

Start Thurrock

Evaluation Report - Phase 1 Year 3 (2024-25)

Appendix 1: Methodology and data sources

Evaluation approach

We have strong beliefs about evaluation and making it work to be useful. This affects everything about how we approach evaluation design and implementation.

Underlying principles

The principles that underpin our approach to evaluation are:

- 1) **Evaluation is valuable as much for learning and change as it is for understanding whether outcomes were achieved** – processes and approaches are as important as outcomes.
- 2) **Learning and change occur continuously throughout the life of a project** and beyond. We commit time to giving feedback informally on a regular basis and see outcome sharing as equally important as any summative report.
- 3) **Evaluations should always be a joint endeavour** – people are at the heart of understanding the impact of the programme and supporting change, so human-centred design methodologies are embedded in our practice.

- 4) **Having a participatory, co-creative approach to evaluation is essential to engage and inspire** staff, artists, advisory groups and participants. They need to understand the value of evaluation, and we need to make it meaningful to them.
- 5) **Embedding skills are essential to what we do** – we will seek to develop opportunities for training and skills development within any evaluation programme.
- 6) **The importance of making the case for a programme** – this is particularly in the need for clear, validated analysis and reports which speak to multiple audiences.

The evaluation process

Utilising the principles set out above, we worked in partnership with the Start Thurrock CPP team in a scoping activity to develop a Story of Change (please see **Appendix 2**) and Evaluation Framework. We then carried out direct data collection (see below) and offered mentoring and support to Start Thurrock with their own data collection. We will review the Story of Change and data collection with Start Thurrock regularly as part of our ongoing evaluation. Due to rounding errors, percentages contained in the report may not always total 100%.

Data collection approaches

Engagement and demographic monitoring data – collected by the Start Thurrock team at events over the year using surveys and monitoring. Includes information about events, as well as the demographics and qualitative experience of audiences and participants.

Interviews – 21 1-to-1 interviews with a range of stakeholders using the Story of Change as a framework to guide questions.

Observations – 8 observations at Start Thurrock events throughout the year by several different team members who provided written reports which captured qualitative data on the ‘feel’ of events as well as audience and participant experience.

Reflections – 4 team learning discussion workshops and panel reflections including written feedback, observation and a focus group. Facilitated by RMR, these discussions are designed to draw out learning.

The table below shows more detail about our data sources and sample sizes.

Data source	Description	Sample size
Engagement and demographic monitoring data	Data collected by Start Thurrock team at events, demographic information of audience / participants	527 total responses
Indices of Multiple Deprivation and Audience Spectrum postcodes	Data analysis by RMR team (Mac Ince) and The Audience Agency of postcodes collected by Start Thurrock team at events this year	1,497 and 1,736 valid postcodes respectively
Interviews	1-to-1 interviews with Consortium members	5 interviews
	1-to-1 interviews with partners	11 interviews
	1-to-1 interviews with artists	1 interviews
	1 to 1 interviews with volunteers	1 interview
	1 to 1 interviews with participants	3 interviews

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	Consortium focus group	1 focus group
Event observations	Observations at Start Thurrock events by members of the RMR team: • Colourscape observation x 1 RMR person • Music of the Spheres observation x 1 RMR person for the afternoon • Big Lunches x 1 RMR person on one day • Green Light observations – Feb 25 ○ 2 days attended by 1 person, 5 events attended	8 observations by 3 people
Team learning discussions - reflection workshops	Team learning discussions held in Thurrock with RMR to help draw out learning and challenges this year	4 workshops

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