1. Partnerships and Development
   1. Introduction

Partnerships & Development is one of the key themes of Hull 2017, made up of one aim and its accompanying objectives:

* **Aim 9: To demonstrate exemplary programme delivery and partnerships, establishing Hull 2017 as a blueprint for successful delivery**
  + Objective 18: **Demonstrate Hull as best practice of how to successfully deliver UK City of Culture.**
  + Objective 19: **Develop strong partnerships, where partners are satisfied with their experience.**
  + Objective 20: **Establish a suitable delivery model and approach for the UK City of Culture project.**

‘Back to Ours’ will be evaluated, referencing these aims and objectives, as well as identifying additional outcome areas not covered in the above, but linked to the project-specific aims and objectives (see Chapter 1).

The Process Evaluation of ‘Back to Ours’ is a natural fit within the assessment of the Partnerships & Development aims and objectives, so has been incorporated within this chapter. As such, feedback from all respondent groups has contributed to this chapter, namely:

* Core Project Team (CPT);
* Artists;
* Peer Assessors;
* Audiences;
* Delivery Partners; and
* Venue Partners.
  1. Motivations

Hull’s ‘UK City of Culture’ status was clearly a significant motivation for Venue Partners and many audience members when choosing to be involved with or attend ‘Back to Ours’.

When asked for their main motivations for attending, the most popular reason selected by audience members was ‘Because it’s part of Hull UK City of Culture 2017’, with 27.1% of responses. This motivation was also clear in the ‘Chat with Gran’ research. When respondents were asked why they decided to attend, many stated that they were trying to see as many City of Culture events as they could during 2017.

*“You’ve gotta go for it when you’ve got something like this, it’s a once in a lifetime opportunity so you’ve gotta go for it.”*

*“What we decided to do this year was to try everything and anything. And if we can get tickets for it, we’ll do it.”*

*“City of Culture show-wise, I’m trying to see as much as I can.”*

*(Chat with Gran: Audience members)*

The research indicates that ‘Back to Ours’ was successful in attracting a family audience, with 26% of audience members selecting ‘something to do with the kids’ as one of their main reasons for attending.

*“I wanted to come and experience something new with my family.” (Chat with Gran: Audience member)*

1 in 5 audience members also selected ‘a specific interest in the artists / actors involved’ as a main reason for attending ‘Back to Ours’ (20.5%), with many of these mentioning the live music acts, for example Badly Drawn Boy or Black Grape. Other popular motivations included a ‘general interest in this type of event’ (19.5%) and ‘it’s a unique experience not to be missed’ (15.1%), which suggests that the audience members were open to trying something new.

*“It was nice to come out and come somewhere different.”*

*“Something out of our comfort zone.”*

*(Chat with Gran: Audience members)*

In terms of Venue Partners, although one partner said they wouldn’t have taken part in ‘Back to Ours’ without Hull 2017 backing, feedback from others suggests that although they were certainly influenced by Hull’s City of Culture status, it wasn’t the ultimate deciding factor.

*“I think that’s a bonus for it isn’t it? Because everyone wants to be part of it, but I don’t think it was the deciding factor.” (Venue Partner)*

Venue Partners also had strong links with their local communities and felt that being involved in ‘Back to Ours’ would help to develop opportunities within the local area. Another key motivation was the opportunity to raise the profile of their venue and gain exposure in the local and wider community.

*“[Back to Ours] Will raise our profile and get us a good reputation as a place of varied entertainment.”*

*“Exposure for the venue is really good.”*

*“[Back to Ours] gives us that gateway to interact with people.”*

*(Venue Partners*)

In terms of the CPT, being involved in ‘Back to Ours’ was seen as a way to develop skills and gain experience of working on a large-scale project.

For artists, motivations to take part in ‘Back to Ours’ were mixed, with some wanting the opportunity to raise their profile and reach new audiences with their work. Most artists felt the concept and aims of the project aligned well with their own, which influenced their decision to be involved.

* 1. Concept and Artistic Programme
     1. The Concept

It was recognised by the CPT that there were several barriers preventing local people from engaging with the arts:

* **Financial barriers:** The ticket cost or entry fee associated with attending arts and cultural events is seen by a barrier for low-income families in deprived areas of the city.
* **Geographical barriers / mobility:** The city centre location of many traditional performance venues is a barrier in itself. Many disengaged families do not have access to their own vehicle and rely on public transport to access the city centre – which is also an added cost. This, along with an unwillingness to travel from the local area is a significant barrier.
* **Attitudinal barriers:** There is also a feeling of alienation when it comes to the arts in more deprived areas of the city. Many are disenfranchised with arts and culture events and carry misconceptions of art forms that are perhaps unknown to them.

In order to overcome these barriers, ‘Back to Ours’ aimed to create opportunities for those who are disengaged to experience the arts within their own community, at an affordable price. The project set out to create a series of temporary performance spaces in local neighbourhood settings in the East, North and West of the city, transforming existing venues into places that can cater for arts and culture events.

The long-term view of the project is that audiences engaged through ‘Back to Ours’ will become audience members at other venues in the future – including those in the city centre. This supports a further project aim to help showcase Hull’s community buildings and public spaces and

encourage people to discover a different experience of the city.

Feedback suggests that all parties involved in ‘Back to Ours’ were supportive of the concept.

*“I think the best thing about their attitude was that they completely and totally understood what we were trying to do.” (CPT member on ‘Back to Ours’ artists)*

*“It’s really important for arts organisations to work across a range of venues and audiences, so not to create a sort of hierarchy of high arts.” (Delivery Partner)*

*“Bringing culture to the area is, it’s a really good move I think.” (Venue Partner)*

*“I think it's a good concept, especially for the audience members themselves because they don't have to put out a lot of effort to get to see something they would not ordinarily go to.” (Artist)*

Audience feedback research suggested that audience members felt more relaxed and less intimidated in community venues; reaffirming the project concept of engaging people in spaces they feel comfortable in.

*“You didn’t feel intimidated by anything.”*

*“Intimate, cosy. It was lovely.”*

*“It was nice because it was more intimate than what I was expecting.”*

*“It’s better because you’re more relaxed.”*

*(Audience members)*

* + 1. The Artistic Programme

The aim of the programme was to provide a broad range of entertainment that would be appealing to all ages within the local community whilst also pushing boundaries and challenging people’s interpretations of art.

The artistic programme was developed through initial consultation with groups of people that represented an area of Hull, using a card game created by the CPT. This created a starting point for the programme to take shape and gave an indication of the price people would be willing to pay for tickets.

The artistic programme for each festival was then finalised by the CPT in collaboration Venue Partners, promoters and programme consultants:

* China Plate Theatre
* Revolver Promotions
* Film Hub North

This collaborative approach to the development of the artistic programme was a key strength to the project, enabling:

* Community input into the types of arts and culture events happening in their neighbourhood;
* Specialist knowledge and contacts in the industry and;
* Links to be made with external organisations for resource and advice.

Venue Partners were given the opportunity to share their thoughts on the programme suggestions put forward by the CPT, offering feedback on whether it was right for their space and local community. Although the majority of Venue Partners were positive and even surprised at the amount of input they had into the development of the programme, one venue felt as though their feedback wasn’t taken into account.

*“I think I would have programmed something slightly different. I would have gone for a family show here.” (Venue Partner)*

During the initial development of the programme, the CPT felt that Venue Partners had slightly unrealistic expectations of what could be booked in terms of cost and budget. The team recognised that it was important to manage these expectations during the programming of future festivals.

*“Little Shop of Horrors – insanely expensive to put on, but kind of without that understanding that actually if you do put something like that on, you take a much bigger financial risk.” (CPT member)*

*“Around the table when we were programming that (music) people were like well we want famous people, so it was just kind of managing that.” (CPT member)*

Although initial levels of involvement in the programming were high, qualitative feedback suggested that this decreased with each festival. One Venue Partner suggested that this was because the CPT had a better sense of what would be successful after experiencing the first couple of festivals, therefore needed less input.

*“I think initially, after our first discussions, there was quite a lot of meetings, quite a lot of discussion, a lot of offerings on what do you think of this? And I think that's got less and less as the year's gone on.”*

*“I think Louise and the team know what's best. By now, I think we all sort of do know what has gone down the best in the venues and things like that. I'm guessing that's maybe why the involvement is slightly pulled back for us.”*

*(Venue Partners)*

Audience members responded well to the programme, with research respondents giving positive feedback on the performances they attended. Venue Partners also praised the variety and quality of the acts, which exceeded what they would have been able to fund if they had booked them independently.

*“I don’t even think I thought of anything else the whole time I was there, I was completely mesmerised by her.” (Audience member on Joan & Hekima)*

*“I thought it was brilliant. I thought she was really funny. She managed to get the customers to join in with what she was doing and everything. It was so funny.” (Audience member on Secret Gig: Barbara Nice)*

*“I thought it was amazing, I wasn’t really expecting that. I thought the puppetry was incredible. Like how they made all the little gestures, it was all just with their hands.” (Audience member on Meet Fred)*

*“The venue has seen acts we could never afford to invest in. It has been a huge positive for us.” (Venue Partner)*

*“ [Back to Ours has] Brought shows to the venue that we wouldn't be able to fund normally.” (Venue Partner)*

Delivery Partners also gave positive feedback on the diversity of the programme and commented on the booking of a well-known band alongside theatre and dance acts. They went onto explain that having a popular live music act within the programme reflects positively on the rest of the acts, which could encourage people to try something new.

*“It was such an eclectic and fantastic programme.”*

*“Our place is very much theatre and dance, but being programmed by a really significantly well known band, I think gives an added level of kudos to work which could be seen as experimental, so I think it’s a very helpful way to programme as we go forward.”*

*(Delivery Partners)*

* 1. Partnerships and Collaboration

The project also saw a number of partnerships from the planning and organisation stage through to the live delivery of the festival.

* + 1. Venue Partner Collaboration

Venue leads were key partners for ‘Back to Ours’, having developed positive relationships with the CPT. Some suggested that the CPT made them feel like they were part of the team, involving them in key decisions about programming and the development of the festival.

*“We were treat as part of the team.”*

*“I know it's not your job to be part of the team, but you become part of the team. You feel part of the team.”*

*(Venue Partners)*

Venue leads also developed relationships with other venues across the city as a result of working on ‘Back to Ours’. It was acknowledged that some of these relationships would have been very unlikely if they hadn’t have come about through the project, as some of the venues are geographically far apart and have very different functions.

*“We’ve been working with the other schools and the Freedom Centre and the Gemmell Centre and all those types of places, so we’ve got those links now.” (Venue Partner)*

Venue Partners also described how they had shared equipment and facilities with other venues during the festival, which helped to keep costs down.

*“I know that a couple of the other venues have helped each other out and things and we lend our stage in pieces out to other venues.” (Venue Partner)*

* + 1. Artist Collaboration

Being involved in ‘Back to Ours’ gave artists the opportunity to work with new individuals and organisation whilst developing strong relationships with the CPT and front of house staff.

*“Absolutely a privilege and a pleasure to work with that team of people, to be very honest with you.” (Artist)*

Relationships with Delivery Partners HPSS were particularly positive, with one artist hoping to continue this in their productions moving forward. Another artist met a lighting designer during their initial visit to Hull and asked them to work with them on ‘Back to Ours’ and any future projects.

*“They did a impeccable job and anything I needed they helped with - they weren't just doing their job they were using their brains, thinking, and they were really nice.” (Artist)*

* + 1. Delivery Partner Collaboration

Delivery Partners felt that they developed strong relationships with the CPT and Venue Partners, which helped with the efficient delivery of the festivals.

One Delivery Partner reported that working on ‘Back to Ours’ helped them expand their client base and access new opportunities.

*“Working with Production Managers who have events outside of City of Culture, has given us an opportunity to expand our client base and access new events.” (Delivery Partner)*

Another Delivery Partner said that they were likely to continue to work with some of the venues that they had been introduced to through the ‘Back to Ours’ project.

*“I’m sure we will suggest things to [Freedom Centre Venue Partner] in the future and keep that relationship going regardless. And William Gemmel as well I think is – depending on whether the management has changed again or not, I’m sure we will look at taking work there, separate to Back to Ours in the future as well.” (Delivery Partner)*

* 1. Project Management

Project management for ‘Back to Ours’ was widely considered to be successful, with the Hull 2017 team scoring highly on statements relating to their project management skills, including frequency of meetings, explanation of roles and responsibilities and communication overall.

Furthermore, survey data suggest that Venue Partners felt that the project management of ‘Back to Ours’ improved throughout the year. When asked to rate the project management of ‘Back to Ours’ on a scale of 0-5 where 0 was ‘poor’ and 5 was ‘outstanding’, the team received an average score of 3.8 pre-festival one and 4.6 post-festival three.

Venue Partners, Delivery Partners and Artists gave positive feedback around the overall level of communication with the CPT.

*“I had regular meetings so everybody knew what was going on.” (Venue Partner)*

* + 1. Challenges of Project Management

Although the project management of ‘Back to Ours’ received positive feedback in the main, a number of challenges were encountered, particularly around communications between the CPT and others.

There were felt to be occasions when communications with Venue Partners slipped, with some feeling as though they weren’t up to speed at points during the planning stage. This appeared to be partly down to the tight deadlines the team were facing in terms of finalising the programme and marketing materials.

*“It did feel a bit like we still didn’t really know what was going on until the day.”*

*“I know we had the monthly meetings and there were emails going around but there could have been a little bit more communication.”*

*(Venue Partner)*

The CPT acknowledged that there were times when they could have been better at communicating with Venue Partners – particularly when individuals were nervous on the run up to the first festival.

*“I think if we’d kind of given them much more of an update on things like that, they’d have something to hang their expectations around.” (CPT member)*

Both Venue Partner and artists spoke about the lack of communication around ticket sales and expected audience numbers. One artist said that the interactive elements of their act were dependent on audience numbers, so it would have been helpful to have an up-to-date figure prior to the performance. A Venue Partner supported this, stating that they could be better prepared to set up the space if they knew in advance how many people were expected to attend.

*“And there is that thing that we never have the final ticket numbers until the day, So you never really know until we get here on the day how many we're setting for.” (Venue Partner)*

Delivery Partners were positive about project management of ‘Back to Ours’ overall, however one respondent felt that their roles and responsibilities should have been more defined from the outset of the project and the contracting process was overly complicated.

*“Our contracts were overly complicated in its formality and under defined in its actual role.” (Delivery Partner)*

* + 1. Project Management Areas for Improvement

Key learnings from regarding Project Management were the need for consistent communication, clarity of responsibilities and time. As such, the following areas for improvement should be considered:

* **Communication:** channels of communication must be simplified to ensure standards don’t slip during busy periods in the festival planning. Key contacts within the project should be established at the outset so that parties know who’s best to contact for what.
* **Responsibilities:** contracts should better define roles and responsibilities to ensure efficiency and clarity throughout the delivery of the project.
* **Time:** there must be sufficient time during the planning stages of the project to avoid a negative effect on other elements of the project management.
  1. Production Management

Respondent groups considered the production management for ‘Back to Ours’ to be one of the main successes of the project overall. Key strengths that were highlighted include:

* **Production Schedule:** All parties praised the efficiency and smooth delivery of the festivals. In particular, the production schedule received positive feedback from all parties and was considered to be very efficient given the complex nature of the project.

*“They seemed to have every angle covered.” (Venue Partner)*

*“In a lot of cases it did work like clockwork in terms of one thing to the next.” (CPT member)*

*“The pressure was limited because the organisation was really smooth.” (Artist)*

*“It was probably one of the smoothest projects I've ever been involved in.” (Artist)*

* **Artist and Venue Confidence:** Artists were confident in the ability of the production team and spoke positively about the support offered by Delivery Partner HPSS. The technical specification of the shows also received positive feedback from artists, with one respondent saying it was better than what they were used to.

*“When we arrived all of the tech equipment that we'd requested was there, and ready to use, and was in perfectly working order. We actually found it a very pleasurable experience.”*

*“And [the technical specification] was more than we would actually have put on, so it made the show look even better from the lights and the sounds.”*

*(Artists)*

Venue Partners also felt that the CPT had the technical and logistics under control, which helped them to feel more at ease during the live delivery of the shows.

*“I was expecting to be running around and switching things on and off and such like, but I didn’t have to do a thing, everything was taken care of.”*

*“I didn’t have to worry about anything.”*

*(Venue Partners)*

* **Artist Liaison:** Performers reported feeling ‘well looked after’ and supported throughout their experience at ‘Back to Ours’. Some artists felt that having front of house and support team at each venue they performed at was also a real benefit.

*“I've never been looked after better than what I did there.”*

*“We worked with the entire same team for the four shows, which was great.”*

*(Artists)*

* **Process Review:** In collaboration with Venue and Delivery Partners, the CPT reviewed and adapted the production management and delivery plan after each festival. As a result of this, it was generally agreed that the production management of ‘Back to Ours’ improved over time, as the team learnt from experience.

*“I think as we've gone through, I think we've ironed out some problems that we had from the start.” (Venue Partner)*

*“I think it’s honed itself over the year, I think they’ve got better as the year’s gone on.” (Venue Partner)*

*“There’s a huge amount of learning in terms of what works, what maybe works less well or doesn’t work and we could only have really have known some that from actually delivering the festival.”(CPT member)*

* + 1. Production Management Areas for Improvement

Although the project management was a clear success, the team experienced some minor challenges throughout the delivery of the festivals. These challenges included bad weather delaying the arrival of an artist, the cancellation of a performance by The Pigeon Detectives and the breakdown of radio communications across venues.

It was generally felt that any challenges were unavoidable to some extent and were overcome without any negative impact on performances or the experience of the audience.

Some of the practical learnings taken from the first festival and implemented across the remaining festivals included:

* **Whatsapp:** After the breakdown of radio communication, the team agreed that Whatsapp groups were an effective alternative to communicate with different teams across sites.
* **Staff support:** The geographical locations of the venues across the city meant that it was time consuming for the team to travel between them during the festival. As such, they felt that the support of more staff to act as ‘runners’ between venues would mean the CPT would waste less time travelling.
* **iPads:** The team felt that the use of iPads would help with the smooth delivery of the festival as they could be used to communicate, access digital documents and box office reports and support with all elements of admin.
* **Fewer volunteers**: Both the CPT and Venue Partners acknowledged that there were sometimes too many volunteers present for the size of the audience and venue. After experiencing the first festival, the team felt that they were in a better position to tailor the volunteer request according to the performance.
* **Site visits:** The CPT felt that incorporating more site visits to the venues during the planning stage would ensure that details are not missed.
  1. Marketing & Communications

The Hull 2017 website and word of mouth from friends / family or colleagues were the principal ways of communicating with audiences about ‘Back to Ours’, most closely followed by Hull 2017 social media. In order to put this into context, Table X presents comparable data from audiences at ‘Back to Ours’ and Hull 2017 events overall:

* TV coverage was not particularly influential, relative to both Back to Ours and Hull 2017 events overall - 1.0 % for Back to Ours overall vs. 5.7% for Hull 2017 events overall.
* Hull 2017 events overall seemed to gain a slightly better level of coverage in the printed media, with 5.4% compared to 2.5% at ‘Back to Ours’
* Advertising and printed promotional materials generated much greater awareness for ‘Back to Ours’ than for Hull 2017 events – with 20.1% for ‘Back to Ours’, compared with 13.1% for Hull 2017 events overall.
* Particularly significant with ‘Back to Ours’ was the influence of word of mouth recommendation, in person – 30.9% for ‘Back to Ours’ and 14.5% for Hull 2017 events overall.
* The influence of digital platforms linked to Hull 2017 was also significant for ‘Back to Ours’, with 38.4% being made aware about the festival via [www.hull2017.co.uk](http://www.hull2017.co.uk) and 27.3% via Hull 2017 social media, vs. 22.2% and 13.4% respectively for Hull 2017 events overall.

Table X: Marketing & Communications

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Marketing Channels** | **Back to Ours**  **(n=735)** | **Hull 2017 Overall**  **(n=XXX)** |
| **Friends / family / colleagues - told me in person** | **30.9%** | **14.5%** |
| **Friends / family colleagues – via social media / email** | **9.2%** | **14.5% total with above** |
| **www.hull2017.co.uk** | **38.4%** | **22.2%** |
| **Hull 2017 Volunteer – told me or via social media / email** | **11.8%** | **N/A** |
| **Other website** | **1.9%** | **7.3%** |
| **Hull 2017 Facebook / Twitter / Instagram / YouTube / Flickr / e-newsletter** | **27.3%** | **13.4%** |
| **Other organisation Facebook / Twitter / Instagram / YouTube / Flickr (please specify)** | **5.0%** | **1.4%** |
| **Advertising and printed promotional material (e.g. brochure, leaflet, flyer, billboard, poster)** | **20.1%** | **13.1%** |
| **Newspaper** | **2.5%** | **5.4%** |
| **TV** | **1.0%** | **5.7%** |
| **Radio** | **2.1%** | **3.5%** |
| **Don’t remember** | **1.5%** | **N/A** |
| **Other** | **3.7%** | **8.6%** |

The principal difference between the two events was that significantly more audience members at ‘Back to Ours’ heard about the festival through friends and family – either in person or through social media (30.9% total compared to 14.5% for Hull 2017 events overall). This demonstrates that word of mouth was a key tool for raising awareness about ‘Back to Ours’.

‘Back to Ours’ audience members were also much more likely to find out about the festival through advertising and printed material with 20.1% compared to 13.1% for Hull 2017 events overall. This is supported by feedback from the audience focus groups and Chat with Gran interviews, where several respondents spoke about seeing brochures in the festival venues or receiving a leaflet from their child’s school.

*“I probably first found out from leaflets down here [Freedom Centre].” (Audience Focus Group Respondent)*

*“We got a leaflet through the door.”(Chat with Gran: Audience member)*

*“He brought a book home from school, like a pamphlet.” (Chat with Gran: Audience member)*

For Back to Ours there was a significant difference in how a range of demographics affected the way that people had heard about Back to Ours (see Table X).

* Men and respondents aged 16-34 were less likely to have found out about ‘Back to Ours’ from the Hull 2017 website.
* Men, respondents aged 55 and over and respondents from the most deprived areas of Hull were less likely to have found out about ‘Back to Ours’ from Hull 2017 social media.
* Women, respondents aged 55 and over and respondents from Hull were more likely to have found out about ‘Back to Ours’ through advertising and printed promotional material.
* Men were more likely to have found out about ‘Back to Ours’ from being in told in person by friends/family/colleagues, with 39% of men and 29% of women having found out in that way.
* Older respondents were more likely to have found out about ‘Back to Ours’ through being told by a Hull 2017 volunteer with 10% of 16-34, 10% of 35-54 and 19% of 55 and over having found out that way.

Table X: Marketing & Communications

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **‘Back to Ours’…** | **Age** | **Gender** | **Area of Residence** | **Area of Deprivation** |
| **Friends / family / colleagues - told me in person** | 55+ years **(29%)**  35-54 years **(28%)**  16-34 years **(39%)** | Male **(39%)**  Female **(28%)** | Other UK residents **(39%)**  East Riding residents **(29%)**  Hull residents **(31%)** | 10%-20% deprived **(38%)**  20%-30% deprived **(29%)**  90%-100% deprived **(29%)** |
| **Friends / family colleagues – via social media / email** | 55+ years **(5%)**  35-54 years **(12%)**  16-34 years **(8%)** | Male **(9%)**  Female **(9%)** | Other UK residents **(8%)**  East Riding residents **(9%)**  Hull residents **(10%)** | 10%-20% deprived **(13%)**  20%-30% deprived **(8%)**  90%-100% deprived **(10%)** |
| **www.hull2017.co.uk** | 55+ years **(48%)**  35-54 years **(41%)**  16-34 years **(22%)** | Male **(28%)**  Female **(42%)** | Other UK residents **(35%)**  East Riding residents **(39%)**  Hull residents **(38%)** | 10%-20% deprived **(32%)**  20%-30% deprived **(40%)**  90%-100% deprived **(40%)** |
| **Hull 2017 Volunteer – told me or via social media / email** | 55+ years **(19%)**  35-54 years **(10%)**  16-34 years **(10%)** | Male **(8%)**  Female **(13%)** | Other UK residents **(10%)**  East Riding residents **(11%)**  Hull residents **(12%)** | 10%-20% deprived **(16%)**  20%-30% deprived **(14%)**  90%-100% deprived **(10%)** |
| **Other website** | 55+ years **(1%)**  35-54 years **(3%)**  16-34 years **(1%)** | Male **(1%)**  Female **(2%)** | Other UK residents **(0%)**  East Riding residents **(3%)**  Hull residents **(1%)** | 10%-20% deprived **(0%)**  20%-30% deprived **(2%)**  90%-100% deprived **(2%)** |
| **Hull 2017 Facebook / Twitter / Instagram / YouTube / Flickr / e-newsletter** | 55+ years **(16%)**  35-54 years **(31%)**  16-34 years **(29%)** | Male **(21%)**  Female **(30%)** | Other UK residents **(17%)**  East Riding residents **(27%)**  Hull residents **(28%)** | 10%-20% deprived **(20%)**  20%-30% deprived **(26%)**  90%-100% deprived **(34%)** |
| **Other organisation Facebook / Twitter / Instagram / YouTube / Flickr (please specify)** | 55+ years **(2%)**  35-54 years **(6%)**  16-34 years **(6%)** | Male **(6%)**  Female **(5%)** | Other UK residents **(3%)**  East Riding residents **(5%)**  Hull residents **(5%)** | 10%-20% deprived **(2%)**  20%-30% deprived **(6%)**  90%-100% deprived **(6%)** |
| **Advertising and printed promotional material (e.g. brochure, leaflet, flyer, billboard, poster)** | 55+ years **(33%)**  35-54 years **(18%)**  16-34 years **(12%)** | Male **(14%)**  Female **(22%)** | Other UK residents **(0%)**  East Riding residents **(17%)**  Hull residents **(23%)** | 10%-20% deprived **(25%)**  20%-30% deprived **(22%)**  90%-100% deprived **(23%)** |
| **Newspaper** | 55+ years **(2%)**  35-54 years **(3%)**  16-34 years **(1%)** | Male **(3%)**  Female **(2%)** | Other UK residents **(0%)**  East Riding residents **(0%)**  Hull residents **(4%)** | 10%-20% deprived **(1%)**  20%-30% deprived **(4%)**  90%-100% deprived **(4%)** |
| **TV** | 55+ years **(2%)**  35-54 years **(1%)**  16-34 years **(0%)** | Male **(1%)**  Female **(1%)** | Other UK residents **(0%)**  East Riding residents **(1%)**  Hull residents **(1%)** | 10%-20% deprived **(2%)**  20%-30% deprived **(0%)**  90%-100% deprived **(2%)** |
| **Radio** | 55+ years **(3%)**  35-54 years **(2%)**  16-34 years **(0%)** | Male **(2%)**  Female **(2%)** | Other UK residents **(0%)**  East Riding residents **(2%)**  Hull residents **(2%)** | 10%-20% deprived **(3%)**  20%-30% deprived **(2%)**  90%-100% deprived **(3%)** |
| **Don’t remember** | 55+ years **(2%)**  35-54 years **(1%)**  16-34 years **(1%)** | Male **(0%)**  Female **(2%)** | Other UK residents **(4%)**  East Riding residents **(1%)**  Hull residents **(1%)** | 10%-20% deprived **(0%)**  20%-30% deprived **(1%)**  90%-100% deprived **(2%)** |
| **Other** | 55+ years **(6%)**  35-54 years **(3%)**  16-34 years **(4%)** | Male **(5%)**  Female **(3%)** | Other UK residents **(0%)**  East Riding residents **(3%)**  Hull residents **(4%)** | 10%-20% deprived **(6%)**  20%-30% deprived **(4%)**  90%-100% deprived **(3%)** |

These findings suggest that:

* The lack of internet access in the more deprived areas of the city mean that people who live in these areas are less likely to find out about ‘Back to Ours’ online – either through social media or on the Hull 2017 website.
* Printed promotional materials are mainly distributed in the areas close to the ‘Back to Ours’ venues, so are much less likely to be seen by those living outside the area.
* Women are potentially more likely to find out about ‘Back to Ours’ through printed promotional material due to distribution of leaflets and brochures through primary and secondary schools in the local area.
* Those aged over 55 are potentially more likely to know a Hull 2017 volunteer of a similar age to them due to the similar demographics of those engaged with the volunteer programme, which provides a reason as to why they are more likely to find out about ‘Back to Ours’ through this channel.
* Word of mouth is a valuable tool when engaging a male audience.

These aspects should therefore be considered when developing future marketing campaigns. It is clear that there needs to be a variety of methods employed to reach different audiences, for example volunteer recommendation appears to be a valuable way in for those aged over 55, whereas women and those who live in the more deprived areas of the city take notice of printed materials.

In terms of feedback on the marketing of ‘Back to Ours’, it was generally agreed that the design was visually effective and appealing across a broad ranges of ages and art forms. Anecdotally, audience members enjoyed the community engagement activity as a marketing strategy, and thought it was a good way to encourage people to ask questions and find out more about the festival.

*“It’s quite amusing being in a supermarket and seeing that going on, you think what’s all this about?”*

*“It makes you smile doesn’t it?”*

*(Audience Focus Group Respondents)*

Venue Partners however, expressed an initial lack of confidence in the marketing activity, stating that printed materials - including guides and banners, were sent out too late.

Audience survey results show that 20.1% of respondents found out about ‘Back to Ours’ through advertising and printed material – a high percentage compared to Hull 2017 events overall (13.3%). This suggests that despite the concerns of Venue Partners, this method of marketing was successful.

*“That was always going to be a tricky thing to be able to produce something that would appeal to broad age range, because on one part of the brochure you’ve got films or you’ve got puppet shows, and then you’re also trying to sell a gig. But the way it was laid out, the way that the keys were used to show the menus, yeah it was just really good, aesthetically it looked really, really good.” (Delivery Partner)*

*“Well we were promised a banner for the fence for ages and then it arrived the day before the first production went out.” (Venue Partner)*

*“I think they left it too late to tell people what it was all about.” (Venue Partner)*

Venue and Delivery Partners and the CPT felt that the marketing of ‘Back to Ours’ improved throughout the year as the team reacted to learnings and feedback.

*“We’ve learnt from that and with each one it’s got better and better.” (Venue Partner)*

*“We've tried completely different methods across every festival to use last year as a real test bed for what did work what didn't.” (CPT member)*

The research suggested however, that some audience members weren’t sure what performances were part of ‘Back to Ours’, often listing other Hull 2017 events when asked about the festival. This may be due to a lack of clarity in the festival branding, but is more likely to be down to the sheer volume of events that were programmed as part of Hull’s year as UK City of Culture.

*“I went to loads of stuff, but whether it was Back to Ours or not, I don’t know.”*

*“Now you’re saying about Back to Ours, there was that much on last year, I can’t remember what I’ve seen.”*

*(Audience Focus Group Respondents)*

* + 1. Suggested Improvements

All parties were keen to offer suggestions for improvement to the future marketing of ‘Back to Ours’ including:

* **Stronger visual presence:** in the areas surrounding the ‘Back to Ours’ venues – including posters in local shops and cafes and bus stop advertisement;
* **Creative community engagement:** stunts in the local community were seen as an effective way to encourage conversation about ‘Back to Ours’;
* **Venue Partner input:** using existing partner networks and social media to help spread the message within the ‘Back to Ours’ neighbourhoods;
* **Stunts in school assemblies:** to engage with an immediate local audience and capture the attention of young people;
* **Earlier engagement:** sending out marketing materials at the earliest opportunity to give local people time to save and plan their visit;
* **Clearer information:** simple and clear descriptions of performances and the festival overall within marketing materials, to prevent putting people off attending with over-complicated language.
  1. Audience Satisfaction

Likelihood that audiences would recommend a similar type of event to friends and relatives was slightly more likely for ‘Back to Ours’ than Hull 2017 events overall (see Table X).

Furthermore, the token count research activity (see Appendix 6) showed that 86.2% of respondents said they would be ‘Very Interested’ and 8.6% said they would be ‘Interested’ in attending a similar event in the future, demonstrating a high level of audience satisfaction.

Table X: Likelihood to Recommend

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Score out of 10** | **Back to Ours**  **(n=735)** | **Hull 2017 Overall**  **(n=14717)** |
| Very likely (9-10) | **82.0%** | **76.4%** |
| Likely (7-8) | **14.8%** | **17.9%** |

This high level of audience satisfaction was seen to be a key success of the project amongst audiences, with Focus Group respondents feeling Back to Ours very much benefitted from positive word of mouth.

“Hearing the reviews of it makes me want to try it. Especially that Skin, that sounds really good, I’d go and see something similar.”

“Nearly everyone was talking about it.”

“I thought it was brilliant. I thought she was really funny. She managed to get the customers to join in with what she was doing and everything. It was so funny.”

(Audience Focus Group Respondents)

Audiences were also asked to feedback on staff and volunteer welcome (see Table X below). Both were praised, receiving over 95% agreeing that they felt welcomed.

Table X: Satisfaction with Staff and Volunteers

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Strongly Agree or Agree** | **Back to Ours**  **(n=735)** |
| Felt welcomed by staff | **95.7%** |
| Felt welcomed by Hull 2017 volunteers | **96.8%** |

Focus Group respondents provided more insight into these attitudes, with one audience members suggesting that the Hull 2017 volunteers helped to make her experience of ‘Back to Ours’ more relaxed and comfortable:

“[It was] Friendly, especially where the volunteers are. I'll come in, and they'll be chatting to the girls, and then their having a laugh, and it's all fun, whereas, say you go to New Theatre, and they'll take your stub and that's your chair ... and that's it." (Audience Focus Group Respondent)

Focus group respondents also gave positive feedback about the volunteer performers at the Picture House screenings, suggesting that they really added to the experience.

**"**People dressed up and the Beast was fantastic" (Chat with Gran: Audience Member)

“It was real good fun, and we had all the volunteers dressed up.” (Chat with Gran: Audience Member)

“They're not necessarily indie films, but they add a little bit, like you were saying, about popcorn and candy floss and stuff, and they're dressed up volunteers, and, it's just that little plus, on top of seeing a film.” (Audience Focus Group Respondent)

“I think because there were performers as well as the film it made it really unexpected” (Audience Focus Group Respondent)

Peer assessors also praised the Hull 2017 volunteers, describing them as ‘knowledgeable’, ‘attentive’ and ‘welcoming’.

*“I always felt good and well taken care of always so many volunteers around checking you are ok and chatting to you.”*

*“Both venues I attended were accessible and volunteer stewards were very efficient at ensuring people’s needs were met.”*

*“The presence of volunteers was really welcome and clear and they were so friendly and knowledgeable.”*

*“I was concerned about walking in on my own to a place I don't know anyone, but everyone was so friendly and there were so many volunteers everywhere and they were just so welcoming and made you feel so welcome.”*

*“The volunteers were very attentive to those things very capable if any mobility issues equally as welcome as everyone else how you feel is this a place you are supposed to be in.”*

*(Peer Assessors)*

* 1. Ticketing

The CPT felt it was important to make the tickets accessible to residents in the ‘Back to Ours’ neighbourhoods, rather than solely an online audience. The team knew that Internet access may be low in these areas, or that people prefer to pay for items in cash rather than using a credit or debit card. As such, the festival offered different ways to purchase tickets, for example online, face-to-face within the neighbourhoods themselves, or using a self-service ticket machine.

*“We need to make sure we don’t put all the tickets online because they will just go to whoever, they won’t necessarily go to people living in the areas that we’re wanting, we want people who are living around the venues to go and walk up.” (CPT member)*

*“We’re not all online at home - I’m not, I’ve got good Internet at work, but some of the tickets it sells out in minutes, but I’m old school I like to be able to buy a ticket in my hand and I save them.” (Audience Focus Group Respondent)*

*“Trying to increase the number that we can sell locally and keeping them off being online. I think as soon as they're online then you obviously dilute your local audience.” (Venue Partner)*

Provision for selling tickets within the community was increased following learnings and feedback from the first festival. In response to the demand for tickets from customers and lack of Internet access in the local area, the William Gemmel Club was given an increased allocation of tickets to sell direct from the venue.

The pop-up box offices were also accompanied by publicity stunts and engagement activity, which received positive feedback from members of the public.

*“It’s quite amusing being in a supermarket and seeing that going on, you think what’s all this about?”*

*“It makes you smile doesn’t it?”*

*(Audience Focus Group Respondents)*

Although the pop-up box offices were seen as a positive move, some audience members had some criticisms. Some respondents felt that there were not enough opportunities to buy tickets within the community and another said that the timings made it difficult for him to attend because of work.

*“It [box office] was one on Holderness Road for like one day. So unless you got there that one day, that was it.” (Chat with Gran: Audience member)*

*“The only thing that we found out, is where they were selling the tickets, we could only find it in one place, so it made it a little bit…that was the only thing.” (Chat with Gran: Audience member)*

*“When events sold out very quickly, you released a second wave of tickets but you had to get them down here in person, usually on the morning of a working day. So I had to grovel to my boss to come down and get Black Grape tickets basically.” (Audience Focus Group Respondent)*

Another weakness of the ticketing strategy according to the CPT was that the ticket machines that were placed in the venues rarely worked and were underused. This was supported by audience feedback – whereby one respondent felt that although the machines were a good idea, they never seemed to be working when he wanted to use them.

*“They are really expensive machines, and for most of their life in those venues, they've not sold a ticket, or they've not worked.”*

*“I don't think the ticket machines have been as used or as utilized as we would've maybe envisaged it or hoped a year ago.”*

*(CPT members)*

*“That would have been a great idea, but it never worked did it.” (Audience Focus Group Respondent)*

Although ticket sales in the community were seen as successful in the main, it was acknowledged within the CPT however that the way tickets are sold needed to be revisited as they were yet to find the best solution.

*“I think it’s been really successful for us to not do 100% sales online and do at least half of them in the areas and going to areas where we know our communities are around and flock to or walk past or there’s a lot of footfall.”*

*“The things that need work on is how we ticket, and how we give people access to tickets, we’ve tried lots of different things but there’s not one solution to that so we need to keep trying.”*

*(CPT members)*

* 1. Accessibility

A range of assisted performances were on offer at ‘Back to Ours’, including British Sign Language interpreted and relaxed performances.

Research respondents discussed the accessibility of the festival, with one Venue Partner receiving positive feedback from a parent of an autistic child who had attended a relaxed performance and had managed to stay for the full show – a new achievement for the family.

*“When a parent left she said that she’s got an autistic child and it was the first time that he’s gone to anything like that and sat through. And she was so pleased and thrilled about it, so that was a really nice bit of feedback.” (Venue Partner)*

It was also suggested by an audience member who attended the accessible showing of ‘Meet Fred’, that performances within the community are much more accessible for people with additional needs. The respondent spoke of a family friend with a disabled child who felt unable to see the ‘Made in Hull’ installations because of the large crowds. She went on to say that visiting something within the local community is something that would be easier for his family.

*“He didn’t go to see the projection thing because it was too much for him, but this would be far better. It brings it to him rather than…” (Chat with Gran: Audience member)*

*“He doesn’t like noise, so a lot of stuff in town is too much for him.” (Chat with Gran: Audience member)*

Audience members who experienced a BSL interpreted performance said that it made the festival feel more inclusive.

*"I think it's fantastic, and that there should be more of that, definitely."*

*"It was better, it meant that people were included."*

*"I think the BSL interpreter there was good, helping people that don't have these opportunities."*

*(Audience Focus Group Respondent)*

A group of hearing impaired audience members who attended a BSL interpreted performance of ‘Drip’ in festival 3 spoke positively about the visual nature of the show, stating that they’d be unlikely to have the same experience in a theatre. It was mentioned however that it was difficult to find information about BSL interpreted performances in the main Hull UK City of Culture programme, so the group had to do some research into what was available.

In terms of accessibility of the venues themselves, 42.7% of respondents to the audience survey felt that they were more accessible than venues in the city centre. 32.6% said they had the same level of accessibility as city centre venues and only 7% said felt that they were worse.

The venues also received positive feedback in terms of accessibility from peer assessors, who commented that the newer buildings were clearly built to accommodate additional mobility needs. The Hull 2017 volunteers stationed at the venues were also felt to be beneficial, as they could offer extra assistance if necessary.

*“Very good there was a lift in both places, so you could have got into both venues if you had a physical disability, and space was created. There would have been enough staff if there had been anyone with physical disabilities. The volunteers were very attentive to those things very capable if any mobility issues equally as welcome as everyone else. How you feel is, this a place you are supposed to be in – feeling was I’ve come to a place ready and able to cope with all access abilities.” (Peer Assessor)*

* + 1. Getting to the Venue and Parking

Audience members generally felt that the venues were easy to get to with ample free parking, which helped to minimise the cost of attending.

When asked to compare the parking at the ‘Back to Ours’ venues to city centre venues, almost ¾ said that it was better (73.6%). 14.4% rated the parking as the same as city centre venues and only 4% said it was worse.

Audience research respondents were also positive about the locality of the ‘Back to Ours’ venues, many of them stating that they were in walking distance of their homes. Some mentioned that this helped to cut travel time, which was particularly beneficial to families with children.

*“It’s nice to have it where you’re not having to travel too far from where you live isn’t it.” (Audience Focus Group respondent)*

*“I can see it [the venue] from my house. It’s amazing. That’s proper part of the community.” (Audience Focus Group respondent)*

*“It’s easy to get to, lots of parking, lots of space. So it seems to work very well.” (Chat with Gran: Audience member)*

* 1. Look to the Future

Some audience members became repeat visitors to ‘Back to Ours’ throughout the year and expressed a desire for the project to continue in the future.

*“It's been fantastic. We want it to continue for as long as possible, really.”*

*“It would be nice if they carried on doing things like this outside of the City of Culture, you know doing things like this generally.”*

*“We've been to see all the other Back To Ours last year and we loved them.”*

*(Chat with Gran: Audience members)*

The findings suggest that although ‘Back to Ours’ was a challenging project, all parties had an enjoyable experience being involved in the festival. All artists, Delivery and Venue Partners consulted said that they would be keen to take part in ‘Back to Ours’ or a project with a similar concept in the future.

*“We loved it. We want more. We'd do it every other weekend.” (Artist)*

*“I can't wait if they want us back to do something else together.” (Artist)*

*“Loved every minute of it. It was fantastic.” (Delivery Partner)*

*“I think specifically, we’d be really keen to work in Hull because it’s been a really great place to work over the last year.” (Delivery Partner)*

On discussing hopes and expectations for the future of ‘Back to Ours’, the CPT expressed a wish to expand the festival into the North Hull estates – an area they feel is currently under-represented. This was supported by Venue Partners, with the suggestion of adding more community venues into the festival circuit.

*“And add more venues to the mix. Maybe spread a little bit wider into some of the harder-to-reach communities.” (Venue Partner)*

Venue Partners also expressed that they would like to continue to focus on a local audience moving forward and one partner suggested involving students at their school as a way of achieving this.

*“Maybe if we could get young people, I don’t know Year 10s and 11s maybe involved as well. We’ve got a really fantastic arts department, CPA – creative performing arts, and we’ve got ambassadors, and they’re probably the type of people as well that would carry it forward.” (Venue Partner)*

Audience members were keen to propose recommendations for the future of the ‘Back to Ours’ programme, with many suggesting more interactive activities and large scale outdoor events.

*“I think it'd be nice to have more outdoor things, so like Freedom Festival that's open to everybody.”*

*“Maybe get some stuff like at East Park, more stuff like that.”*

*(Audience Focus Group Respondents)*

Table X: SWOT Analysis – Partnerships and Development

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| STRENGTHS OF BACK TO OURS | WEAKNESSES OF BACK TO OURS |
| Strong festival branding and visual identity.  Touring network enabled people to choose to attend a performance in the most convenient venue for them, with some audience members living within walking distance.  Efficient production management and high technical specifications enabled smooth delivery.  Artists felt well looked after and had a positive experience.  Successful and diverse programme spanning a number of different art forms with specific interest in artists being one of the main reasons for attending.  Overall effective communication and project management by the CPT.  Effective and long lasting relationships built across Venue Partners, Artists and Delivery Partners.  Project under constant review, responding to feedback and learnings throughout.  Clear explanation of project aims and objectives and high level of support for the festival concept across all parties.  Collaborative approach to artistic programme.  Good access provisions and positive feedback around relaxed and BSL interpreted performances.  Excellent level of customer service by staff and Hull 2017 volunteers.  Ticketing strategy to give local audiences better access to tickets. | Time constraints when promoting festival due to tight turnarounds and marketing materials sent out to venues too late.  Lack of visual presence in community.  Lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities of Delivery Partners and an overly complicated contracting process.  Ticket machines in venues didn’t work.  Not enough opportunity to purchase tickets in the community.  Initial lack of confidence in marketing in Venue Partners.  Small number of audience members felt that parking and accessibility was worse than in city centre venues.  Communication between CPT, Venue Partners and Artists could be improved. |
| OPPORTUNITIES IDENTIFIED BY BACK TO OURS | THREATS IDENTIFIED BY BACK TO OURS |
| Using positive reputation of ‘Back to Ours’ to attract new acts and creative partners.  Earlier engagement with audiences and earlier programme announcements to encourage audience planning and enable enough time to save for tickets.  Audience members keen for project to continue indicates support for future festivals and artists and delivery partners happy to stay involved.  Word of mouth and volunteer recommendation are valuable tools to attract males and older audience members.  Make use of school assemblies and explore pupil involvement to encourage attendance to festivals.  Greater Venue Partner input into marketing and exploit own networks for better local reach.  Clear appetite to attend arts and culture events outside of city centre and an openness to try something new.  Positive experience of international artists could help to build reputation further. afield.  Expansion into more venues in under-represented areas, for example North Hull Estates.  Programming popular live music act next to other art forms can give added credibility and encourage people to try alternative entertainment. | Lack of access to pop up box offices creates barrier to attending.  Complex schedule delays can cause knock on effect due to touring nature of festival.  Late marketing and programme announcement – could lose potential audience members who need to plan in advance or more time to save for tickets.  Unclear show descriptions in festival programme.  Some audience members weren’t sure which events were part of the ‘Back to Ours’ festival, which prevents project from building a good reputation by capitalising on these positive experiences. |