be proud of"*

3.2.2 Young people in the Staffordshire Moorlands are at the heart of decision making, to better understand and respond to their needs

As noted, the Young Advisory Group took longer than was hoped to become established, but there is now a committed core group of young people who've been involved in a wide range of activities.

Members of the Young Advisory Group have:

- Met monthly since July 2023
- Participated in Go Sees
- Assisted in the production of the Netflixs Super Mario Bros screening, a 24 Doors event and Cheadle Moon as volunteers
- Attended a youth governance conference
- Two members of the YAG now sit on the consortium board

Two members of the YAG took part in an online evaluation discussion with the project evaluator, and a third sent feedback via e-mail.

The young people described being involved in decision making as the best thing about the YAG:

"The thing I like about it is the idea of being able to have input into the sorts of things that happen around here"

"It's giving you responsibility at a young age. That's the biggest thing...People who are like sat in school and have no voice at all, and it's all they want, they want one person to listen to them, like

the teachers won't, like other people won't, the youth advisory group focuses on listening to the young people... at a meeting, where we voted on like, those projects, and we voted on which ones get funding. So that's what from our view, it's like, this is what we want to get funded. You're asking us and you voted, and you're going to fund the top three or five or whatever it was. So that's literally directly coming from us. And they're gonna put it in action. That's amazing"

"I enjoyed planning and assisting in public situations such as the calendar (24 Doors) disco and choosing the films advertisement"

In particular for one young person, being able to advocate for access needs

"Accessibility is really important to me as a disabled person. And so it's very nice to be able to have an opportunity to give my input into that and have an opportunity to look at an event that's happening and say, 'Hey, this bit might not be as accessible. Maybe this is how we could make an adjustment to it to make it a bit more accessible so that more people can join it'"

3.2.3 People - both artists and residents - have developed and shared their skills

Inside OUTSIDE event

There was consistent feedback from artists that attended the Inside OUTSIDE event that their involvement with OUTSIDE has helped them to develop their practice and learn new skills. They described how their practice had developed, as they were invited to deliver their work in new ways (for example in communities, rather than at festivals), or had the chance to try new approaches, or work more locally.

"Creating material decided by others rather than something that interests you pushes your work out of the normal box"

"Gave me the opportunity to push myself into new artforms giving me that freedom to pick up a paintbrush – that I would never willingly do"

Artists spoke about the chance to collaborate with other creatives was particularly beneficial.

"Extended community of artists being brought together with a collective vision."

Whilst there was less evidence of skills development and sharing from other attendees at the event, a number of people did mention that their confidence had grown, in terms of confidence in public speaking; confidence in their practice as an artist; and confidence in working with young people.

Young people

One member of the YAG described the impact on them since becoming involved with OUTSIDE in terms of confidence

"So I did the Luminarium and Netflix, and I recently did the Moon. Right. So, and I've met and spoken to so many people, some that I've recognised and I haven't spoken to in ages... even just like public speaking, like two years ago, you wouldn't have caught me talking to anyone. So now it's like, so easy to talk to anyone and everyone."

And how this has now led to them starting an apprenticeship

"When I started volunteering, I took a six month break off out of education. So I wasn't really doing much. I was like, I need something to do when this was like, literally the perfect time for everything."

And then once it came to me get in an apprenticeship OUTSIDE gave me a reference for work. Because they had seen me, you know, volunteering and stuff, which really helped me like, get the job and everything. So that was a really big one."

Another described how they have gained the confidence to advocate for their own access needs *"Being with OUTSIDE and having an opportunity to kind of say my needs and have them be adapted to, I think is helping me especially for the future when I'm going to have to have to do that more and more and, and so it's good practice."*

Local creatives

The Creative Moorlands programme of sector support for creatives living and working in the Staffordshire Moorlands is already having positive impacts on those taking part, with 1 to 1 recipients valuing the OUTSIDE Director's arts sector experience and knowledge; appreciating the empathetic approach; and gaining information about OUTSIDE aims and ambitions.

A representative selection of feedback is below:

What was most useful:

"Speaking to someone who knows the arts and events industry and can share advice and information based on knowledge and experience."

"The session was relaxed and I found Sarah to be understanding about my concerns, strengths and weaknesses. Her business advice was informative and positive. Sarah has great knowledge and experience and is generous with her time. She has real empathy when talking about funding and the practicalities of working in the arts. I felt encouraged and more prepared to be decisive. I also felt excited and supported about future opportunities."

"Having the opportunity to talk about how Outside aims to work in rural areas and how local artists might get involved and hearing about networking plans"

What would you like to see more of:

"Opportunities to share and develop storytelling"

"The advice sessions are valuable as is the chance to meet and work alongside other artists and groups. I welcome the support and possibilities brought by bringing together the arts communities of the Staffs Moorlands. The seed funding has made me think about further developing a dhun and dance group A Staffs Moorlands Arts Festival with would be an ambition worth considering as the variety of artists and performers grow in confidence. Many thanks to OUTSIDE."

"Support in developing art project ideas; funding advice; networking"

3.2.4 People feel more connected to each other

There was consistent feedback at the Inside OUTSIDE event, and from the OUTSIDERS feedback session that people felt more connected to one another, as a result of being involved in OUTSIDE, and this was happening in a variety of different ways.

Stakeholders commented that the project was bringing together different partners from across the moorlands, noting that OUTSIDE was filling a gap in this way

“Convening people together - no Moorlands wide network”

Artists appreciated the chance to work with other creatives

“Giving me the opportunity to work creatively, meet other creative people and get involved with exciting ideas and projects”

Individuals noted that they had met new people; described as ‘a wide variety’ and ‘likeminded’; and travelled across the Moorlands for different events.

One member of the YAG described volunteering at OUTSIDE events enabled them to meet a wide variety of people:

“Being able to talk to random people about what you mean, just being able to, like, meet different kinds of people, because I’ve worked on Luminarium first, and that was like, you got to meet anyone and everyone of any age. You just got to speak to anyone and you just like even when we did the disco, the silent disco at Christmas, anyone came”

3.2.5 Residents of the Staffordshire Moorlands are excited and proud of this place

OUTSIDE is creating a palpable sense of excitement, particularly as the programme is developing, and more and more people are experiencing the range of events and activities on offer. Comments from people at the Inside OUTSIDE discussions included

“Introducing new ideas/events to the area – the element of surprise and wonder”

“Creative celebration by local people about this unique place”

*“*spirit of community*”*

The programme is also helping to develop local pride and community spirit

“Raising the profile of a small rural town and challenging the common idea that ‘nothing good or interesting happens around here’”

“I can’t believe this is in Leek !” – constant quote we all hear – sense of pride in place”

“Something to be proud of – Cheadle skatepark”

“I love Staffs!”

3.2.6 OUTSIDE activities provide an escape from the everyday

As described in Section 4, Inside OUTSIDE attendees talked a lot about OUTSIDE providing something new and different; about feeling inspired; and experiencing moments of magic.

When asked to describe their experience in three words, the words clouds below illustrate the most frequently used words by respondents at the Luminarium, 24 Doors and Cheadle Moon event and exhibition.

Luminarium three words

Interesting
Colourful Relaxing
Unique Calming
Fun
Immersive Exciting
Amazing
Different

24 Doors three words

Festive Exciting
Magical
Lovely
Joyful Fun
Christmas Interesting
Amazing
Community

Cheadle Moon event three words



Cheadle Moon exhibition three words



3.3 What other impacts and outcomes is OUTSIDE having?

Whilst not included in the original hoped for outcomes, there have been other, important things the project has achieved.

3.3.1 Volunteering

OUTSIDE has benefitted from 1167 volunteer hours in the first year, and worked with over 100 individuals as volunteers. These range from members of the advisory and steering groups who meet regularly to shape and plan the programme, to volunteer stewards at events.

Volunteering has been overseen by Katie Aldous the Operations Manager and has included a range of approaches including:

- Open Call Outs

- Targeted recruitment
- Bespoke development

Throughout the year there has been an increase in uptake of volunteering opportunities and a high percentage of repeat volunteers. Although this has to date centred on a centralised approach to volunteering there has been geographical clusters of volunteers and this will be built on in 2024/25

Partnership working has taken place on volunteering with a range of organisations:

- Your Housing has created opportunities for local Job Club attendees often those in long term unemployment
- Support Staffordshire – recruitment
- SCC Libraries team
- Leek Building Society

OUTSIDE have successfully supported one work placement student part time for 3 months from Manchester University undertaking a Masters in Digital Culture and Media.

3.3.2 Creative sector support

OUTSIDE worked with or contracted 69 artists/arts organisations to deliver the programme in 2023/24, and 64% of these were from local area. The first round of small scale Seed funding awarded 17 grants with a total value of £9,200 to local artists and community groups.

Support was provided for funding applications from Moorlands based artists and organisations with the following results:

- Successful ACE Project Grants for Bolton Gate Arts £30k and League of Artisans £29,500
- Successful ACE DYCP grant Emma Dawson Varughese
- Successful Creative Peaks Lost in the Hills Grassroots Music £39k
- 1 Grassroots Music Applications (awaiting decision), Foxlowe Arts Centre
- NLPG application from SCC libraries - awaiting result £28.5k
- Supported an artist's application for a Clore Fellowship and another unsuccessful DYCP application.
- Natural England Funding for Staffordshire County Council Libraries £3,000
- Support for SWT National Lottery Climate Application – multi year £750k

Arts Council investment

OUTSIDE has delivered a series of funding advice workshops for local creatives and as a result, there has been an increase in ACE funding into the area.

Funding Category	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Project Grants	6000	13080	27612			29757
Strategic Grants -DYCP				21187	20294	8400
Emergency-Individuals			12100			
Emergency-Organisation			8989			
Total £	6000	13080	48701	21187	20294	38157

3.3.3 Collaborations and partnership

Partnerships

OUTSIDE has worked with a wide range of partners from a variety of sectors as delivery partners, venues and research partners.

Arts and Heritage	Community/Charity	Education	Voluntary sector	Local Authorities	Sport	Climate	Housing
Biddulph Arts Festival	Biddulph Youth & Community Zone	Beresford 1 st School	Alton Village Hall	Staffordshire Moorlands District Council	Leek Hockey Club	Moorlands Climate Action	Your Housing
Cheadle Arts Festival	Glow/Lighthouse Womens Refuge	Buxton & Leek College	Flash Village Hall	Biddulph Town Council	Leek Town FC	Staffordshire Wildlife Trust	
Leek Arts Festival	Equal Base Cheadle	Jodrell Bank	Great Westwood Village Hall	Cheadle Town Council			
Foxlowe Arts Centre	Haregate Community Centre	National Literacy Trust	Moor Village Hall	Leek Town Council			
Film Hub Midlands	John Hall Gardens	Oral History Society	Cheadle Discovery Group				
Leek Loves Books	Sporting Communities Family Hub	Royal Astronomical Society	Ipstones Village Hall				
Nicholson Institute							
Staffordshire County Council Libraries Team							
The Maude							

Levering other funding

OUTSIDE has successfully attracted over £80k of funding and an additional £20k + in match funding.

Funders:

Severn Trent Foundation

National Lottery Heritage Fund

Historic England
Staffordshire County Council Libraries
Natural England
SMDC Climate Fund
Film Hub Midlands

Sponsors:
JCB
Alton Towers

3.3.4 Press and media coverage

Press and marketing have been delivered by Olivia Kehoe a local resident and an experienced cultural marketing lead, who has contracted various designers, photographers and videographers. Olivia oversaw the creation of the OUTSIDE website, including a skills development opportunity for a local student from Buxton & Leek College.

OUTSIDE has developed a strong and recognisable brand and established its on and offline presence:

Website - 16k users, 41.5k page views.

Socials - 3800 followers across platforms (271k impressions/reach)

Press – 75 pieces of media coverage including 20 on air spots, 2 x local BBC tv, one BBC online. E-Newsletter - 1979 subscribers

4. Evaluator Conclusions

OUTSIDE has made an impressive start; delivering a large number of events and reaching significant audience numbers.

Like many ACE funded organisations, OUTSIDE has been grappling with the audience data platforms it is required to use as a condition of funding. In year one these platforms have provided some useful insights, but they don't tell the full story of who the programme is reaching and impacts it is having.

Evidence from year one suggests that whilst the programme is successfully reaching large numbers of people, there is still more work to be done in reaching residents who are less engaged with the arts, and from a broader socio economic and age range.

Audiences and participants who have engaged with the programme are consistently positive in describing the impacts it is having – it is providing inspirational and magical moments, connecting people together, and building local pride. People feel listened to and that their voices are heard. The attitude of the team and the artistic programme are the main reasons for these successes.

Whilst events have been programmed in a variety of locations across the Staffordshire Moorlands, there could be even more of a geographical spread.

The OUTSIDE staff team are dedicated and hard working, committed to reflection and learning, with a very positive team spirit; however, capacity is an issue. As the programme and the team develops

still further in year two, ensuring there are resources and systems in place to support the team to deliver on their ambitions will be vital.

OUTSIDE has been particularly successful in creating a wide range of partnerships with other local stakeholders, these have supported the programme delivery and levered significant amounts of match funding. These relationships are a positive step in embedding the programme locally and thinking about its legacy.

After some initial tensions with some members of the local arts scene, OUTSIDE is now successfully engaging with and supporting the local creative sector.

5. Evaluation in Year Two

There have been significant learnings for the evaluator from year one of the programme. Whilst a number of aspects of the evaluation approach worked well (regular reflection sessions and qualitative feedback obtained at the Inside OUTSIDE event) Others were less successful (the OUTSIDE objectives as a structure and using Insights and Impacts toolkit and Illuminate).

Following discussion with the OUTSIDE team, the evaluation approach in Year Two will shift, with the aim of capturing a wider variety of outcomes and impacts, including unexpected outcomes. Rather than having a pre-determined set out of outcomes that we then gather data on to understand if and how these have been achieved, we will use a more open approach that identifies a wide range of outcomes, with learning and stakeholder engagement embedded within the process.

We will use the approach 'Stories of Change' or '[Most Significant Change](#)' this is a qualitative method of evaluation that identifies what has changed for participants and stakeholders involved in a project or programme. Originally developed by Rick Davies in the 1990s in the context of international development programmes, the approach is participatory; captures outcomes that are hard to quantify; and focuses on learning and change rather than measurement. It has been increasingly used in community, social change and arts contexts, and fits well with the action research nature of the CPP programme, and with the OUTSIDE approach.

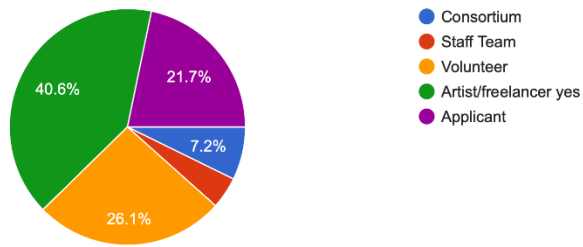
Alongside this qualitative approach we will continue to use the Insights and Impact toolkit and Illuminate but in a more focused and effective way. A sample of events will be identified in advance, and the research methods agreed, we will also use a consistent set of additional survey questions. It is hoped this will make the process easier for the team to administer and produce more meaningful and useful evidence.

6. Appendix

Annual Diversity Monitoring

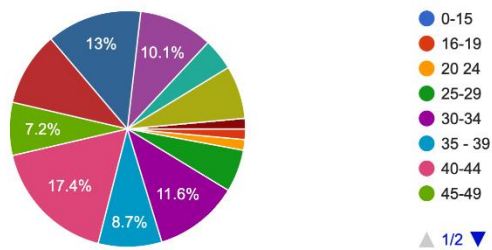
In what capacity are you working with the OUTSIDE project:

69 responses



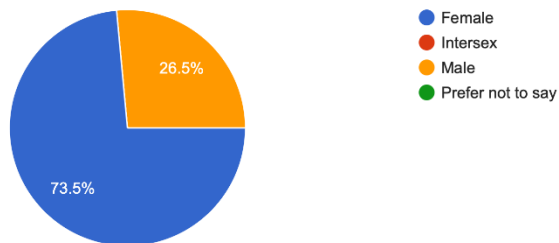
What is your age?

69 responses



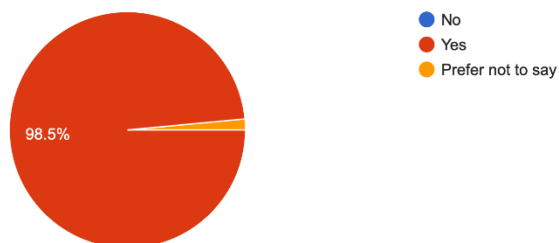
What is your sex?

68 responses



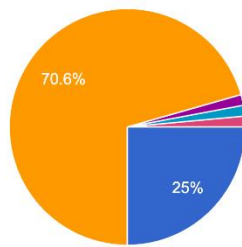
Is your gender identity the same as the sex you were assigned at birth?

67 responses



How would you describe your gender identity?

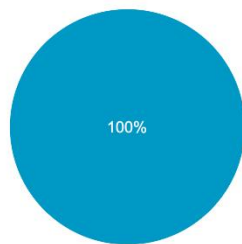
68 responses



- Man
- Non-binary
- Woman
- Prefer to self describe
- Not applicable
- Prefer not to say
- Female

Asian/Asian British

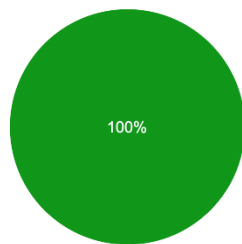
1 response



- Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Indian
- Pakistani
- Prefer to self describe (please do so below)
- Other

Black/Black British

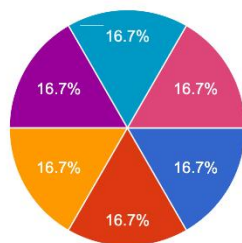
1 response



- Black African
- Black Caribbean
- Prefer to self describe (please do so below)
- Other

Mixed background

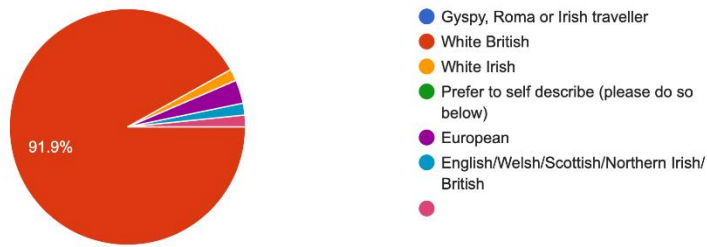
6 responses



- Asian and white
- Black African and white
- Black Caribbean and white
- Prefer to self describe (please do so below)
- Mixed ethnicity, White English, French, South Asian, South East Asian
- British-Greek
- Other

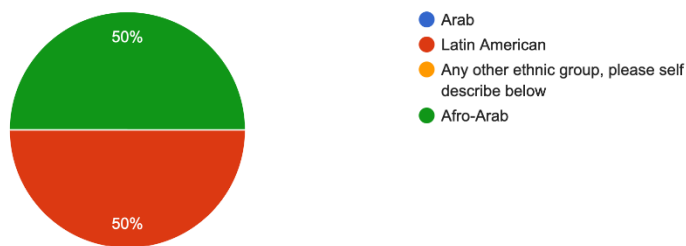
White/White British

62 responses



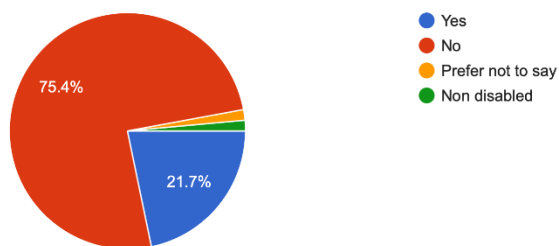
Any other ethnic group or background

2 responses



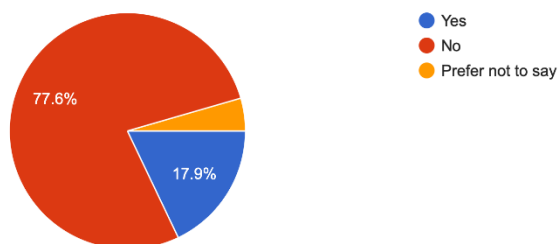
Do you identify as D/deaf and/or D/disabled person, or have a long term health condition?

69 responses



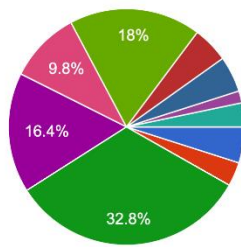
Do you identify as neurodivergent? Being neurodivergent could include Dyslexia, ADHD etc.

67 responses



What best describes your current or most recent occupation?

61 responses

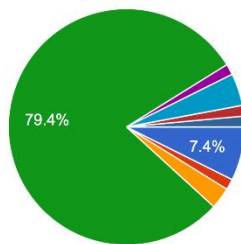


- Clerical and intermediate occupations...
- Full-time education such as: studying f...
- Long term unemployed (claimed Jobs...
- Modern professional & traditional prof...
- Retired
- Routine, semi-routine manual and ser...
- Senior, middle or junior managers or a...
- Small business owners who employed...

▲ 1/2 ▼

How would you describe your sexual orientation?

68 responses



- Bisexual
- Gay man
- Gay woman/Lesbian
- Heterosexual/straight
- Queer
- Prefer not to say
- Not known
- Prefer to self describe (please do so b...

▲ 1/2 ▼