



arts wave devon

enjoy
discover
reveal

creativity

executive
summary

This executive summary is a snapshot of *arts wave devon* and what it did, with a brief overview of outcomes for participants. For a fuller story with quotes, statistics and visual evidence, please see the main report and short film (links on back page).

About arts wave devon

arts wave devon, a consortium of arts organisations, worked with professional artists and local communities to create inspiring, accessible arts opportunities that support wellbeing. Its mission was to *enhance wellbeing through creating opportunities to explore, create and play.*

arts wave devon worked with communities to co-design engaging arts activities that supported and inspired participation. In particular we aimed to reach; children and young people, older people and disabled people.

arts wave devon delivered three types of activity:

- **Pop-Up (PU):** 45 one-off events at festivals, school playgrounds, local fetes and fairs
- **Light the Touch Paper (LTP):** 45 (6 weeks each) projects which sought to ignite participants' interest in a creative activity, discover new skills and work towards a collective, artistic objective
- **Deep Impact (DI)** 7 community-wide projects saw a range of *arts wave devon* artists working over several months in a locality, culminating in a community event showcasing work produced. It also aimed to strengthen local networks and community collaborations

Sessions covered a wide array of artistic forms.

Participants ranged from babies through to 88 year olds.

From April 2013 to April 2016, 941 sessions (132 Pop-Ups, 270 LTP, 539 DI sessions), led by 90 professional artists, were delivered in 159 venues in 31 localities across Devon.



arts wave devon's Ambitions and Outcomes

arts wave devon sought to inspire people to try something new and join in. 14,157 people got involved. Participants reported that they:

1. Increased their creative skills and knowledge
2. Felt more confident
3. Increased their sense of wellbeing
4. Engaged in artistic activities; and that
5. Community organisations worked more collaboratively

arts wave devon gathered feedback from 356 children, 106 adults, and artists. Overwhelmingly positive, feedback brims with talk of "fun", "enjoyment" and "learning new things", whether during a 1 hour Pop-Up for a 5 year old, or for someone much older, engaging in a longer project.

99% (334) of children (who gave an opinion) said they would remember something positive from their *arts wave devon* experience.

- "I'm having the best most awesome time, I learnt all about arts."

Jake, Hannah's @ Seale Hayne

The value of art as a vehicle for personal growth and enhanced wellbeing, and for stronger communities, is repeatedly illustrated in participants' comments.

"It doesn't matter who you are, what size you are, or what gender or race you are. Everyone can join in. Everyone has opportunity."

Alex, dance workshop, Ilfracombe



enhancing wellbeing through participatory arts

Outcome 1 Participants have increased creative skills and knowledge

Through workshops, participants learnt about creative processes, and the steps involved in taking the seed of an idea and turning it into the finished product, be it a mask, a theatre piece, a dance, poem, willow fish, art in the woods, juggling skills, a mosaic cow, an animated film, music mixing, shadow puppets and more. Participants of all ages and abilities learnt to plan, devise and design, to work together and alone, to listen and to share ideas, to perform, all within a supported space.

77% (269) of children said they'd learnt something new (only 4% (15) felt they hadn't).

90% (277) of children would definitely like to do activity again (only 1% (3) wouldn't).

89% (86) of adults would definitely like to do activity again (only 1% (1) wouldn't).

Practising new skills gave people much joy and satisfaction. There are scores of similar comments, in response to: "What did you like/what have you learnt?"

- "I learnt to make it my own. This was an inspiring thing to do. I learnt how to put your feeling into art. I like the style and will use it as a base to my artwork."

Emily, 13, Expressive Drawing, Axminster

- "I've enjoyed learning something new each week, friendship, (and) making things I never expected to be able to do! Got me out of the house and meeting new people. I've loved it!"

Sheila, Plough Arts Drop-In, Torrington

Outcome 2 Participants feel more confident

Participants had opportunities to learn and try out new skills. For some this was exciting, for others it meant pushing personal boundaries. Of 121 adults who answered, 44 said they "showed (their) work to others", 42 "challenged myself", 33 "developed my confidence" and 25 "took a risk and survived!" 87% (281) children were "happy" with what

they'd produced. Children and adults talked of feeling more confident during and after **arts wave devon** activities.

- "I loved every second. My favourite part was performing in the show. I learnt to be confident in myself and believe in myself."

Lily, 13, Cyberbullying Project, Tiverton

arts wave devon brought together previously unconnected groups, resulting in positive outcomes. In Torrington, a group of adults with learning disabilities worked intensively with Great Torrington School (GTS) students, to research, devise and perform a play at the Plough Theatre.

- "I believe that the GTS students were particularly affected in a positive way by working with adults with learning difficulties. One of the adults who took a main part really developed in confidence. All of the participants were very happy with the work they produced."

Sam, Artist,

St Nectans Theatre Project

Outcome 3 Participants have an increased sense of wellbeing

This outcome is shaped around New Economics Foundation's (nef) "5 Ways to Wellbeing", each element contributing to an individual's overall personal wellbeing. Many participants' responses demonstrate enhanced personal wellbeing.

CONNECT...

arts wave devon enabled family and friends to play together, gave space for new friendships to grow, and worked to bring community partners together.

- "I felt included. More workshops like this please (...) I enjoyed being accepted - having a chance to



dance, create and learn. Loved every second. Thank you!"

Josie, 24 (considers self to have disability), Dawlish

BE ACTIVE...

Through dance projects, theatre performance, drumming workshops, mask making, circus skills, photography and other art forms, participants enjoyed moving and being active, at whatever level they were able.

- "Best Part? Everybody can do it at their own level. Feel relaxed."
Adult (with learning disabilities), ROC Welcome, Tavistock
- "Really enjoyed working with Parkour Team and experiencing how they piece things together. (...They) made it fun and gave our group confidence that we could create something worthwhile. Initially I was concerned for the frailer members of our group (...) but I needn't have worried, we were all very well taken care of!"
Annie, 66, Dawlish

TAKE NOTICE...

37% (38) of adults who gave feedback told us they were "curious" to get involved in **arts wave devon**. Many workshops encouraged participants to take artistic inspiration from their environment. Crediton Photography Group's pop-up exhibition, "Reasons to Stop", stimulated conversations about a sense of place and belonging, with family, friends and passers-by.

KEEP LEARNING...

Learning is fun!

During sessions 73% (78) adults said they had fun, 55% (56) had learnt new things, 49% (49) had explored their "interests and talents", and 41% (41) felt they had done something positive for themselves. For some, knowledge was entirely new. For others it was about extending existing learning.

- "It's re-energised me in terms of optics and photography. I have been interested all my life in photography and have not been able to do that for a long time (I am a wheelchair user). This project helped me get back into photography." David, 68, Crediton

GIVE...

Helping others, and being part of a community, is an important part of who we are, as social animals. 51% (52) adults said they'd worked in a group on

a project, 34% (34) felt they did "something positive for the community" and 20% (20) told us they'd "helped someone else".

- "I have a deep sense of contentment, sharing enjoyment with others in my village. The pleasure of being creative with others in the community. We need lots more of these kind of arts projects in our rural community which has poor access to such opportunities."

Marjorie, 69, Colebrooke

A significant body of evidence links creative expression and arts engagement with improved mental and physical wellbeing. This was affirmed by many participants: 54% (55) said they "felt happy", 43% (43) "felt relaxed", and 30% (30) felt "well and healthy".

- "I felt I had something to get up for, helped relieve my depression and anxiety, made me feel less useless. It's made me feel better and taught me how to make masks by myself. I loved it - uplifting, playful and very productive."

Amanda, 41 (considers self to have a disability), Holsworthy

Children were asked which part of the sessions was their favourite. Their answers encompass all the elements of wellbeing:

72% (246) said their favourite part was designing and planning

13% (44) said their favourite part was performing

7% (24) said their favourite part was all of it!

5% (16) said their favourite part was meeting new people and/or working as a group

3% (12) said their favourite part was learning something new

Outcome 4 Participants engage in artistic activities

Stakeholder feedback paints a picture of active learning and engagement, of participants contributing ideas, working in groups, designing, making, listening, performing, reflecting, sharing successes, and having fun!

This partly reflects tutors' skills, providing a safe space where participants could



relax, meet and work with others, overcome shyness or anxieties and the possible fear of doing something new. All ages appreciated this.

- "Best bit was doing what I want without being judged. THANK YOU FOR BEING THERE FOR ME. I just feel better for expressing myself."
- Jade, 13, Expressive Drawing, Axminster
- "Several ladies are in early stages of dementia and didn't remember who we were each week or why we were there. One always asked me what we were doing. When I said we were going to be dancing, she said every week she didn't really think she'd join in, but every week she was very engaged and contributed to the movement. Their physical confidence and stamina has increased over the time we have been going there. The process of creating the dances and the talking about their experiences of spring, dances, sport ... I think gave everyone a chance to contribute to the process and discussions."

Katie, Dance tutor, working in residential home, Dawlish

Producing artwork or a final performance is an affirmation of participants' creativity and their learning journey. 44% (44) adults said they felt proud of themselves; 37% (37) did/made something they were proud of; 44% (44) showed their work to others; and 46% (46) received good feedback from others.

Communities are already seeking funding for further projects, and in Honiton, parents of one participant bought a set of arts materials so the group could carry on, as the children had enjoyed it so much.

- "I enjoyed everything! This has been the BEST workshop EVER!!!!!!!!!!!!!!"

Rianna, 10, DJ workshop, Torrington

Outcome 5 Community Organisations work more collaboratively

Deep Impact (DI) projects focussed around larger market towns, hubs for activities over several months. DI aspired to strengthen community links, spark new connections, raise awareness locally of what was going on, and to find ways to work together. Each DI project culminated in a celebration, show-casing people's artistic endeavours and coming together of local people.

In Dawlish, key catalysts agreed **Dawlish Journeys has been a great boost to the town, bringing people together, raising a sense of pride in the town, strengthening local connections and creating new ones.** The showcase event drew BBC Spotlight coverage, and community organisers felt a palpable buzz of town pride and excitement. Partners have followed up with new initiatives and are clear about project legacy - a commitment and optimism for increased and improved future collaborations. Other DI locations reflected similar sentiments.

Library staff in Tavistock, Dawlish and across North Devon saw DI as a valuable opportunity to raise the profile of library services, in light of their transformation to Libraries Unlimited. In Tavistock, partners believe connections were made through **arts wave devon** that wouldn't otherwise have happened. New groups and work have been established beyond the project life, at local care settings, Plymouth Royal and The Wharf.

- "We had mainly positive feedback, huge amounts of it, the vast majority of people had a brilliant time. Whole day was amazing. We displayed lots of stuff and very positive comments back about what we are doing."

Helen (staff), Tavistock Library

- "Arts Wave Devon in Barnstaple rekindled old networks - of artists and of venues. The legacy is evident in the number of new partnership projects which we have recently established (...). There is a willingness to continue working collaboratively."

Julian (staff), Barnstaple Museum

Added Value

With any project one can plan activities based on intended outcomes, but often other unanticipated outcomes will emerge. These have included:

Widening horizons/raising aspirations.

In learning and applying new skills during social media workshops, young participants spoke of their hopes to develop media careers.

- "All participants enjoyed the workshops and wanted to increase their use of social media. They all have an increased interest in local, national and international news. One participant ran their own blog and because of the workshop began to use Twitter. All of the group were inspired when they visited the local primary school to report on the animation workshops. Many of them said they would like a career in media."

Tony (artist), Holsworthy, March 2015

Cascading new skills/knowledge.

Several participants planned to share their new knowledge/skills with their families, with groups they were involved with and in care settings where they worked, spreading **arts wave devon** benefits even more widely.

Improved wellbeing and support for carers.

Although **arts wave devon** activities were not targeted at carers, many adults and children/siblings with caring responsibilities benefitted.

- "It was Therapeutic, Absorbing, Enabling, Refreshing, Rewarding; providing an oasis to be creative in a very positive atmosphere. (I'm) a carer for two elderly people - (including dementia) and the workshops were a most welcome break during the weekly routines."

Andrea, 60, Colebrooke

- "The siblings engaged very well and looked forward to the sessions, returning each week with enthusiasm."

Mandy (artist), Downs Group, Exeter

Additional work for artists. Many artists reported that groups they worked with were seeking funding to purchase more arts sessions.

For some, involvement in **arts wave devon** has already led to additional paid work beyond the scope of the project, and the establishment of new groups.



Daisi is the arts education organisation for Devon and Torbay, working across all art forms, with children and their communities from pre-school age to their late teens.

Dance in Devon is the dance development organisation in Devon. We seek to enrich and energise people's lives through dance.

Devon Guild of Craftsmen promotes the enjoyment and appreciation of contemporary craft by nurturing creative excellence and championing the importance of making.

Wolf and Water is a diverse collective of creative practitioners. We use the arts as a tool for personal and community development.

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