

**Art
Works**

**Paul Hamlyn Foundation
Special Initiative**

**Developing
Practice in
Participatory
Settings**

**Evaluation Report for the North East Pilot Short Courses in
Developing Practice in Participatory Settings**

Report produced by Susan Priestley

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Executive Summary

“It has been a great platform for creative discussion and debate which we don’t usually get the chance to do.”

This document has been prepared by freelance consultant Susan Priestley as the final evaluation for the ArtWorks North East Pilot Short Courses programme. The evaluation has been delivered in two phases:

- an interim report was submitted in January 2014 focussing on non-accredited pilot short courses delivered between September and December 2013 which covered a range of participatory arts settings: Education; Youth Work; Community; Health; Criminal Justice; and Cross-Contextual courses;
- this final report has been updated to take into account additional feedback gathered by students (and the academic tutor) who have gone on to undertake the accredited courses delivered between February and May 2014.

The report has been informed by ongoing consultation with arts professionals who have engaged with the courses as participants, academic and delivery specialists, and representatives from ArtWorks North East. The main impacts and outcomes have been identified as:

- Participant profiling carried out as part of the evaluation shows that:
 - learners have been predominantly female (70%), of White UK origin and none have disabilities or life-limiting illnesses;
 - the largest proportion of learners was in the 16-25 (41%) and 46-55 (35%) age ranges. Participants in the 26-35 and 36-45 age ranges each made up 12% of the total course number;
 - the Visual Arts was the most popular area of working practice amongst participants (60%); with Cross-Arts making up 23% of participants; and Drama, Media and Music making up around 6% each; and
 - the majority of participants (63%) had limited experience of working in arts in participatory settings; 19% each had either no experience or were experienced.
- Overall, courses have been very well received and valued by participants - the mean average score from 18 students in relation to the extent to which the programme has met their expectations when enrolling was 4.38 (out of 5). Both the core and context-based sessions have resulted in some very positive outcomes associated with student knowledge and understanding, increased confidence and skills.
- In terms of the **core sessions**, analysis of 10 completed evaluation forms show that the mean average score (out of a maximum of 5) was:

- 4.3 for the extent to which participants felt that the core sessions had *increased their knowledge and understanding of core principles underpinning participatory arts practice*; and
 - 4.1 for the extent to which participants felt that the core sessions had *increased their knowledge and core skills in relation to developing, designing and managing their own projects*.
- 22 completed evaluation questionnaires were received for the **context-based sessions**. Analysis shows the following mean average scores (out of 5):
 - 4.47 for the extent to which participants agreed that the sessions they had attended had *increased their understanding around the role and context of artists in the relevant participatory setting*;
 - 3.95 for the extent to which participants agreed that the sessions they had attended *had increased their ability and confidence to deliver a coherent project within the relevant setting*;
 - 3.76 for the extent to which participants agreed that the sessions they had attended *had increased their skills and ability to clearly present and communicate ideas*;
 - 3.71 for the extent to which participants agreed that the sessions they had attended *had increased their practical skills in how to facilitate groups and activities*; and
 - 4.18 for the extent to which participants agreed that the sessions they had attended *increased their knowledge and understanding of the practical issues and requirements associated with developing and delivering projects in the relevant setting*.
 - Three students progressed to the accredited courses; one stage 1 (10 credits) and two post-graduate (30 credits) (although subsequently one of the post-graduates did not submit a registration form and hence was not formally registered on the course). Evaluation feedback has been collected from two students and the academic tutor and identified the strengths of the course as: student learning from and within cross arts and academic networks and the course seminars; and areas to address around earlier appointment of the academic tutor and a lack of time to include the mentoring element of the programme.

The issues arising from consultation with students, course delivery specialists and ArtWorks North East is presented fully within the body of the report. There are, however, a few areas raised across all who have engaged with the programme that are worth highlighting here:

- The low numbers of student participants on courses, due in part at least to delays in the design of the short courses and the knock-on effect in terms of marketing and recruitment, have been a disappointment to all concerned, but particularly to the course delivery team;
- It was felt that the course outlines could more accurately and fully reflect the course content which, in turn, might result in a greater student take-up;
- Some students have reported that some of the courses they attended did not fully meet their needs, particularly some of those at the extremes of the experience spectrum; inexperienced students sometimes required more direction and those with

more experience wanted a “*deeper underpinning of ethics, principles, frameworks and theory...*”;

- Students following the accredited courses were disappointed that a lack of time meant that the formal mentoring and shadowing elements of the programme could not take place;
- One of the main areas of concern raised by the delivery team has been the levels of pay for artists, which was felt to be too low for the amount of work and time expected of them; and
- There was a sense from some of the delivery team that the programme has lacked sufficient leadership and direction, particularly in terms of the academic side of the programme. This is in no way a criticism of the quality of academic input, but simply that there was a lack of enough academic input into the delivery team because of a shortage of individuals with the relevant experience.

All of that said the ArtWorks North East Pilot Short Courses Programme has been a very positive and valuable experience for all concerned. With very few exceptions, students and delivery team specialists alike reported that their original expectations had largely been met, with students, arts specialists and academics alike referring to inspiring conversations, pushing boundaries, learning new approaches and sharing good practice. Report recommendations arising from the consultation are mainly around: clarifying the aims and context of the programme; developing a deeper and more theory-rich element for more experienced students; engaging academic tutors at the earliest stages to allow for maximum sharing of dialogue, discussion, experience and good practice; and improving the course information and marketing to attract higher numbers of students.

Although not without its challenges, it is clear that the ArtWorks North East Pilot Short Courses Programme has already made a strong and valued contribution to participatory arts practice in the North East. The programme has established a firm foundation which, if the findings and recommendations outlined within this report are addressed, could grow to offer significant opportunities to explore continuing professional development issues associated with participatory arts practice across a unique arts and academic partnership.

Introduction

ArtWorks: Developing Practice in Participatory Settings is a new special initiative from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation which supports the continuing professional development of artists working in participatory settings. The key objectives of the initiative are to:

- Develop, pilot and embed training and continuous professional development methods for artists working in participatory settings at all stages of their careers;
- Develop a better understanding of what constitutes quality in participatory work through sharing good practice across artforms and demonstrating positive outcomes; and
- Gather, document and disseminate compelling evidence of positive impact.

ArtWorks North East is the pathfinder in the North East region and the project is led by the University of Sunderland with a wide range of partners: BALTIC; Equal Arts; Helix Arts; Live Theatre; National Glass Centre; New Writing North; Northern Stage; Regional Youth Work Unit North East; Sage Gateshead; and Tyneside Cinema.

ArtWorks North East: Developing Practice in Participatory Settings has offered a range of Pilot Short Courses for artists and media practitioners who work or aspire to work in a range of settings (Education, Youth Work, Criminal Justice, Community, Health and Cross-contextual). This report assesses the impact of the programme in its entirety, which has included non-accredited courses delivered between September and November 2013; and accredited courses delivered between December 2013 and May 2014.

Evaluation scope and methodology

The brief for the evaluation was to:

- Gather quantitative data about participants in the short courses;
- Gather qualitative information about participants' learning;
- Assess participants' satisfaction with the short courses;
- Gather views/reflections of the delivery team; and
- Make recommendations about the delivery methods and content of future short courses in participatory arts.

The evaluation of the programme was carried out in two phases:

- the first phase took place between September and December 2013 and involved gathering observational and written feedback from students during the core and context-based sessions to measure impacts in terms of increased knowledge and understanding, confidence and skills. Analysis of the feedback and emerging findings were presented within an interim report in January 2014 focussing on the non-accredited courses;

- the second phase took place between December 2013 and May 2014 and involved telephone and e mail consultation with two of the three students who progressed to the accredited courses, as well as the academic tutor and ArtWorks North East Project Manager.

The findings from the consultation feedback are presented as follows:

Section 1 includes a profile of students across the whole programme (i.e. non-accredited and accredited courses); feedback from students engaging with the core and context-based sections; and analysis of all data and information to assess the impacts, outcomes and issues arising.

Section 2 includes feedback from two of the three students who progressed on to accredited courses, as well as feedback from the academic tutor.

Section 3 sets out the conclusions and recommendations across the whole programme.

Section 4 presents the appendices: a summary of core and context-based workshop sessions; and the three student case studies.

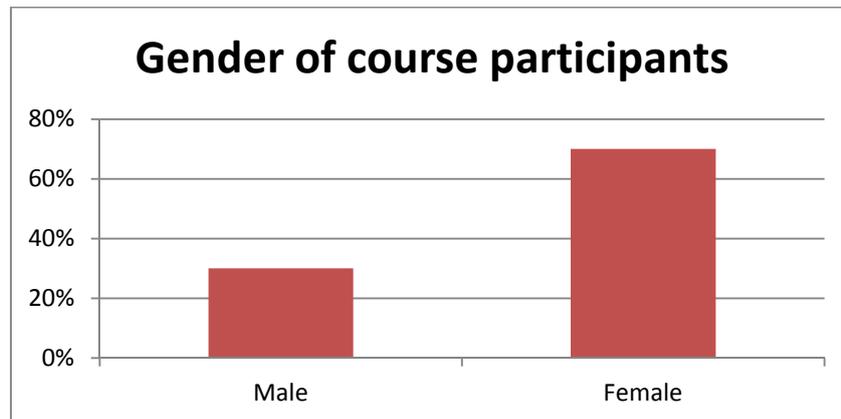
Section 1: Non-accredited short courses

1.1 Participant profile

17 baseline questionnaires were completed by participants and captured profile information in relation to: gender; age; ethnic origin; life limiting illness; location; work/practice background; career stage; and reasons for enrolling.

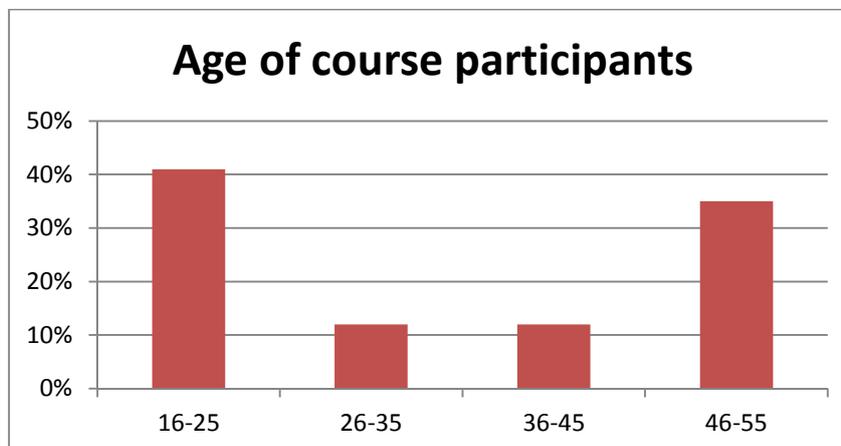
Gender

The majority of the participants were female (70%). All of the participants were of White UK origin and none had a life limiting illness.



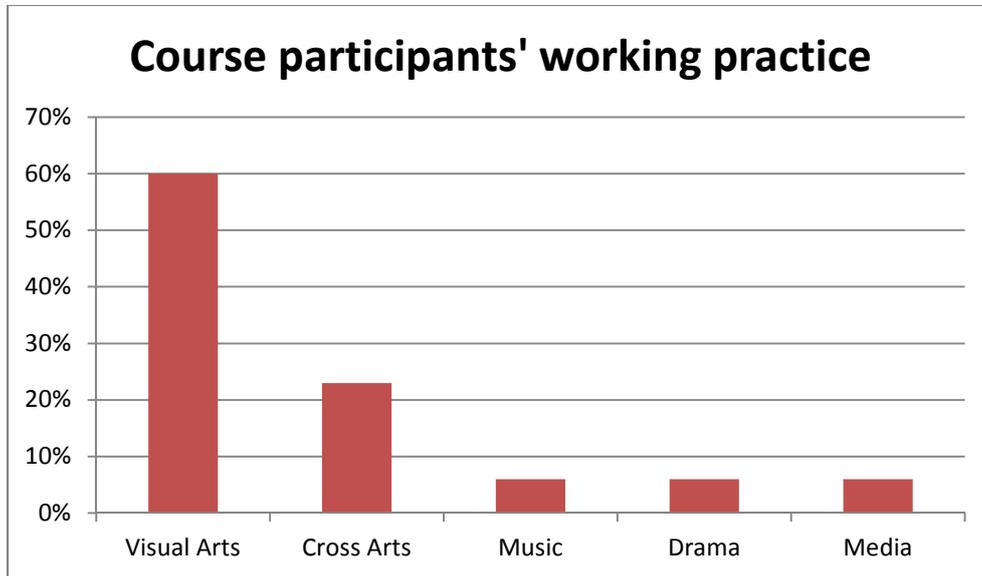
Age

The largest proportion of course participants were in the 16-25 (41%) and 46-55 (35%) age ranges. Participants in the 26-35 and 36-45 age ranges each made up 12% of the total course number.



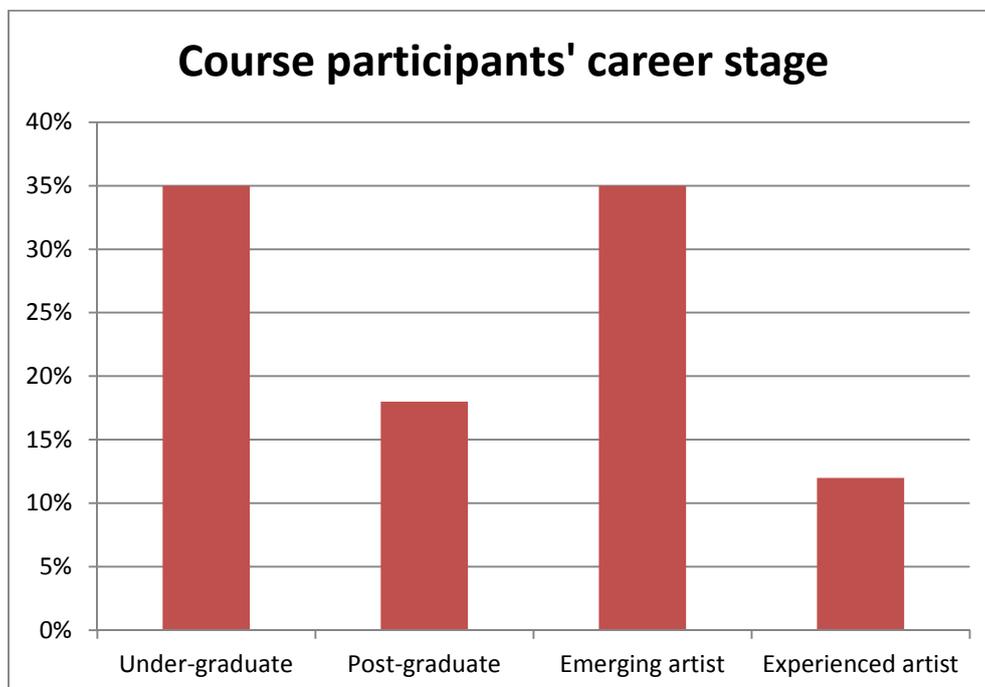
Working practice

The Visual Arts was the most popular area of working practice amongst participants (60%); with Cross-Arts making up 23% of participants; and Drama, Media and Music making up around 6% each.¹



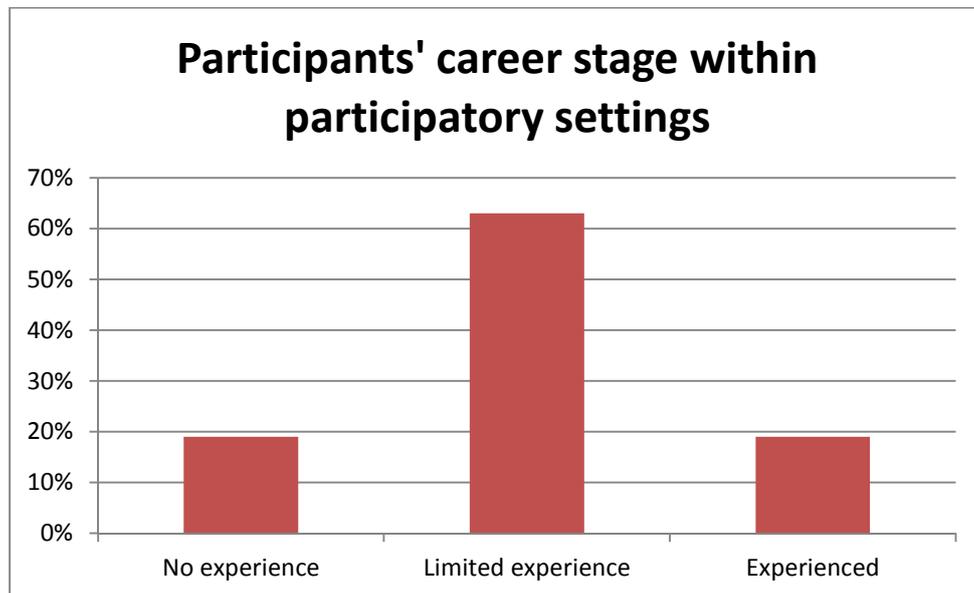
Career stage and experience of working in participatory settings

Analysis of participant data shows that the two largest groups of participants were either under-graduates or emerging artists (35% each).



¹ Figures may not sum due to rounding.

The majority of participants (63%) had limited experience of working in arts in participatory settings; 19% each had either no experience or were experienced.



Student feedback: Whole Programme

The mean average score from 18 students who had participated in the ArtWorks North East Pilot Short Courses was 4.38 (out of 5) in relation to the extent to which the programme had met their expectations when enrolling.

Participant feedback has been gathered by way of detailed questionnaires completed as part of a proportion of the context-based sessions and covered: student satisfaction with courses; impacts on knowledge, skills and working practice; to what extent student expectations have been met; and progression – how students will use what they have learned within their work and/or working practice. 22 completed evaluation forms were received from 18 students (four students completed forms for more than one course).

22 completed evaluation forms were received across the whole pilot short courses programme: 1 for Education; 5 for Health; 6 for Youth work; 4 for Criminal Justice; 4 for Cross Contextual; and 2 for Community.

Case studies

Three students agreed to provide further information by telephone and/or e mail to inform case studies from three different career perspectives: an undergraduate with limited experience of participatory practice; an emerging artist with some experience of working in participatory settings; and a postgraduate who has significant experience of arts participatory work. The aim of the case studies is to briefly illustrate the impact of the Pilot Short Courses on students' learning across a range of different scenarios, i.e. undergraduate with limited experience; emerging artist with limited experience; and postgraduate with significant experience of participatory settings (the latter had gone on to undertake the postgraduate (30 credit) accredited course. The students within the studies are anonymous and the case studies are referred to as 1, 2 and 3 respectively. The case studies are included as Appendices.

Student Feedback: The Pilot Short Courses

The ArtWorks North East Pilot Short Courses Programme ranged from non-accredited at stage 0 (0 credits), through to accredited courses at stage 1 (10 credits), stage 3 (20 credits) and postgraduate (30 credits) to cater for artists at varying career stages. All students engaged with a two-part programme: two core sessions covered the principles and values underpinning participatory arts practice; and a total of eleven context-based sessions (one session was cancelled) explored issues around participatory arts practice across six settings - education, youth work, health, community, criminal justice and cross contextual. Students undertaking the non-accredited courses were required to attend a minimum of 4 three-hour sessions: core sessions 1 and 2; and a choice of at least two further three-hour context based sessions of their choice. Students moving on to the accredited (stage 1, stage 3 and postgraduate) courses undertook additional sessions and activities and completed research projects and/or presentations. Students were drawn from individuals with experience in arts, media or relevant subject areas and candidates with no formal academic qualifications but with an appropriate background and/or proven desire to work in participatory arts.

Evaluation of the non-accredited phase of the programme, i.e. the core and context-based sessions, involved observation of some sessions and gathering written feedback from students to measure impact in relation to knowledge and understanding, confidence and skills. Analysis of the consultation feedback is presented within this section.

Core sessions

The focus for the core sessions was the common principles and values underpinning participatory arts practice. 10 completed evaluation forms were received across the programme in relation to the core sessions

The mean average score for the extent to which participants felt that the core sessions had increased their knowledge and understanding of core principles underpinning participatory arts practice was 4.3 (out of a maximum of 5).

The mean average score for the extent to which participants felt that the core sessions had increased their knowledge and core skills in relation to developing, designing and managing their own projects was 4.1 (out of a maximum of 5).

Student comments about the core sessions

Feedback in relation to the core sessions was largely positive and they would seem to have met the needs of the majority of students. There is evidence, however, that for a small number of very experienced students, the sessions were interesting but failed to significantly increase their knowledge.

“The group was cohesive and communication was open and fluid – exchanging ideas was allowed/facilitated by lead facilitator.”

“This gave me a more focused approach to the theory behind participatory arts practice.”

“The content of these sessions was very familiar; the value I gained was in considering ‘how’ people presented the content, revisiting questions and in meeting others in the sessions. I wouldn’t say that has particularly increased knowledge of core principles.”

Student Feedback: Context based sessions

“At the end of the final session I was presented with a youth work scenario. The answers I gave were informed entirely by the sessions – I wouldn’t have been able to answer the question at the beginning of the short course.”

The context based sessions were designed to be “*interactive, take a cross arts stance and have at their heart discussion and debate*”.² Sessions were designed and taught through unique collaborations between artists, arts specialists and academics working within and across six settings: education, youth work, health, community, criminal justice and cross contextual. Students undertaking the non-accredited courses were initially required to attend two core sessions and two context-based sessions; however, greater flexibility was introduced part way through the programme which meant that some students attended context-based sessions only. 18 students completed 22 in-depth evaluation forms (some students attended more than one workshop) as part of these sessions.

Overall satisfaction

18 participants gave the following ratings (out of a maximum of 5) in terms of their overall satisfaction with the programme of pilot short courses: 4.27 for course times; 4.33 for course venues; 4.44 for course delivery; and 4.38 for course content.

Learning outcomes

22 responses were received from 18 students (some students attended more than one course) to questions asking them to rate on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 equals strongly disagree and 5 equals strongly agree) the impact the context based sessions had had on their understanding, confidence, knowledge and understanding and skills. Analysis shows that:

- The mean average score for the extent to which participants agreed that the context based session they had attended had increased their understanding around the role and context of artists in the relevant participatory setting was 4.47.
- The mean average score for the extent to which participants agreed that the context based session they had attended had increased their ability and confidence to deliver a coherent project within the relevant setting was 3.95.
- The mean average score for the extent to which participants agreed that the context based session they had attended had increased their skills and ability to clearly present and communicate ideas was 3.76.
- The mean average score for the extent to which participants agreed that the context based session they had attended had increased their practical skills in how to facilitate groups and activities was 3.71.

² ArtWorks North East Pilot Short Courses course specification

- The mean average score for the extent to which participants agreed that the context based session they had attended increased their knowledge and understanding of the practical issues and requirements associated with developing and delivering projects in the relevant setting was 4.18.

Overall, the programme has scored highly (4.38) in terms of the extent to which students felt at the end of the courses that their original expectations had been met.

Participant feedback in relation to individual context based sessions

The eleven context based sessions (one session was cancelled) explored issues around participatory arts practice across six settings - education, youth work, health, community, criminal justice and cross contextual. Students undertaking the non-accredited courses were required to attend a minimum of 4 three-hour sessions: core sessions 1 and 2; and a choice of at least two further three-hour context based sessions of their choice. Students were drawn from individuals with experience in arts, media or relevant subject areas and candidates with no formal academic qualifications but with an appropriate background and/or proven desire to work in participatory arts. Students were asked to complete a written evaluation at the end of their second context-based session to measure their satisfaction of the courses attended and the impact in relation to their knowledge and understanding, confidence and skills. This section presents the information and feedback broken down into the six individual participatory arts settings. It should be noted that as student numbers – and the number of completed questionnaires – differs from course to course, an accurate comparison is not possible. This section should rather be viewed as an indication of qualitative impacts and outcomes across the individual context-based workshop sessions.

Student Feedback: Youth Work

Youth Work 1: 7 attendees (4 students/2 tutors/1 ArtWorks NE); **Youth Work 2:** 10 attendees (6 students/2 tutors/1 ArtWorks NE/1 evaluator). The sessions explored the core values and aims of Youth Work: Hear by Right standards framework; engagement by young people in their art making process; establishment of authentic relationships and conversations between those involved; key players and policy contexts. Six students completed evaluation questionnaires at the end of their second session.

The mean average score from students attending the Youth Work sessions in relation to what extent their original expectations had been met was 4.5.

The Youth Work context based sessions were given the following participant ratings (out of a maximum of 5): 4.16 for course times; 4.5 for course venues; 4.5 for course delivery; and 4.66 for course content.

Students were asked to rate their agreement in relation to five areas of impact on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 equals completely disagree and 5 equals completely agree):

- The mean average score was 4.8 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their understanding around the role and context of artists in Youth Work settings.
- The mean average score was 4.5 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their confidence to deliver a coherent project within Youth Work settings.
- The mean average score was 4.16 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their skills and ability to clearly present and communicate ideas.
- The mean average score was 4 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their practical skills in how to facilitate groups and activities.
- The mean average score was 4.66 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their knowledge and understanding of the practical issues and requirements associated with developing and delivering projects in Youth Work settings.

Youth Work course participant comments

“I would appreciate ‘deeper’ underpinning of ethics, principles – frameworks and theory/related policy...”

“I feel inspired and motivated by the speakers’ journeys to give me the confidence, ideas and core skills to enhance my prior knowledge.”

Student Feedback: Community

Community 1: 7 attendees (4 students/3 tutors). **Community 2:** 8 attendees (4 students/4 tutors). The sessions explored the issues around participatory practice in Community settings: definitions of community; forming and sustaining communities; and roles of artists in developing communities. 2 students completed evaluation forms at the end of their second session.

The mean average score from students attending the Community sessions in relation to what extent their original expectations had been met was 4.5.

The Community context based sessions were given the following participant ratings (out of a maximum of 5): 4.0 for course times; 3.5 for course venues; 4.0 for course delivery; and 4.0 for course content.

Students were asked to rate their agreement in relation to five areas of impact on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 equals completely disagree and 5 equals completely agree):

- The mean average score was 4.0 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their understanding around the role and context of artists in Community settings.
- The mean average score was 3.5 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their confidence to deliver a coherent project within Community settings.
- The mean average score was 2.5 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their skills and ability to clearly present and communicate ideas.
- The mean average score was 3.5 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their practical skills in how to facilitate groups and activities.
- The mean average score was 3.5 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their knowledge and understanding of the practical issues and requirements associated with developing and delivering projects in Community settings.

Community course participant comments:

“I will use the knowledge I have gained from the course to form part of the research for my dissertation project at university.”

“I wish the course was longer... it definitely whetted my appetite for information and knowledge in this area.”

“All credit to tonight – I feel more part of a cohort/group. I have signed up to a longer programme (in ArtWorks) but this could be an online thing.” “I’ve increased my overall knowledge of participatory arts and want to know more – I haven’t gone on to any of the other courses just because of where I am in my current degree but would consider this course as a stand-alone or if it was incorporated into an MA. I’m going to look at how artists use participation in their own work for my dissertation for my BA to further my learning”

Student Feedback: Health

Health 1: 10 attendees (6 students/2 tutors/2 ArtWorks NE); **Health 2:** 8 attendees (5 students/2 tutors/1 ArtWorks NE). Sessions covered the core values, aims and benefits of participatory arts work in Health settings; the importance of self-esteem, self-confidence, social connectedness and autonomy to well-being; guidelines for working with specific groups; research in the field. Five students completed evaluation forms at the end of their second session.

The mean average score from students attending the Health sessions in relation to what extent their original expectations had been met was 3.8.

The Health context based sessions were given the following participant ratings: 4 for course times; 4.4 for course venues; 4.8 for course delivery; and 4.4 for course content.

Participants rated the content and the extent to which the

- The mean average score was 4.4 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their understanding around the role and context of artists in Health settings.
- The mean average score was 4.6 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their confidence to deliver a coherent project within Health settings.
- The mean average score was 4.4 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their skills and ability to clearly present and communicate ideas.
- The mean average score was 4.6 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their practical skills in how to facilitate groups and activities.
- The mean average score was 3.8 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their knowledge and understanding of the practical issues and requirements associated with developing and delivering projects in Health settings.

Health course participant comments

“Will definitely apply some of the approaches demonstrated.”

“I know what to expect more in a Health participatory setting.”

Student Feedback: Criminal Justice

Criminal Justice 1: 9 attendees (6 students/2 tutors/1 ArtWorks NE); **Criminal Justice 2:** 7 attendees (4 students/2 tutors/1 ArtWorks NE). Session covered the core values and aims of criminal justice work; philosophies of criminal justice; understanding the role of the arts in criminal justice; the role of the artist; strategies and activities for working in challenging environments; key players and policy contexts. Four students completed evaluation forms at the end of their second session.

The mean average score from students attending the Criminal Justice sessions in relation to what extent their original expectations had been met was 4.75.

The Criminal Justice context based sessions were given the maximum rating of 5 for course times, course venues and course delivery. Course content received a mean average score of 4.75.

- The mean average score was 4.75 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their understanding around the role and context of artists in Criminal Justice settings.
- The mean average score was 3.5 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their confidence to deliver a coherent project within Criminal Justice settings.
- The mean average score was 4.0 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their skills and ability to clearly present and communicate ideas.
- The mean average score was 4.25 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their practical skills in how to facilitate groups and activities.
- The mean average score was 4.5 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their knowledge and understanding of the practical issues and requirements associated with developing and delivering projects in Criminal Justice settings.

Criminal Justice course participant comments:

“I think that everything I learnt from all of the sessions is extremely beneficial to my future if I want to work in this field.”

“The issues Donna and Tommy raised were real life situations - using case studies helped me to understand how I would transfer these skills into real life participatory sessions.”

Student Feedback: Education

Education 2 (Education 1 cancelled): 5 attendees (2 students/2 tutors/1 ArtWorks NE) The context based session explored the core values and aims of Education work; creating conditions for learning and arts work to flourish; effective practice as demonstrated through case studies, activities and discussion; analysis of current thinking through review of reports, legislation and Government strategies. Only one evaluation form was received for the Education context based session. The student gave a rating of 5 for course times, venues, delivery and course content.

The score from the one student attending the Education session who completed the evaluation form in relation to what extent their original expectations had been met was 4.

The Education session was given a score of 5 for course times; course venues; course delivery; and course content.

The student was asked to rate their agreement in relation to five areas of impact on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 equals completely disagree and 5 equals completely agree):

- The score was 5.0 for the extent to which participant felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their understanding around the role of artists in Education projects.
- The score was 4.0 for the extent to which participant felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their confidence to deliver a coherent Education project.
- The score was 4.0 for the extent to which the participant felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their skills and ability to clearly present and communicate ideas.
- The score was 4.0 for the extent to which the participant felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their practical skills in how to facilitate groups and activities.
- The score was 4.0 for the extent to which the participant felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their knowledge and understanding of the practical issues and requirements associated with developing and delivering an Education project.

Education course participant comment

“The speakers had produced a thoughtful and thorough session full of interesting activities and content.”

Student Feedback: Cross-Contextual

Cross-Contextual 1: 6 attendees (3 students/2 tutors/1 ArtWorks NE); **Cross-Contextual 2:** 7 attendees (3 student/3 tutors/1 ArtWorks NE). Cross-Contextual sessions explored the role of the artist in participatory settings from a holistic perspective; examining the notion of dialogue as a core pedagogical method; the situational skills and approaches required to develop work in many contexts; the importance of reflective practice and personal/professional authenticity. 4 students completed evaluation forms at the end of their second session.

The mean average score from students attending the cross-contextual sessions in relation to what extent their original expectations had been met was 4.66.

The Cross-Contextual sessions were given the following participant ratings: 3 for course times; 4.33 for course venues; 3.66 for course delivery; and 3.66 for course content.

Students were asked to rate their agreement in relation to five areas of impact on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 equals completely disagree and 5 equals completely agree):

- The mean average score was 3.66 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their understanding around the role of artists in cross-contextual projects.
- The mean average score was 4.0 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their confidence to deliver a coherent cross-contextual project.
- The mean average score was 3.5 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their skills and ability to clearly present and communicate ideas.
- The mean average score was 3.75 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their practical skills in how to facilitate groups and activities.
- The mean average score was 4.25 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their knowledge and understanding of the practical issues and requirements associated with developing and delivering a cross-contextual project.

Cross-contextual course participant comments:

“Brilliantly presented sessions!”

“I have felt inspired to look beyond music for ideas/projects.”

“I only went to the second Cross-contextual workshop but wish I had gone to the first and could continue.”

Impacts, outcomes and issues arising from the student consultation (core and context-based sessions)

There were a number of opportunities within the evaluation process for students to provide written comments and suggestions. The main issues raised were:

1. Sessions were not always pitched at the most appropriate level for different student situations.

Student feedback in terms of both their rating of individual elements of the courses and their comments has been largely positive; the Health, Youth Work and Criminal Justice sessions scored particularly highly. Some students, however, reported that sessions were not always pitched to their individual abilities, needs or career stages – an issue that was also highlighted by some of the delivery team. This is perhaps unsurprising bearing in mind the wide range of student situations – from undergraduates with no experience of working in participatory settings to experienced post-graduates and/or artists. There is evidence that some students at either extreme of the spectrum, i.e. the very inexperienced and very experienced, particularly felt that the sessions they had attended were not always ideally pitched to their needs and/or expectations, with inexperienced students requiring more direction and those with more experience wanting a “*deeper underpinning of ethics, principles, frameworks and theory...*”

“Although the sessions were very good overall they seemed mainly aimed at people already working as participatory arts practitioners and felt somewhat excluding of those who were interested in the field but did not have any direct work experience.”

“I understand that there are a range of people on the course but I just didn’t feel like it (the session) was pitched quite right in terms of content or levels of ability/experience.”

“... lots of the content was familiar and I would have valued more opportunity to dig into some of the issues and/perspectives/assertions of some of the presentations.”

2. Some students were disappointed with low course participant numbers.

Although this does not seem to have been as much of an issue with students as with the course delivery team, some students did comment on the low numbers of participants on some courses.

“Such a shame that there weren’t more people to engage with – share experiences and knowledge, etc. Was this to do with marketing?”

3. Students would have appreciated access to course resources earlier.

Some student participants said that they would have found access to course materials in advance of sessions very beneficial as an introduction to the context of the session.

"I would have benefitted from the materials being accessible."

"Having access to information on the website beforehand would have been useful."

"It would have been useful to have an overview of the course/module guide at that first (core) session..."

4. In common with the delivery team, students have greatly valued the opportunities for networking, discussion and sharing good practice.

There is clear evidence that the opportunities the sessions gave for like-minded people to get together to share knowledge and ideas, learn and debate good practice within a range of context based sessions has been highly valued by students.

"I think that the networking opportunities have been invaluable – there are still questions which I need to ask but feel confident that I can ask for further advice."

"Thoroughly enjoyed the active engagement. Learning through experience is crucial!"

5. The use of case studies was well received

It is clear that students found the use of case studies and real situations very valuable in fully understanding the context settings.

"The issues Donna and Tommy raised were real life situations - using case studies helped me to understand how I would transfer these skills into real life participatory settings."

6. The sessions have provided valuable knowledge and skills that students can use within their future working practice.

When asked how students would use what they learned during the sessions to progress their future working practice, responses were wide-ranging:

"Thinking about participatory arts as a vital part of rehabilitation process. Will think about this and use in life as well as my practise."

"I think that everything I have learnt from all of the sessions is extremely beneficial to my future if I want to work in this field."

"I'd like to deliver a range of courses."

"Many of the topics covered will be invaluable in planning future projects."

"It will help inform my continuing development as a teacher and researcher by inspiring me to be more creative and use my dormant creative skills."

"I have felt inspired to look beyond music for ideas/projects."

"Will definitely apply some of the approaches demonstrated."

"I will feel more confident in applying for any jobs advertised for this role. I will feel more confident in instigating projects for people with health problems."

Delivery team feedback

The Pilot Workshops were co-delivered by over 20 artists and academics in cultural venues in Sunderland, Newcastle and Gateshead. Tutors addressed a set series of topics in each workshop using a very diverse set of approaches and exercises to support the sharing of information and offer challenge for participants.

Each member of the delivery team was asked to feed into the evaluation at two points: at the start of the programme to set out their motivations and expectations in terms of their involvement in the course delivery; and at the end of the course programme to feed back their views and observations in relation to programme highlights and positives, issues and areas to be addressed and whether their original expectations had been met. All 20 delivery team members have contributed to the evaluation. The main findings are set out below.

There was much consensus across the arts practitioners and academics at the start of the programme as to why they had chosen to be involved in the programme and what they wanted to achieve and get out of it – both personally and in terms of their working practice.

The main **motivations**, i.e. reasons for engaging with the programme were:

- supporting sectoral knowledge growth and providing opportunities to share knowledge and experience with a wider audience;
- being part of an ongoing dialogue – between arts professionals, academics and students - about the theory and practices of participatory art.
- networking and forming new working relationships;
- inspiring new creative ways of working across a range of non-arts settings;
- raising the quality of artists' work and participatory arts projects in the region.

“My main motivations are to extend my network of peers working in a similar field of work and thereby establishing a common support and knowledge bank, and to use the opportunity to take time and reflect upon the participatory aspect of my creative practice within an academic framework.”

“As an artist and teacher I have found little opportunities for students to undertake thorough theory and practice based research in participatory arts practice. These courses will give us the opportunity to explore the content and context behind this work, developing skills and understanding.”

“I am motivated by wanting to support fellow artists... I see the ArtWorks course (if the right content is developed and offered to students) as making the route into participatory arts easier.”

The main **expectations**, i.e. what individuals hoped to get out of their involvement, were:

- opportunities for individual academics and practitioners to present their own perspectives of participatory arts and have them tested, validated and challenged;
- to complement existing working practice and gain new knowledge and perspectives to further develop and expand working practice;
- to deliver sessions that help to empower and engender creativity in a wider socio/economic community;
- to network and learn from others outside of individuals' working areas/practice; and
- to develop a greater awareness of the ethos behind participatory projects.

"I am hoping this will lead to a network that could advocate and create a knowledge bank on participatory ways of working."

"... my expectations include enhancing my existing practice as an artist facilitator. (Facilitating sessions) will encourage critical reflection of dialogic participatory practice and create an opportunity to evaluate my past and existing practice. By working collaboratively with other practitioners this will develop connections and introduce new approaches to delivery."

"To be honest I do not think that my involvement with the course of 3 hours with 2 hours shared planning will have much impact on my own practice – my long term gain will be from friendships with my academic partners and I am looking forward to future conversations."

Impacts, outcomes and issues arising from the delivery team consultation

Follow-up consultation at the end of the pilot workshops found that overall, although delivery team members raised a number of issues to be addressed as part of future programming, most said that their original expectations had been met, particularly in terms of new collaborative working, networking and opportunities to reflect on their own working practice. Opportunities to plan, communicate, connect and reflect with other practitioners and course participants has been by far the most positive and valued aspect of the programme. This has been the case across the board, with arts practitioners and academics alike referring to inspiring conversations, pushing boundaries, learning new approaches and sharing good practice.

"I have worked alongside other professionals that I have not met before. Their experiences, ideas and approaches have provided much food for thought."

"It has been a refreshing experience meeting those attending the workshops and understanding what draws them to participatory arts."

The delivery team did however highlight a number of areas they felt should be acknowledged, considered and addressed as part of the evaluation and future planning:

1. Practicalities

- 1.1 A number of people said that the workshops had been too long and suggested reducing any sessions in the future to 2.5 hours.

“The sessions were slightly too long. 3 hours in the evening meant everyone wasn’t functioning at his or her best. There was a sense that after a full day of work, participants were tired and had limited capacity to take on board information, or contribute, after two hours.”

- 1.2 ‘How to’ sessions for the delivery team were not well received by either arts professionals or academics. It was generally felt that this had been wasted time that could have been better spent as an opportunity for all of the delivery team to talk about how their sessions would work together.

“The ‘how to deliver a lecture’ session was unnecessary and the time would have been better used for all the delivery team members still to meet as a group, but to discuss the format of specific sessions in delivery groups and with artworks staff and academics.”

“The initial introduction to teaching session... was very demotivating... and did not seem to be organised in a way that was coherent with the overall philosophy of ArtWorks.”

- 1.3 Some of the delivery team raised issues about the workshop venues – an area that has also been highlighted by ArtWorks North East to address for future sessions. The main issues are: a lack of flexibility from some venues around fluctuating participant numbers; the distance from public transport, particularly the metro; parking charges (at Sage Gateshead); and availability of equipment and room layout.

“At the start of the short courses there was no certainty over the number of people who would book onto the courses, but two venues required five weeks’ notice for confirmation of room bookings, layout and equipment requirements...”

“... there was a lot of talk about expensive car parking at the Sage.”

2. Artists’ payments and time allocation

The amount of time and fees allocated to artists was perhaps the issue raised most often as an area to be addressed within any future sessions. It was generally felt that payment levels did not match the amount of work and that individuals had spent far in excess of the two hour preparation time to prepare their sessions.

“Any programme that demands unpaid overtime from people as part of its basic planning structure is flawed.”

“My contribution to the programme was based on my personal commitment to offer the best we can to artists who had signed up as ‘learners’ on the programme. I wanted the programme to succeed but I personally gained little financially.”

“... for most people who took part in the programme, time was a factor... the amount of planning meetings..., e mails, things you’ve had to send, phone conversations with delivery artist and ArtWorks didn’t reflect the fee... especially the planning fee.”

A number of people also highlighted occasions when sessions were cancelled at short notice, which impacted on both fees (artists had sometimes turned down other work to run sessions); and on working practice (some sessions were cancelled when academics pulled out, which was disappointing to artists who had partly engaged with the programme for the chance to work alongside academics). However, delivery team members (both artists and academics were paid in full for development and delivery time) even when a session was cancelled.

3. Course take-up

Low student numbers was raised by many of the delivery team, mostly as a disappointment, although one or two people reported that it had resulted in a positive outcome. In general, it was felt that the balance of participants/facilitators was too heavy on the facilitator side at most of the sessions.

“Two facilitators and one participant makes it a strange situation – however, it worked well!”

“Clearly there is a concern with the take up of courses. There were four of us to teach a session for four ‘students’.”

“The only thing I was disappointed with was the number of attendees – I thought there would be more artists keen to learn more about participatory arts and improve the quality of what they do.”

A number of changes were made to try to address the low student take-up. Course fees were waived in certain circumstances, particularly for the later courses, to encourage attendance. Some participants who booked free places however – sometimes multiple places - dropped out at short notice, often on the day of the course. Greater flexibility was also introduced to encourage bookings; for example, participants were no longer required to attend the core sessions and could attend only one context-based workshop. This may or may not have encouraged greater student numbers, but consultation feedback from some of the delivery team suggests that this did impact on learning within sessions.

“In every session, there were people who didn’t go to the second one, or hadn’t been to the first, and that (also) impacted on group learning, because there was a lot of inconsistency within the cohort.”

Some delivery specialists highlighted the course marketing as a possible reason for low course take up, both in relation to late marketing and the actual content of the course brochure. Timing in relation to the courses preparation as a whole was also raised as an area of concern by ArtWorks North East.

“My over-riding comment on the practical aspects would be that arrangements were made too late for courses starting in September.”

4. Leadership, roles and communication

Clarity in terms of leadership and roles was raised by a number of people. There was a feeling from some that the programme lacked clear leadership and direction to “set out a well-considered theoretical position within which to contextualise the course”.

“The course has had no innate content structure beyond a (quite vague and generic) ‘handbook’... it feels as though some of the more specific aspects of participatory arts practice have had to be overlooked due to a lack of academic consensus about what ‘strain’ of participatory practices we are focussing on.”

This lack of clarity had a knock-on effect in terms of course design and delivery, with some of the delivery team being unsure of how the programme worked as a whole, which was exacerbated by limited opportunities for delivery specialists to engage in discussion.

“... communication was a little poor to begin with, mainly around what they wanted us to cover in specific settings and how the whole programme linked together.”

Some delivery specialists also commented that more detailed information about students prior to the sessions would have enabled them to plan more effectively for the group.

“... a clearer idea about who the course was aimed at would probably have helped with uptake, structure, aims and outcomes.”

“A little more communication about numbers of people coming to the workshop would have helped... there is a huge difference between ten participants and three participants, especially when your session is practical...”

5. A lack of a consistent academic perspective.

A number of people have suggested that the programme has not had enough of an academic ‘backbone’. ArtWorks North East recognised that: “There were too few academics within the delivery team (this reflects the wider shortage of academics experienced in participatory arts). The co-delivery teams which gelled well were those in which one of the tutors had academic experience.”

6. One size doesn't fit all

Developing and delivering the same content for post-graduate students and undergraduates or artists with very little experience of practical participatory arts did not always work. Some of the more experienced artists wanted – and needed – critical perspectives to help them to conceptualise their practice, whereas less experienced artists often needed more basic activities and more directed instruction. This was an issue that was picked up by both the delivery team and some of the students.

“... Trying to develop a curriculum that was ‘good for everyone’ resulted in something that may have ended up as being too broad, and didn’t speak to people’s varying levels of experience.”

7. Evaluation

A number of people commented that the programme has been ‘evaluation heavy’ – something that some of the students picked up on too. There was resentment in some cases that evaluation ate into the sessions and some said they would have preferred to have completed this work online out-with the workshop sessions. However, at one session where evaluation forms were not handed out, very few responses were received for requests to complete an online evaluation form.

Section 2: Accredited Courses

“Engaging in the ArtWorks short and postgraduate courses has been both interesting and challenging... The knowledge and experience I have gained has and will impact positively on my practice, in turn potentially contributing to the development of and/or my engagement with those with whom I work, i.e. participants, colleagues and students.”

Student feedback

Three students progressed from the core and context-based sessions to the ArtWorks accredited courses: one stage 1 (10 credits); and two post-graduate (30 credits). The course breakdown was as follows:

1. The project proposal (10%);
2. Presentation of the project and associated documentation (30%); and
3. A critical summary (60%).

Although only two students have engaged with the evaluation process - one stage 1 and one post-graduate – the findings are nevertheless valuable in informing future programmes. The main points arising from the consultation are:

- The main difference students appreciated in terms of moving into the accredited element of the course (from the core and context based sessions) was the opportunity to follow their individual and distinct research areas. Students enrolled because they wanted to extend their working practice within specific participatory settings and both felt that the course had significantly moved them forward in this respect: with one reporting that she now had ‘a foot in the door’ within a new working area; and the other that she had significantly progressed with her chosen project.

“Although we’re not delivering arts practice within my chosen research area at the moment, the course has helped me to articulate what that work is and to present it as something for the future.”

- Students were generally positive about the accredited courses, particularly in terms of the support and guidance they received from the academic tutor, although it was felt the course would have benefited from her being appointed earlier, a view shared by the tutor herself.

“The general format was very good – very interactive and led by professional practitioners. I was very well supported by my tutor – communication was good and conversations were fluid and very well informed.”

“(The academic tutor) was appointed late on – the fact that she wasn’t there from the beginning did impact on the course delivery.”

- Both students reported that one of the main highlights of the course was the opportunity to link with new positive networks and to learn outside of their usual working environments. Engagement with specialist practitioners throughout the ArtWorks programme was seen as one of the most positive highlights of the programme.

“High quality engagement with successful practitioners in health care settings through the workshops and seminars was invaluable to the experience of learning about participatory arts in practice, beyond the academic environment; it helped to equip us participants with a real sense of the rewards and challenges of undertaking work with vulnerable people in such complex environments.”

- There was some disappointment that the mentoring and shadowing elements of the accredited courses did not happen formally due to a lack of time, which was seen as a missed opportunity by both the students and the academic tutor. Students did create their own mentors, however, by actively seeking out people who could offer them a fuller insight into their chosen area of interest.

“The shadowing couldn’t happen because of a lack of time which was a shame – it would have been good to explore relevant participatory arts issues in someone else’s space.”

- Students found the demands of the course alongside their day-to-day jobs and/or working practice challenging and whilst there was recognition that this is inevitable, it was felt that more information at the start of the course could have helped them to manage their time and plan more effectively.

“One of the main challenges I faced was doing this alongside my main job. The scope and scale of the course could have been made clearer in the module guide to help students with planning and timetabling.”

- Although generally satisfied with the practical aspects of the accredited courses, students identified two main areas they would like to see addressed for the future:
 - A larger student intake would offer more opportunities for peer-to-peer learning and discussion; and
 - Although access to online resources was felt to be good, some books were not available through inter-library loans and could only be accessed through the university library at Sunderland. Students living and working in other areas found the time and travelling difficult alongside the other demands of the course.

- One student said that she would have valued more information about 'next steps' at regular intervals.

"I have had feedback from my course tutor but its all gone quiet since then – I would have liked more communication about the end result and what happens next."

Feedback from the Academic Tutor

“One of the highlights has been the diversity represented by just three students: inter-disciplinary within working processes with people from different ethnic backgrounds; jazz improvisation with adults; and a puppet project playing a near therapeutic role with children with specific medical conditions and their families.”

The three accredited course students were supported by the academic tutor through face-to-face tutorials, e mail and telephone conversations. The main points arising from telephone and e mail consultation with the academic tutor are:

- There have been a number of highlights to report, including: *“the dedication and passion of some of the tutors involved in ArtWorks”*; the seminars as a *“strong and distinct element of the programme”*; opportunities for dialogue and open discussion; the diversity across the student research areas; and the quality of some of the work.
- One of the main issues raised by the academic tutor was that it would have been helpful if she had been appointed earlier. Although she had the experience to “get up to speed quickly” she felt that earlier engagement would have allowed for greater crossover with the seminar tutors and could have improved overall general communication.

“In relation to my own role, the academic tutor would ideally be fully part of the process from the start of the course and the role would include being part of at least some of the seminars.”

- The seminars were seen as particularly important in this respect. Taking part in one of the seminars to observe a student presenting ideas for discussion in advance of submitting a project proposal for assessment was identified as an element of the assessment process that worked well and something to build into future programmes.

“The seminar discussion... reflected the ethos of community arts in creating spaces for dialogue and open discussion – probably the most valued aspect of the courses from impression gained from my students.”

- The course module was generally thought to be good, although there could be room for one or two areas to be tweaked and the percentage weighting

could be altered, but generally minor things. The course materials, however, were identified as an area to be reviewed - in particular, fuller descriptions of the courses and an assurance that the description in the course module is actually what is delivered. The main example here, which was also identified by the students, was the fact that the shadowing and mentoring elements did not take place due to lack of time.

“I would like to see the mentoring role outlined in the course document play a significant part in the process in supporting students. It could help to reinforce the connection between the ‘real world’ and the academic requirements of the accredited course and create a valuable link between tutor, student and mentor.”

- In terms of the assessment process itself, *“there were one or two issues raised during this pilot year... which seemed typical of any new course”*. One area, also identified by the students, was the potential for more flexibility of deadlines and assessment, for example, for post-graduate students to have additional time over the summer break and assessment to go to a later board.

Section 3: Conclusions and recommendations

“Overall, the short courses have worked well and have provided us with much to consider in terms of future design and delivery of non-accredited and accredited short courses in participatory practice. As is the nature of action research projects, there have been highlights as well as some areas of activity which have been challenging and we’ll be considering these carefully in planning for the future. We’ve welcomed the opportunity to pilot delivery of the courses in cultural venues and to develop our relationships with artists and participants - building on the community of practice in this area in the North East.”

In summing up the information and feedback within this report, it is clear that the ArtWorks North East Pilot Short Courses Programme has resulted in a number of very positive impacts and outcomes. Although not without its challenges, all who have engaged with the programme, from students to course tutors and programme managers, recognise that as a pilot programme, any issues raised should be viewed positively in terms of informing future programmes.

A number of issues raised in the report can be traced back to delays within the short courses design process, which resulted in courses not being validated until mid-July. This had a significant knock-on effect across a range of areas, most notably: the design and distribution of marketing materials which were sent out in early September, very close to the commencement of the courses; the recruitment of the delivery team, which took place during August – again, very close to course start dates and too late to include information about artists and academics delivering courses within the pilot short courses leaflet (although this was included in additional marketing materials); delays in developing the ArtWorks North East website, due to project management time being consumed by the logistics of getting the courses up and running; and perhaps most significantly, the late recruitment of course students, which took place over the summer holidays for courses commencing in September. In the final event, 54 enquiries were received and 30 people booked a place on one or more workshops. Three students went on to undertake the accredited courses; the low take up has been attributed mainly to a combination of the cost, which feedback indicates was too high; and the time commitment for students already working, particularly those in full-time jobs.

Fulfilling the objectives of the programme

The programme has addressed the original programme objectives in the following ways:

1. Develop, pilot and embed training and continuous professional development methods for artists working in participatory settings at all stages of their careers.

There is evidence that the Pilot Short Courses Programme has gone some way to meeting this objective. The programme has resulted in a strong set of workshops exploring participatory arts in the context of six settings, each of which has been well received by the majority of participants in terms of the content and the range of different approaches to delivery. Participants – and the delivery team - have highly valued the opportunities for shared learning through discussion, debate, practical activities and the use of case studies and ‘real life’ example projects. All participants have reported that the workshops they have attended have contributed and/or extended their learning in some way. It should be noted, however, that some participants have felt that some of the workshops have not been ‘pitched’ at the right level for their individual needs. There is clearly some discussion to be had amongst ArtWorks North East and delivery team members to identify how future courses can meet the needs of a broad range of participants’ academic backgrounds, experience levels and career stages.

2. Develop a better understanding of what constitutes quality in participatory work through sharing good practice across artforms and demonstrating positive outcomes.

There is clear evidence that the Pilot Short Courses Programme has contributed significantly to participants’ understanding of quality participatory work across a range of artforms through the core sessions, workshops and seminars. Participants have consistently referred to the high standard of workshop delivery, inspiring case studies, creative practical activities and the value of using ‘real-life’ projects to help to put into context the individual participatory arts settings. Workshop and seminar discussions “*highlighted the dedication and passion of some of the tutors*” and allowed for open discussion between students, practitioners and tutors as to the role and quality of contemporary participatory practice. Although, as has already been highlighted, workshops did not always meet the needs and experience of all participants, the quality of the programme delivery and the effectiveness of the examples and case studies in demonstrating positive outcomes within participatory arts have not been called into question. Following on from this, the element of this area of work to be reviewed and addressed for the future is a programme that shares good practice at a more challenging and theoretical level between academics, arts professionals and practitioners, and course participants who already have a significant amount of experience within their chosen field. This has been highlighted as an area of need within both the workshops programme and the accredited courses, most notably for the latter in terms of the inclusion of opportunities for shadowing and mentoring to allow for more in-depth sharing of good practice in ‘real-work’ settings.

3. Gather, document and disseminate compelling evidence of positive impact.

The planning and development of the pilot workshops has started the process of gathering, documenting and disseminating evidence of positive impact by bringing together information and resources to share with participants – and long term with a wider audience via the ArtWorks North East website. Consultation with both students and the delivery team has highlighted that people would value ongoing access to up-to-date course information and resources, as well as online discussions and blogs, etc. It is clear that a great deal of learning has taken place and that one of the major strengths of the programme has been sharing knowledge and experience across students, academics and practitioners. This has provided a strong body of material which clearly illustrates impact. The challenge now is to identify the most appropriate and effective ways to share information across the participatory arts and academic sectors to extend the impact to wider networks.

Recommendations

“It would be good to know how this community of artists (in participatory arts) is supported and scaffolded – when can it be thought about and talked through?”

Based on the information and feedback received from course students, delivery team members and ArtWorks North East, this report makes the following recommendations.

1. That course leadership and direction is reviewed and addressed to clearly articulate the overall context, aims and objectives of the programme. Consultation with delivery staff, in particular, highlighted a perceived lack of hands-on academic leadership (although the overall course management and administration was thought highly of) and a feeling of ‘fragmentation’ resulting from insufficient planning time between arts specialists and academics. There has been a feeling that this lack of direction filtered down through the course information and could have had a bearing on low participant take-up on courses. This report recommends that structured and facilitated discussion and planning takes place at the earliest opportunity between the delivery team for the next stage of the programme to: resolve any issues; clarify any areas of uncertainty and misunderstanding; review ways in which future sessions can effectively meet differing needs and abilities; address planning and lead-in times across the whole programme; and explore new opportunities to ensure future activity meets its fullest potential for all concerned.
2. That course delivery is reviewed in light of feedback for this report, most notably:
 - The mix of core and context-based sessions - some students did not want to attend the core sessions as they were only interested in learning about a specific context. Furthermore, there was some repetition of content across the two.
 - The delivery of workshop sessions, including the number of tutors delivering a session (which was sometimes thought to be too high); the presentation skills of some of the delivery team; and the right balance of theory, case studies and practical exercises.
3. That planning and lead-in times within any future programme are carefully considered. Many of the issues raised within this report associated with late marketing and low student numbers are directly attributable to the length of time required to design the pilot short courses, which meant that they weren’t validated until mid-July 2013. This had a significant knock-on effect in terms of recruitment of the delivery team, development of marketing materials and student enrolments, which took place too close to the commencement of the courses. It is recommended that planning for future programmes takes into account:

- the need for marketing and promotional material to be disseminated well in advance of the start of the programme to encourage greater course take-up from students;
 - the need to appoint course delivery specialists, including the academic tutor, at the earliest stages to allow for the greatest possible interaction across the various stages and elements of the programme and amongst academic specialists and practitioners; and
 - the need to allow sufficient time to ensure that all elements outlined within the course outlines and modules are delivered.
- 4.** That course materials and marketing are reviewed in light of consultation feedback presented within this report, most notably:
- that course outlines include comprehensive information about content and delivery specialists, in order that potential students can ensure they are attending courses pitched at the right level for their experience and areas of interest;
 - that course information clearly indicates the time requirements from students and includes a schedule with key dates to assist students to manage courses alongside any existing commitments; and
 - that an end-of-year module review is introduced to identify and address any issues around post-graduate assessment in particular.
- 5.** That the practicalities of the programme are reviewed in line with the comments and suggestions made within this report, most notably:
- that workshop and course costs are reviewed: feedback from freelance artists suggests that some were dissuaded from registering on accredited courses because of the course fees; even the £25 fee for non-accredited courses was regarded as too high by several artists.
 - that workshop sessions are reduced in length from 3 hours to no more than 2.5 hours;
 - that any venues are visited in advance to ensure they fully meet the needs of the programme activities in terms of equipment and facilities, parking and transport links and the availability of food;
 - that pre-programme consultation takes place with potential course participants to ascertain the most appropriate way/s to deliver workshops, e.g. during the day, evenings, a combination of both, in blocks, etc;
 - that programme information is produced and circulated at least two months in advance of workshops taking place;
 - that an effective system is put into place to offer potential participants the opportunity to discuss workshop/course content to ensure a full 'fit' with individual needs; and
 - that course materials are fully and easily available to students, including books and other printed materials.
- 6.** That appropriate information is collected from students and disseminated amongst delivery specialists at the earliest planning stages in order that workshop development can address any differences in knowledge, experience and career

stages. Only at this stage can decisions be made as to whether one session can meet the needs of all participants or whether more of a tiered learning approach will need to be explored and developed for some workshop areas.

- 7.** That time allocations and fees to artists are reviewed to ensure that all preparation, delivery and meeting time is fully covered within payments. This should take into account and include payments for time spent after workshops, for example preparing follow-up resources, post-workshop e mail and/or telephone contact with participants, etc.
- 8.** That the ways in which the evaluation of the courses takes place is discussed and reviewed as part of the market research, in particular, whether participants would prefer (and/or be more likely) to submit feedback online as opposed to as part of workshop sessions.
- 9.** That course participants and the delivery team are circulated with information that clearly set out 'next steps'. A number of people have said that they would value: regular access to key dates and deadlines; feedback from any student-submitted course materials and assessments; and knowing about any networks and/or initiatives that have come about as a result of the Pilot short Courses programme.

Section 4: Appendices

APPENDIX 1: Next steps

In terms of next steps for ArtWorks North East, the following plans are underway for pilot short courses (accredited and non-accredited) and the overall programme:

- Following on from the pilot short courses, a one-day introductory workshop in participatory arts in partnership has been developed with The Cultural Spring Creative People and Places project in Sunderland and South Shields. This free one-day workshop will enable participants to:
 - Understand the role of the participatory artist and the development of participatory practice
 - Learn about working in two specific contexts – community and youth work settings
 - Explore how to communicate ideas in community and youth work settings, build relationships and understand group dynamics
 - Refine their project management skills
 - Find out about resources available on our website www.artworks-u.org.uk to help develop their participatory practice.

The workshop, which will take place on 10 June 2014 at The Customs House in South Shields, will include hands-on activities, networking and opportunities to ask questions and share practice in an informal setting. The day is aimed at emerging artists working or aspiring to work in community and youth work settings, artists interested in refreshing their knowledge of participatory arts and looking to make new connections with artists.

The presenters will be: Alison O'Hara (project management), Dave Camlin (what is participatory arts, history and dialogic approach), Donna Tonkinson (community settings) and Tommy Anderson (youth work settings). Dave, Donna and Tommy all taught on the pilot short courses. Artists will be paid from ArtWorks North East and The Cultural Spring is providing in-kind support for venue hire and will provide refreshments. Initially, ten artists involved with The Cultural Spring have been invited with the offer of up to £40 towards their expenses (paid for by The Cultural Spring).

- Discussions are taking place with: Bait, the Creative People and Places project in South East Northumberland; the Creative People and Places project in Durham to explore mutual opportunities; and inclusion of a session on participatory practice within modules at Sunderland University (based on the introduction to participatory arts full-day workshop).

- The ArtWorks North East management team is leading on a campaign to influence subject benchmarks. The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) subject benchmark statements set out expectations for the standards of degrees in a range of subject areas. They describe what give each subject discipline its coherence and identity and define what can be expected of a graduate in terms of the abilities needed to develop understanding or competence in the subject. They refer to two sets of skills: subject knowledge and skills and generic intellectual and transferable skills.

The QAA publishes and regularly reviews its benchmark statements. They are not described as a national curriculum but as a set of statements which allow for flexibility and innovation in programme design within an overall conceptual framework established by an academic subject community. It helps academics involved in programme design, delivery and review and is of interest to prospective students seeking information about the nature and standards of awards in a subject area. In other words, academics in higher education have to show that they are developing their programmes with these benchmark statements at the heart of the content and standards.

Benchmark statements are published for both undergraduate programmes and masters. Those of particular interest to the ArtWorks project are Dance, drama and performance, Art and design; Communication, media, film and cultural studies; and Music. The statements could influence potential curriculum content in ArtWorks' area of research.

The management team has drafted text re participatory practice (narrative and subject specific knowledge and understanding, attributes and skills) and evidence of demand drawn from the recent ArtWorks artists' survey for potential inclusion in the subject benchmarks. The aim is to influence inclusion of the text in the benchmarks and for this to form a co-ordinated campaign. The Standing Conference of University Drama Departments and the National Association of Music in Higher Education have been contacted for potential support. Paul Kleiman of the Higher Education Academy has also been contacted and the team are awaiting his response.

APPENDIX 2: Course profile and student evaluation scores

1.1 Participant profile

17 baseline questionnaires were completed by participants indicate that:

- learners have been predominantly female (70%), of White UK origin and none have disabilities or life-limiting illnesses;
- the largest proportion of learners was in the 16-25 (41%) and 46-55 (35%) age ranges. Participants in the 26-35 and 36-45 age ranges each made up 12% of the total course number;
- the Visual Arts was the most popular area of working practice amongst participants (60%); with Cross-Arts making up 23% of participants; and Drama, Media and Music making up around 6% each; and
- the majority of participants (63%) had limited experience of working in arts in participatory settings; 19% each had either no experience or were experienced.

1.2 Evaluation scores

The mean average score from 18 students in relation to the extent to which the programme has met their expectations when enrolling was 4.38 (out of 5).

Participants gave the following ratings (out of a maximum of 5) in terms of their overall satisfaction with the programme of pilot short courses: 4.27 for course times; 4.33 for course venues; 4.44 for course delivery; and 4.38 for course content.

1.3 Core sessions

Analysis of 10 completed evaluation forms for the **core sessions** show that the mean average score (out of a maximum of 5) was:

- 4.3 for the extent to which participants felt that the core sessions had *increased their knowledge and understanding of core principles underpinning participatory arts practice*; and
- 4.1 for the extent to which participants felt that the core sessions had *increased their knowledge and core skills in relation to developing, designing and managing their own projects*.

1.4 Context based sessions

Analysis of 22 completed evaluation questionnaires across all of the **context-based sessions** show the following mean average scores (out of 5):

- 4.47 for the extent to which participants agreed that the sessions they had attended had *increased their understanding around the role and context of artists in the relevant participatory setting*;
- 3.95 for the extent to which participants agreed that the sessions they had attended had *increased their ability and confidence to deliver a coherent project within the relevant setting*;
- 3.76 for the extent to which participants agreed that the sessions they had attended had *increased their skills and ability to clearly present and communicate ideas*;

- 3.71 for the extent to which participants agreed that the sessions they had attended *had increased their practical skills in how to facilitate groups and activities*; and
- 4.18 for the extent to which participants agreed that the sessions they had attended *increased their knowledge and understanding of the practical issues and requirements associated with developing and delivering projects in the relevant setting*.

1.5 Student scores for individual context-based sessions

1.5.1 YOUTH: The mean average score from six students attending the Youth Work sessions in relation to what extent their original expectations had been met was 4.5.

The Youth Work context based sessions were given the following participant ratings (out of a maximum of 5): 4.16 for course times; 4.5 for course venues; 4.5 for course delivery; and 4.66 for course content.

Students were asked to rate their agreement in relation to five areas of impact on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 equals completely disagree and 5 equals completely agree):

- The mean average score was 4.8 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their understanding around the role and context of artists in Youth Work settings.
- The mean average score was 4.5 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their confidence to deliver a coherent project within Youth Work settings.
- The mean average score was 4.16 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their skills and ability to clearly present and communicate ideas.
- The mean average score was 4 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their practical skills in how to facilitate groups and activities.
- The mean average score was 4.66 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their knowledge and understanding of the practical issues and requirements associated with developing and delivering projects in Youth Work settings.

1.5.2 COMMUNITY: The mean average score from two students attending the Community sessions in relation to what extent their original expectations had been met was 4.5.

The Community context based sessions were given the following participant ratings (out of a maximum of 5): 4.0 for course times; 3.5 for course venues; 4.0 for course delivery; and 4.0 for course content.

Students were asked to rate their agreement in relation to five areas of impact on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 equals completely disagree and 5 equals completely agree):

- The mean average score was 4.0 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their understanding around the role and context of artists in Community settings.
- The mean average score was 3.5 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their confidence to deliver a coherent project within Community settings.
- The mean average score was 2.5 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their skills and ability to clearly present and communicate ideas.
- The mean average score was 3.5 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their practical skills in how to facilitate groups and activities.
- The mean average score was 3.5 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their knowledge and understanding of the practical issues and requirements associated with developing and delivering projects in Community settings.

1.5.3 HEALTH: The mean average score from five students attending the Health sessions in relation to what extent their original expectations had been met was 3.8.

The Health context based sessions were given the following participant ratings: 4 for course times; 4.4 for course venues; 4.8 for course delivery; and 4.4 for course content.

Participants rated the content and the extent to which the

- The mean average score was 4.4 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their understanding around the role and context of artists in Health settings.
- The mean average score was 4.6 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their confidence to deliver a coherent project within Health settings.
- The mean average score was 4.4 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their skills and ability to clearly present and communicate ideas.

- The mean average score was 4.6 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their practical skills in how to facilitate groups and activities.
- The mean average score was 3.8 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their knowledge and understanding of the practical issues and requirements associated with developing and delivering projects in Health settings.

1.5.4 CRIMINAL JUSTICE: The mean average score from four students attending the Criminal Justice sessions in relation to what extent their original expectations had been met was 4.75.

The Criminal Justice context based sessions were given the maximum rating of 5 for course times, course venues and course delivery. Course content received a mean average score of 4.75.

- The mean average score was 4.75 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their understanding around the role and context of artists in Criminal Justice settings.
- The mean average score was 3.5 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their confidence to deliver a coherent project within Criminal Justice settings.
- The mean average score was 4.0 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their skills and ability to clearly present and communicate ideas.
- The mean average score was 4.25 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their practical skills in how to facilitate groups and activities.
- The mean average score was 4.5 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their knowledge and understanding of the practical issues and requirements associated with developing and delivering projects in Criminal Justice settings.

1.5.5 EDUCATION: The score from the one student attending the Education session who completed the evaluation form in relation to what extent their original expectations had been met was 4.

The Education session was given a score of 5 for course times; course venues; course delivery; and course content.

The student was asked to rate their agreement in relation to five areas of impact on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 equals completely disagree and 5 equals completely agree):

- The score was 5.0 for the extent to which participant felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their understanding around the role of artists in Education projects.
- The score was 4.0 for the extent to which participant felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their confidence to deliver a coherent Education project.

- The score was 4.0 for the extent to which the participant felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their skills and ability to clearly present and communicate ideas.
- The score was 4.0 for the extent to which the participant felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their practical skills in how to facilitate groups and activities.
- The score was 4.0 for the extent to which the participant felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their knowledge and understanding of the practical issues and requirements associated with developing and delivering an Education project.

1.5.6 CROSS CONTEXTUAL: The mean average score from four students attending the cross-contextual sessions in relation to what extent their original expectations had been met was 4.66.

The Cross-Contextual sessions were given the following participant ratings: 3 for course times; 4.33 for course venues; 3.66 for course delivery; and 3.66 for course content.

Students were asked to rate their agreement in relation to five areas of impact on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 equals completely disagree and 5 equals completely agree):

- The mean average score was 3.66 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their understanding around the role of artists in cross-contextual projects.
- The mean average score was 4.0 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their confidence to deliver a coherent cross-contextual project.
- The mean average score was 3.5 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their skills and ability to clearly present and communicate ideas.
- The mean average score was 3.75 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their practical skills in how to facilitate groups and activities.
- The mean average score was 4.25 for the extent to which participants felt that the sessions they had attended had increased their knowledge and understanding of the practical issues and requirements associated with developing and delivering a cross-contextual project.

APPENDIX 3: Student Case Studies

Case Study 1: Undergraduate with limited experience

Reasons for enrolling/expectations

"I have started to become involved in participatory arts and hope to build experience in the next 2 years while completing my degree and eventually work within this field. I hope to gain relevant knowledge and skills to help me towards that goal."

Personal highlights

"The sessions gave me a good understanding of the range and scope of participatory arts within a community setting – I did have limited experience – I was about to run my first workshops. The core session I attended helped me to understand how closely related my project management and facilitation skills were – and wholly transferable (although based in business analysis/IT requirements over 20 years in the civil service) and that with my fine art practice (currently undertaking the 3rd year of the BA Fine art degree on a p/t basis over 2 years) I have a good foundation to build on – which gave me the confidence for the first workshops. I would say they were pitched at the right level – the format was really people working in this field talking about their practice in the community and examples of the projects they'd undertaken."

Progression: How I will use what I have learned as a result of engaging with the Pilot Short Courses Programme.

"I'd just joined Dot to Dot Active Arts CIC when I started the course – I've got more involved with them and I'm going on a dementia awareness training session with them and looking for more opportunities to run workshops, etc. to gain experience. I've kept contacts from other attendees at the sessions – I haven't reached out to them yet largely due to my schedule... but hope to now in the New Year."

"I've increased my overall knowledge of participatory arts and want to know more – I haven't gone on to any of the other courses just because of where I am in my current degree but would consider this course as a stand-alone or if it was incorporated into an MA. I'm going to look at how artists use participation in their own work for my dissertation for my BA to further my learning"

Have your expectations been met?

"Being new to this area I hadn't appreciated the breadth and scope of participatory arts and that there were so many people out there undertaking such interesting projects. It gives me hope as I transition my career that there are opportunities, many of my own making, out there to bring art and involvement out into the community and possibly earn a living from it too!"

Case Study 2: Emerging artist with limited experience

Reasons for enrolling

“I have skills and experience in applying my own work as a theatre director/practitioner to participatory settings but my training is in my area of skill as an artist and that can only take me so far... I need more knowledge and experience in participatory arts as a specialism.”

Personal highlights

“The second Community session was a brilliant session and I got a lot out of it. The mix of practitioners, combined with a mixed approach to the session content – some formal content, some practical delivery and lots of meaningful reflection and conversation worked well. I felt like I could be challenged appropriately with the other participants that were there and it felt like more of a collaborative approach rather than ‘practitioners and participants’. I could have worked with that group of people for the whole week and explored a lot more that could help me properly develop my practice.”

Issues/areas to address

“A lot of the sessions didn’t allow enough space or time, or facilitate the right environment to engage in challenging discussions and reflection on our own practice and learning with the other participants and practitioners. When we did start discussion in smaller groups or pairs we had so much to share and so much to provoke wide conversations within the groups but these opportunities felt halted and were often the most useful part of the session but weren’t allowed space to go further and become meaningful to influence my learning.”

Progression: How I will use what I have learned as a result of engaging with the Pilot Short Courses Programme.

“I have looked at accreditation but the money and the time commitment are both issues for me. Also – is accreditation what I need? No – it’s more about engaging with other practitioners and networking. I didn’t know any of the other participants before joining the programme but as a result of the sessions I’ve attended I’m now looking at the possibility of some shadowing at Sage Gateshead.”

Have your expectations been met?

“I did get a lot from the core and community sessions... (but) I found last week’s (Youth Work 1) session a little disappointing and felt that it was not a specialist youth work session and also not aimed at developing practice but more for people starting their practice in this context.”

Case Study 3: Postgraduate artist with experience of working in participatory settings (Accredited – 30 credits)

Overview

“Engaging in the ArtWorks short courses and postgrad has been both interesting and challenging. I’ve valued the debate and contribution of the arts and academic practitioners who have led workshops as well as the support from my tutor... There has been little that I haven’t valued in terms of meeting people and revising areas of work – all very refreshing – and useful in widening out my network of practitioners.”

Personal highlights

“The programme has encouraged and facilitated networking, discussion and the sharing of good practice between like-minded people in a physical space, which has been a luxury. People in this field of work are busy – we don’t often get the chance to meet together all in one space to spend focussed time thinking and talking about our working practice. There has also been some informal networking after the sessions, which has allowed me to share information and engage in dialogue on an ongoing basis.”

Issues/areas to address

“In terms of the overall course content, although interesting and enjoyable, I would appreciate more academic contribution married with opportunities to debate, test and consider such content...”

“The Youth Work sessions and resources could have been stronger – they were less rooted and grounded in practice and theory and didn’t cover youth leadership. I started out as a youth worker so I found the sessions frustrating in that they didn’t accurately reflect the theory and working practices... I would appreciate ‘deeper’ underpinning of ethics, principles, frameworks and theory/related policy/more opportunity to benefit from the skills and experience in the room. More up-to-date resources re Youth Work in the reading list, including reference to recognised theorists, i.e. texts.”

Progression – how I will use what I have learned/gained within my working practice.

“My interest was in meeting practitioners and hearing about other areas of work. I’ve already followed up some of the contacts I’ve made in the sessions – we’re exploring the possibility of a future work collaboration involving students... The knowledge and experience I’ve gained has – and will – impact positively on my practice, in turn potentially contributing to the development of and/or engagement with those with whom I work.”