



Local Voices Creative Choices



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



SCALA

FESTIVAL OF PLAY

Presented by Scala.
Part of the Local Voices Creative Choices programme.

2026 Festival Dashboard Contents

1. Festival headlines
2. Impact
 - Programme measures
 - Reach
 - Co-creation / engagement
 - School sessions
 - Volunteers & feedback
3. Surveys & feedback
 - Audience
 - Schools
 - Artist
4. Summary
 - Progress against programme measures



Key Observations

- Families praised the variety of free creative activities for all children's age groups
- The atmosphere was family-friendly, festival like and colourful
- Approach to access and inclusion is recognised by audience, creatives, volunteers, schools and co-creation participants
- The festival was well managed with positive comments for staff and volunteer support
- SEND schools praise approach to access and inclusion and positive impact on students
- Audience postcodes show a strong local footprint
- Co-creation predominantly took place on the day (not prior to the event) with high levels of participation and engagement
- Opportunities to improve promotion, on the day signage and communication of activities, food offer and pre-event co-creation with community groups
- Already making good progress against programme measures



Impact



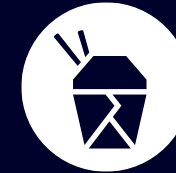
Impact: Key Programme Measures FOP 2026



1 installations
3 performances
18 creative activities



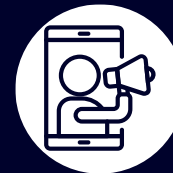
11 emerging
creatives



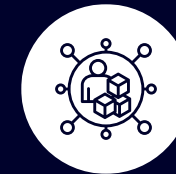
1 food trader



44 artists and creatives



3 student
placements



13 community
organisations involved



8 co-created
works/activities
1,888 co-creation
participants



13 volunteers
75 volunteer hours



8 SEND school sessions
150 students



1 film-maker
1 photographer



4 production team
members



86 Survey responses
3 MSC

Impact: Audience Festival of Play 2026



6,150 estimated footfall
2000+ more footfall at The Hive



1 installation
3 performances
18 creative activities



654,712 digital / social reach
5690 FOP website page views



Countywide advertising via news releases,
posters, flyers, digital screens and websites



647 maps downloaded
2000 maps distributed



8 school sessions
150 students



30,714 total social video
views



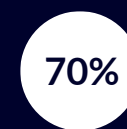
4 radio interviews
25 articles

Impact: Survey Headlines

Audience:

-  Heard about the festival through word of mouth (28%) and posters and banners (18%).
-  Said the festival made them feel happy.
-  Said the festival was either very inclusive or inclusive.
-  Said the range of activities was either very good or good.
-  Would be interested in attending another festival

Artist Survey:

-  New artworks/activities/performance.
-  Felt supported in delivering their artworks/activities/performance
-  Follow an environmental policy.
-  Of artists felt the community engaged 'very well' with their activity/performance (rather than co-creation question)

Impact: Co-creation & Engagement

- Co-creation before the festival
- Co-creation (mass) at the festival
- Engagement at the festival

8

Co-created activities/performances

13

Community organisations involved

1888

Co-creation workshop participants
(*plus 200 wishes)

Activity	Participants	No.s	Sessions	
Dancefest Flashmob	Call out for dancers	30	6	
The Brave Ones	Rogueplay Youth Company	10	5	
Messy Mural - The Artery	Fort Royal, Regency, community	1150	2 days	SEND
Wall of Happiness	Community Group	100	1 day	
Wish Ties / Dreamcatchers	Fort Royal School, Regency, Community	200	2 days	SEND
Positive Ribbon Affirmations	Fort Royal School Visit	250	1 day	SEND
Woodlands Tribe	Dinesfest	78	1 day	IMD 1&2
Easter co-creation with emerging artists	Dinesfest	70	1 day	IMD 1&2
The Wishing Tree	Festival	*200 ish		

SEND Schools Sessions



Impact: SEND School Sessions

2 2 schools

8 Sessions = 2 half days for 4 groups

150 Students total

56 Workshops throughout the school day

7 Activities: drumming, circus, messy mural, wish ties, wishing tree, open theatre, hula and a quiet space

8 All 8 teacher responses said they /students would like to come again



What they said:

Strengths:

- Schools praised the management, organisation and general accessibility and range of suitable activities
- Students visibly enjoyed the event with many wanting to come back again
- Staff / facilitator engagement with pupils was well received

Areas for improvement:

- Some suggestions to consider fine motor skills abilities and challenges around communication and independent access to activities
- Opportunity to carry out co-creation with schools pre event: *“Really enjoyed it. Could they come into school to deliver workshops?”* Regency High School

“The bus ride back to school was noisy and excitable as they all chatted about their favourite parts of their day. They were literally buzzing. ... Staff were really impressed with the organisation, choice of activities and the manner in which everyone involved in the delivery of the festival engaged with our students. It really was super. I was asked if we could go again by multiple students ” Regency High School

“They absolutely LOVED it – every aspect. Open Theatre brought out some students in a way their teachers had never seen.” Regency High School

“They really enjoyed the event, they engaged well and were inquisitive when exploring the resources provided.” Fort Royal School

“...some found it tricky making the dream catchers and ‘writing’ their wishes down.” Fort Royal School

Impact: Volunteers

13 Volunteers (including students)

75 volunteer hours

Volunteer comments focus in inclusivity:

"I was keen to volunteer for the Festival of Play as it aligned closely with my developing identity as a theatre-maker and facilitator. The festival's emphasis on creativity, inclusivity, accessibility, and community engagement reflects many of the values that underpin my own practice."

"I saw that Scala was going to be an inclusive theatre, and knew I wanted to be a part of what you do in whatever way I can."



Surveys



Survey: Responses

- Audience – 73
- Artists – 13
- Most Significant Change – 3

Responses:

89

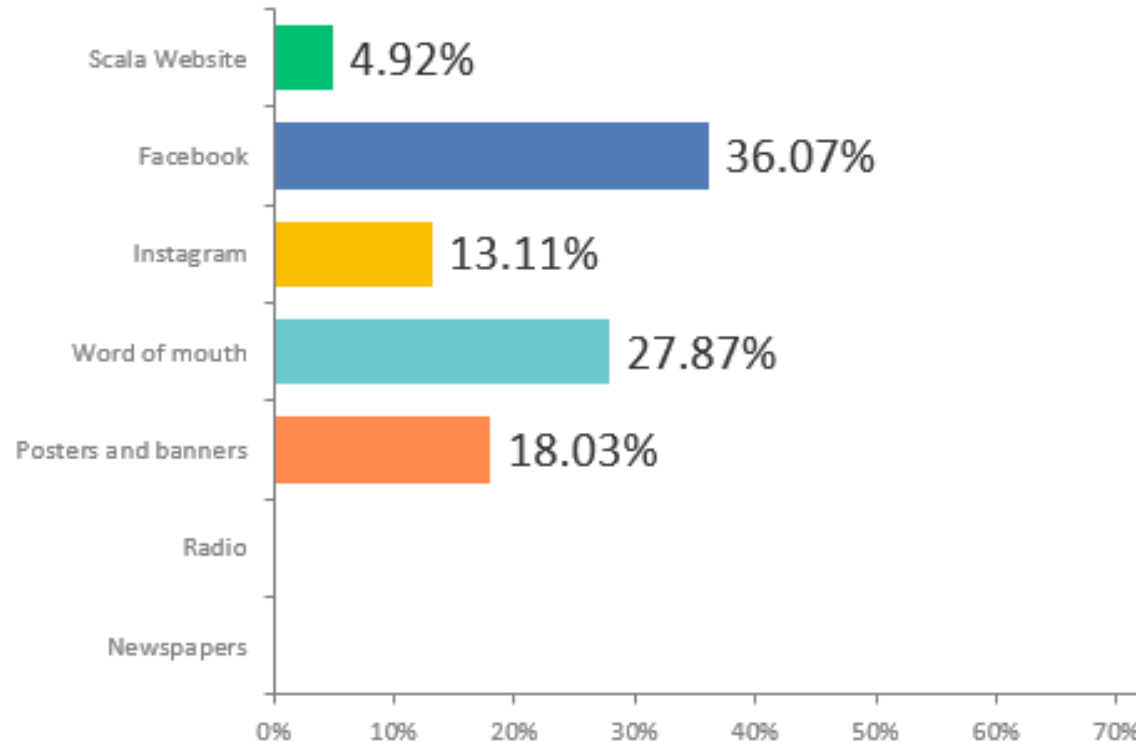


Q1: How did you hear about today's festival/event?

Answered: 61 Skipped: 12

37%

Heard about the festival
through Facebook.

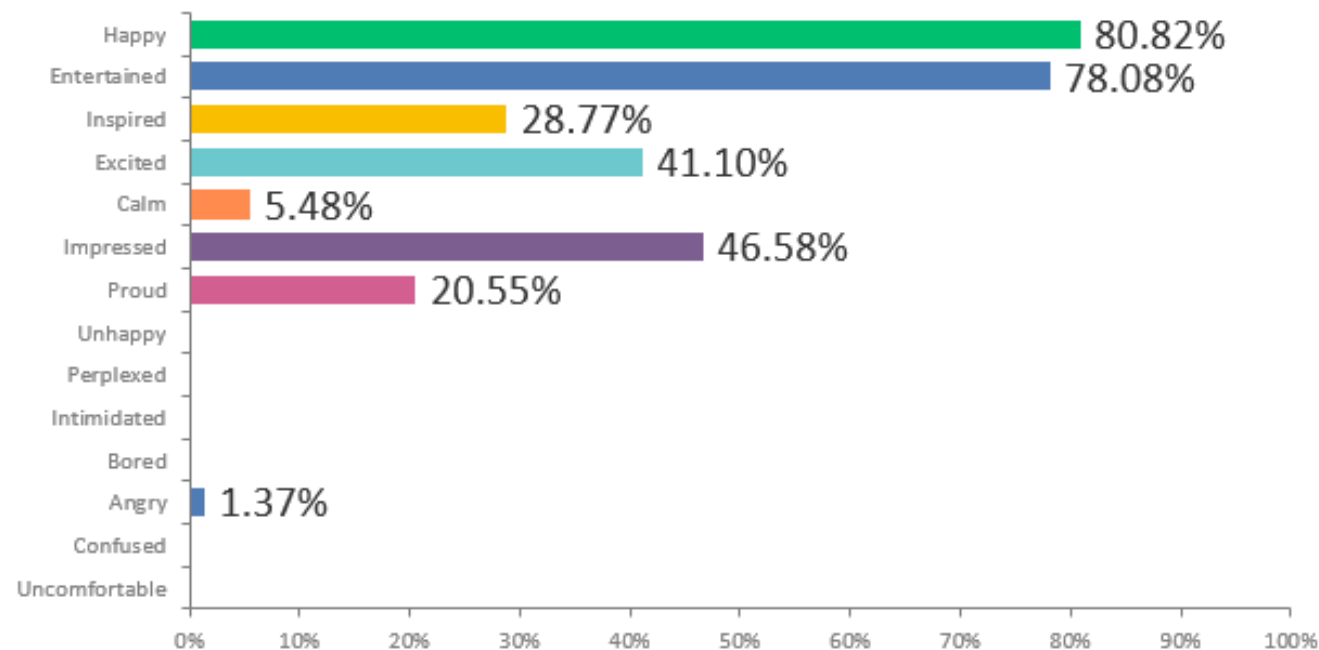


Additional free text comments:

- LVCC partner organisation (incl. DanceFest)
- What's on in St Johns booklet
- Google/Al search

Q2: How did Festival of Play make you feel? Tick all that apply.

Answered: 73 Skipped: 0



80%

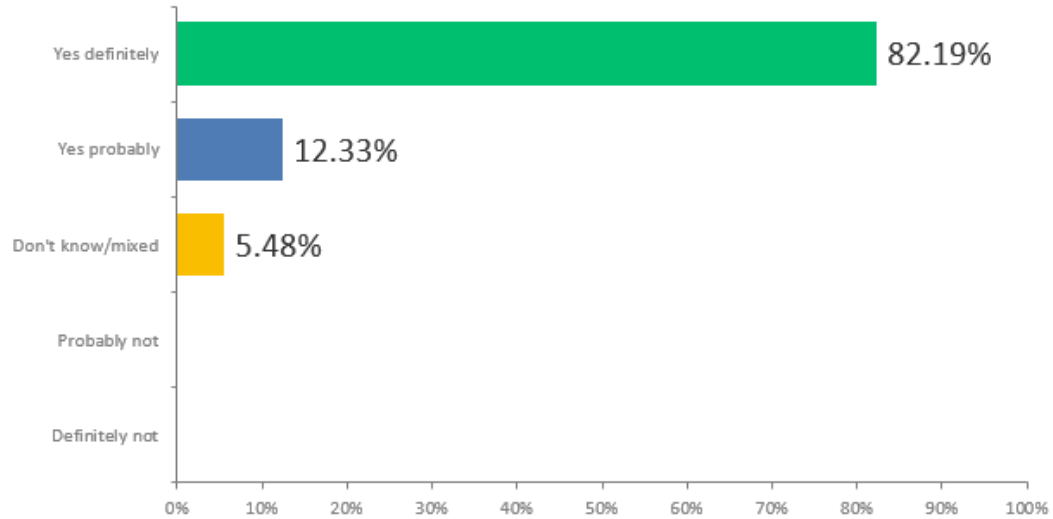
Said of respondents said they felt 'happy'

Additional free text comments:

- Intrigued
- Relaxed

Q3: Did Festival of Play feel well managed?

Answered: 73 Skipped: 0

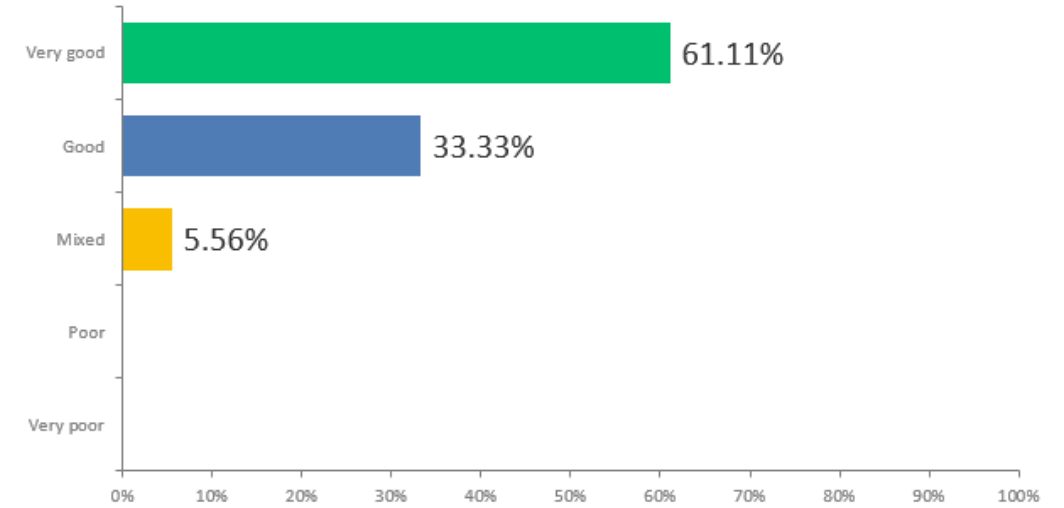


94%

Felt the festival was 'definitely' (%) or 'probably' (%) well managed.

Q4: What did you think of the range of activities at Festival of Play?

Answered: 72 Skipped: 1



94%

Felt the range of activities was 'very good' or 'good'.

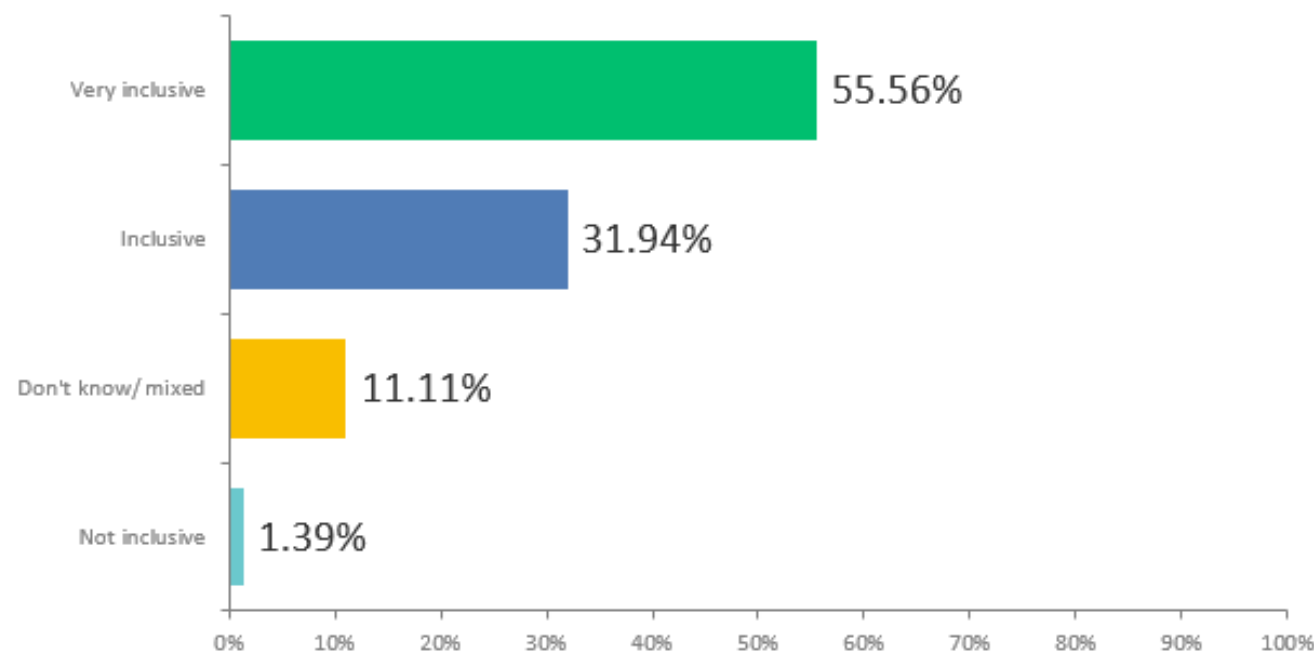
- Generally positive comments such as: "Lots of options for all ages, fun and inspiring things to do" "There's something for all tastes (crafts, music, gaming, stories"
- One comments suggests there were less opportunities for older children.
- Another suggests longer activity running times and disappointment that specific acts (Spider man and Rumi) weren't present.

86%

Said the festival was either very inclusive or inclusive.

Q5: How inclusive did the Festival of Play feel to you?

Answered: 72 Skipped: 1

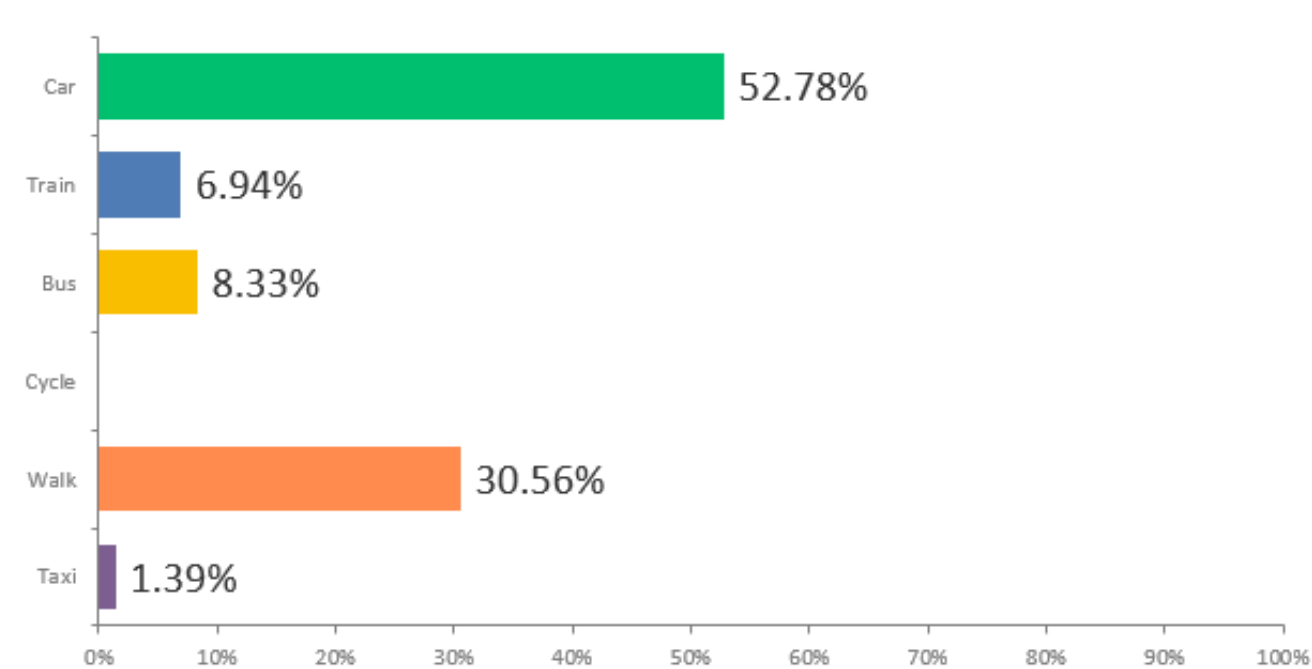


Additional free text comments:

- *Comments praise the variety of activity, staff, disability access and sensory area.*
- *Competing music and drumming was too loud for some with hearing loss.*
- *More signage might be helpful.*
- *People appreciated the sensory/quiet zone but commented the smell of the was strong.*
- *"Suggest involving Worcester Snoezelen for people with more complex disabilities to take part"*

Q6: How did you travel here today?

Answered: 72 Skipped: 1

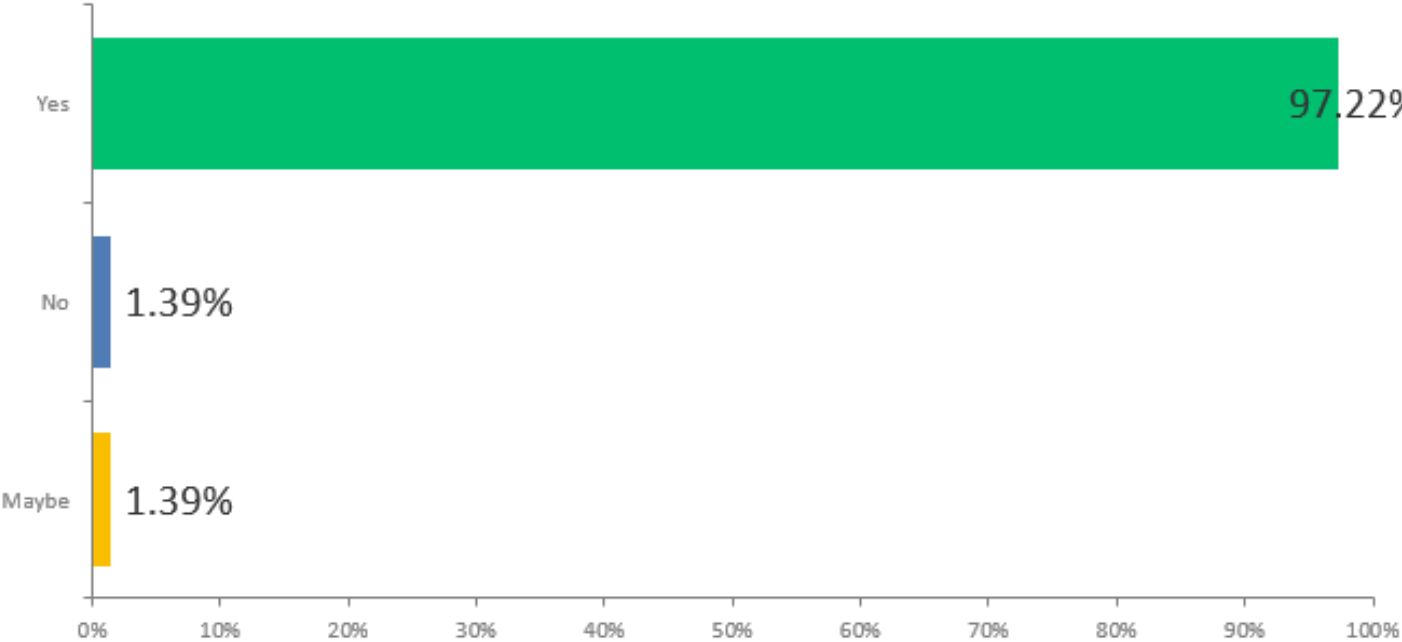


31% Walking was the second most popular method of transport

15% Used public transport (train or bus)

Q8: Would you be interested in attending another festival or event in Worcester's Creative Quarter (e.g. The Arches, The Hive, Angel Place, Scala) or other city centre venues?

Answered: 72 Skipped: 1



97%

Would be interested in attending another festival

Q8 Any other feedback? (free text summary)

Majority =
positive sentiment

Strengths:

- Family friendly and suitable for all ages
- An 'amazing', 'awesome', 'brilliant', 'fabulous', 'wonderful' and 'inspirational' event.
- Wide range of activities with something for all ages groups and interests.
- A positive, festival like and colorful atmosphere / energy.
- Praise for a creative, free and family-orientated events and calls for it to become an annual event.
- Organisation, management and lovely staff.

Areas for improvement/recommendations:

- Lack of advertising pre-event
- Unclear signage and event information on the day
- Hot weather needed more shade
- More food trucks / options
- Activities where children could take something home

What People Said:

"It's really good for the community"

"A wonderful child-friendly event with a great atmosphere"

"Really good atmosphere. Grandkids said it was the best day ever."

"Absolutely lovely event, thank you for putting this on. My 7- & 5-year-old daughters thoroughly enjoyed attending... I sincerely hope you continue to do this each year as we loved it. Now off to get a few hula hoops. All the best :)"

"Great job by the organisers. I am really impressed."



"We had a fabulous day with our 5-year-old Grandson"

"This was awesome! Well done for organising."

"We arrived just after 3 and we felt like it was wrapping up already. We'd tried to avoid crowds and the peak of the hot but think we missed most of the fun. Didn't see any signage for the UV sensory tree. Only sound out about it after via socials."

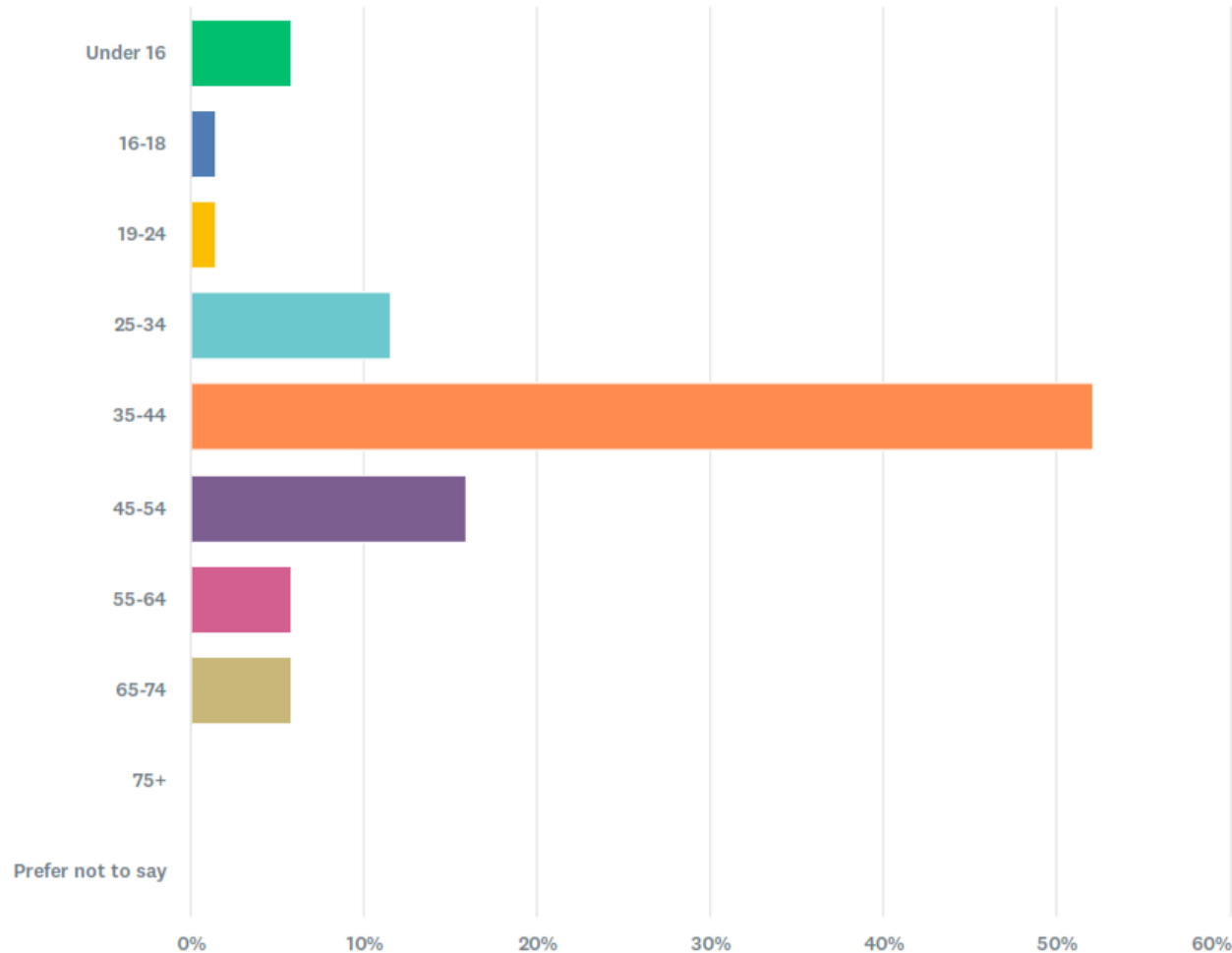
"What a great festival! Our 4-year-old had a smashing time; there was so much to do and really lovely to see art properly back in events."

Survey Demographics

Survey – Demographics

Q10 69 responses

What is your age?

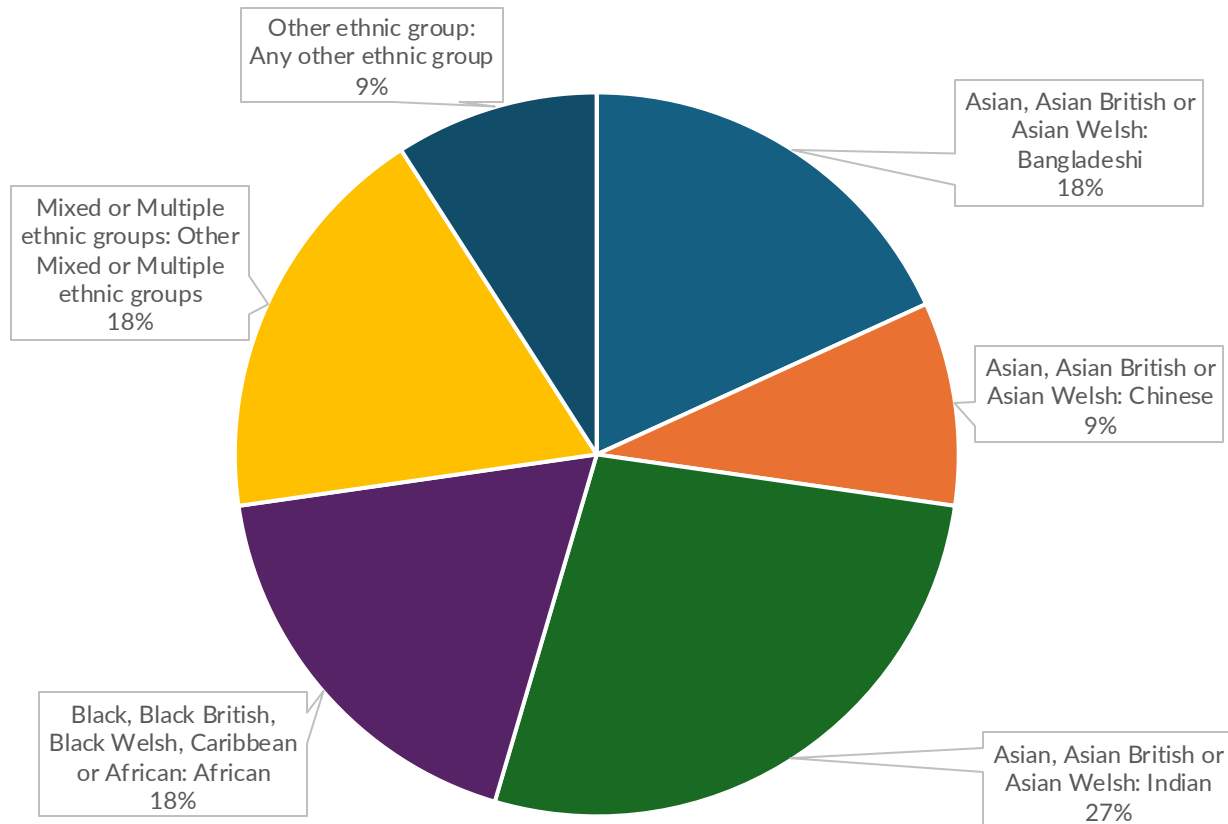


- Respondents predominantly reflect family group
- Caution: Skewed by parents filling out the survey (note, different question needed about family members?)
- Much higher proportion of 35-44s than BOL

Survey – Demographics

Q10 With which ethnicity do you identify with?

74% White English/NIrish/Scottish/Welsh, White Irish, White Other



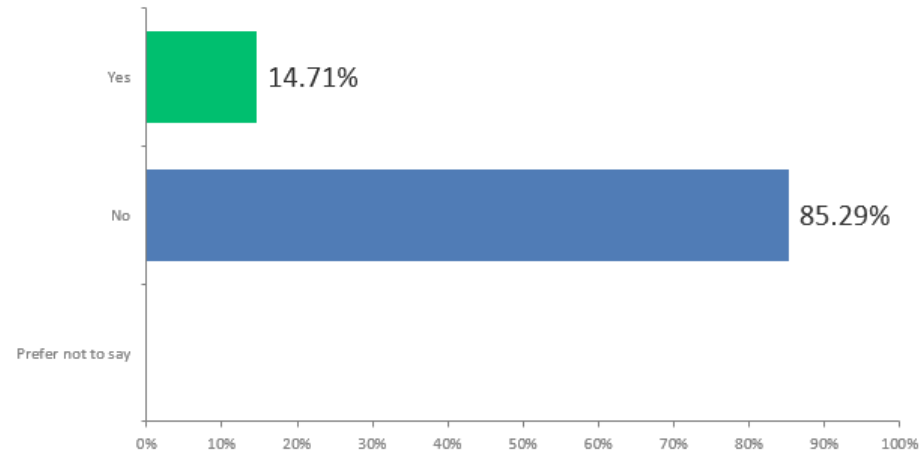
- 74% White English/NIrish/Scottish/Welsh, White Irish, White Other
- Bridges of Light (94.6% white)
- Pie chart shows remaining selected ethnicities

Survey – Demographics

- 15% identify as D/deaf, disabled or having a LTHC
- 13% identify as neurodivergent

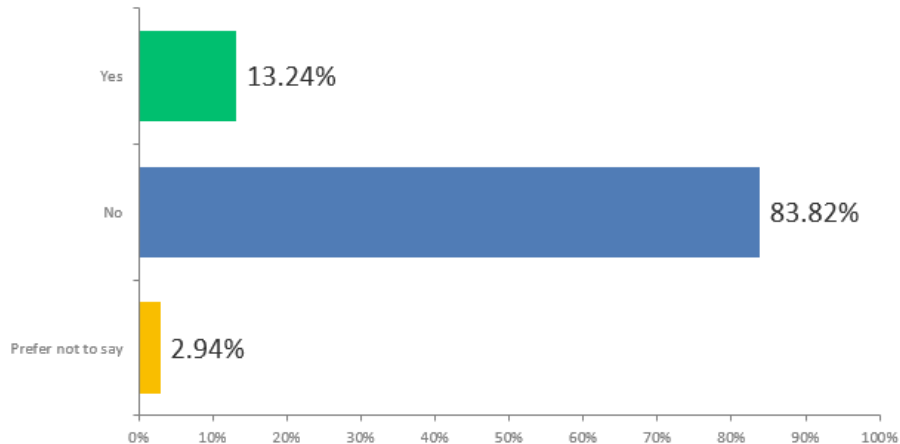
Q12: Do you identify as D/deaf, disabled or have a long term health condition?

Answered: 68 Skipped: 5



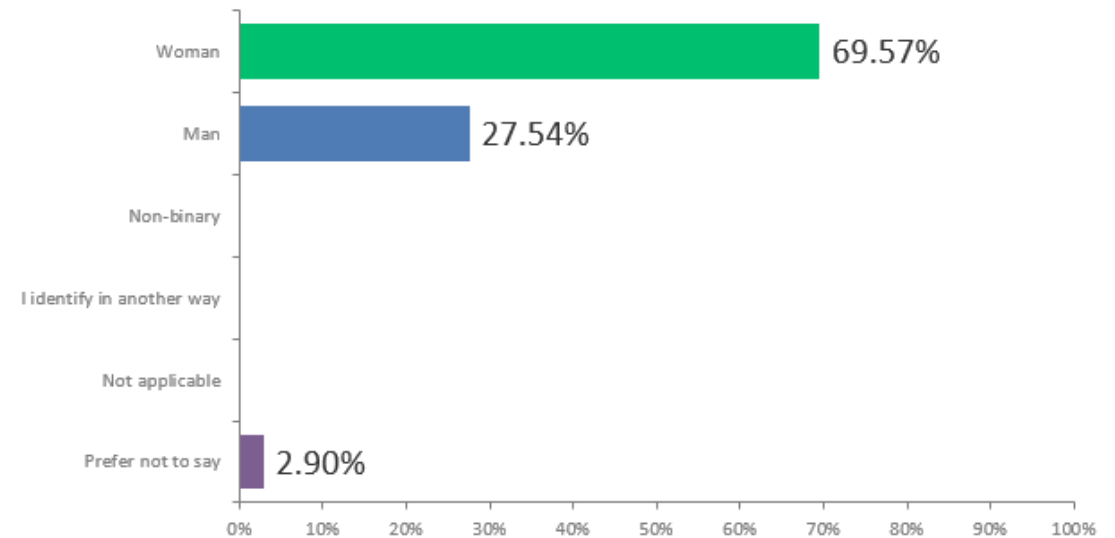
Q13: Do you identify as neurodivergent?

Answered: 68 Skipped: 5



Q15: What is your gender identity?

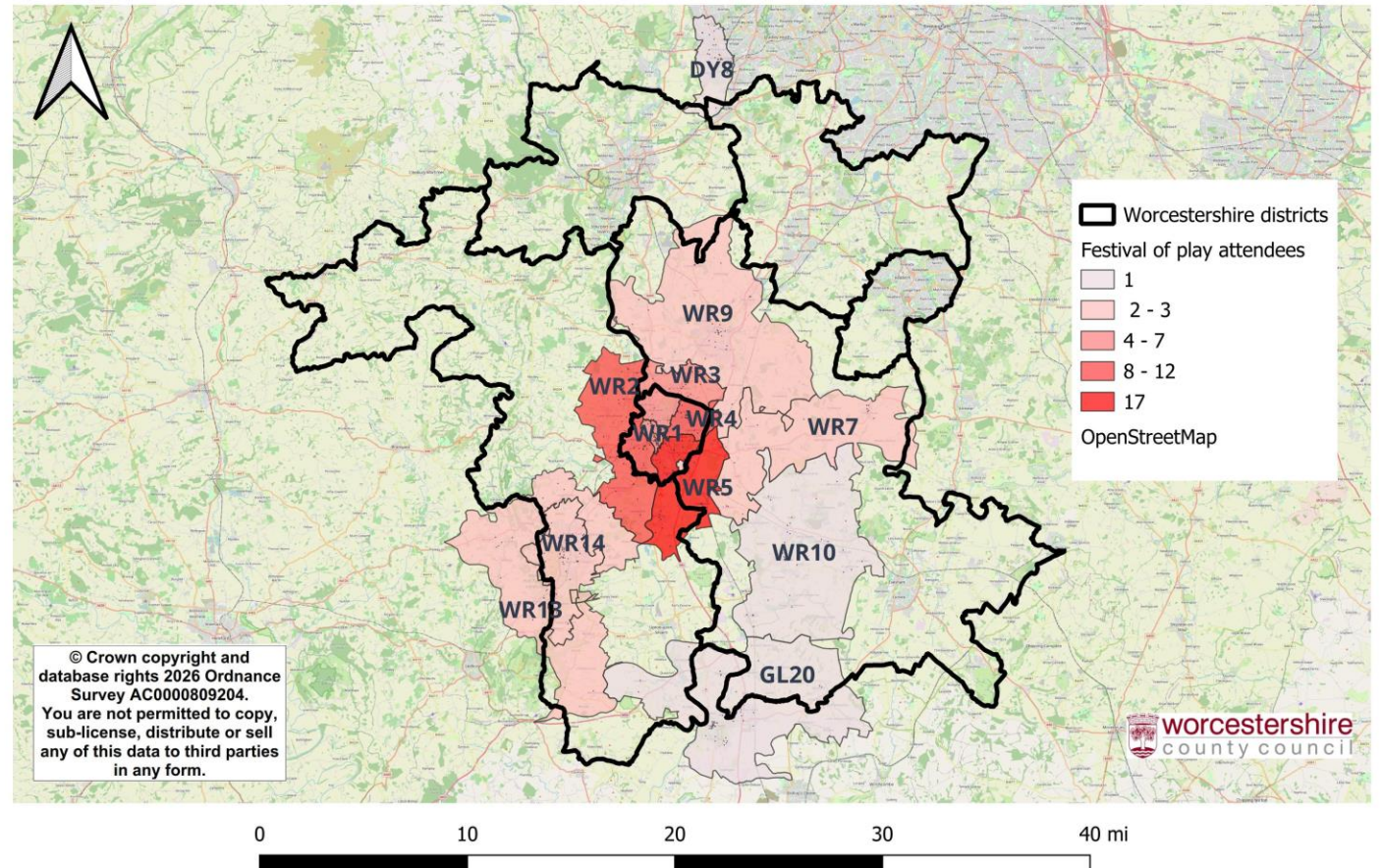
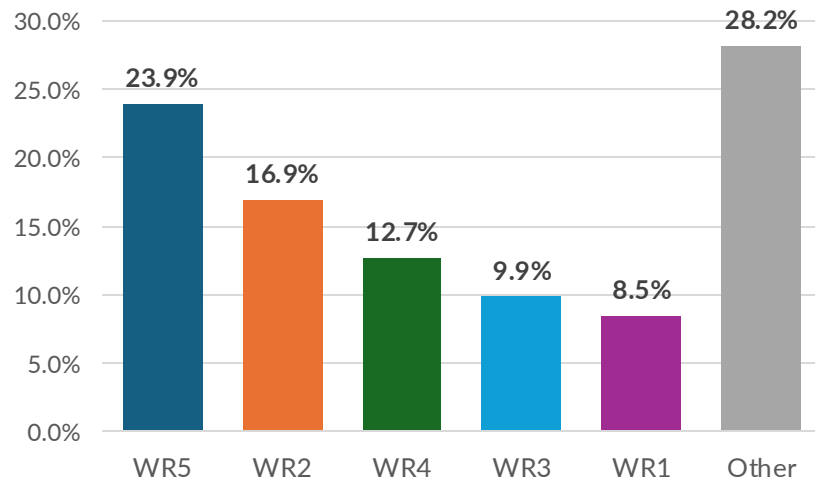
Answered: 69 Skipped: 4



Survey - Postcodes

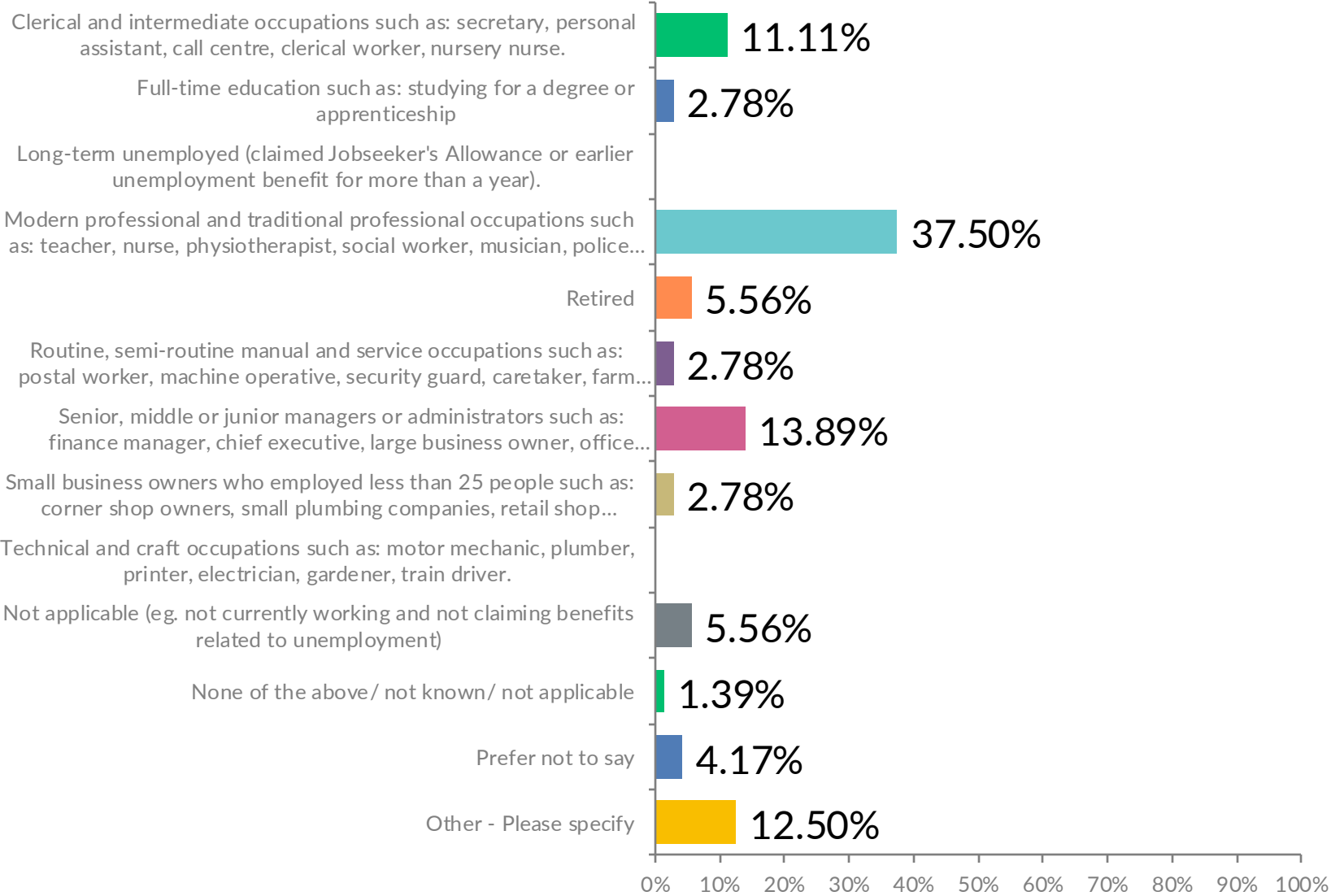
- 71% from Worcester city postcodes
- Clear representation from local Worcester city residents (and some much further afield)

Postcode districts of Festival of Play attendees - Percentage



Map showing Festival of Play Attendees by Postcode District, 2026

Survey - Occupation



- Other:
- Student
 - Youth worker
 - Photographer / Film / TV
 - Carer
 - Housewife

Modern professional and traditional professional occupations	37.50%	27
Senior, middle or junior managers or administrators	13.89%	10
Other - Please specify	12.50%	9
Clerical and intermediate occupations	11.11%	8
Retired	5.56%	4
Not applicable (eg. not currently working and not claiming benefits related to unemployment)	5.56%	4
Prefer not to say	4.17%	3
Full-time education such as: studying for a degree or apprenticeship	2.78%	2
Routine, semi-routine manual and service occupations such as.	2.78%	2
Small business owners who employed less than 25 people	2.78%	2
None of the above/ not known/ not applicable	1.39%	1
Long-term unemployed	0.00%	0
Technical and craft occupations	0.00%	0

Artist Survey



Artist survey

13 Artist / activity survey responses, including:

- Big Blue Blocks
- Dancefest community flash mob for Festival of Play
- Voguing & Waacking workshop
- The Brave Ones (RoguePlay- Circus)
- Emerging Producer / Zone manager - Play Zone
- Wish Ties / Dreamcatchers Workshops & Installations / Decorations
- Festival of Play
- The Wall of Happiness
- Emerging Producer
- Emerging Artist

50%

New activities/performances/artworks

85%

Of artists felt the community engaged 'very well' with their activity/performance (rather than co-creation question)

70%

Follow an environmental policy.

100%

Felt supported in delivering their artworks/activities/performances

Q5 How did the opportunity to work in Worcester shape or influence your development as a creative professional?

"Reach more audience, meet new places, adapt my work to any space.."

"I also had the opportunity to speak with and build connections with other creatives, which was incredibly valuable. It is very likely that I will work with some of them again on future projects, and it was lovely to be part of such a collaborative and welcoming creative environment.."

"Strengthened the relationships we are building within Worcester and partnership with Scala and Uni of Worcester. It also deepened our work with local communities and enabled connections with local individuals..."

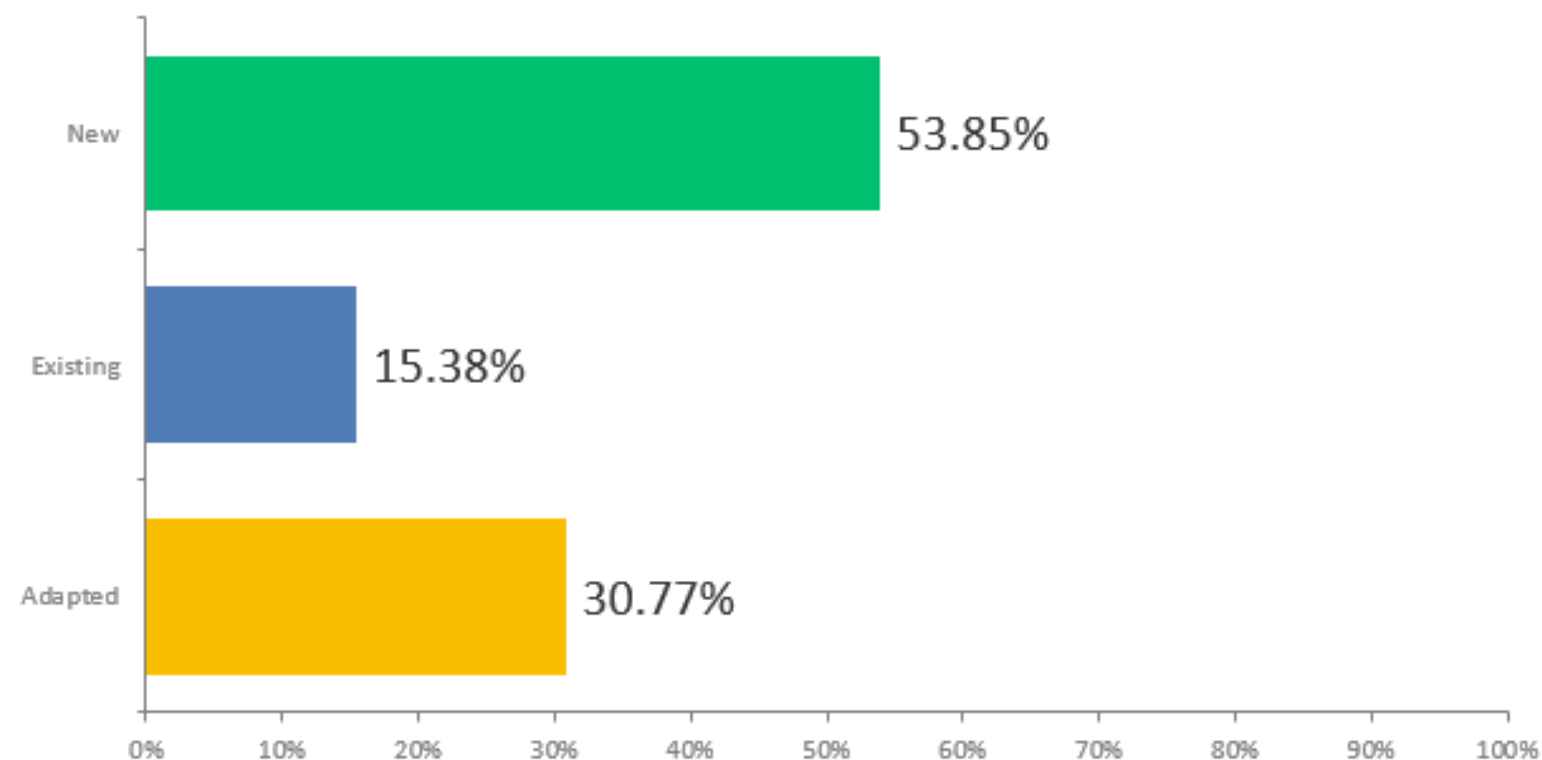
Comments reflect:

- A well supported and managed event that gave creative flexibility to artists / activity providers
- Opportunities to connect with other artists, creatives and organisations
- Ability to adapt and develop own practice to new locations/audiences



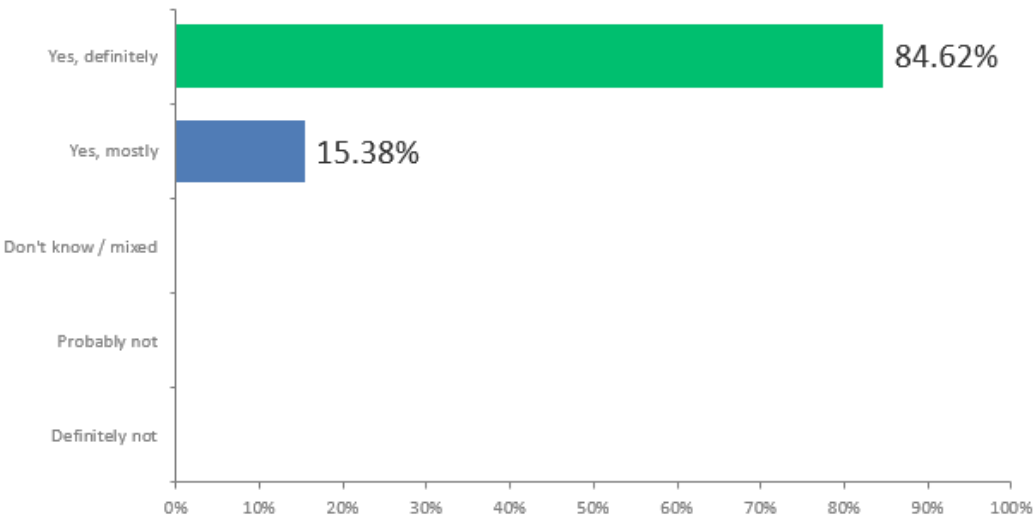
Q3: Was this a new, existing, or adapted installation or activity?

Answered: 13 Skipped: 0



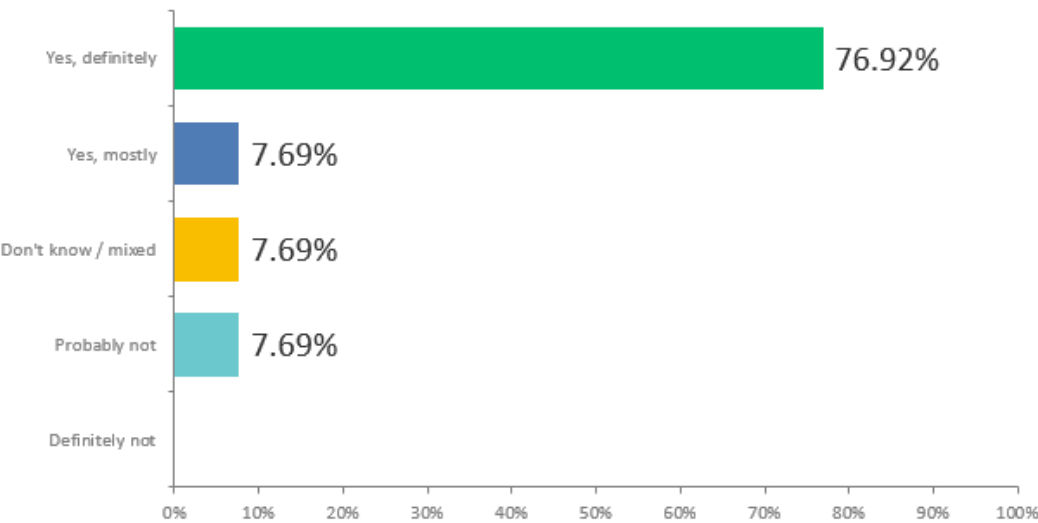
Q4: Did you feel supported in delivering your artwork at Festival of Play?

Answered: 13 Skipped: 0



Q6: Do you think the Festival of Play team enabled you to deliver your art installation or activity as you envisaged?

Answered: 13 Skipped: 0



All

Artists felt support (definitely or mostly) in delivering their activity

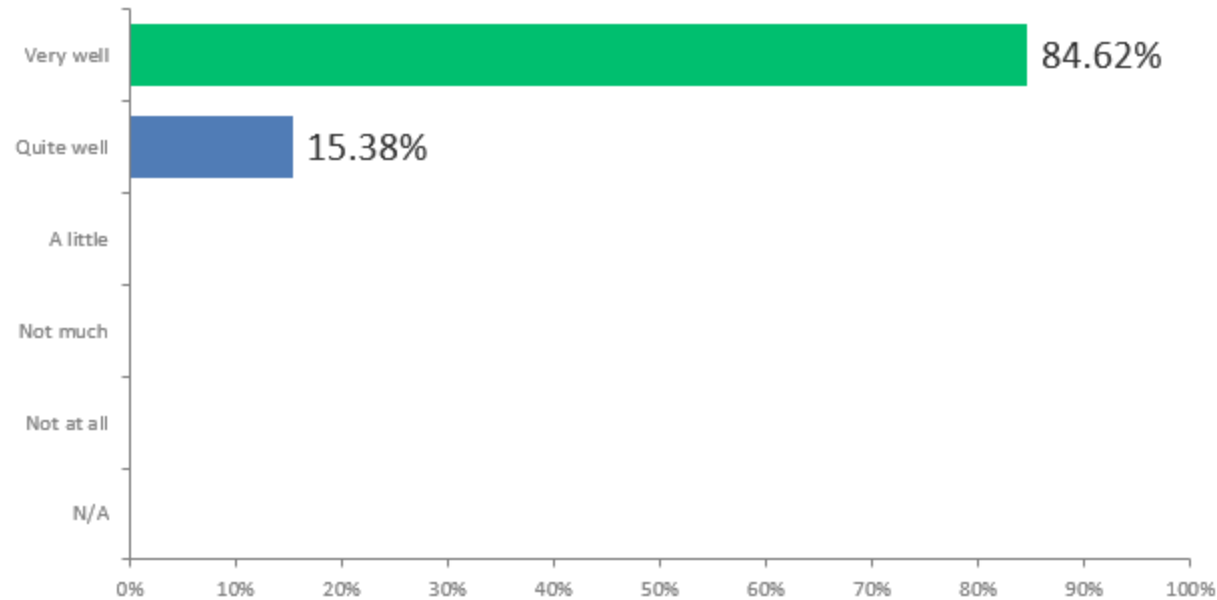
77%

Think the FOP team enabled them to support their activity

Artists Co-creation / Engagement

Q7: How well did the audience/participants engage with your artistic practice?

Answered: 13 Skipped: 0



Comments reflect:

- Positive engagement and participation for all activities
- Programming of activities suited all ages

“Everyone loved it! They danced and laughed with full of joy.”

Artists Co-creation

Q Please share some general feedback on your experience of community co-creation for Festival of Play 2026?

"Engaging with the other young play workers was great; they brought enthusiasm, energy and a sense of fun to the day. It was also brilliant to feel the buzz as people of all ages mingled, lingered, watched and tried new things together, all contributing to a more vibrant and playful Worcester.."

"Discussions with local people came naturally and were easily facilitated."

"We co create with our dancers as much as possible, this project gave us the opportunity to create an intergenerational piece bringing together several of our groups. our dancers created the movement through tasks given by the dance leaders, they are co leaders in the creation process!"

Comments reflect:

- The positive role of co-creation on the day.
- Artists / creatives provided more general reflection on the festival than the co-creation element.

Artists Co-creation

Q Could Festival of Play do anything differently to improve the community co-creation process?

“I also think perhaps in the future the team could be involved in even more community centres, as visiting Dines Green was definitely a highlight and it felt like an excellent way to build hype among Worcester communities.”

“Work with specific communities over a longer lead in.”

“...specific creative workshops to the run-up of the event just to build more momentum and to allow more participants to be involved, and then showcasing the work that is made from those workshops.”

Comments reflect:

- More co-creation activity in the lead up to the event

Practical suggestions:

- More staffing to support turnout
- Giant bubble table boundary for safety
- Visibility of certain activities – i.e. guidance or announcements

Artists - Environmental Responsibility

70%

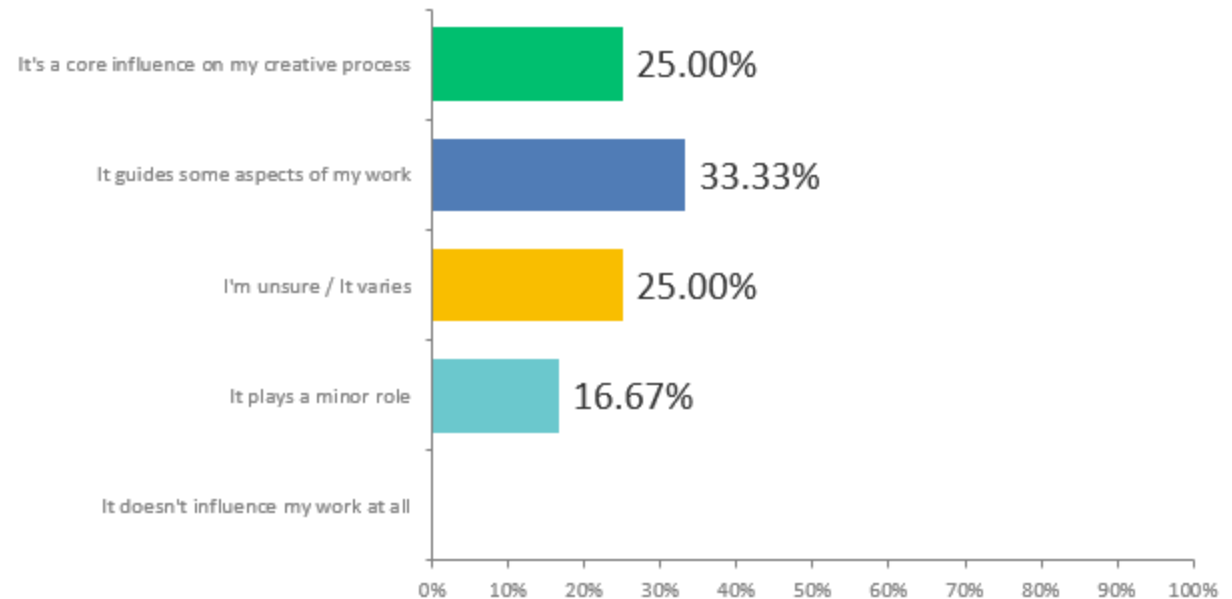
7 of 10 follow an environmental policy

80%

8 of 10 reuse materials or have a system for responsible disposal

Q11: If yes, how much does your policy directly inform your artistic decisions?

Answered: 12 Skipped: 1



Artist Demographics

Artists age ranges from 19-24 to 55-64

Artist's ethnicities selected:

- Mixed or multiple ethnic groups: White Asian
- White English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British
- White Other
- Any Other ethnic group

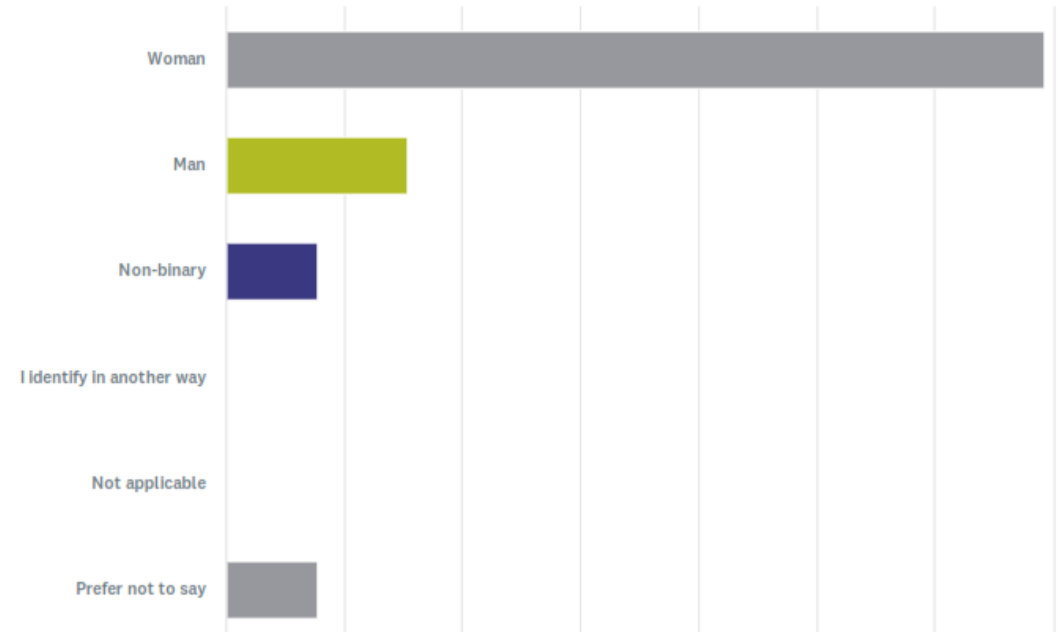
Artists gender identities selected

- Woman
- Man
- Non-binary
- Prefer not to say

31% Artists identifying as neurodivergent

23% Artists identifying as D/deaf, disabled or have a long-term health condition

What is your gender identity?



PROGRAMME MEASURES						
	Totals BOL 25	Totals Play 26	Totals SAHM 26	Year 1 Totals	Aim	Yr 1
A thriving, new Creative Quarter that is well used by artists, participants and audiences						
•83,550 audiences/visitors by 2027	22,000	6,150		28,150	83,500	34%
•2k+ mass participation co-creators	442	2,210		2652	2,000	133%
•80% using Creative Quarter say they will return	93%	97%		95%	80%	119%
A city where people from under-served communities take ownership of high-quality cultural activity that relates to them						
•900+ co-creation participants from Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) areas 1 & 2	442	148		590	900	66%
•Festival attendees from these areas increase 15% by 6th festival	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
•Best practice process produced for WCT & partners re: co-creation	N/A	N/A	N/A	In progress	Complete for Y2	On track
•80% co-creation participants say workshops accessible; developed confidence; increased cultural appetite; grew pride in creating festival artwork						
development of access & inclusion report	Report complete	Report in progress		In progress	Complete for Y1	On track
A city where South Asian culture and creativity is visible, celebrated and embraced by people Worcester-wide			Jul-26			
•20,310 participants, visitors & audiences SAHM	N/A	N/A	TBC	TBC	20,310	
•Events daily in South Asian heritage month	N/A	N/A	TBC	Activity covers every day	Complete for Y1	On track
•South Asian festival audiences report greater awareness of South Asian culture	N/A	N/A	TBC	TBC		
A city that attracts more students to take up creative courses, retaining arts graduates and developing a talent pipeline for employment in the creative industries	skills & talent					
•12 graduates on development programme			skills & talent dahsboard	TBC	12	TBC
•250 students on live projects			skills & talent dahsboard	TBC	250	TBC
•Incubator facility feasibility report by 2027			skills & talent dahsboard	TBC	Complete for Y2	TBC
•80% participating students & graduates say they gained skills; feel connected to City's cultural scene & supported to stay			skills & talent dahsboard	TBC	80%	TBC
A city where the Heart of Worcestershire College and University of Worcester are embedded in its broad cultural offer and creative community	skills & talent and Yr 1 report					
•By 2027, participation in live projects embedded into HE & FE arts courses			skills & talent dahsboard	TBC	Complete for Y2	TBC
•By 2027, all creative FE students report awareness of HE creative courses			skills & talent dahsboard	TBC	Complete for Y2	TBC
•Cultural Compact partners report increased collaboration with FE & HE Sector. FE & HE report feeling more embedded.			YR 1 report	TBC	Complete for Y2	TBC

LVCC Data and Evaluation Reporting.xlsx

- Making good progress against participation and co-creation numbers
- Challenge capturing co-creation experience %
- Clearer picture at end of year 1 with festival data and skills & talent dashboard

Key Observations

- Families praised the variety of free creative activities for all children's age groups
- The atmosphere was family-friendly, festival like and colourful
- Approach to access and inclusion is recognised by audience, creatives, volunteers, schools and co-creation participants
- The festival was well managed with positive comments for staff and volunteer support
- SEND schools praise approach to access and inclusion and positive impact on students
- Audience postcodes show a strong local footprint
- Co-creation predominantly took place on the day (not prior to the event) with high levels of participation and engagement
- Opportunities to improve promotion, on the day signage and communication of activities, food offer and pre-event co-creation with community groups
- Already making good progress against programme measures



For discussion:

What does co-creation mean within the context of Local Voices, Creative Choices?

Local Voices, Creative Choices (LVCC) is Worcester's Arts Council England Place Partnership funded project. Co-Creation is core to the Place Partnership programme and links into Arts Council England's wider 10 year strategy, Let's Create, which places communities at the heart of cultural development.

In the context of this project (LVCC) co-creation is defined as;

- a collaborative process where artists, participants/communities, and other stakeholders work together to shape cultural experiences
- an approach which emphasises active listening, shared decision-making, and the development of new partnerships to ensure that cultural activities are relevant and inclusive
- projects that engage participants/communities in the artistic process, are responsive to the participant's/community's needs, experiences and aspirations, and integrate their ideas, skills, and perspectives
- a flexible, adaptive, grassroots approach that allows for the creative process to evolve in response to on-going dialogue and collaboration with the participants/community

This collaborative effort aims to produce cultural outcomes that reflect the diverse voices and experiences of the participants and foster a sense of shared ownership in the work and the process.

It is acknowledged that co-creation is a process that relies on trust and understanding between participants/communities, artists and stake-holders. Consequently LVCC projects in Year 1 may begin a process of working with participants/communities from which more in-depth co-created work can be presented in Year 2 and 3.

Festival of Play 2026



It lets everyone like be themselves