

Creative Playground

Evaluation Report 2023-24



Performance against SMART targets

As part of the Business Plan for 2023-24, we set **SMART** targets against six key aims. This section reviews how well the programme has performed against these targets and where improvements need to be made for future years. In many cases these improvements need to be made to data collection so that we actually have the data required to evaluate against some of the targets it has set.

1

Aim 1: More people are regularly engaging in the arts and culture in Crawley as audiences, participants, makers, producers and curators

We have been very successful in increasing levels of creative activity across the five target neighbourhoods - Bewbush, Broadfield East, Broadfield West, Langley Green and West Green.

- **Target:** 950 people from the target neighbourhoods. **Progress:** 2,462 total engagement in target neighbourhoods plus another 2,040 people engaging with our mural in Bewbush.

However, we have not been able to gather enough data to establish whether there is a greater diversity of people taking part in the programme particularly from under-represented demographics. We had targeted that our programme mirrored Crawley's population with at least 18% of audiences from global majority communities and 10% disabled/ neurodivergent. However, the sample sizes of demographic data collected via Arts Council England's Illuminate platform are not adequate to report against these targets. We acknowledge that for some audiences, the Illuminate platform can be inaccessible or intrusive. In 2024/25 we will work to find more accessible ways to gather this data and achieve a reliable sample size.

2

Aim 2: Residents are actively involved in decision-making regarding creative activities happening in their town.

This target relates to the involvement of Playmakers, Community Connectors and Consortium members in shaping Creative Playground's programme and future. In general, we have been performing well against this target:

- By 2025 we targeted 100 playmakers recruited, with a core of 50 actively engaging. At the end of 2023/24 we have 60 regularly engaged Playmakers.
- Playmakers have been involved in programming decisions through panels and programming parties. We had aimed for 16 Crawley residents to be involved. In fact, 6 took part in a programming panel and 99 attended Programming Parties. In addition, 437 took part in our Free Fridays test events which offered opportunities for light touch decision-making (target: 100), and we engaged with 19 Mural Playmakers.

Progress and improvements can be made by:

- Recruiting more Community Connectors, who have more in-depth involvement e.g. recruiting playmakers (current cohort 6; target 10). We need to work with the original cohort longer to understand the model before aiming to recruit again in 2024/25.
- Involve Playmakers as decision-makers for the BOOST grants programme, as in 2023/24 these decisions were made by the core team.
- Supporting Playmakers to co-create elements of the programme. This has not happened in 2023/24 but plans are already in place for 2024/25 with Brighton Festival.





Aim 3: Local people learn new skills and are empowered to deliver their own creative activity / programmes

We have had mixed success with this aim.

Areas of success have been:

- Our focus on youth voice/ skills development through collaboration with Crawley College and Youth Council. **Target:** 25 young people. **Progress:** 25 young people regularly engage, another 1,757 young people have engaged with activity e.g. via careers fairs.
- Understanding training needs of local people through the Free Fridays programme. **Target:** 100 people. **Progress:** 247.
- Team development - Crawley residents recruited into entry level roles at Creative Playground and mentoring/training support provided. **Target:** 2 people. **Progress:** 2 residents recruited.
- Team development - Creative Playground team develop skills through Without Walls Creative Development Network. **Target:** At least 5 events. **Progress:** 6 training events/ sessions took place. In addition, both Co-Directors are regularly attending Creative People and Places Action Learning Sets and drawing on advice from peers (target: 1 co-director).

However, in 2024/25 we would like to support more Playmakers, Community Leaders and Crawley residents taking part in our skills development programmes.

- Learning opportunities for Playmakers. **Target:** 50 people. **Progress:** 10 people.
- Training programme around test events, helping them to create their own creative programmes. **Target:** 50 people. **Progress:** 23 people.
- Come With Us programme in which Crawley residents visit professional cultural events with the Creative Playground team. **Target:** 120 people. **Progress:** 70 participants.
- BOOST programme commissioning opportunities and advice sessions. **Target:** 8 people. **Progress:** 6 people.

We would also like to see more Consortium members report that they are using learning from Creative Playground in their own organisations. **Target:** 5 members organisations. **Progress:** 3 member organisations (CCA, Caridon and LGBTQ Crawley).



Aim 4: The Creative Playground strengthens the local arts infrastructure and cultural offer

We have been performing exceptionally well against targets to deliver events in Crawley in partnership with other organisations.

Areas of success have been:

- Business Improvement District town centre commissions (Homecoming and mural project). **Target:** 3,000 people. **Progress:** 23,393.
- We aimed to work with four partners, these are Crawley Borough Council, Crawley BID, Theatre Centre, Manor Royal.
- Grassroots Foundations activities with Manor Royal workers, community centres, schools to promote the programme, recruit playmakers and encourage cross sector workers. **Target:** 150 people. **Progress:** 1,045 people at 20 events.

This success in partnership working is reflected in the contributed and in-kind income received from partners in 2023/24:

- Contributed income. **Target:** 15% of total income. **Progress:** 23%.
- In-kind income. **Target:** £59k. **Progress:** £64k.

We have been performing reasonably well against targets for embedding learning from Creative Playground across Crawley, but would like to see more in future years:

- Consortium membership increases to 6 organisations. Progress: 5 organisations.
- West Green Space is established as a creative hub in partnership with Theatre Centre to engage the local community. **Target:** 300 people take part in activities. **Progress:** 242 people.

In 2024/25, our Evaluators will support this by reviewing Creative Playground's impact on consortium members and create case studies to be shared with Crawley Borough Council.

5

Aim 5: The programme has a positive effect on community cohesion and wellbeing

We have performed well against our targets against this aim.

- Cross neighbourhood activity. Initially we set a modest target of 40 people - in fact 1,862 have engaged with cross neighbourhood activities including murals development, Breathe Academy, Homecoming, Programming Parties and Free Fridays.
- Playmakers from different neighbourhoods have joined us at Come With Us activities. **Target:** 20 people. **Progress:** 70 people.

Evidence gathering for other targets is ongoing:

- 25% of participants report improved wellbeing as a result of Creative Playground.
- Test events Broadfield Arts Festival draws in 5% of participants/audiences from other neighbourhoods.

In future years we may explore other metrics for community cohesion, for example from the DCMS Community Life Survey.

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Aim 6: Crawley's reputation grows as a cultural destination where you can see and take part in a wide range of high quality creative events and activities

For this aim, we have met the following targets:

- External press/ online messaging celebrating Crawley as an interesting cultural destination. **Target:** 10 instances. **Progress:** 11 instances.
- Established artists work on Creative Playground activity. **Target:** 10 artists. **Progress:** 24 artists plus 9 companies.

We do not yet have data to support the target that 15% of participants report increased pride of place after engaging with Creative Playground. However, interviews with 40 people are in-progress to help us understand our impact here.

Again, we may be able to introduce new metrics in future years to help understand our impact on Crawley's reputation as a cultural destination.

Summary of SMART targets



We are performing well and, in many cases, overachieving against SMART targets in the following areas:

- **Levels of creative activities in our target neighbourhoods.**
- **Recruiting Playmakers and involving them in shaping decision-making around the programme.**
- **Youth voice and young people's skills development.**
- **Staff training/ team development.**
- **Delivering a wide range of events in Crawley with partner organisations and artists, and ensuring they engage a wide number of people.**
- **Cross neighbourhood activity.**
- **Media coverage of Creative Playground's contribution to Crawley's reputation as a cultural destination.**

Areas for development are:

- **Effective collection of demographic data and case studies.**
- **Supporting Community Connectors and Playmakers to have a deeper level of engagement in decision-making.**
- **Encouraging Crawley residents to take part in skills development activities.**
- **Consortium members involvement in demonstrating their learnings from Creative Playground.**

What actually happened?

We delivered our programme and made things happen



In total in 2023/24, we delivered 125 events for 31,185 people.

Across the year	We delivered this many events	For this many people
April - June 23	15	1,564
July - Sept 23	30	2,340
Oct - Dec 23	39	2,671
Jan - Mar 24	41	24,610



There are three strands to our programme

1. Foundations

46 Foundations events for 1,735 people

Across the year	We delivered this many events	For this many people
April - June 23	9	205
July - Sept 23	22	848
Oct - Dec 23	9	257
Jan - Mar 24	9	425

Foundations events are participatory interactions that involve listening to and learning from each other through creative acts. It is creative activity that supports local people to make decisions on the direction of the future programme. We also support small commissions for local people to try something new

2. Bridge

20 Bridge events for 1,897

Across the year	We delivered this many events	For this many people
April - June 23	1	6
July - Sept 23	6	1469
Oct - Dec 23	9	127
Jan - Mar 24	5	295

Bridge is a participatory programme and events that bring people together in new and different ways across:

- generations, faiths, cultures, backgrounds and neighbourhoods to deepen mutual understanding,
- power cultural exchange and inspire friendship. Through this strand we invest in the existing and latent talent, entrepreneurialism and creative
- potential of Crawley's citizens of all ages through formal and informal training, skills sharing, skills development mentoring, youth ambassadors.

3. Beacons

54 Beacons events for 27,504 people



Across the year	We delivered this many events	For this many people
April - June 23	4	1348
July - Sept 23	2	23
Oct - Dec 23	23	2287
Jan - Mar 24	28	23890

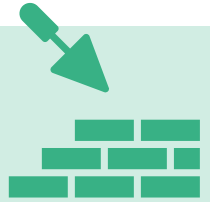
Beacons are big commissions and events that connect with existing Crawley moments, national events and/or that reach 500 - 10000+ audiences and participants. In Phase 1, these are test smaller events. Our Beacons programme will become a cultural calendar of signature 'beacon' events that showcase the vibrancy of Crawley, celebrate significant Crawley moments and produce events that regularly bring citizens and neighbourhoods together in celebration of people, place, culture and local talent for example in meals, feasts, and festivals.



Events in our **Foundations** programme have included:

Free Fridays

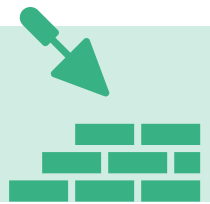
13 events for 343 people



These are once a month on a Friday afternoon in different locations in Crawley. Our Community Producer or Community Engagement Manager works with an artist to host an informal creative meet up where light-touch art activity will take place over food and conversation. Free Fridays focus on fun, light-touch engagement with some sessions including programme decision making moments. Activities have included can we change to printmaking, zine making, lyric writing, cyanotype and creating characters.

Homecoming

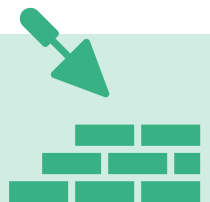
12 events for 443 people



Estabrak's HOMECOMING was produced by Marlborough Productions to ask the public a simple question: What Does Home Mean to You? Homecoming was an on-going interactive installation made for public participation where anyone can contribute by either writing or drawing with UV pens in any language they choose onto the walls of the installation, which was located in Crawley town centre. We also ran workshops in the lead up to the installation with community groups and individuals in our four target neighbourhoods that will feed the installation.

Invite Us

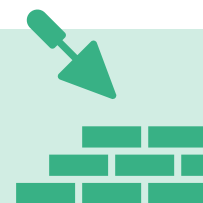
21 events for 1,075 people



Invite us encourages local residents and community groups to invite us to visit their regular meetups and one off events to share information about Creative Playground and recruit Playmakers. We have been guest speakers at Youth Council meetings, we have attended BID focus groups, we have attended school career days and have been part of Crawley Pride.

Playmakers including Theory of Change development

5 events for 119 people



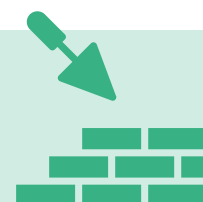
Playmakers is an inclusive network of volunteers connecting with and driving Creative Playground. Anyone who takes part in a Creative Playground event can become a Playmaker through the following activities:

- Specific project groups such as the Mural Playmakers to guide the development and delivery of Beacon activity,
- Volunteering at events to help us with marketing,
- Attending Programming Parties
- Other decision making events.

As part of Playmakers, consultant Lisa Baxter from The Experience Business worked with a range of local Crawley people and the Creative Playground Co-Directors to create a People's Theory of Change. Over 60 people were approached to be involved and a total of 18 people took part providing rich and diverse perspectives on the change Creative Playground can make in Crawley. Participants included people over 70 engaged in grassroots community activity (Friends of Goffs Park, Diverse Crawley, Broadfield Arts Festival, Autism Support Crawley), local councillors, students and tutors from Crawley College, young people from the Youth Council and Dance Hub, workers at community centres and other local residents. In thinking about what the future could look like and how Creative Playground can positively impact Crawley, the group decided on five core values that would underpin Creative Playground's programme.

Breathe Academy

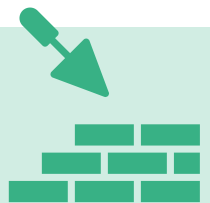
3 events for 50 people



A youth project empowering young people from Crawley (aged 12 - 24) led by internationally acclaimed beatboxer and CALM ambassador SK Shlomo in partnership with Komedia Productions in Brighton. Taster workshops ran in Crawley Secondary schools and young people were invited to take place in further sessions in Brighton building up to performing as part of Shlomo's professional show at Brighton Dome in April 2024

Test programme - Bank of Hope

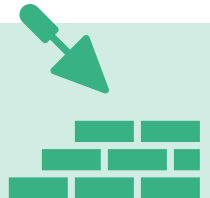
3 events for 75 people



Bank of Hope was a series of creative writing and movement workshops led by Alice Roots (from Figs in Wigs) in partnership with Swallows Elders Group, that meets at Broadfield Community Centre. Attendees at Broadfield Arts Festival were also invited to make 'deposits' of hope (what they would like for Crawley) into the Bank of Hope.

West Green Launch

1 event for 73 people



An event for partners, stakeholders and participants to launch the partnership with Theatre Centre at the West Green Community Centre as a cultural hub for professional artists and community engagement.

Events in our **Bridge** programme have included:

Come With Us

10 events for 70 people

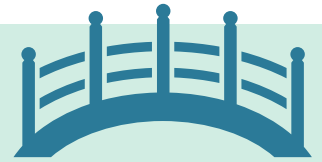


We invited Crawley residents to come with the Creative Playground team to see professional creative events and activities in Crawley, Brighton & London. Taking part has been free and includes all travel and subsistence costs. Following the events we talked about them together to develop a critical discourse about arts and culture and to see how they might impact on the Creative Playground programme. Some of the events we have been to include:

- A dress rehearsal for Victoria Melody's *The Enthusiasts*,
- *The Rest Of Our Lives* by Jo Fong,
- *Without Walls* as part of Brighton Festival,
- *The Tin Man* at The Hawth.

Boost

6 awards for 728 people

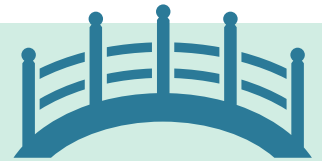


BOOST is our initiative of investment in small scale, sustainable, creative ideas to encourage creative entrepreneurialism and independent thinking. Support has been available for up to eight individuals per year to try ideas they have had bubbling away in their minds and who want to explore something new. BOOST has provided vital opportunities to meet new people, offer Foundations commissions to those with great ideas and raise the bar in terms of the professionalism of activity presented by individuals who may not think art and culture is for them.

6 awards were given in 2023--24 including support for developing marketing and branding assets for The Friends of Goffs Park, developing floristry workshop skills and purchasing equipment to enhance an individual's freelance opportunities, supporting production of outdoor poetry trail for local writers circle, supporting costs of room hire for new writing group, career support for a movement/wellbeing practitioner, helping kick start a local micro garden initiative in Broadfield.

Drive

11 event for 1827 people



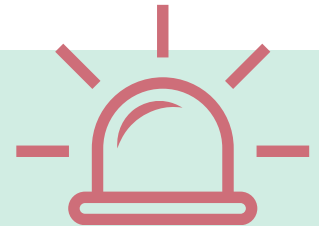
Drive is our training programme. It is for Playmakers, other local people and the Creative Playground team. Our Drive programme has included formal and informal training, skills development, mentoring and supporting youth ambassadors.



Events in our **Beacon** programme have included:

Beeja at Seymour School in connection with Brighton Festival

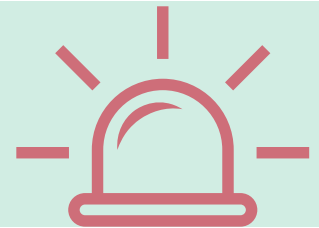
3 events for 748 people



A test partnership with Brighton Festival where we have worked with the creative team at Brighton Festival to present a play called *Choogh Choogh* by Beeja in Seymour Primary School in Broadfield for children in the day and parents / carers at pick up time. *Choogh Choogh* is part of the Without Walls programme at the festival.

Test programme with Broadfield Arts Festival and Broadfield Community Centre

1 event for 600 people



Broadfield Arts Festival has taken place twice over the last three years. It showcases performances, food and art work by people who use the community centre and other Broadfield residents. We have worked with Viv and Tracy, who lead the centre, to open the festival up to people in other neighbourhoods and offer professional performances and artists to work in partnership with Broadfield residents to boost the impact of the hyper-local festival for the local community.

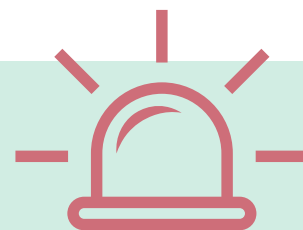
In its third iteration, Creative Playground programmed professional performances/artists to work in partnership with Broadfield residents to boost the impact of the Festival. These were:

- Simple Cypher's *Roll Model* performed in the Basketball court outside the centre
- *Lifted* by Mimbire performed in the Broadfield Barton Shopping Centre.

We supported the marketing of the festival to encourage more people from across the town to attend and helped to raise production values and supported festival infrastructure.

Developing murals in connection with Crawley Borough Council

26 events for 23,540 people



We have worked with local residents to develop a series of murals in Crawley town centre to utilise some Section 106 money that has been secured from Crawley Borough Council. These artworks have been produced by experienced public art producers and artists to create a range of artworks inspired by local people.

The Book of Crawley

6 events for 324 people



This is a guidebook to Crawley created by local school children aged 8-11 in collaboration with artists Andy Field and Beckie Darlington. Part fictional imagining, part actual guidebook, the book is an opportunity for adults to see and experience a place through the eyes of some of Crawley's youngest residents. Young people also have the opportunity to reflect on and describe their unique experiences of the place they live – to explore the distinctive texture of their own lives and to challenge adults to listen harder to the things they have to say about the world today. We worked in partnership with Langley Green Primary School, The Mill Primary Academy, Seymour Primary School, The Bewbush Academy and the Boulevard to deliver this project.

Peace Poem

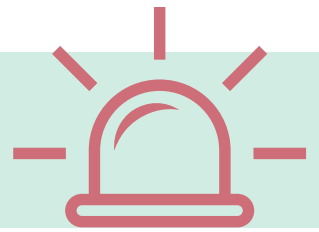
1 event for 917 people



A 14ft high illuminated artwork commissioned by Emergency Exit Arts and poet Robert Montgomery. The poem was created to commemorate the 100 years since the first day of peace after WWI. Working in partnership with Emergency Exit Arts & Crawley Borough Council the artwork toured around different roads and neighbourhoods in Crawley.

Crawley Stories

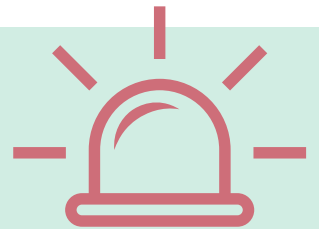
6 events for 870 people who downloaded the content



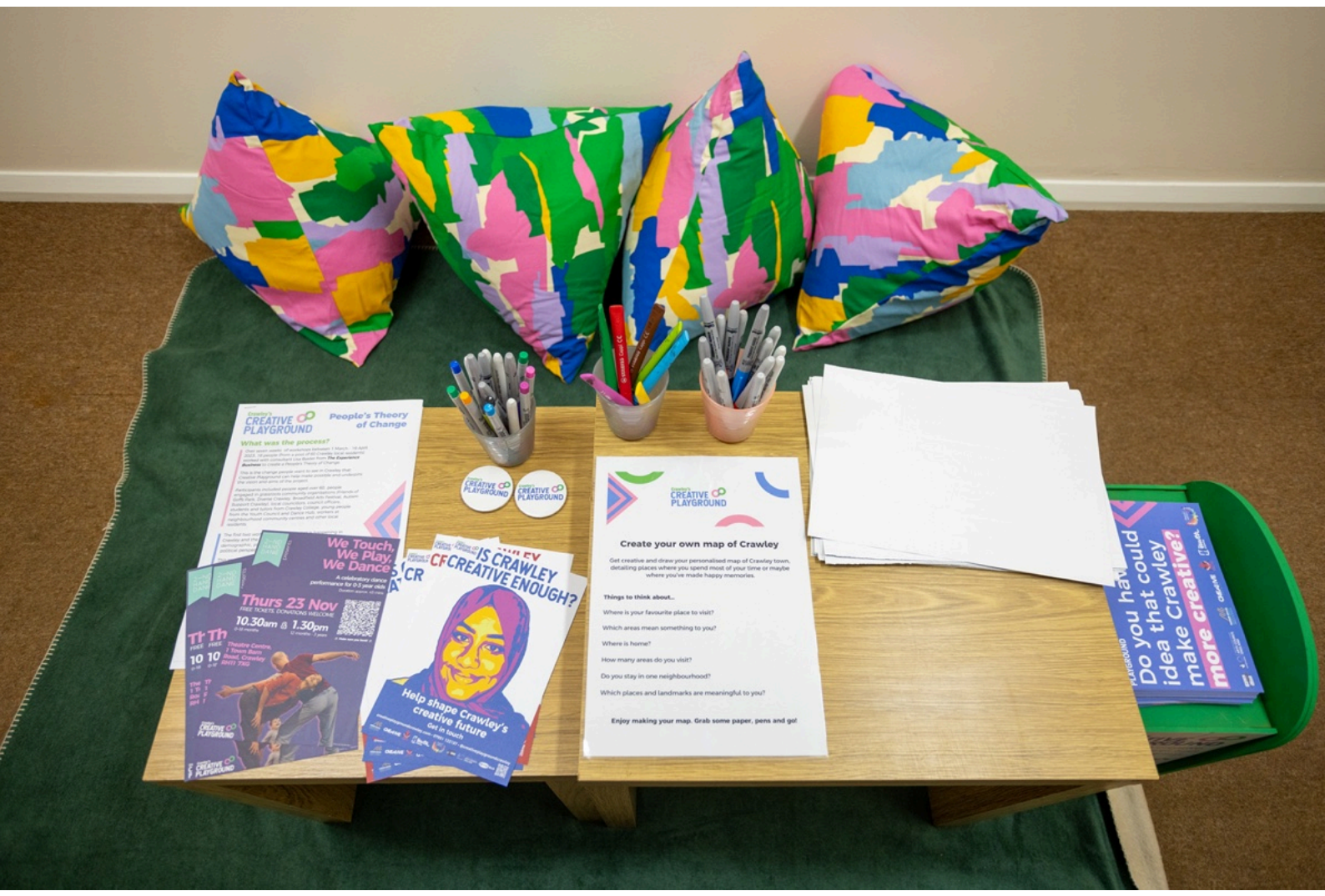
A series of 6 podcasts created in partnership with Theatre Centre featuring local artists and young people. Crawley Stories explores young people's thoughts, feelings and memories of their local area as they take artists on physical journeys around their hometown of Crawley.

We touch we play we dance

1 event for 52 people



A playful dance performance for 0-3 year olds and their families presented at West Green Centre presented by Second Hand Dance.



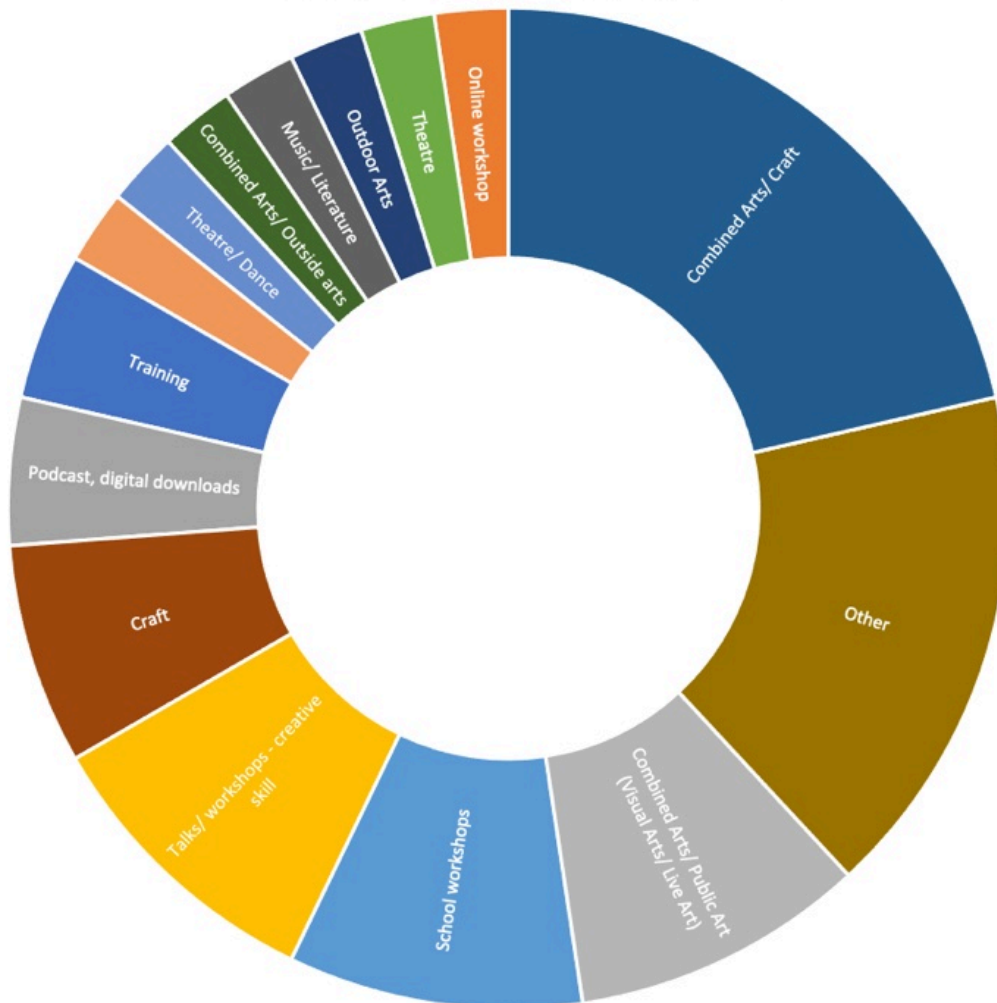
We have offered variety



We know that different people are interested in different things, so we have made sure that our programme across the year has been really varied, making sure that there is something for everyone.

We have showcased at least 19 different artistic disciplines.

The creative variety of our programme



We have worked across the whole town and beyond



Target areas

We identified 5 target areas across Crawley where we believed we would have the most impact. These target areas are:

We chose Broadfield West because it has:

- Slightly younger population than for Crawley – 23.3% under 15 years
- A slightly higher Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African population for Crawley at 7.5%.
- A higher Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh population for Crawley at 17.7%.
- A slightly higher proportion of the population have a non-uk identity only at 18.9%

We chose Broadfield East because it has:

- A slightly younger population than for Crawley – 21.1% under 15 years
- A slightly higher Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African population for Crawley at 6.9%.

We chose Ewhurst & West Green because it has:

- A slightly younger population than for Crawley – 21.9% under 15 years
- A slightly older population than for Crawley – 15% 65+ years

We chose Bewbush because it has:

- A slightly younger population than for Crawley – 22.6% under 15 years
- A slightly higher proportion of the population have their highest level of qualification at level 1, 2 or 3 at 49.7% than the population for Crawley

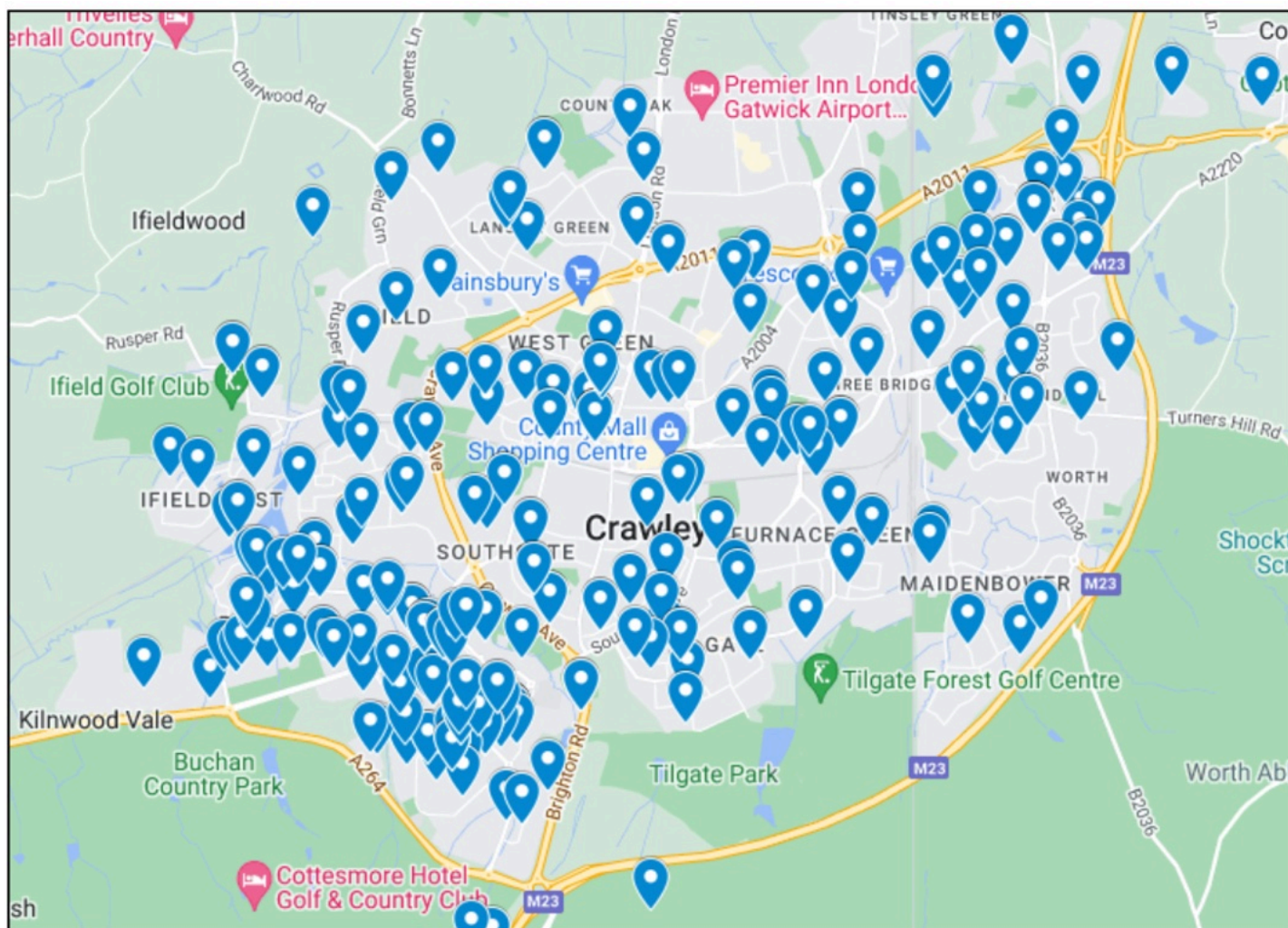
We chose Langley Green because it has:

- A slightly younger population than for Crawley – 22.2% under 15 years
- A higher Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh population for Crawley at 32%.
- A slightly higher proportion of the population are economically inactive at 38.3%
- A slightly lower level of the population have their highest level of qualification at level 1, 2 or 3 at 38.3% than for Crawley (with a higher proportion with level 4 or above).

We have reached people from the whole town



We have used Google Maps to map audiences and participants for 2023-24. This demonstrates we have engaged people all across Crawley, but with a focus on the areas we have worked hardest in such as Bewbush and Broadfield (south west of the map).



The Audience Agency will complete a more detailed mapping exercise for us in the coming weeks. This will tell us specific numbers for each ward/ neighbourhood.

Our work has been for everyone



We segment the suitability of our events into 5 different categories

- 0 – 16 year olds
- 16 – 25 year olds
- 18+
- Mixed ages
- 60+

Of our Foundations programme:

- 17% of events were aimed at 0-16 year olds, reaching 301 people
- 0% was aimed at 16-25 year olds, reaching 0 people
- 15% was aimed at 18+ , reaching 246 people
- 59% was aimed a mixed ages, reaching 1,018 people
- 8.7% was aimed at 60+, reaching 150 people

Of our Bridge programme:

- 14% of events were aimed at 0-16 year olds, reaching 271 people
- 0% was aimed at 16-25 year olds, reaching 0 people
- 52% was aimed at 18+, reaching 993 people
- 33% was aimed a mixed ages, reaching 632 people
- 0% was aimed at 60+, reaching 0 people

Of our Beacon programme:

- 30% of events were aimed at 0-16 year olds, reaching 8216 people
- 2% was aimed at 16-25 year olds, reaching 483 people
- 12.5% was aimed at 18+ , reaching 3383 people
- 56% was aimed a mixed ages, reaching 15465 people
- 0% was aimed at 60+, reaching 0 people

In total, across our whole programme.

- 22% of events were aimed at 0-16 year olds, reaching 6985 people
- 1% was aimed at 16-25 year olds, reaching 249 people
- 20% was aimed at 18+ , reaching 6237 people
- 54% was aimed a mixed ages, reaching 16715 people
- 3% was aimed at 60+, reaching 997 people

Young people aged 0 to 16 have been well-served by Creative Playground in 2023-24. Meanwhile, 54% of the programme was aimed at mixed age groups, encouraging intergenerational experiences and collaboration. What has been missing and could be developed for future years is activity specifically targeted at young adults aged 16 to 25 and older people aged 60+.

We have welcomed everybody



It is really important that our work reaches, appeals and welcomes people from all Ethnic Groups. At the very least, we want to be representative of Crawley's diversity. In our first year we have concentrated on making sure that we have a varied programme delivered to a really high standard.

We wanted to make sure that everyone felt welcome. Because of this, we did not feel it appropriate to ask people personal questions. We wanted to spend our time making sure that everyone, regardless of who they are, were simply welcomed and had a great time. Therefore, our sample evaluation data on protected characteristics such as people's ethnicity, gender, whether or not they live with a long term health condition or disability or whether they are neurodiverse, is small. (Apx just over 50 respondents answered this question). Remarkably, this very small data set demonstrates that the ethnic diversity of participants engaging with us is positively over reflective of Crawley's population. As is the percentage of people who are D/deaf, disabled or neurodiverse. However, we know that this sample is too small, and anecdotally we don't believe that the data set is reflective of our wider participant base.

In year two, we aim to revisit how we evaluate protected characteristics of the people we engage with in a way that ensures our welcome and quality of our work is still very much the priority but enables us to gather information about people at the same time in a way that ensures our participants feel comfortable and valued at the same time.

Reaching new audiences

It is also important to us that our work reaches, appeals and welcomes people who do not usually take part in arts and creativity. In this first year of our programme, we asked 51 people across 9 events how often they engaged with the arts. If we were to assume that this sample were reflective of our whole programme we could conclude that:

- 29% of our audiences and participants had never engaged with arts and creativity, and our programme enabled them to engage for the very first time. Another 6% generally engage with arts and creativity once a year.
- Our programme also appealed to people who are regularly engage with arts and creativity. (64%)

Next year, we plan to extend our consultation so that we have a much larger sample from which to analyse.

Our work was valuable



We asked people to describe their experiences with us in three words. We analysed the first, second and third word separately. The results were overwhelmingly positive:

- First word - Initially our events enabled people to feel **overjoyed** and **uplifted**
- Secondly people expressed **joy**, **creativity** and **positivity** about the events that they took part in
- Finally people leave feeling a sense of **enthusiasm**, **appreciation** for the arts, and a **desire for more** engaging experiences.

Across our whole programme

Straight away people were overwhelmingly positive. The words they gave conveyed feelings of happiness, amazement, excitement, joy, and appreciation. Positive words such as "happy," "amazing," "fun," "brilliant," "good," "great," and "fantastic" dominate the list. Overall, the sentiment of the words they gave was **upbeat, enthusiastic, and optimistic.**

Secondly, people's positivity developed into enthusiasm. Words such as "fun," "creative," "interesting," "marvellous," "great," "exciting," "awesome," "wonderful," "amazing," and "fab" convey a positive and enjoyable experience. Additionally, words like "happiness," and "lovely," emphasise positive emotions and a pleasant atmosphere. Overall, the sentiment expressed in the words people gave was **optimistic, engaging, and appreciative.**

The third word that people provided confirmed the level of positive and enthusiastic sentiment. Positive words such as "good," "beautiful," "exciting," "amazing," "playful," "magnificent," and "creative" convey a sense of appreciation and enjoyment. Words like "happy," "nice," and "relaxed" also contribute to a positive sentiment. There are a variety of positive emotions expressed, including excitement, happiness, and appreciation for creativity. **The words suggest a positive and enjoyable experience, with elements of adventure, entertainment, and cultural appreciation.** Overall, the sentiment in these words is optimistic and favourable.



Our Foundations programme

Overall our foundations programme offered people a vivid combination of delightful experiences and cherished moments.

It portrays a vibrant landscape where every activity offers a sense of joy and wonder. The recurring theme of "**fun**" resonates throughout, infusing each moment with laughter and excitement. Participants experience a sense of exploration, with each new experience sparking curiosity and wonder.

Mentions of activities being "**interesting for children**" demonstrate that events cater to a child's inquisitive mind, further enhancing a sense of exploration and discovery. This emphasis on creating engaging and entertaining experiences speaks to the desire to ignite imaginations and fuel creativity.

The descriptors "**creative**," "**fantastic**," and "**productive**" suggests that participants value innovation and ingenuity, suggesting that activities should not only entertain but also inspire and challenge. The foundations programme is a celebration of events where each one presents opportunity for growth and self-expression.

Moreover, the notion of a "**fantastic family day**" evokes warm sentiments of togetherness and unity, emphasising the importance of shared experiences and meaningful connections. It's a reminder of the profound joy found in spending quality time with loved ones, creating lasting memories that will be cherished for years to come.

In essence, these words paint a picture of a day filled with laughter, exploration, and meaningful connections—a celebration of the beauty and wonder found in the simple joys of life.



Our Bridge programme

People are overwhelmingly positive and enthusiastic about the Bridge programme. There is a consistent theme of enjoyment, excitement, and appreciation for various experiences and activities.

People consider the Bridge strand to be filled with **"fun"** **"laughter"**, **"joy"**, and lightheartedness, offering a sense of delight and playfulness. Quality is recognised suggesting that people's level of satisfaction surpasses mere enjoyment. It hints at an experience that exceeds expectations, leaving participants feeling uplifted and fulfilled.

Descriptors such as **"incredible"** suggest that this strand of the programme evokes a sense of wonder and astonishment. It describes an experience that is extraordinary and awe-inspiring, leaving an indelible impression on those who partake in it. **"Amazing"** is a word often reserved for encounters that surpass the ordinary and leave a lasting impact, suggesting that the programme has a sense of magic and marvel.

Together, these words form a reputation of positivity and excitement, painting a picture of an experience that is not only enjoyable but also remarkable and unforgettable.



Our Beacon programme

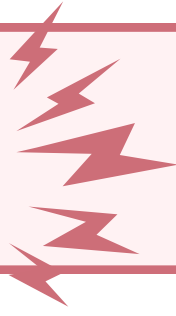
Our Beacons programme was both enjoyable, culturally meaningful and appreciated.

The mention of **"happy"** sets the tone for a contentment and emotional well-being, while the array of global references adds a cultural dimension where people have experienced diverse traditions and heritage.

The repetition of words like **"amazing," "brilliant,"** and **"exciting"** suggest that the programme will leave a lasting impression of wonder and admiration. The sentiment extends beyond mere enjoyment towards a deeper sense of connection and community. References to a **"proud community"** and **"welcoming"** environments highlight the importance of belonging and shared experiences, fostering a sense of unity and community cohesion.

Moreover, the acknowledgment of thought-provoking and informative content suggests a thirst for knowledge and understanding, further enriching experiences with intellectual stimulation and introspection.

We had impact



We measure our impact against our Theory of Change. We hope that the work that Creative Playground does enables people to:

1. Feel Differently
2. Think Differently
3. See Differently
4. Do Differently

Feel differently



On a scale of 1-5, people rated:

- Our whole programme 4.14
- Our Foundations Programme: 4.23
- Our Bridge Programme: 3.90
- Our Beacons Programme 4.44

for enabling them to feel differently.

When people feel differently, they are proud of their hometown, they are happy to live or be in Crawley and they are proud of theirs and other achievements. People feel invigorated, they are inspired just by walking around, they feel like an explorer and they feel happiness and joy. People feel affirmed, knowing that they are important, valued and accepted, and finally people feel part of something, they feel part of a bigger community, and feel that Crawley is their adopted home and that Crawley has adopted them.

Think differently



On a scale of 1-5, people rated:

- Our whole programme 4.38
- Our Foundations Programme: 4.36
- Our Bridge programme: 4.34
- Our Beacons Programme 4.44

for enabling them to think differently.

When people think differently they think that Crawley is the place to be, to think that there is more to Crawley than meets the eye, that it is a vibrant place to live, grow and learn, where the town benefits from its diversity and where the creative arts are visible across the town, and there is encouragement and opportunity to take part and express their unique artistic gift. People think that “This Is For Me”, they want to be part of something bigger, they want to spend more of their precious time being creative and that a creative life is a happier, more healthy life.

Our work has enabled people to feel that Crawley is for everyone, that the town is an inclusive place, that there are opportunities here that you can't get anywhere else and that it is ok to be different.

See differently



On a scale of 1-5, people rated:

- Our whole programme 3.70
- Our Foundations Programme: 3.95
- Our Bridge programme: 3.40
- Our Beacons Programme 3.94

for enabling them to see differently

When people see differently, they see a more vibrant town that is unique and new, where there is art everywhere and where people are able to see joyful events in their neighbourhood. People see a range of diverse people engaging with Creative Playground, a place where they see themselves represented and where there is bespoke activity for those with different needs. People see a community connecting where different people come together in new ways, to connect through shared experience and reinforce a sense of similarity rather than difference.

Do differently



On a scale of 1-5, people rated:

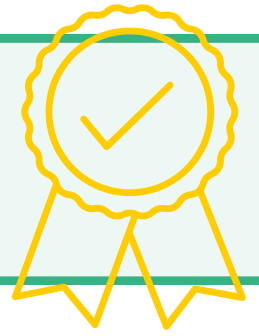
- Our whole programme 3.71
- Our Foundations Programme: 3.68
- Our Bridge programme: 3.50
- Our Beacons Programme 4.05

for enabling them to do differently.

When people do differently they connect and share: they come together in new ways, young people will be engaged in the life of the community and people will connect in spaces through food, music and play. People build social bridges, they talk and engage with different people whom they might have engaged with otherwise and every neighbourhood works together. People make art every day and engage in everyday creativity, which eventually becomes long-term engagement. Finally people experience the unexpected, they experiment and try new things, they can escape daily lives and become spontaneous.



Our work was also high quality



High quality for our partners

We measure quality for our partners using 5 key criteria:

- Shaping the intention of the project
- Taking their ideas seriously
- Making them feel comfortable when trying new things
- Enabling them to become deeply involved
- Leaving them motivated to do more creative things in the future.

We know that

- 85% of our partners agreed or strongly agreed that they were able to help shape the intention of our projects
- 89% of our partners agreed or strongly agreed that their ideas were taken seriously
- We enabled 98% of our partners to feel comfortable when trying something new
- We enabled 88% of our partners to feel deeply involved with the process of working with us
- Working with us has enabled 87% of our partners to want to do more creative things in the future.

High quality for our participants and audiences

We measure quality for our participants and audiences using 5 key criteria:

- Ensuring that it is relevant and has something to say about modern society
- Making sure that it is well thought out and put together
- Hoping that it is different to things that people might have experienced before
- Enthusing people to do something similar again
- Making sure that the work is important to Crawley
- Ensuring that the work adds to the cultural life of the area
-

We know that:

- 87% of people agreed or strongly agreed that our projects were relevant to modern society
- 95% of people agreed that the projects were well thought out and put together
- We enabled 92% of people to try something new
- We enthused 94% of people to want to get involved again
- 92% of people agreed or strongly agreed that our projects were important for Crawley
- 97% of people agreed or strongly agreed that our projects added Crawley's cultural life.

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What have we learned?



How do we learn?

After every event we complete an event summary report which is shared amongst the team. This enables us to learn on a micro-scale. Every six months we reflect on the six months just gone by in order to learn from the bigger-picture.

What have we learned?

Networking and being seen.

Involvement in noteworthy Crawley events amplifies our visibility and influence. When we are not part of crucial community events, it can swiftly alter public perception, yet we can positively maintain our visibility and public perception and build our diverse and inclusive community through actively participating in various town-wide cultural events. Establishing reciprocal engagement with the community nurtures mutual support and contributes to success, and embracing positive responses to support requests from other organisations cultivates a robust community network. There is the opportunity to add value and encourage community engagement to the local amateur scene.

Programme and delivery enhancement

Our programme is best when events are grouped by theme – it enables us to create a cohesive experience. Themes should be creative and go beyond basic skills, exploring diverse activities that might not always find their way into an arts programme, such as decorating cakes and making ice sculptures. Themes should combine regular light touch events with collaborations to allow for testing ideas, which then build up to larger events. This will give people the chance to deepen their engagement and become encouraged and motivated to get more and more involved. Being present at existing events is more than just attendance; it's a way to engage with the community and spread the word about the Creative Playground project. Our participation adds significant value to the overall project, contributing to its success. Being part of the Crawley calendar and actively participating in local events holds significant importance for us. It's a clear demonstration of our project's commitment to not only being recognized but also valuing and supporting the broader spectrum of community activities. Activities should be regular; they should be a combination of drop in events and close sessions to help maintain accessibility and build senses of community. We need to keep a close eye on evaluating the value for money, especially after events where we know that the delivery could have been better. There is the opportunity to merge our Drive programme with our Come With Us programme to offer backstage experiences, which would enhance the overall programme. When thinking about partnerships, we carefully assess whether organisations or events are deeply connected to Crawley. This ensures that we align with the project's goals and objectives for a meaningful impact.

Strategy vs Spontaneous responses

It is important and yet tricky to both maintain a strategic line in programming, all the while responding to spontaneous requests. Responding to requests as they come in allows us to be remain visible, be where the need is, and build our reputation for community support and development, but the long term strategic planning helps us keep an eye on the long-term cultural vision for Crawley, ensure that we align with our theory of change values and connect with our target audiences. When responding to programme or workshop requests, it would be helpful to have a checklist to allow us to assess the value of events before committing to them. This involves considering whether the event aligns with the project's goals and brings meaningful value, preventing burnout and allowing for reflection.

Supporting artists

We can support artists by ensuring that they are confident in working with diverse audiences, helping them transition their practices to engage with non-traditional settings. We can encourage our artists to ensure that the content of sessions doesn't feel too much like a school session. We need to give artists clear expectations and brief them adequately about what is expected and the quality of events that make us proud.

Communication and planning

Planning and communication are key to creating quality experiences for everyone involved. It's important to look at how we transport people to and from Come With Us events and pay attention to the spaces that we choose to use to talk to people after the event has happened. When we see events with low attendance, it's a chance to adapt and understand what the community really wants – for example, would it be better to structure the event as one bigger event, or many smaller events over a number of sessions. Understanding the right timing for events is also important, we need to keep things regular for the community and not cause confusion. Certain spots, like Broadfield Barton and the Millpond, are really important, and work well. It is important to choose locations smartly and ensure they are regular in order for everyone to know what's going on and build loyalty. Lastly, we know that getting data and making friends in Crawley is a big deal. Our events' success depends on how well we are connected to the community.

Evaluation and reflection

Having meaningful evaluation about events right after or during our monthly get-togethers is vitally important. It helps everyone get involved and makes our program even better. Checking in regularly on how things are going, both in terms of planning and what our participants think, is key. We value getting better and adapting to what's happening around us. We know it's crucial to build on what's working well and try new things in areas where we're not doing so great. It's all about finding that perfect balance between getting better at what we do and exploring new ideas for a complete approach. There is room to improve the processes connected to evaluation – currently short evaluation forms and longer evaluation forms are used, and the data is collected on a spreadsheet, which is then interpreted manually. The Impact and Insights report evaluation as provided by Arts Council have recently been used. Qualitative case studies and deeper impact conversations are just about to be adopted. Although there is qualitative review of team progress, there is room to improve its structure. Reviews of effective and meaningful partnerships and networks are yet to take hold. Adopting a streamlined approach will offer clarity to the team, it will combine many data capture methodologies and will prevent manual data entry and interpretation.

Understanding our communities and what they need

Pinpointing specific audience groups is key in shaping our workshop content and structure. Whether it's addressing the needs of community connectors or those aiming to enhance skills like social media, customising and tailoring programmes to the correct audience segment must remain the core of our approach. It is equally important to cater for a diverse age range in our activities. Clearly indicating whether an event is for children, adults, or both is part of our commitment to inclusivity and ensures relevance across various age groups. Sometimes, adults need that extra nudge to join in, and that's why separate sessions for different age groups can be beneficial. It's all about creating spaces where everyone feels comfortable and encouraged to participate. We understand that engagement levels can vary between drop-in sessions and closed groups. While closed groups offer a captive audience, we're mindful that this might not align with the broader engagement goals and we need to strike a balance accordingly. It's absolutely crucial to appreciate and value the journey alongside participants, even if they come regularly. Every individual's experience adds to the overall impact and richness of our project. We must recognise the window of opportunity to sustain engagement, and we need to actively explore how we guide participants towards other activities or sessions for continued involvement. It's about keeping the momentum going! Our commitment to inclusivity is evident in our efforts to reach a broader pool of participants, but we know we can do better. Inviting those who might not typically attend cultural events is key to showing our dedication to diverse engagement. Although we do have specific targets for new participation, we equally emphasise inclusivity. It's essential not to exclude those who have consistently been part of the programme to ensure that everyone feels welcome and valued.

Marketing

Making sure our promotional materials showcase a diverse range of age groups is key to communicating that our events aren't exclusively designed for children. We need to include elders and those above 60 to ensure everyone thinks the events represent them. We need to enhance the identity and branding of our events for better recognition. Exploring visual elements like banners, flags, and distinctive wearables will allow us to establish a consistent and easily recognisable image, making our projects stand out. As we try to improve how we trail events and elevate our marketing strategies, we need to strike the perfect balance between maintaining the charming essence of an underground initiative, whilst also striving for a more prominent marketing presence to reach a broader audience effectively.

Playmakers

We must remember that our playmaker programme is a 10-year programme where playmakers are currently highly supported but will eventually take the lead. It's imperative to clearly define the role of a Playmaker, making sure that we, and the Playmakers are clear in responsibilities. Fostering an inclusive culture for our Playmakers involves talking to Playmakers of all ages together, but separate groups for youth and adults might also be helpful to set expectations effectively. We need to explore whether progress for a Playmaker follows a vertical or lateral path, and this needs to be decided according to what they playmakers and our communities feel is best, however it is vital that we maintain inclusivity steering clear of hierarchical structures and instead, valuing each Playmakers contribution. We need to publicly and frequently reward our Playmakers with features on the website and potential Playmaker spotlights. It would be valuable to host engaging thankyou events to retain and encourage Playmakers, recognising their motivations and acknowledging their dedication. Formal recognition through badges and gifts will instil a sense of value. Community connectors could also be recognised as Playmakers, to enhance their involvement. In order to remain transparent, we will need to set clear criteria to guide recognition levels. We will need to make sure that we focus on the strategic growth of our Playmakers by continually assessing them, all the while doing our best to avoid overwhelm. There is room to explore cross-collaboration opportunities for playmakers which will enrich the programme, diversify perspectives.



What should we work on in the future?



Taking the following steps can help us make Creative Playground even more successful:

1. Streamlining and fine tuning of our evaluation processes
2. Identifying and prioritising areas of focus based on the insight in this evaluation
3. Acting on what we have learned to make our programme and work better

Streamlining and evaluating evaluation processes

Public survey and data capture

1. To move from 3 separate evaluation forms to one form divided into three sections, where the participant decides which sections they complete.
2. To include an optional case study capture in the above as well
3. To move from a paper only data-capture method to on-line and paper collection
4. To move from storing data using Excel Spreadsheets, where insight is extracted through manual processes and coding, to an online survey platform which automatically filters and cross tabulated responses.
5. To ensure that questions on the combined surveys are ACE compliant where appropriate, so that responses can be downloaded and automatically uploaded to the Impact and Insights platform
6. To revisit survey questions, especially those connected to theory of change, to make sure that we are asking deep enough questions and ensure we are able to see longitudinal (before and after) change
7. To address lack of partnership and network evaluation – complete stakeholder mapping assessment, partnership log and partner interviews.

Internal culture assessment

1. To participate in the Flying Geese Audience Development Health Check to understand our collective team culture concerning 7 areas of audience development: Who you are, strategies and plans, audiences, place, price and income, monitoring and evaluation, CPD
2. To participate in staff skills questionnaire in order to track skills development and CPD growth

Best practice and implementing learning

1. To be clear about how we can assess whether we have implemented measures to improve our service, programme and delivery.
2. To set clear action plans, identify success criteria and timescales for changes to be made
3. To create an evaluation tool kit which details a new approach to evaluation so that everyone can 'pick it up and use it' easily.

Identify and prioritise areas of focus based on the insight in this evaluation

1. Are we sure that we have coded the events properly
2. Group insight into theme
 - a. Audience numbers (overall, by strand, by event)
 - b. Artistic variety (overall)
 - c. Locations of events (overall, by strand, by event)
 - d. Locations of participants (overall, by strand, by event)
 - e. Age of participants (overall, by strand, by event)
 - f. Sentiment to programme (overall, by strand)
 - g. TOC outcomes
 - h. Does this meet our target
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No
 - i. How important is it that this is improved
 - i. Very important – If we do not act now: we would not meet core or minimum criteria / Opportunities for growth would stop or not open up / our reputation would be damaged / we might actually have negative impact
 - ii. Important – If we do not act soon: We would risk Opportunities for growth would slow down / relationships would not deepen /
 - iii. Not important.

Our upcoming Internal Reflection and Evaluation Planning session on May 7, 2024, is the next step in this process.

Acting on what we have learned to make our programme and work better

Implement a more formal process for gathering and sharing key learning points each quarter so that we

1. Reflect as a team on all aspects of programme delivery from practical logistics, to community engagement strategies and partnership working.
2. Share key learnings with our consortium and ACE as part of our quarterly reporting cycle
3. Make sure this learning informs future decision making and during the next reflection session check in on this.