

Tuesday 12 February 2019  
Everyman Theatre, Liverpool



# Family Arts Conference

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## Welcome



**Helen Featherstone**

**Chair of the Family Arts Campaign**

Welcome to the Family Arts Conference 2019. I am Helen Featherstone and I am Chair of the Family Arts Campaign Board and it gives me great pleasure to be here today and to see so many of you from a wide spectrum of art forms across the country.

Many of you here are already undertaking fantastic work for families - our key advocates and champions of family work in the UK. Others of you may be thinking about how you can prioritise families within your work and want to know more about the value and benefits of doing so.

I am sure today will have something for everyone. We have got some great speakers lined up and a chance to delve deeper into pertinent topics during breakout sessions.

Working with families brings great value in a range of ways. Many people's first memories of engaging with arts and heritage is as a child, with their family. It is often a very formative and valuable experience which can propel us to want to engage further. Or, it can be quite a negative experience and make us feel as though the arts are not for us. So, it is really essential that as a sector, we get these experiences right. Inspiring children can also lead them to influence their families and encourage a child led visit. Not being musical myself, I remember being in awe of my music teacher at Primary School and pestering my family to take me to an orchestral concert.

Families, of course, come in different shapes and sizes. Having been involved in the Family Arts Campaign since its conception, I remember the hard deliberations to pin down the definition of "family". Families can include different generations, single parents, extended families, carers, early years, preteens, teenagers, and can be from a wide variety of backgrounds. There is a need to recognise that, to celebrate that diversity and reflect it. We have got some great examples of that by organisations in the room that we will hear more about today.

By recognising the value of your work with families and getting your product and your welcome for families right, you are also making your visitor and audience experiences better for everyone. When asking people what their main motivation is for engaging in the arts and culture, one of the top reasons cited is to spend time with family and with friends. Enjoying these experiences together is something people place value on. So being able to facilitate these experiences as inclusive, enjoyable and stimulating is something to carefully consider if you want to reach new families and encourage repeat attendance. If you engage with arts as a child, you are more likely to do so as an adult, even if your attendance drops off in your early teens and twenties. In that respect family work has huge value, not just in generating income, but in building future

audiences and motivations for older adults to keep engaging.

Throughout today we will explore different types of value that engaging families in the arts and heritage can bring, discuss how we need to understand and better to communicate the values to key stakeholders and to families. I am looking forward to hearing how you are engaging with families in new and exciting ways.

## Provocation No. 1



**Gemma Bodinetz**

### **Artistic Director of Liverpool Everyman & Playhouse**

Good morning, welcome to the best performance space in the world (laughter). Which sounds ridiculous, but we won that award in 2014 which was when the theatre was built. We won the Sterling Prize - a panel of judges had voted this the best in the world, nay, the universe.

We hope you will have a fantastic time with us today. I suppose I wanted to say, one of the reasons I hope that it won the prize was because of its intent at that point. It was no more than an aspiration, it would be a place that pleased people of all generations from different backgrounds and the facade, I hope when you stand outside, take a look at the people on the front and they are echoed all around the building, on windows to stop you walking into the windows. There is actually a whole family on there. We picked 108 people. Having put an open invitation to Liverpool, we took hundreds of photos and then selected 108, they are our ambassadors, we chose them to make sure they looked like a fantastically interesting cross section of the city but there is a whole family on there that we picked randomly who all happened to look fantastic. So, I suppose there is a commitment to family.

I am quite nervous making this speech because I am talking to experts, I am not an expert, I am a Theatre and Artistic Director, I suppose my commitment to what you all do with expertise is genuine. I am of the generation where I suppose the person above me that I didn't hope to be but dreamt I might somehow aspire to be a little bit like is Joan Littlewood. She was the woman I looked to, in terms of what theatre could be, above and beyond the performance on stage. The room you are sitting in now, designed with the young everyman the playhouse audience in mind, is a space that could be as polished as it needed to be for a polished piece of theatre, that people could stand on stage on their own without being exposed. It is as much about audiences as it is the work itself. I thought I would therefore start off with this – what makes a really good piece of family theatre? Theatre by the way, is my art-form of focus here, as that is what I know.

What I have noticed in my 15 years, is there is no such thing anymore, as a piece of theatre for families. There is work that appeals to families and work that doesn't. And people of all ages, are coming to what I would consider, historically, could have been work for young people, but grown-ups are coming to that of their own volition, without children. And, then, there's specific work for grown-ups that children are coming to. In terms of putting children off, I wanted to tell you this story and look at what families are. One of my friends is a lone parent and very cultured and brings her very lovely son to everything she goes to and she took him to a piece of theatre, not here, and it was very intense, and very moving. And she looked across at him and he had tears

running down his face. And she was stood in the darkness, "Darling, are you all right?" And he said, "Mummy, I'm bored!"

Literally crying with boredom! That is clearly not what this theatre was built for. But cut to some extraordinary work we have either presented or received. Make Do And Mend Theatre have come here several times. Do you all know their work? If you don't, I would say come and see it. It is actually intended for little tiny children up to six. Whenever they come here, I bring all my grown-up friends to see it. It is usually about death. That sounds awful, but it is completely magical, transformative theatre, which is silent. I first saw them at the Unicorn Theatre and the piece was entirely without a spoken word. And an audience almost as big as this, of little children, sat in silence, absolutely awe-struck by what are little model boxes of a stage, that the puppets are operated and simultaneously filmed. On the big screen you can see the big picture, but you can watch the puppeteers making a story about what it is to be a human being and to deal with some of the most tough questions

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***“This building is as much about audiences as it is the work itself”***

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about how we survive and how we make ourselves happy. I suppose, for me, what is so beautiful about intergenerational theatre is that at its core, it is about what makes us happy. Recent research tells us that, actually, what young people remember as a happy childhood, is much more based on social activities that they have shared, a party, or going to the theatre, or going to a concert, than lone activity, playing a musical instrument, which are all good things, or painting and drawing but when they look back and decide what made their childhood happy, they are far more likely to think about a shared experience, a social or cultural experience. In Liverpool we need to think about that. Sadly, this city has shocking and sad statistics that were at the core of building the theatre you are sitting in. In 2016, the City Council published a Children's transformation plan with a vision to improve outcomes and reduce inequalities for children, young people and through an integrated community focus, model of care and support and that was some of the other industries the City Council are looking at in the city, were pretty depressing. Only 56.6% of young people get grade 5, get 5A-Cs GCSEs, compared to 63% nationally.

11.7% of young people in this region are excluded from schools. And we, here, do an awful lot of work with people like those. And 42% of households with dependent children in Liverpool are lone parent households, as opposed to 27% in the UK. Now actually, it isn't necessarily a bad thing being a lone parent. I was one, am one, but we have an awful lot of indices here that make us aware, apart from second-highest dependence on antidepressants in the country. We know what culture can do and the value of it and we try hard to do that, as Helen was saying, define family in terms of ticket-buying to one adult, with any number of children. We have seen an increase in

that. 16% of our tickets have been to family tickets, which is quite, almost one-fifth of what we sell.

So, I suppose, for us, the beauty and the transformation of what we can do here at the Everyman & Playhouse, it is a parallel organisation, there are young technicians, and in the marketing team. We do a lot of work with children in care. These things have been profoundly important to what has made this, I hope, the best theatre in the country. Because the need is there and, because, the beauty of what theatre can be to our audiences is very clear to us. We are very committed to our relaxed performances where carers can bring young children, usually on the autistic spectrum and I know many organisations do, that we are by no means pioneers, but it is one of

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*“The beauty of what theatre can be to our audiences is very clear to us”*

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the most beautiful things that any of us will ever witness. I remember watching one young boy who was too afraid, actually to sit in the auditorium for two-thirds of the performance, which was only a panto but the loud noises were frightening him. By the end he was

celebrating the fact he had managed to see the final scene, in a seat, next to his family. And we do an awful lot of work with our ushers and actors to make those magical experiences happen for young people in this theatre.

I hope you get to discover this city and love it as much as we do in this theatre. It's a profound commitment from all our staff to integrate into the community and integrate young people into the work we do. It is a corny quote, but it is one of my favourites and from Albert Einstein. It must be right. Which is that “if you want to make a child intelligent, read a fairy story and if you want to make it more intelligent, read it more fairy stories”. I don't know that intelligence can be measured in those ways but I have certainly seen, through our work, that the power of the imagination, not to be crying when you are bored but to be transfixed by something extraordinary, and I have seen grown-ups come here and watch Hansel and Gretel, meant to be for children, and weep with joy. 64% of people who buy Harry Potter are adults who want to read it for themselves. The breakdown of what is child and grown-up has never been stronger in my experience. I hope that continues. Finding the child in all of us and helping the children that belong to all of us become adults, is surely what we are all about. Welcome to the Everyman.

## Keynote: Diversifying Family Audiences



**Syima Aslam**

### **Artistic Director of the Bradford Literature Festival**

It is a real pleasure to be here and thank you so much to the Family Arts Campaign for the invitation. I'm not really from the culture sector, I'm trying to get used to the fact that I'm now in the culture sector. I will tell you a little bit about myself which will probably make sense in terms of how the festival that I run, runs. I'm an industry hopper. I have changed industry every time I have changed jobs. It doesn't mean I'm fickle. But my first job was in London, in investment, which is all about: how do you get companies to come and invest in a place? I then moved on to work for Audi UK. Even though I knew nothing about cars, but I had a great time driving them. I looked after a partnership, which is a credit referencing agency. That was really interesting as well. Then after that, I ran a restaurant, which I knew absolutely nothing about. You have probably seen there is a bit of a trend here. The restaurant was very much somebody else's dream. But I have a real thing about some of my favourite quotes.

That is where the festival came from. You might be thinking - how does somebody who has hopped along these various things end up running a festival? It came from a passion for words. In terms of putting it into context about where that passion for words and where that belief came from, I will tell you more about myself. So, I'm a child of immigrants. It is something I'm going to add here. The wording I have used is not how I would've previously described myself. It is not how I would like to have, for most of my life, thought about myself. But it is something that has been changed by the recent political discourse. I think if somebody had spoken to me, maybe, five, six, seven years ago I would've said I'm a British Asian, my parents come from Pakistan, that is how I would've talked about this. But I feel this is a label now that actually I want it take ownership of. I'm proud of the fact that I'm a child of immigrants and would probably be regarded by some people as an immigrant. So, saying, that I'm a second-generation immigrant. My parents are first generation, my father came to the UK in the '60s, the whole idea to make a quick buck and go home. He spent most of his life in the UK and he spent most of the time going home, it is a standing joke amongst his friends and my mother was very much the same. She didn't like the size of the houses in the UK. So, there is always this desire to go home, because the place moves on, but there is this golden thing in people's minds of what they left behind. What did that mean for me? It meant my mother got pregnant and had me in Pakistan, then came back to the UK when I was four months' old. At three-and-a-half we went to Pakistan, then we came back. I went to nursery. I have vivid memories of that and when nursery finished, we went back, it was supposed to be for good but then, aged 8, I was back. Luckily for me, we had good family friends, who said to my mother - it doesn't matter where you live, but stay in one place, otherwise, she will not get an education. At age 8, I had lost my spoken English. I went to a language centre.

I was lucky I came out quite fast. Also, probably because I was slightly snobby, and I was a bit kind of - I don't know where I am and what I'm doing here? I stuck around the teachers a lot and came out of the language centre quite fast. I went to junior school in what would be, and I mix this up because the years have changed, year 4. It was Easter term, I got there bang in time for exams. I got 98% in my English, sorry in my maths, and 34% in my English vocabulary. And the next year, I got 99%. Now I'm certainly not Einstein, by any stretch of the imagination. But the reason why I had that change, was because I got taken to the library religiously. Every Saturday we went off to the library - this was really, really crucial for me and something I'm really passionate about.

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***“If you don't have libraries, how do you get social mobility?”***

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My parents came back, they were setting up house again. There wasn't a lot of money for books and things. In fact, this, I still have. One of my pride and joys. This is a book I bought from a jumble sale, I must have been about 9 years old. You can see slightly well worn. But I absolutely loved this. The amount of fairy tales I read now - my daughter told me to grow up. I grew up in Halifax, next door to Bradford - this is the central library. From the age of 8 and a half through to university, I went to the library pretty much every Saturday. I think given the current climate and the cuts we are seeing - this is really important - if you don't have libraries, how do you get social mobility? Because if I think of myself, I was really lucky, I had parents who were educated and therefore were keen for me to get educated but, my father hardly spoke English, his English was passable. My mother doesn't speak English, to this day doesn't speak English, she can maybe get by. For me growing up in the house hold where England was not the spoken language. How was there to be change? There wasn't money for books without the library. Would I have made the change from 34% to 99% in a year? I doubt it. Would I pass my 11+? I doubt it. What would that mean for my life? Would I have done the things I have done in my life? I don't think I would have had that transformation without the language. So, this is something that I really believe in, I believe that the foundation stone for any kind of education for anyone any child or adult is actually language. It is literacy. Without the creative sector or libraries, I don't see how you can achieve that in a way that gets you to a level where you can do something positive. Some grow up in a household where you are taken to things that engage you and books are around you. Some are growing up in a household where that is not the case. This is one of the reasons to set up the festival.

Before setting up the festival I was doing some work looking at strategies for an organisation in the education sector, also based in Bradford, looking at population statistics. This got me thinking - where are the population booms in terms of the district? What are the jobs of the future? All of this kind of thing. To me, there was a mismatch. With Bradford you have one of the youngest city populations in Europe –

about 30% are under 20. But, 33% of those children are growing up in poverty - and when you look at some of the individual wards, that poverty is as high as 47%. If you have these communities stuck in these cycles of deprivation and there is not economic engagement and shiny jobs around, who is going to take them?

To me, I, I really wanted to do something about it. Some of that was personal. I had, when I had had the sort of retail restaurant adventure, same time diagnosed with breast cancer and I remember coming home and thinking about what I have done with my life. I had a desire to make positive change. I know, doesn't necessarily mean to lead to a literature festival for everyone! But that is where it took me, firstly via the restaurant I ran, sat on the edge of city park at a time when Bradford was regenerating. But the regeneration didn't happen for all businesses in the area. I wanted to create a culture renaissance to actually support the regeneration that the city was going through. We needed to change people's minds and get people back in. I thought, I would love to create something that turns the city into an international destination but the key thing for me, I wanted to do something that got children excited about reading. I get really excited about reading.

With the festival I wanted to create a change for the city and young people. Bradford has a certain perception in the national imagination. It is known for its ethnic population, particularly Asian. A lot of people will call it Bradistan - when I first wanted

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***“Talk to people, find out what they want, and bring them along with you”***

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to set it up. People thought I wanted to set up a South Asia festival. I said, the city needs one of those like a hole in the head. But let's not go down that route- for me, creating a space that would bring everybody together was the most important thing. I wanted to change the perception around Bradford. There was a negative perception. Every time something happens in the city, I remember having an

interview, "what is it about Bradford that has made these things happen?" I said, well, all of the things happening in other places, you are not saying "what is it about these places". There was a real negative perception around city that needed addressing.

Like I said previously, with the immigrant label, it was about taking ownership of some of the debates around the city. Every time something happens that is Muslim or and these days it is - or if there is a terrorist incident or there is something to do with immigration, Bradford is a place where people come to take the pulse of the Muslim population. I wanted to take ownership of that debate as well. I think it is important that the city talked about these things rather than have labels stuck on.

What is important to me was to create a festival that reflected the city. So, Bradford has, has had successive waves of migration, Irish, Jewish German, eastern European, south Asian. There is a real mix. 36% of the population comes from BME backgrounds, if there is a festival that reflected the city and talks of the city it would

reflect the UK and be national and internationally. Let's set something up that is getting people excited. For me, the really key thing was how do you actually get people engaged? When you have so many different communities in the city, how do you engage them and get them to take ownership of something?

For me this is actually about you talking to people, you find out what they want, and you try to bring them along with you. So, I think of the festival events as portals. I try to create events that will actually talk to a different community and I see those events as their portal into the festival because I think there has to be something that you connect with and that you can engage with. One of the things I will say here, we spend a lot of time talking about obviously we have the creative case for diversity, spend a lot of time talking about hard to reach audiences, BME populations then the white working class. Actually, you know, it is about socio-economic factors.

One of the things I saw when I went to festivals was, you see a certain type of audience, or if you go to theatre you see a certain type of audience. A lot of that is about money. I wanted to buck that trend. On one hand we are about community, on the other we are creating a destination out of the city, the visitor economy and boosting the city. That is our regional, national, international audience and we're proud of the fact that this year we could put a percentage on the international. This year we were able to say 1% which is not much but it is a start and you have to start somewhere.

The other side for me was very much about engaging those families who can't otherwise engage. Sometimes it is not so much won't but can't. If you are a single mother on on a council estate or, holding down a job and 3 or 4 kids, and trying to feed them, are you going to think about feeding them or think about taking them to a cultural experience? It is about removing barriers – the BLF is free if you are on benefits or social housing, on state pension, refugee or asylum seeker. There is a long list. For me, quite honestly, if I could make the entire festival free, I would. But we also have to think about sustainability.

So, for me, the tickets are for the people who can afford them. For anybody who can't you need to be able to come along. These events on the back here, this is one of the free events we are doing, the programme is split into 3. We have a ticketed public programme and you pay to come along to that, but for everybody under the exclusions you don't pay.

Then you have a family programme. The beautiful space I showed you earlier, this is in the space. The festival runs for 10 days, the days on the weekend we have themed family fun days. One of which is Harry Potter, it has been Harry Potter for the last 3 years and at some point, I might move on but at the moment I am not. I think that it is important to have amazing magical stuff. So, we have superhero days, so this year, we will have superheroes, Peter rabbit, we are going to have Harry Potter, all of these events are free. It is outdoor theatre and around books. Around that we create story-telling events, free drop in workshops, this is like Bradford on the beach. So, a lot of families will congregate here in the summer, this is about taking it to families and being

aware of the fact that this is the festival but there are other things going on around them. When I set up the festival, somebody said to me, you can't call it a literature festival. We want to do the events in City Park, which is why it is in the summer. Children play in the fountains in the park and when those events are going on, hopefully they will know they are at the literature festival, hopefully they will realise that these events are brought to them by the literature festival.

It will be something that they can actually feel that they have a connection with. So, we have the Family Fun Days and then we have an extensive schools programme. A commitment to young people is important - for the ten days, 6 days are taken up by the schools' programme, during the daytimes.

It is free for schools in the Bradford district. If you are outside the district, you pay a nominal amount. It is about removing barriers, there are lots and lots of things that happen and lots of interventions and lots of programmes that are running. I know there is a pupil premium and all this but I wanted to do something to actually encourage them to come out, bring the children out, we created all these different days, so, now, we have six days for primary schools and six days for secondary schools and last year we had over 30,000 attendance across those. We put the superhero schools' days on the Friday and we had the superhero day on the Saturday. We got feedback from schools and parents saying - my child came to the event on the Friday, and then pestered us and we came on the Saturday. And, again, that brings people into the festival. So for me, it is about creating things which actually mean different people feel a sense of connection with the festival.

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***“For families, it’s important to have amazing, magical experiences”***

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There is one thing around diversifying audiences, but there is quite another thing around diversifying your artistic line-up. The BME aspect is really important but actually there are lots of things, right across the socio-economic group that apply to everyone. If you don't have the money, you don't have the access, it is what it boils down to. The barriers become greater. And I think that is something that people need to be conscious of. If you want to attract different audiences, you do have to diversify your line-up. Some of that is about organisations as well. It is very difficult to diversify your line-up if you don't have that knowledge yourself. Or if you don't bring that knowledge in. When you are programming for different communities, if you don't get it right, have that knowledge and don't speak to people - I have been to so many events where there is a tiny little nuance that gets missed - then the whole thing falls on its face, and it is not authentic.

This year's Festival will be at the end of June. Do come along and visit. We run a culture sector industry day as well. So, hopefully you will see some best practice, not just from ourselves but other organisations, as well. So, come to Bradford!

## Panel Discussion: Diverse Family Engagement

Chair: Terry Adams, Arts Council England

Panellists:

Syima Aslam, Bradford Literature Festival

Ciaron Wilkinson, Manchester International Festival

Rebecca Ross Williams, Liverpool Everyman Theatre & Playhouse



*Bradford Literature Festival*

I am Terry Adams and I am a relationship manager for Arts Council England. We are a publicly funded body. We are tasked with investing money from government and the lottery national lottery, into arts and culture. That investment typically takes the form of grant funding to arts organisations and individuals. The aim, of that funding is to develop a thriving art ecology that offers everybody the chance to engage, participate and create art. We believe that great art and culture inspires us, brings us together, and teaches us about ourselves and others around the world. In short, we believe it makes life better. Amongst our highest priorities is diversity, our commitment is in fact quite long standing. We believe arts organisations museums and libraries should ensure that their work draws on and reflects the full range of backgrounds of all that represents our citizens and those people in our society.

My role as a Diversity Officer, Manager within the Arts Council is to support the delivery of Arts Council England diversities, equalities and inclusion agendas. I work with arts and cultural organisations, individuals, institutions, of all types, to ensure that culture is representative of all, and that all representatives can truly engage.

Now for 2 minutes I would like to show a video produced by the Arts Council on creative case for diversity:

*Our nation is more diverse than ever before. How we use that is the key to our future success. Our arts and cultural institutions can lead the way. So that diversity is an*

*integral part of everything they do. The work they programme, to the staff they employ and the people who are chosen to lead them. The decisions organisations make about the art-led programme and the artists they commission, is at the heart of what we call the creative case for diversity. We require all organisations that receive public funding to respond to this and the work that they create. Because we recognise diversity is one of the creative opportunities of our time. Already the creative case is producing art that belongs to everyone. We all want to hear our stories and our passions reflected in the arts we enjoy and, in the museums, and the galleries we visit. We all want work that recognises what we share and what we hold unique. Work that will encourage future generations to believe that the arts are for everyone, work shows the power of diversity, work that sets free the creative energy for our nation. If we get this right, the arts won't have to make the case for diversity. The arts will be the case. Join the creative case conversation and see what you can do to help the cause.*

Today we have a session, which is looking at the diversity of audiences. We have three speakers, esteemed speakers, pleased and happy to have them today, you have already heard from Syima. Inspiring education on the Bradford Literature Festival, we have Rebecca Ross Williams and Ciaron Wilkinson for the Manchester International Festival. They will be sharing their insight and perspectives on diversifying family engagement.

SYIMA: I spoke earlier about family audiences within the festival. I was talking about children and pester power, I will expand on that slightly. As I was saying earlier, children for me are key. One of the reasons why BLF is structured in the way it is. When I was setting it up, I

spent quite a lot of time looking at population stats but I also spent a lot of time looking at schools and schools performance and, mapping what was happening within the district in terms of cultural organisations working with schools. I found it quite interesting because obviously, you know, different organisations have different specialties and they work with different schools but tends to be I think what happens, people get embedded within one or two schools and that is where they want to stay. I wanted to have something that went across. When I was thinking about families, I really started from children. I felt that was the key place to start. So, that is why actually probably if you look at the festival, two thirds are around children and the open air stuff and the drop ins. The schools programme. I felt if you get the children excited then you get the families coming along. For this part I was focusing on the district and the people within the district and actually at that point where I wanted to create the change. I wanted to create something that is life changing. If you start with children, you can create the generational change. You engage with activities that you engage

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***“If you start with children, you can create the generational change. You engage with activities that you engage with as a child.”***

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with as a child. For me, when it came to creating the change for the district it was about starting with children and creating the change from there. A lot of the work has been about going into schools. But that has been a starting point, that has been the foundational, the foundation that we built the family work on. Getting the information out to schools and having that engagement with schools and getting to the parents through the children. For some of the communities we are working with, coming to the festival is not a natural thing. How do we bring them along? From my childhood a lot of spaces I would end up taking my mother into and would never have walked into there by herself, even now there are spaces within the city. Since I set up the festival and reuse, she will have gone to for the first time. Unless there was something happening there, she wouldn't go in. So, there is that side to it.

I think of events as portals. There are quite a few events we do within the festival focused at particular family audiences, so I have what I call my orthodox Muslim strand. There are certain families within Bradford who will have a barrier to engagement with culture, from say, they might think if it is music or dance then it is not religiously acceptable. So there is a strand of events, based around books. They wouldn't necessarily go to the setting up of a festival or the city centre, they will come into these events. And then we work with other communities where we adapt - reflection is really important. I think that is something that I spoke before about diversifying artists when you want to diversify audiences, if you can see yourself reflected. When we programme certain events, it is really important that the people who are on that stage, they have the knowledge about the topic. People are not talked at. If you are creating something that is artistic, people can see that reflected in themselves. Those connections are really important. With the festival have the big names and all the rest of it, but there are a lot of events which are grass roots. But I don't think we have a big name here and grass roots here, a lot of the time we mix these together anyway. It is important when we come along, that there is somebody on stage that we feel the connection with. That is a great way of drawing families in. You are talking to them about issues that matter to them.

I remember going to an evaluation that an arts funder and somebody said "because we had this funding, we were able to programme some Muslim women and women in hijab into our programme" I was taken aback. The artists, they were here anyway. These were people are in the UK already and you could have programmed them anyway, you didn't need that money to enable the programme. That seems to be the case a lot of the time. It is about casting your eye wider. I think it is really important that, when this is done, this is about who are you programming for in terms of your own city, what does diversity look like? Socio-economic, eastern European or south Asian? Thinking of the connections, the communities have a connection with. We do a similar thing with schools as well. We do a lot of work where we take people into schools and that comes from the main programme, about children are seeing themselves reflected. It is important that there is somebody they can see and think, I can do that, we had somebody that we have done various things with in the festival, I

think he is amazing, anything I ring him up about and yes, he will talk to me about it and he is a physicist and we took him into a school. A difficult school.

Two young Asian boys came up to him and said, "So you have been to Cambridge." He said, "Yeah, you could do that."

And they said, "No, we couldn't, we are from Bradford." I find it heart breaking, why should you be limited because of where you are? Meeting people like that could change their perception. Going off on a different tangent but these are the key things for me with family audiences, creating a connection with people being able to see themselves reflected, about the topics they can connect with.

The last thing I will mention is marketing. A big organisation said to me, we are interested in the way you programme and how you get your audiences but when we spoke about how you actually market to different communities, I said - we don't market like that. If you want those audiences, you will have to think about it, the different channels that actually get you to people. For the family audience we do brochures that are child-friendly. We did one which had, I think it was something like the art of seduction, and mildly erotic poetry, some of the schools weren't happy about putting that in the book bag. We have created brochures just for schools. Small things, with just kids stuff in them into the book bags. Things about the different communities. Social media is fantastic, you have to segment it down. It is like the bit that can sometimes be missing, people can sometimes put on a really, really great show or create a great event but they don't think about the things to get the audience to come along.

TERRY: Our next speaker is Rebecca Ross Wilkinson. She has been director of several theatre organisations and is the engagement director here at the Everyman & Playhouse. She has developed the theatre's creative engagement programme here. She founded the community outreach programme, which focuses on underrepresented people, and which has been nominated for awards. The most recent development for the Young Everyman & Playhouse provides participation for training for young people in a variety of theatre strands. The Young Everyman aims to provide a navigated route for engagement and professional training, employment. Rebecca is passionate about diversity and has spearheaded the development work in this area and was awarded diversity awards in 2015.

REBECCA: I want to talk to you this morning about our work in terms of diversifying our audiences here at the Everyman. Gemma spoke a little bit about the demographics of Liverpool. What is interesting, we used to be considered to be the worst in terms of deprivation. And with the Capitalist of Culture we are the only local authority area which has improved on that. Having said that, the inequalities are extreme. Our focus is on socio-economic disadvantage and also unfortunately that is the case for many of our underrepresented groups. We have made a priority for years, with a strategy for years. We have just finished the Chinese New Year's celebrations. Down the road

we have Cat in the Hat. It has been a four-year engagement. But I know that at least four Chinese families have booked independently. I want to talk about the story of how it happened. A commitment through the organisation, when engaging with under-represented groups, it is like a wheel, with different spokes of engagement, which are all necessary to build the relationship and to engage effectively.

When we first opened the building, the area was changing, there were a lot more Chinese students in the area, a visible difference and little Chinese shops starting to open, and yet, Chinese people were really invisible within our theatre. So, in our catering offer, our audience, our participation. And I really wanted to work out how we could engage better.

To our shame, I find out that the institute was across the road and they became a major partner. Confucius Institutes are around where there are a large number of Chinese students. We arranged a welcome day in the first instance. We had really no idea what it would mean, what Chinese people might want to see, engage with us, how it might work. So, with that institute, we planned two welcome days and invited 100 students. We had scones with cream and jam which is a must every year, they love that. Tours of the building, opportunities to dress up in costume, but really, crucially, for us to be able to talk about our organisations and the offers we have and find out from them, how they might want to engage. At the end of the days we set up a Chinese arts forum so there would be Chinese students with us, programming what the offer would be.

We found from the students that they loved pantomime. So, one of the first things we wanted to do was enable them to see work on our stages. We discovered with pantomime that Chinese students said when they arrived in the UK, they found British people really serious and when they came to see pantomime, they were astounded by how bonkers it was.

That year we had a version of Cinderella and there was a prawn that flew in at one point of the show. But they loved the fact that it had a family tradition in Britain, and they could see there were grandparents, parents and children all having a fabulous time together. So, annually, we have to actually limit the number of tickets the students can have because it is so popular, but we do a pre-show session, everyone loves to dress up and see the show. We also found out from the students and their perspective, their biggest need was to feel they were integrating in the city and they were finding it difficult to experience that, even though that was their hope when they arrived in the UK. So, we set up a volunteering programme for them, where they could work alongside our artists on our family programme. The students had a keen desire to work with children or elders and actually for our pantomime season we send a fairy out across Liverpool to all sorts of different youth and community centres and two Chinese students accompany the artists, in full costume and deliver Christmas and pantomime workshops but actually they work across our full family programme now.

The students say that that is some of the most rewarding experiences they have while they are in the UK.

But it also enabled us to engage with some of our Chinese community organisations because what we discovered was, we were finding it really hard to engage with our resident Chinese communities. They wanted to engage with the students and were finding that hard. We set up sessions with children of some of our local organisations and the Chinese students helped support that.

In the process, we also found there were so many students that had really proficient artistic skills, they were dancers, singers, musicians and so forth. So, we set up an artist hub and provided opportunities for them to be able to perform while in the city. Chinese New Year is a massive part. We have a huge programme. Actually, for the students they find that really rewarding, because, it is difficult being away from home at Chinese New Year. It enables them to celebrate and share their culture here.

So, to all of this, we have been developing relationships and a presence through the programme and I think, a real catalyst for us was in 2017 we were a partner in bringing Shore-to-Shore, a Chinese-led piece of theatre about different experiences for Chinese people leaving China and coming to the UK. And this was a really interesting piece of theatre because it was to be performed in a restaurant, rather than within a theatre space and it was the first time that we were really able to engage with our local resident communities in this show. What was really funny was the first time when we tried to promote it, there was very, very little take-up. And we had to work with three major organisations politically within the city. And then when we went back to the organisations, we offered, we managed to get the Confucius Institute to offer a discount. I discovered the conversations going on when people were discussing this, was about the tickets to see theatre. They decided £10 was worth it, because it was what the meal was

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***"We invite people to come to the theatre as our guest for the day - and they are the only audience in the auditorium"***

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worth at that point in time, generally people were not paying to come and see the theatre. What was lovely was that Liverpool on the tour, was the only city that had a majority Chinese audience. So, I think the majority of the audience for Shore-to-Shore were BAME. It is to come back to Liverpool this March. It is a catalyst for us, since that happened, it has enabled different conversations with different groupings within our Chinese community which has enabled the situation today with Cat in the Hat to happen, we have been able to have conversations with the different groups and to do what we did with the Chinese students, really, to invite the families to come to the theatre for a welcome session, where we provide refreshments and we really welcome them as guests rather than audience to our theatres and to provide activities for the

children as well as coming to see the show. We are still fairly near the beginning of our journey with our resident community, but we are really delighted that that has started to work.

I wanted to talk to you a little bit about our working with refugees and asylum seekers. The Chinese work has taken four years to get to this stage, but with refugees and asylum seekers, we as a city in Liverpool have a large number. And pro rata I think we have one of the largest numbers nationally. In the theatre I was struggling with the fact that we needed to provide free tickets for refugees and asylum seekers and yet at the same time we have pressure with ticket yield and commercial producers with the touring work. We decided to use our own resource the best we could. For our own in-house shows, we have theatre days. Our final dress rehearsals happen on a Saturday and on a Saturday, that is when we have the final dress rehearsal, and we have relationships with a number of refugees and asylum-seeking organisations in the city and we invite people to come to the theatre as our guest for the day. So, they are greeted with a hot drink. Then we have really nutritious hot food and we have a session that is designed to help support people, to see whatever show it is. So that is how it works. Everyone comes in, watches, they are the only audience in the auditorium for the final dress apart from creatives. It has been incredibly popular. It has been for me one of the most important things we do. You can see the impact of theatre is so extraordinary with that group of people. We now, because we haven't got enough spaces for everybody, are really negotiating hard with our commercial producers, and actually they have been really generous. So, for most of our family work, we have at least 50 tickets for refugees and asylum seekers and we invite them to the theatre, have a pre-show session with them and welcome them to see our shows.

TERRY: Our final speaker is Ciaron, who takes the lead for the Manchester festivals community outreach and working to develop a deeper level of engagement and create links with a diverse range of people. The festival's engagement with families is vital ahead of the opening of the Factory, which is a brand-new large-scale theatre, scheduled to be opened in Manchester in 2021, to be run by the team behind the festival.

CIARON: When Anna invited me, I envisioned 15 people around the room, then 50, 100 people, 250 people. Then our Director said, there is a massive Family Arts Conference, you should go. I said I was already signed up to speak! I have not been in the sector for very long. So, I like to think that today I can speak to you as somebody who is the kind of person like a lot of people you are trying to engage with. I have not been in the role that long and not from an arts background. I may have a different perspective from the normal people you might hear speak.

We run Manchester International Festival, which runs for 18 days. We're coming up to our seventh festival in July. It's been going through a period of change over the last couple of years, and had a new Artistic Director, John McGrath. Came from Wales.

When he took over the festival off the record, I think he probably thought, I have got a festival, popular and with your typical culture vultures maybe the average person in Manchester either hasn't heard of it or isn't for them.

So, we needed to make sure that people knew about all the opportunities that we have got for them, as it is quite an inclusive festival. We have done work over the last 3 or 4 years on this: what is the city, who are the people? We began by working with 250 people, including families and young people. We introduced story telling workshops, worked with movement directors – all of these people who make Manchester amazing. We worked with a woman who had just given birth, and taxi drivers who had driven people home after the Manchester bombing. This, became our idea of “show-casing” what is amazing about Manchester, and it had a strong family aspect at its centre.

We have always done work for families but ultimately, we know that the audiences are not as diverse as they should be. We have set ambitious targets to make sure that the festival represents Manchester, from our programme, to work force, through to audience. Building a community of interest around the festival and working with local people, as experts, to try and

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*“Our local experts  
are our ear to the  
ground”*

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get us through the door. I'm pleased that Syima was talking about money - that is a massive part of it. I personally feel that time and trust are just as important. I think on the time side of things, this is for me, this equates to politics as well. Sometimes I wonder why people are not interested in politics, but if you, a single mum who comes home and has just an hour to herself, the last thing you want to do is to think about Brexit. It is the same with arts and culture, if you have a couple of hours a week, you don't want to try something new, you want to go is cinema or take the kids to wacky house; something that you know. By working with local people who are the experts - that is how you will get people to come to your shows. The example I use, when I first started working, I would be sat in meetings with some of the creative teams and artists, I wouldn't have a clue - I didn't understand what was happening because I am not from the arts background. When you understand that, that is when you can really benefit from working with those people. Over the last 2 years we have put together this creative community - a mix of people from all backgrounds, from all over Manchester, our ear to the ground and our local experts essentially, I will show you a video that show cases them:

*Performer, member of the creative community, side-kick, doer, youth forum, host, associate artist, volunteer, enthusiast I team leader, poet, board member, community ensemble member, volunteer of the year. Wigan, Stockport, Salford, Oldham, Rochdale, encouraging, inclusive, fun, radical, magnificent, ambitious, unique, community, possibility, inspirational, welcoming, spring board, challenging, wonderful, enthralling, brilliant, friendships, life changing.*

For me I really believe that for certain families, the kind of families we are engaging with, there is no marketing technique that will work for them. Doesn't matter what video you make or anything like that, what is going to get them to come to your show, is someone they trust - one of these people saying, come on and you will enjoy it. I will say, I know it doesn't sound fun, but when you get there, you will enjoy it. When they get there, they do enjoy it. These are the experts, and these are the people that will get you the family audiences.

We also run regular social events, and have run a couple of events at Manchester youth zone - a dance and spoken word project that took place in the boxing ring. We worked with local Councillors and the young leaders to invite local families to see it for free. This young lad came - I think he is a perfect example of somebody, if we put this in the city centre or if we charged, he wouldn't have come. It was free, someone he trusted invited him. He came along. Then a couple of months later, at Mostyn miners club, he read out the poetry, he had written, inspired. That was really touching but also it proved that he wouldn't have been there if it wasn't for the fact that it was free, where he lived, *and* somewhere he felt safe. Someone he trusted invited him to come along.

This is another thing we do, Festival in my House, where people can run a festival in their own home.

This is a project where the kids, family focused arts association, do fantastic work in Manchester, built a theatre in the shipping container, in the car park of the academy, we worked with local Councillors, some of the young leaders there and pupils to invite families in to experience the show for free. There was some really good learning for us there, something that worked well, invading other spaces. Going to talk to kids playing football, Russian language class, local chip shops and where people congregated and inviting families to come along. Learning for us and some things that didn't work, a lot of the families sending their young people on their own. We weren't able to build the relationships with the people who would be able to sanction the kids to come back again. That is one of the things we thought, how can we get around that in the future?

The last slide is The Factory - this is going to be our home from 2021. All the work we have been doing in the last 20 years and going forward to make people feel welcome in this space and talking to them, what would make you feel welcome? People saying, I would like to come in even if I don't have to pay £5 for a drink, to make families feel welcome when the space opens in a couple of years.

FLOOR: I am a festival producer particularly for children's theatre and we have so many white people who make children's theatre – what do you think the sector can do to better open up artist development? Particularly at developing artists from communities that don't necessarily engage.

CIARON: Building the community of interest, has so many benefits. Part of what we

are trying to do, to build up the people that have an interest in the festival and want to know as much about it as possible. We have a Talent Development Manager, came from the Rochdale Literature Festival, I think she knew everyone. She is putting together a talent development programme in the next couple of years. The benefits of the Factory, the way we have been doing things for a while with the festival, we have a blank canvas, thinking about how we do things differently. Making sure that people are on ground, meeting people and talking about the opportunities that are out there - that will make sure you get a diverse range of people engaging.

SYIMA: I think artistic development is really important. One of the interesting things when you set up the festivals, you have festivals and fringes which is fine, so the literature festival doesn't have a fringe because what I found interesting was, what I saw in other places, if you are not good enough to go the festival, so we put you in the fringe. A lot of BME artists or writers or poets are stuck in the fringe and never went beyond because nobody was focusing on that side to develop it. One of the things we have done with the festival is that we have a lot of our poetry events multiline up. We don't do many things, which is reading by an individual poet. I am keen on, we have a range, you know, so our miracle worker - so at the start we have people who are coming on to the scene, may not have a book published yet. Things like that are really important to give that experience as well. Also, with new writers we do a lot of panel discussion and part of that is providing the experience, working with somebody who is a lot more experienced. That is something that needs to be focused on. Holding everybody up to the same artistic standards. I was slightly horrified with some of the things I've experienced – it almost seems like, BME, check - well done, you have done that. And it is awful because we need to develop people in a way that allows everybody to benefit, and people are able to speak on a level platform. Not a kind of, "you're BME and we will stick you over there because you won't make the cut for over here."

REBECCA: Talking about the people that are making the work for families - we have got a responsibility to be really diversifying and engaging from families and upwards, for us, Young Everyman Playhouse is now supporting people into the industry. But in order to make sure that our producer's and director's cohorts and so forth are really diverse, and have young people that are underrepresented in the industry, we have to really start with the commitment with the family work. Working with organisations and communities from on engaging audiences from the beginning, as children, and that takes years. Some of our young people that have gone into the industry through those strands has been a 5 year or more commitment. And we might have met them even younger than that in the theatre. We need to acknowledge that commitment.

In Liverpool, it is interesting, in the new funding agreements that arts organisations have, there is a necessity to support, in a different way, the cultural festivals and organisations in the city. I think it is a good thing, I think for organisations to work much more closely in partnership, will help as well.

CIARON: I think the responsibility is on the cultural organisations to network with each other and signpost young artists for other opportunities. If you have an opportunity where you can take six and you get 100 and 100 are amazing artists, you should say - you didn't make it here but look at what's going on here and here... and don't get disheartened.

FLOOR: I wanted to ask if any of you had any experience or plans to work with the Gypsy Roma traveller community who are excluded?

SYIMA: We have a large Roma community in Bradford. I haven't got stats but the two largest are ourselves and Sheffield. I don't know quite who has the largest. We have done a fair bit of work in schools. So, in terms of the area that the Roma community are moving into, there have been tensions in the schools with some of the children. And areas they are moving into, a lot are Punjabi, Asian communities. And we have done work on the language. Kids can relate to it. We have done work in the festival with various people who have written books about the Roma community. I think it is really important to have artists from the Roma community to talk about whatever they want to talk about, not necessarily being Roma, but what is it you want to discuss at the moment, what's important to you. We have to stop identifying people from different communities, inviting them to talk about the community bit, and not anything else. So, we have done some work around that.

REBECCA: It is a new area for us, we are beginning that journey, we have a big Roma community in Liverpool. We have been working with Roma young people for a little while, because of a youth centre in Liverpool called Park Hill, who engage with the community. We were asked to engage with Roma mums and daughters in a project, but we are working with Roma young men. I think what has worked well is having our Young Everyman Playhouse Director involved from the start. What we have had trouble with before, it is all right working in the community, but we want those young people to feel they can come into this building and they can create work here as well. And we are in that process, so they have been working in the community for some time but now some of the work is happening in the building. I think it has helped that we have been consistent since the beginning, and it means Matt can be flexible to how we shape Everyman & Playhouse to how we engage with those young people.

TERRY: I think we know that the Roma and gypsy community in the UK and perhaps across Europe is still one of the most disadvantaged and discriminated groups we have. So, to address that through art and culture is a great thing.

FLOOR: Do any or all of you had any advice for diversifying your programme and your approach if the geographic area you are working in doesn't appear to be that diverse? Obviously there is diversity there but I'm new to the area. How can I find the pockets of people - who they are, where they are, and what they need? When actually, on the surface, it seems to be quite a middle class, white area.

CIARON: I'm banging the same drum. Repeating what I have said. Have a look at what groups already exist in that area. So, that is part of the work that I do, looking at what support groups and what groups exist in Manchester and trying to piggyback on there. They have the relationship. It is important to think about what diversity means, you can walk down the street and think everybody is the same but when you boil it down, there might be significant differences that maybe they keep more hidden, it is about going into that place where they may feel safe and might meet once a week or once a month and break it down that way.

SYIMA: I would echo that. A lot of the work we do is actually with community groups. I think a really good starting point is to look at what kind of community groups there are around. They are inevitable: community groups, places of worship, even Facebook groups. Those kinds of things can be really, really helpful. And if you look at what type of restaurants you have as well.

REBECCA: I think partnership is critical to that. It is about finding out where the different communities are, but also finding out who you will have an effective partnership with.

TERRY: I think for me one of the things that has come out consistently is about connectivity, relevance with communities and ensuring that the engagement is proper and tangible. Not engagement that looks as though it might engage but getting down on the frontline, talking with people in communities. From what we have heard this morning from our speakers, that is the real activity we need to be focusing on.

## Provocation: Engaging adults through family audiences



### **Millicent Jones, Liverpool Philharmonic**

When I was thinking about this conference and the themes around diversity and how we get people from non-traditional backgrounds involved with what we do with families, I was thinking about the opportunity we have around engaging the adults who are attending with their children perhaps for the first time, in their journey around audience development.

Research tells us that family audiences are actually the most diverse audiences we have, in terms of age, class, and ethnic background. They are more local than other audiences and they often attend in multi-family groups. And we also know that people who rarely, if ever, have engaged with the arts will bring their children and family to arts activity. At Liverpool Philharmonic, which is a venue in Liverpool that presents a whole range of music, comedy, film, etc, and is also home to the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, we have observed that these things are the case. We also know that, and this is from last year's Conference, that 75% of family audiences are composed of four groups and one of the groups that's most prevalent is called Facebook Families, which make up 12% of the population but 4% of arts generally. They are unique among the less well-engaged groups, in that they attend with their children in greater proportion than they do other events generally. Again, people can think, this isn't something I know about, but it is something I think will be good for my kid, so I will take the step for the first time and check it out, essentially. We also know that - this is from the general cultural economics, and it is obvious - an individual's needs change with the number of dependents they have and their availability of resources and time. So, a decline in the newly married couples and then later they have more time and attention to devote to the arts community. It is hard to see when your children are small but there will be a point one day when you can go out again, without the kids, and enjoy cultural activity.

So, one the ways we have explored this at Liverpool Philharmonic is through a scheme called Leap into Live Music. It was to get audiences from disadvantaged backgrounds into the concert hall for the first time, using price as the tool to reduce barriers to attendance. So essentially people who were on the scheme, targeted through community groups, employers and other mechanisms, get to attend events free of charge and they have more assistance in terms of help with their ticketing, the welcome at the event, being on hand to answer any questions, so we support the journey that way, and after they have attended three times free of charge we move them on to a reduced price ticketing scheme. This scheme has been running for five years, we have 2,000 households engaged with it. And we've given away or sold 16,000 tickets to date to a variety of our programming, not just the orchestra, but rock, pop, folk music, comedy, etc, everything we do. The interesting thing about this group is we found it is a lot easier to engage with these folks initially through a family event.

But now 54% of our households have come to a family event through this scheme, even though, actually, family events make up a minority of what we offer them. Also, interestingly, 41% have attended both a family event and a non-family event. So, again, I think a lot of research needs to be done in this area, but my gut instinct is that lowering that barrier for them with their children has lowered a barrier for them in terms of their overall attendance. So, they are our gateway into the rest of the organisation.

I also then just looked at the number of households that we have got attending our family concerts, which we have run for many years. We had about 5,300 households attend in the last couple of years. And of those folks, we have about 37% who do attend other events at Liverpool Philharmonic and 47% of them attend not only orchestral events but the other musical programming that we present. So, I think, again you can see there is opportunity for us to talk to these folks, not just about our family programming, but programming more generally.

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***“family audiences  
are the most diverse  
audiences we have”***

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So, I guess my provocation is: What do we do about this group? How do we get them to attend at a point in their lives where it makes sense for them? How do we take advantage of the fact we have great data on these folks, and that we can collect and maintain it over time?

One of the things we did recently, was to do a promotional offer to families who have attended our very popular Christmas concerts. We did a best-available ticket offer for £10 around a series of concerts where we had spare capacity. We could afford to do that. We didn't have the most massive response in the world, but we did sell over 100 tickets and generated another £100,000 worth of income off the adults we may not have previously considered potential contenders for our main stage orchestra programme. Many years ago, in San Francisco, we did an offer around giving people, who wanted to go out, without their kids, effectively a babysitting credit. So, we gave them a \$20 or \$25 rebate on concert tickets as a way of getting them to think about going out, without the expense of hiring a baby sitter. To almost give them permission to do something for themselves at a time in life when it becomes very difficult. My other provocation is: Is there a product we can develop, whether it is a show, or a concert, that really is developed specifically for these adults attending without children for the first-time audience? You know, how do we present them with a way in geared towards their needs, expectations, level of knowledge that is as easy as we make it for children to appreciate and in our instance classical music, as it is for adults? Another opportunity is our, and I'm sure you do relaxed concerts, do we use those to promote access to our various access schemes for adults. I would love to learn more about what everyone is doing to target these audiences, successes and failures and for us all to think about the adults as well as the children in terms of our relationship to them over a lifetime and what research we might do, to identify needs and barriers in this area, so we can really think about this as our family audience, over time.

## **Keynote 2: How creative content can encourage participation, interest and engagement for families**



**Cheryl Taylor**

**Head of Content, BBC Children's**

I am Cheryl, I have got a brilliant job at the BBC, Head of Content for both CBeebies and CBBC, that is an amazing audience to make content for and increasingly we have many different platforms that we are also looking to engage all of that age group on as their kind of frenetic and kind of febrile consumption habits hit on us all. Because we are the BBC, our mission to inform, educate and entertain. Prior to this job I was head of comedy at the BBC. That was also a great job actually. When I came to the kid's department, it struck me it was like no other department at the BBC in that people had been there for a really, really long time and were properly vocational. When I was in comedy, everyone was treading on each other to get into drama and in drama treading on each other to get to movies. In Children's, there were guys there for 25 years, I don't mean they were old and dusty and not engaged in new way of doing things, they are passionate about what they do. Across the board, the whole department are always looking, I mean it is, an hourly, daily kind of passion as I say, to find new ways and better ways to engage and entertain and educate our young audiences.

There are a number of ways we do that, that is what I will look at today. I will make reference to CBBC because we do so much, I am focusing on preschool because otherwise this presentation would last forever. But I will make a bit of a reference to CBBC as well, essentially the same, the same kind of attention to detail and understanding of the audience apply.

So, experts we engage across genres are household names and role models for the children. Once it starts it looks really easy in terms of their expertise and facility in front of the camera. It is hard to find role models who fulfil a number of criteria. As you can see here, we have got Dr Rang, Dr Maggie and Yolanda Brown. She has a new show, she is a brilliant saxophonist. Katie is a racing driver and obviously we chose her because we were trying to challenge to some degree stereotypes about girls liking fast cars and getting involved in motor racing.

Maggie has been doing star gazing for a while and an expert in her field. Dr does various things, including dancing. He has got a fantastic bedside manner, the way he explains complex medical things to the kids has meant along with operation ouch, we get letters from hospitals from doctors and nurses saying kids who come to the hospital are now 50% more compliant because they are not frightened because they have seen Dr Ranj and others explain on TV. That is a fantastic result.

Effectively it is clear, in terms of diversity, it is top of the agenda. We have a new

doctor, says “babes, if you can't see it, you can't be it”. She became a doctor because she watched ER, in terms of inspiring children and lighting up their passion for things, I think it is really important that we are always providing as wide and a diverse range of role models as we can.

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*“if you can't see it,  
you can't be it”*

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Right let's try the next one. Yeah! Science. So, a lot of broadcasters shy away from science because in terms of nailing that kind of laugh while you learn, making quite difficult subjects entertaining, it is quite hard to do. On CBeebies in the last year we have had 2 shows, Kit and Pup and Bitz and Bob, which is designed to have science attitude through open ended play, they discover things and go right down into the fine detail of how it work.

Bitz and Bob was in the long time making, character and story lines at the same time as introducing scientific concepts, this is you know, we have had a lot of feedback from parents saying that because it is colourful and because Bitz and Bob are surrounded by interesting toys who are their friend, the children have engaged with it. One e-mail for example, say's not only educational, "my son has been laughing like a drain, watching episodes so far, brilliant stuff CBeebies with Bitz and Bob."

We know if we encourage kids to laugh and entertained while they learn, it is like the spoon full of sugar. With Bitz and Bob, and on top of that we have done radio content. Across all platforms where we know we have got a successful brand and we know one that is the kids are happy to engage with. We try and deliver on as many different platforms as we can.

Campaigning, again, on that theme of using kind of entertaining and engaging characters another of our shows, Go Jetters. This is a brilliant brand for igniting interesting geography, because the Jetters fly off around the world. It shows them investigating what the particular area is famous for but last year for example, we had the great Pacific garbage pack, where the heroes learned about the problem of building up plastic waste in the Pacific Ocean. Again, this was something that was both entertaining but raised issues, even our youngest viewers we know want to get involved with.

Here was another couple of e-mails that got sent in "my son is upset because the Jetters didn't manage to fix the garbage tip. So pleased they are addressing issues, we need kids to be passionate about driving change." "... they failed because they need the whole world to help. My son was filled with outrage and renewed determination. Great job CBeebies," that was a nice way of turning it on its head. The Go Jetters didn't and the fact they needed the help of everyone else resonated with a very young audience.

It is quite hard - we have to look ahead many, many months in order to incorporate this kind of campaigning message into our output. Obviously, in terms of

eco-sensibilities, that is going to be on-going. For something like Go Jettters it takes about a year to write the scripts and do the complex animation etc. So, across all of our content both on CBeebies and CBBC we are always looking to anticipate what kids will be excited about and concerned about. Just on the eco front for example, Newsround have been doing a series of features inviting kids to tell us about what they are doing to persuade the government that more should be done about climate change and certainly this Friday, when a lot of kids are going to be boycotting schools, Newsround will be there covering that. Lots of different ways, depending on the format and the genre of covering the same format.

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***“we can call use  
entertaining ways to  
embed more serious  
subjects into our content”***

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Let's learn. Laugh while you learn and lighting up little learners as I have said, we can use entertaining ways to embed more serious subjects into our content. Sometimes though, if we were covering literacy and numeracy it can be slightly more overt. Here you see obviously Alphablocks and the Numberjacks are now famous Shakespearean live productions which we do at Christmas and Easter. I think again with Numberjacks, these are great, they are colourful and they have little adventures and kids don't notice that essentially they are covering numeracy. A lot of people said, you can't do Shakespeare for this age-group. There is an amazing team that come together with the producers, look at the text and work out different ways of cutting down the text, also the addition of all of the different role models, especially from CBBC presenters, all important in terms of how we connect with our audience. Coming together in a fantastic way, again the response we have had from the Shakespearean productions have been incredible with parents writing in talking about their kids wandering around the house quoting Shakespeare at the age of 4. If you want to engage kids even in areas that might appear to be kind of beyond their years, if it is done in the right way. We find we can almost talk about anything and get them engaged if it is done in the right way.

Also sing with CBeebies, we have realised, the rise of YouTube and young kids are always looking for quality songs to help them to learn with numeracy and literacy and we have gathered some of the CBeebies stars to join the bandwagon.

And I mentioned diversity before in terms of our presenters and obviously, we spend an awful lot of time thinking about what the children are looking at and what is there on our content and within our content that reflects them and their lives. So, we have got Biggleton which talks about citizenship to them, Apple Tree House, which is a live action drama, which includes many different characters from a sort of council estate in London. Which is fantastic. I don't know if people have seen Pablo recently won an award. Extraordinary production and I think perhaps at the moment, more than anything else demonstrates the lengths to which our producers will go to, to be

inclusive and truly authentically represent. It is a show written by autistic people and voiced by an autistic child. It shows the adventures of him and his friends and sees and experiences the world in a different way. Although the experiences are those of an autistic child, because it is seeing a world in a different way, it has messages beyond that for children around how when they come across people who might be different from them, this is the kind of thing they might be thinking or experiencing. So it is a wonderful show, beautifully done and I think highly representative of the way that we want our children to embrace other people and feel included themselves.

Something special - Justin. A loved brand as well. Which is massively important, not least to the children but to parents with special needs kids and, you know, recently a real first, Rob Delaney delivering a story via Makaton, which he had used with his son.

That clip went viral, with a couple who filmed their son watching it, and he became unbelievably thrilled and overexcited because he was watching bedtime stories in a way he could understand. Time and time again we get letters and clips from families who reinforce that thing of - if you can see it, it means something to you. And obviously, there are a lot of different things to cover, but we absolutely make it appropriate and do our very best all the time.

Just briefly - exciting platforms. Obviously, you have YouTube now. We have the iPlayer, where kids in a catch-up mode, on demand, can find things, this has created different types of content and one that received attention in the press was Daydreams, an hour-long compilation of slow content, children in fields, smelling flowers, quite soporific.

People e-mailing in, saying, that's divine, it was an interesting thing that we thought it wouldn't work on the channel, it wouldn't because it is too slow-moving but because we use different platforms, we adapt to suit them. Daydreams - if you are feeling tired and sleepy, find it on the iPlayer, it is fantastic.

Get Creative - moving on to digital products, we know these are important to our viewers. We have a big digital unit, creating different applications. In recent months we have had the Get Creative app, where children can learn to paint and edit their own mini shows. We also have, very new, Go Explore, hot on the heels of Get Creative. This was developed very much hand in hand with the early years curriculum and all the games cover a range of different topics, like again, exploring geographical habitats with the Go Jetters and helping guests be healthy and happy at the Furchester Hotel and in terms of sequence and planning, kids getting involved in organising a party with Hey Duggie.

So, lots of things to make and do, and, in terms of igniting their thirst for exploration, we think Go Explore will be really popular. The other area that we have always been asked to look at is audio learning, I don't know how many people had Alexas' at Christmas. Our digital whizz kids are looking at how CBeebies Radio can develop

interactive story, so kids who like using Alexa can find their CBeebies friends in an audio capacity. We have a very short clip of this - let's look:

>>: *Roar loud like a T-Rex.*

>>: *CHILD ROARING*

>>: *That's great. You roared like a T-Rex. This would make the perfect finishing touch. First thing first, you cannot go running around with dinosaurs looking like that. Stand up straight. That's it. Show me how fast you can be by running on the spot.*

*Wow, that's really fast. I want you to jump high in the air.*

It is in its infancy for this, this type of story-telling and engagement, but we do a lot of research with all of our age groups. It is a system called Stepping Out, where we go out two or three times a week to schools up and down the country, and show them what we have been doing and get a response from them and that's always a great way of feeding back into the development process and in advance of putting out something like these interactive stories on Alexa, we also get feedback. So, all the time we are talking to our audience, talking to parents, and making sure that things we do resonate in a constructive and entertaining way.

And then, Baby Club. Just continuing on that theme of parents. We realised that there is a lot of kind of co-viewing that goes on CBeebies. We have a number of ways of connecting with parents, but we didn't have a lot of shows that overtly showed parents with kids. So, this is a new show that is coming in March, where it is a Baby Club and we have again a diverse group... A real baby, where is that baby? Obviously very excited. It's a winner, already!

And it'll be really interesting to see how it goes down, it is for the real littlies, I think it'll be a great comfort, especially to new parents, which again is a group we felt we weren't reaching out to. So, both with Baby cap club and CBeebies Grown Ups, I don't know how many people have Facebook and Twitter. If you like that, it is funny, irreverent parents commenting in a rude way on characters and things that happened on the channel. First, we were a bit like, oh, we are not sure, but we have embraced it, so the people who do the CBeebies Grown Ups, Twitter and Facebook feed - we have adapted our behaviour for that platform. And we are constantly struggling to do that because we are the BBC and we are meant to behave in a certain way. But we really try.

So, there for grown-ups – Tom Hardy and Bedtime Stories. It feels sexist but he had a massive reaction from many mothers and some fathers, too. The other thing I wanted to mention about Bedtime Stories, it had chugged along a bit like Top Gear did before the terrible trio refreshed it and suddenly, we started using bigger names, big role models and pin-up boys and girls which made a massive difference. So the halo effect from using big names and celebrities has really helped Bedtime Stories, it is great for literacy and also promoting kind of reading time between parents and their

kids and, I think, now it is extraordinary, we have people ringing us up, massive A-list Hollywood stars, I don't know if you saw Dolly Parton and Will Young reading a same-sex parent bedtime story this week. It is a brilliant way to do focussed content for different parts of our audience.

I hope that gives, to some degree, an overview of all the different areas where we focus, when we are essentially wanting kids to learn, we want them to have curiosity about the world and be infected by what we believe is generally a wondrous world that we live in. And, across all the things that we do, we think about it very, very hard and we are very proud, because it is not easy, to essentially invest all that content with a learning spine. But ensuring that it is always entertaining and hopefully funny at the same time.

FLOOR: We talked earlier this morning about new audiences and getting new audiences into theatres and concert halls and music venues and some of the challenges arts organisations face in that. Obviously, at the BBC and with the many platforms you have, you have a massive audience. I wondered if you had any examples of where you are creating TV, and then online content has come in. And if there are any ideas about linking what you are doing online and on-screen with what is going on in the real world as well?

CHERYL: We are thinking about it all the time, to some degree we are constrained by the fact that we are a public service and a lot of that activity falls into the commercial area. But because we get such a massive demand from parents, so, for example, with the Christmas panto, the way that that is filmed, there used to be two live performances, we were keen to encourage families to come in. We could only allow 800, 400 per show but because of that demand last year we did an experiment and charged for tickets, a very small amount but it was sufficient to allow to us do six or seven performances. And the response was really, really positive. We were really worried, again, because we are public service, that people would object to paying, but actually everyone said – well, your tickets are far cheaper than, you know, a commercial pantomime and our kids love the CBeebies characters so much that we would rather pay a small amount and at least get a seat. So, it is true to say that we are constantly looking for different ways to balance the public service with the commercial, and one of the things we have done, which could be of interest to fee payers, last year we did a summer social - three days of live performances - and we partnered with different organisations to deliver three days of what was a really whizz-bang, live, face-to-face experience. We know because they are the two most popular kids' channels in the UK and, of course you see a lot of Disney, Nickelodeon, Tiny Pop characters appearing in stadiums, we know that our audience and our parents want us to be there. If you have ideas, basically, write in!

## **Accessible Experiences**

**Chair: Charlotte Jones, Independent Theatre Council**

**Panellists:**

**Laura Guthrie, Ramps on the Moon / Nottingham Playhouse**

**Bethany Mitchell, MK Gallery**

**Sarah Allen, Leeds City Museum**

Welcome to this session which is all about making performances accessible to families. I am Charlotte Jones, Chief Executive of the Independent Theatre Council, a management association for about 500 performing arts organisations across the country, many of whom are here today. I am also on the Board of the Family Arts Campaign. With me today I have on my right, Laura Guthrie from Ramps on the Moon. Also, from Bamboozle Theatre. On my left I have Bethany Mitchell from the Milton Keynes Gallery and Sarah Allen from Leeds Museums and Galleries.

**LAURA:** I am from Ramps on the Moon which is a programme a national programme funded by Arts Council. I am based at Nottingham Playhouse where I am the agent for change for Ramps on the Moon, which is a 6-year programme, funded by Arts Council England. It started in 2015 and on the slide behind you, you can see the 7 consortium members of Ramps on the Moon, spread around the country which is great. The lead theatre for that is the New Wolsey Theatre in Ipswich. Ramps on the Moon is focusing on creating a cultural change within regional theatre around the employment of deaf and disabled creatives both on stage and backstage as well as a shift in the embedding of access into performances themselves.

On focusing on that, we want to create the learning environment. The work that is done as part of Ramps on the Moon is done in a way which means it is actually fine to fail providing that failure helps us to learn for the next, as we move on through Ramps on the Moon. It is a very supportive kind of failure, if that is possible but really looks at how the new things that we do, the risky things we do are allowed to be supported by the learning and how that learning is passed on to each different theatre and across the consortium. The process by which ramps works is two-fold. Firstly, we create shows because it is theatre based, that is what you would expect us to do. Each theatre in the consortium will make one show on a different year so across the 6 years there will be a new show each year although we are having a year off this year, for those following ramps.

These shows are large scale performances that have a minimum of 50% of deaf and disabled creatives involved in it and they tour to each of the other theatre venues and within the shows access is embedded. So that means that any British Sign Language visual vernacular or captioning or audio description, is made up as part of the piece.

Then the second way that Ramps is functioning is through the agents for change. I am an agent for change at Nottingham Playhouse - fantastic title and I am proud of

it - there are more of me across the different theatres involved in the consortium. All of the agents are deaf or disabled practitioners which for Ramps is incredibly important because it is very much about being led by disabled people.

The agents' roles across the different theatres vary, depending on the needs of the theatre. As you can imagine, each of the theatres have a very different profile - their needs or the criteria or the priorities they might have are different, our priorities are different to Stratford East in London. Each will decide on the areas they are focusing on. We are there to guide theatres through any new initiatives they are taking on also around supporting them, embedding access into all of their planning and strategy making they might have across the whole of their organisation. So, what might the change look like? For Ramps on the Moon, what we think of as success I suppose, is 3 things. It is about employment. It is about seeing more deaf and disabled people employed as creatives and in theatre both as I said before on stage and behind the scenes.

It is also about embedding, it is about embedding access in the whole organisation so when you have a meeting about marketing, access is on the agenda. When you have a meeting about the operation of the building itself access is part of the agenda. When you are employing casting directors, ensure within their briefs and contracts using and looking for deaf and disabled performers and artists is part of that process.

Finally engaging, that we are looking all the time to increase the engagement of deaf and disabled audience members as well as performers and artists.

So that is Ramps on the Moon in kind of a nutshell. It is something I could talk about for hours, I can't because there is a beeper going to go off now. But how that influenced us at the playhouse, we set up two years ago, a new initiative, family fest, a week of half term activities in the theatre, with a whole range of different activities geared towards toddlers right up to children aged 18. As part of our new thinking we looked at access from the start of that initiative. So, we looked at what the barriers were going to be for the families wanting to come to family fest and we looked at how we were representing disability within the programming of that particular initiative. Also, we were keen that we were taking into account, deaf and disabled adults into this programme. So, we weren't just thinking about how to ensure it is accessible for deaf and disabled children to take part; we were thinking about families that also had deaf and disabled adults as part of that family.

Importantly, we were looking at how deaf and disabled people could be part of the leadership of that. So, with one of our other programmes of work we ran, Ramp it Up. We were keen that the workshops for young people and families were led by disabled practitioners', so I think it has been talked about a lot already today. But the representation of disabled people for other disabled people is really important. Seeing yourself in those positions of leadership are incredibly powerful.

So, what were the challenges for us with Family Fest? Two main challenges really.

One was in terms of building an audience; it was a new initiative anyway. We hadn't done a great deal of work for families outside of some of our family shows. So, it was a big challenge to look at how we would build that audience and for that audience to be inclusive in terms of deaf and disabled children and adults.

Secondly, building the confidence within the theatre itself. We have heard a lot already today about reaching out to different community groups and how you engage with people to bring them into your events or theatre spaces or gallery spaces. But what happens once they are in that space? How welcomed do they feel? How accessible is the space? How useful is the space for them as a family with a member who is disabled?

We ran a programme of training for staff on a variety of different disability focused training such as deaf awareness training, we the kid training on welcoming families with children with profound and multiple learning disabilities. Something that I do a lot of work with, with Bamboozle. Also, part of that training was giving members of staff that worked in different departments the opportunity to work alongside the participation department actually engaging within the sessions themselves. So, when they went back to being in the Box Office, when they talked to families with disabled children or adults they had a real sense of what was going to be, what the offer was as well as feeling more comfortable about talking to and engaging with families with disabled people in them.

So, I guess, um, some - these are some examples of our Elves and the Shoemaker Show. It was a relaxed atmosphere. We had BSL and captioned performances for the first time and they were sold out this year which was amazing.

But the key things I guess we have learned from it are that you need time. You don't need to think that you are going to do a new initiative like this, and it is going to be a hit straight away. You have to give time to embed. Ciaran mentioned this before lunch about time and trust. I would completely concur with him; it is about giving yourself time to build up those connections and giving your families time to feel they can trust you and trust the building that they are coming into.

BETHANY: I am Bethany, the curator of inclusion at MK Gallery. And I have had the great privilege of setting up Art and Us, our now relatively new programme for families with children with complex support needs. It is really important to say initially that this is part of our family programme. It is not treated or seen as a segregated offer, but what it does do, is ensure that the families that we recognise and are telling us, that they didn't feel comfortable, able, some of them safe, to access other areas of the programme. And are choosing to access us this way. While it may be, and hopefully will be a springboard into other areas, at the moment, it is the way in which they are most comfortable to attend the gallery and take something from us.

It has been running since May 2018. It's been run by myself and a team of 13 associated artists and in the short time I have to share with you, a minute of which has

already gone, I think I'm going to be focussing on a very sort of practical toolkit of the things we have used as the key ingredients, that enable us to shape and share these moments with our families. So, although, of course, the access extends well before we have them in our space and well after those moments I'm going to focus on that time together. I have a few family words populated throughout, I think it is important that they are represented here as well.

So, the first mega ingredient is our consideration to facilitation and relationships with our audiences, the way in which we have learned to structure these sessions is on a one-to-one basis. We have up to four families and four artists in any one session and they work together closely in a partnership. So, they are expecting each other. Families are prepared with visual cueing and information about their artist and in response, artists are aware of some basic information around their families. And this is gathered through a family information form which is super flexible. It is not that it has to be returned in that format, but it is written in such a way, it invites information, on balance, about both their creative interests as a full family and their access requirements as a full family.

It is also written in such a way that it invites the full family to share together, to complete that processing together and it is really important to us that every single little moment of this programme and the way in which it comes into being has this constant and subtle messaging and that it is a full family learning philosophy and we are gently trying to strip out any elements that may be a disempowering dynamic for participants, given the fact the nature of the families mean that parents and siblings are caregivers to their sibling with complex support needs. I'm sure many of you will agree, the joy in working with people is the innate unknowns and the possibilities that this brings, so with that comes the utter importance of supporting our artists to have the confidence and capacity to reflect in action. So, when things change, which they inevitably do, to be able to step in, to step back, to recognise that just simply being present in the moment is enough, sometimes.

To also recognise that, given a scenario where they are not sure, it is OK not to know, and it is better to take a step back and to notice the nuances of the environment and the moment than to make assumptions and force the way forward. I might skip a couple to get through. Considered communication, I don't think we can move, because it is integral to this. Our artists and myself are very aware of communication in all its forms. Not just learned modes of communication but we are working closely with our families to suss out what words will work, whether it is signs, gestures, short words or phrases or silence. From many artists I know that one of the things they are taking out of this is the importance and value of being able to be quiet, still, silent and make invitations through the materials themselves very often.

Authentic participation is the aim of the game.

So, a couple of words to embed the value of some of those qualities.

And, second, major ingredient is consideration to material and activity, the content of the sessions. We have found it absolutely essential and I do think it is probably best practice amongst many of us anyway, to use open-ended materials. So, the less our facilitators and the materials themselves are describing a certain way of being, doing, using, working, the more space we are using for interpretation and meaning-making which are incredible empowering elements of being a person and potentially, in some cases, quite lacking from the participant with the complex support needs, wider life structures, so invitations being made to them through other scenarios. We treat everything as curious catalysts, starting points, provocations, springboards into further moments of discovery and wonder and, as such we use a lot of obscure everyday materials. So, we have fly swats and balloon pumps and inflatable bed pumps and badminton rackets as we have ink, paint and powder. It is about appealing to innate human curiosity. It is that leveller, that equalising opportunity. Curiosity is not specific to age or level of support needs. It is within us, so it is an attempt to play on that and pull families in through that. Our materials as such have incredibly dynamic qualities, things that splodge, split, spray, dust, dance, sprinkle, spread, bleed, blob. And for us, that is really important in terms of offering multiple points of access, so, for example, a child with non-verbal autism and their neurotypical sibling may find the same, may find different ways into that material. And I think the more sort of dynamic the quality a material, an activity offers, there are more opportunities for an individual there is to find themselves and recognise themselves reflected in that material, whether it is a reflective gentle moment with a drop of ink pouring from a pipette on to the paper or the explosion of the same ink being splotted on lining paper outside. And also, it is fundamental that things can be gripped, reached, we have made adaptations so people can move around the space and have the agency but at the same time not losing sight that it is a session about challenges, measured risk taking and stimulation, not mollycoddling, it is a celebration of what is possible, and the combination of play-base curious and intuitive seems to lend itself to people finding their own self-motivation or a shared motivation as a family it tackle something, to tackle a challenge and as such new things happen. We hear a lot - I have never seen him/her do that. And it is through those methods I think we are achieving that.

It is very, very rare that we strive for tangible outcomes. Very, very few of our families are driven by that at all.

And then the third ingredient, being the environment, the space. So, the set-is up a huge amount of the time that we spend on the day of the sessions. They are weekly, on Sundays. And it is really, an invitation, an invitation for those families to cross the threshold. For some it shouldn't be underestimated how much of an achievement it is to get them and their children over that threshold. Some sessions, maybe 25 minutes have been spent very gently trying to get the child to cross the threshold. But it was brilliant, and we are gently making steps forward with the families. And the space is transformed and transformable. We make sure it is transformed enough that it is a really inviting, intriguing space but at the same time, it is in no way resolved. It is an

invitation to activate and animate. So for those people to bring their whole selves over the threshold and work and inform the space and work amongst it. It changes, it is flexible. It has to be. We can leave the session a very different space to that which we started in.

But at the same time, elements of continuity. So, we will always have a breakout space, for example. Sensory aids, a black-out tent and also myself as a point of continuity. I think it is hugely valuable and for me, an absolute privilege and luxury to be in a position where I am present in every single session. So, while we are changing and flexing all the time there are some points that never change, so that families are fully aware of some of the things they are going to see.

So, I think of all those things I have said very quickly, I think it is really important to recognise that they make things better for all people, as with every discussion around access, it makes life better for all people to have that level of flexible, choice, agency, personalised communications, care and respect.

SARAH: I'm Sarah Allen. I'm the learning and access officer for Leeds Museums and Galleries. I must apologise for my lack of beautiful images that other people have had. We have had a very specific and deliberate decision at Leeds museums and Galleries that we don't take photographs in lots of our sessions that are deliberately designed as access sessions and deliberately designed for people with a range of complex needs. It's distracting, it takes me out of the moment and like you were saying, it's really good to be in that moment at the same time.

So, originally Leeds were asked to come and talk because we are the current holders of the Kids and Museum Family Friendly award for our City Museum in the centre of town. I don't work there. So, sorry! These are my two sites, if you have never been to Leeds Museums, I encourage you to come to me first. I work at Abbey House Museum, a Victorian social history museum and Kirkstall Abbey across the road, outside the centre of town. A lot of our access work for Leeds museums and galleries is based out of my site. Number one because I'm the unofficial access champion for Leeds Museum but two, we are quite small, we are compact. We were shortlisted for the familiar Family Friendly Awards a couple of years ago, I am not bitter we didn't win but we are seen as a safe space for, particularly family members with complex needs. A lot of the activities actually happen at my site but around other Leeds museums and Galleries too. If you have never been, we are nine sites across the City of Leeds. We have a range of different sites. So, we have two historic houses. We have two mills. We have our two city centre flagship sites, the City Museum and Art Gallery. We have our store which is not a public building, but you are welcome to visit it by appointment. We have my two sites as well. All of those sites have a learning and access officer and we tend to be the first point of contact for families with complex needs, but we try to make sure that all of our team members are all set, a part of that welcome and part of that offer as well.

This is the lovely Cameron. He was enamored of our Space Pants. He was the star of a project involving specialist leaders in education and these are our Woolworths Space Pants, part of our introductory session on space. As part of that work, Cameron was one of the pupils that we tracked. He made incredible process in his literacy. 141% expected rise in a year. He has taught me Makaton, one of my team suggested that I do this presentation in Makaton, but I am not Rob Delaney, my favourite phrase is, where is the cake? You can tell I work in a museum.

So, what do we mean by access? When I first started, I have been with Leeds Museums and Galleries for 11 years, previous to that, I have been in a strategic role with Renaissance, if you are familiar with museums. I had spent 3 years outside of the classroom and museum structure, when I got back to hands-on teaching, I said oh I really need to learn what has changed in the world of access, can you put me on courses to find out what is going on? Actually, everything that was available was all introduction to access or access awareness. I didn't need access awareness, I was aware of access needs but needed much more complex and some much more hand on training and it didn't exist, and I know really frustratingly, I have been having a conversation with a colleague this morning, and that is hard to get hold of.

So, we set out what we mean by access, and I am aware that it is not an accessible sentence. This is a working document, that we review on a regular basis, but this is what we are looking at by access so defining as: something that is made possible when physical, cultural, social, sensory, intellectual, financial, emotional and attitudinal barriers are removed or reduced. I think we need to find a better way to say that but that is what we are working to.

These pictures are taken from another project that is based in the Abbey, this is based on what makes you happy. This is working with adults with learning disabilities at one of our churches. This is a stunning mosaic, which they took back to their church and wouldn't let me keep. Some of the work we have been doing recently has been looking at information on our website and looking around things that actually aren't, looking at barriers that aren't physical. That is something that is quite key in some of the discussions this morning actually. Part of our council values, being open and honest and trusted. This is important to work into our work on access and happens to be good practice. But it is how we like to work.

Some real specifics of what we actually do. Again, lots of these things are not rocket science, a couple of people mentioned relaxed performances. We have a relaxed Santa session every year, we have done this for 5 years. I was reading about a well-known local attraction in Yorkshire, I won't name it. Where a local family with a child with complex needs waited for two hours to see Santa, the child had got really distressed, wet themselves and was asked to leave. I thought this is something I totally taken for granted. We have a Santa's Grotto every year, it didn't occur to me that for some families it is challenging to see Santa. This year, up to 57 children and their families visited. Santa is not in his grotto, he is in his Victorian street, it is up to

children on whether they approach him or not. We have a handful of families who have been to every one. A child, Erin, "I am sorry, she probably won't speak to Santa at all" that is not a problem for us at all. Walked into the Victorian street, went, "Oh Santa!" walked the entire length.

Another young boy comes every single year, we are on a busy main road. He likes to sit in the entrance and tells us how many buses went past since his brother went to see Santa. That is fine too.

(Alarm), I am sure lots of these things will chime with people. We have bespoke workshops for schools and communities. Really importantly, our staff are our best resource, these are some of my lovely staff on site. We have got Rees being wrapped as an Egyptian mummy. Tracey inside the costume. Stephen being a Victorian grocer. Our staff are our main resource and best resource and are absolutely key to our welcome, and welcomes for us is what we see as the key to access. We are currently just starting a new training programme for all of our members of staff. So, I have been learning Makaton and teaching other members of the team Makaton, then front of house, why don't you teach us Makaton? Great question. That is what we are starting. All of our staff are dementia friends and have visually impaired training run by Education Leeds, from the schools service and we are a safe space so we are recognised as a place with complex needs and learning disabilities can come for a safe welcome. So that is a very, very quick run through Leeds Museums and Galleries access.

FLOOR: more theatres and performances than museums, I am interested between the balance between the accessible nature of something and not pigeon-holing people. We have a show coming up, where the lead artist is disabled, dances using crutches. When I heard about that show. I thought this is a real opportunity to inspire young people who are interested in dance and are potentially disabled. When I spoke to the artist, that is not what she wants, it is like, - this can be applied to deaf and blind people. Where you want to make it appealing to them, but not saying you are deaf you will like this or you are blind, you will like this. I am interested in your thoughts, not that you will have an answer?

LAURA: It is dependent on the artist, some would consider themselves very much entrenched in disability art. If the show is about lived experience of their disability, they may want an audience that is reflective of that as well. However, I would agree with you as well, actually it is not surprising that some disabled artists want to be out there because they are an artist. They have created work and they want the audiences to see it. I am not speaking for every disabled person on the planet. Personally, as a disabled person, I don't spend my whole day thinking I am a disabled person. If I have created something as an artist, I have created it as an artist, it varies from artist to artist. The important thing is that you respect their choices, I guess.

FLOOR: Bethany, a question on funding, the one to one facilitated sessions you do for the SEN families, but how do you get funding?

BETHANY: We are funded by Paul Hamlyn Foundation and Milton Keynes Community Foundation until summer 2020 but we intend that if it does get future funding, because it is integral to the organisation and our family and audiences. One of the trickier things is not having a track record, so chicken and egg situation you know? So it was really challenging to implement this programme but now it is up and running and we have a lot of families who are very, very receptive and actually sometimes quite distressingly grateful, sometimes the level of gratitude that we receive, I think it is testimony to the work our artists are doing and what it is offering, it is evidence of the fact that they are not assessing this elsewhere. So, with, with that comes fantastically rich case studies I didn't think of the nature of access, I could put a case study on a single participant. It is gold dust, magic what we are getting back from them. It is that sort of exchange where they feel like they are feeling respected and treated with generosity and care and therefore they are giving it back to us in a way I have never experienced with an audience group before. So we are, I would hope we are well placed now to really evidence the impact of the work and yes, to take steps forward.

FLOOR: Hi, Associate Artist with Vital Park, Park Arts and I want to say thank you to everyone, but particularly Bethany was inspiring and I wondered if you were doing like training? As an organisation?

BETHANY: That was one of the things I wasn't able to say. Really, so this is a very people centred programme for me as the person that looks after it. It is important to recognise that goes in all directions at all times, in order for our artists and ourselves to nourish the audiences we need to be nurtured and nourished ourselves, we have an extensive CPD programme. Some is based, as you, on access awareness, but the funding has been reserved to be responsive. Probably the best example of which I think would be next week, I have checked my e-mails, we are assessing resilience training that is because it was only when we started to meet and work directly with our families, we realised how impactful a session experience might be on an artist. I spoke about how they bring their whole selves over the threshold and in, I am sure a lot of the work everyone in this room is doing is very easy to get a sort of crossover with an art therapy offer which is not what we do, we are not art therapists and it wouldn't be appropriate or professional for us to promote it as that at all. It isn't that. It invites the narrative of the family over the threshold, sorry, I have gone off on a tangent. Yes, an awful lot of training, ASD friendly communication. It is a programme about connectivity between people. We would love to hear from you and maybe see you as well.

FLOOR: I was just wondering, a lot of the programme's you guys are talking about, are bespoke programmes for specific access groups. And, you touched on it at the start about looking at how you then implement that into the wider organisation, or not pigeon hole that into specific access work. I wondered if any of you have anything to talk about in terms of rolling the access programmes across your organisation, into getting audiences to come to other programming or how that work has an impact on other work within your organisation?

LAURA: What is quite interesting is that, certainly with Ramps on the Moon, the focus is definitely around increasing access for deaf and disabled audience members. But it is also about making theatre, which is of interest to everybody. And it is about ensuring the spaces you provide and where you put on your convenient, for example, are as welcoming as they can be, so that when people come, say, for example, for a specialised or tailored offer, they get used to you, as an organisation, and they feel comfortable in coming back to see other things as well. So, it's not just about focussing on individual, tailored provision, it is about focussing on you as an organisation and what barriers you are removing in general, for people to be able to access everything you provide. But it is very much about building up trust for people and, particularly for people with a range of different access needs. Sometimes you are starting from Ground Zero, because the assumption is always that that isn't going to be the place for me because it's not going to be accessible, because I have never had an accessible experience there before.

SARAH: A lot of the training we have done has been if you can make what you are doing accessible for one audience, it actually quite often cascades on to other audiences. So, things like incorporating Makaton into some of the instructions, it doesn't detract from other audiences, but it can help a range of different audiences, so it is not just people with learning difficulties but actually some people who are hearing impaired get benefit from that as well. So, a lot of the work we have done has been about actually trying to make things, working on specific groups and getting training that is relevant to specific groups but actually seeing how that can be rolled across everything we do just to make everything as simple as possible for people and as accessible as possible.

BETHANY: Agreed, what they said, but also, for us, one of the things that we are now being enabled to do is to start to create some resources which are accessible for anyone entering the building but are informed by our learning taking from our families. So, for example, we are just beginning to create a sensory map based on the findings of families who have children with sensory processing disorder, sensory integration processing disorder and they are helping us to create a map so any visitor at any time can get a sense of the building and where it might have really heightened sensory input. So, our learning from these specific individuals is just like you are saying, spilling out into the wider offer and enabling people to access the building and the wider organisation offer in very different ways. A specific example but a current one.

CHARLOTTE: Well, thank you very much all of you for your contributions. I think it has been fascinating, I would've loved to have sat and listened to an awful lot more actually. I hope it has been an inspiring and interesting look at making accessible experiences for audiences. The things I have drawn out about that are about trust and also about the quality of the staff involved. I think what you were saying about the training that isn't available and it is certainly interesting to see how some of the works you can be doing can be cascaded out so that more people can learn to do this.

## Effective Marketing Strategies

Chair: Carol Jones, AMA

Panellists:

Jane Dodson, Unicorn Theatre

Sallyanne Flemons, Family Explorers

CAROL: I am pleased to introduce our first panellist, Jane Dodson. Jane is the marketing manager at the Unicorn Theatre. The UK's leading theatre for young audiences and is passionate about engaging audiences with unicorn's eclectic and surprising programme of work. Lovely description for anybody who has seen Unicorn's work. Jane has worked in arts marketing for seven years, specialising in engaging families, young adults and schools with theatre, including being the first educational specialist in the marketing agency, AKA.

JANE: I'm Jane, I'm the marketing manager at the Unicorn Theatre. I realise this is the graveyard slot of the breakout sessions. I will kick off with a video. I will think if I will do it or not. I will take the risk and there will be a short pop quiz after this video. Make sure you are watching. And you have to work with me on this. If you don't it'll be awkward.

(Video plays)

So, question, one, can anyone tell me whereabouts the Unicorn Theatre is?

(Answers inaudible)

Nice there.

Who and who do we create work for?

(Answers inaudible)

And finally, what do we present? What are we?

(Inaudible)

Nice, well done, it worked. I am happy. Pleased. The Unicorn is based in the centre of London, our audience is 70% general public, families, and 30% schools. Our programmes follow the school year. So, we programme around 13 to 14 productions from September through to July for ages six months through to 18 and we have a strand of adult programming as well. Our 17-18 season was our most successful season in terms of sales, we achieved a record number of sales and played to an average 80% capacity across the year. It is my job at the Unicorn to create and manage effective marketing strategies and campaigns to encourage parents to buy tickets to come to our shows, I will talk to you a little bit about some of the things that underpin the campaigns I manage and how we try to keep audiences once they come

in. So, starting with new audiences. New audiences are incredibly important to the Unicorn. In fact, in our 17/18 season, 70% of our bookers were first-time bookers. Quite a lot. My main tip for engaging new audiences is: don't assume that people know.

You know, that is fairly obvious. But I will give an example of what I mean by that now. We wanted to widen the pool of people we were talking to online and we noticed the audience was becoming increasingly very local. We knew there

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*“don't assume that  
people know who you  
are”*

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we knew there were tonnes of families that didn't know who we were, even though we are the UK's leading theatre for young audiences, you cannot assume that everyone, that means that all families in London know who you are. We worked with our media agency on creating our branding campaign. The main piece of content which we created was the video I played at the start. The idea behind that was creating a single piece of content that would describe exactly who we were, who we are, where we are and what we do in a concise and clear and succinct and as fun a way as we possibly could. This campaign was purely awareness-driving. The video was promoted extensively on Facebook and Instagram. We didn't do Twitter. We find it is more industry rather than family chat. On Facebook it ran for six weeks. We targeted mass London parents, it was just mass awareness. We got the stats here, the results. You can see we had 249,000 views of the video, over I think it was about six weeks, but what is really important here is that meant we had 250,000 pieces of data. With that data we worked with our media agency to first of all go back and retarget them with a sales driving message, so to repeat that, clearer, the strategy here was - wide awareness, get people to engage with the video, watch it for more than five seconds and once we had that data we then go in, for a second time with a sales-driving message, so awareness and then a sales-driving message. What I want to really reinforce. I'm not just saying we need to spend a fortune on digital advertising, I know it is not always possible with people's budgets and it is certainly not possible with ours but the main thing I'm trying to communicate is the value in creating a single piece of content that communicates clearly who you are. We know families are time poor. If you can be as succinct as you can, saying who you are, what you do, where you are, it is just assuming that people, you know, not assuming people know who you are, you have to go out and tell them yourself. I think it is just as important as a new organisation that is entering the family market, as it is for the company like the Unicorn, we have been going for 70 years yet we found we still had to create that content.

My second tip for an effective family marketing campaign is word of mouth. I cannot stress the importance of this enough. If I could have it jumping out at you, I would.

I could have some fun with Power Point. We all know the value of the NCT WhatsApp group or the endless forums on Netmums or the good old-fashioned school gate chat. How can you harness that word of mouth? I believe you have to see the entire

customer experience from seeing an ad, to exiting the venue as an extension of your marketing campaign, by that I mean the clarity you put into your ad, communicating your message needs to be consistent through landing on the website, through the booking process, the pre-show and post-show e-mail and crucially the experience when you are at the theatre. I don't believe it is a case of the marketing stops at the point of purchase when somebody buys a ticket. I will use Baby Show as an example. Believe it or not, it is our show for babies. It has been running for three years at the Unicorn for ages 6-18 months. Let's say, for example, somebody clicks on a Baby Show ad which takes them through to our website.

The first thing people see are the three key things we know families are looking for in that: age range - who is it for, price - how much it going to cost me, and duration, three crucial things, the first things people see. Then they can scroll to the fun stuff like photo, copy and trailers and a handy FAQ guide to download which will tell them what to expect when they come to the theatre. It is recomunicated in the pre-show email that gets sent out so they know we will be met by our friendly ushers who shows up to the preshow lounge, a preshow area to point them to, it is because our foyer is generally full of schoolchildren who are noisy. So, the experience of relaxing in the lounge before being taking up into the performance space, is something people always comment on in their post-show survey. And it goes to say that the overall experience of attending the show at the theatre is a remarkably positive experience, it is not just the show, it is everything that goes around the show. The 96.5% of our survey respondents in 2017/18 said they would recommend a show to a friend. If they did that, boom. Your marketing is done. On our post-show surveys, how did you find out about the show you attended? Way ahead of the others is "word of mouth". So, it's consistency and care and clarity I believe at all touch points with the customer. And realising that the marketing campaign doesn't necessarily stop at the point of purchase. I really believe that marketing extends way beyond actually buying the tickets, if you want word of mouth to spread it has to be a completely total experience. So, the two points I have spoken about so far are about reaching new families and I want to move on to how you keep them once you have got them. So, it might be something, you know, that you will not be surprised to hear at the Unicorn we class a regular booker as somebody who comes and visits us once every two years. That, in any normal circumstance, isn't that usual. If I said I was a regular gym going and went once every two years, it is not going to fly but at the Unicorn, we know that - well, what I'm trying to say here is what we need to work out is what does audience retention mean to our organisation? What does it mean to you? It is never one-size-fits-all. So, the truth is, with theatre engagement with families, well, attending a theatre is a treat. It is not a hobby. You are not going to have families coming to the theatre every month with their children. In our case that is down to many factors like programme. There is not always going to be something on that somebody wants to bring their child to. Children grow up. Interests change. Another statistic, 84% of bookers in our 17/18 season attended just once a year but we have now recognised there is a real scope there to widen that engagement with those bookers. Our goal by 2022 is to convert

30% of the one-time a year bookers into two-time a year bookers. It seems small but we are brain storming ways to do it. We are looking at implementing automated e-mail programmes, so, for example, after a booker attends, they might get an automated e-mail that gives them an offer to come back again. We are looking at multi-buy discounts. Anything that try and encourage them to come back sooner. But also, on the flip side, 6% of our audience in 17/18 attended four times a year, we want sure web encouraging them to maybe consider membership, so they can see more theatre at the Unicorn and also make a saving by being a member and enjoying all of the member perks that come with it. It is about creating something automated, makes all our lives easier, and intelligent, that will hopefully encourage people to come back again and again. So, really, it is more about working out what retention means to you, is it weekly attendance, is that what you are going for, or something as simple as trying to get somebody to attend more than once a year. So, to conclude, my key takeaways for effective family marketing strategies are...

Clarity is key, don't assume people know who you are, and I believe that is crucial on any of your advertisements, digital or online, social, wherever it is, it has to be clear and consistent and it has to be, remember you are talking to families who are time poor, they need to be told who you are consistently and clearly, they need to trust you, that word is coming up again, I think it is crucial. Secondly, never underestimate word of mouth. It seems so obvious, but it really is such a key sales driver we see in all of our post-show surveys, so anything you can do to harness word of mouth is crucial. I do believe that stems from seeing your marketing campaign you can doesn't stop at the point of purchase. Finally work out your retention rate, is it one or two time a year bookers, never one-size-fits-all.

CAROL: I will now like to introduce our second panellist, Sallyanne, she is a Freelance Culture Communications Consultant. Specialising in connecting mainstream audiences with great life changing art. Since 2014 she has been coordinating family explorers northeast, a project backed by a partnership of cultural organisations in the region. As communications director for wonder bar, she works on participatory projects for artists. Over to you Sallyanne.

SALLYANNE: If the majority haven't heard about Family Explorers I will go back to basics and explain how the project came about and why it came about. It began as a research project, a consortium of main cultural venues in that area. Some research. They wanted to find out what would give middle ground families the confidence to try something new, so the kind of audiences so we are looking at were the sorts of audiences that maybe go to the pan toe once a year, but are dedicated to the one venue and event and they just need a bit more support and encouragement to try a new venue or arts genre, that was chosen, for a difference to be made with a bit of extra support.

So what the research found was that as Jane has been saying here, word of mouth, peer recommendation is the most effective way to enable people to try something new,

if a friend or a peer recommends somewhere, they are far more likely to go and try it than perhaps if they see marketing literature or advert or something like that. They were also overwhelmed by the amount of choice there was about what they could potentially do as a family and therefore it was easier to stick with what they knew. So, we wanted our projects to be able to curate for families, make them easier to know what events to trust. They wanted practical information, the kind of things like, where am I going to park when I get there? Is there anywhere I can feed my child? Buggy friendly? These are things that could make or break the visit to the new experience.

That is why we started. We also have Tees family museums on board and Durham County Council come on board. 16 organisations but a lot more venues because a lot of those organisations have a lot of different venues. We have a Facebook group, over 8,000 people on it. A newsletter with 2,000 subscribers goes out every fortnight. A website which is a gate way for explorers to access the resources.

So, the way it works is, those organisations that are part of family explorers pay a subscription in return for a number of mentions about their organisations on the Facebook group and in the e-newsletter. I spend one and a half days of my time delivering the project and the editorial plan is hugely complex because it involves making sure that each venue gets their fair share of mentions as well as making sure there is a good mix of activities, a good geographical spread and arts genre's and age ranges. We have a broad view of what constitutes a family. We try to look at intergenerational national events as well.

The resources, the website. That brilliant place of the website, all the different venues are listed and all the basic information about the venues, to give people the instant information about whether it is somewhere they can visit or not, where it is, how they can get there and facilities for families.

This is what the e-newsletter looks like, usually a top 5 or a few bullet points.

The Facebook group, I will go into detail here. It is an important distinction this is a group rather than a business page. This is a community because people can originate their own posts, not just commenting on posts you have created.

So, we have had the Facebook group since, I think it was 2014 when it became a public Facebook group that anyone can join and there is, Facebook insights have recently told us, about 2,000 postings, comments and reactions a month. Out of the - it is now slightly out of date, now 8,300 members. Out of those, over 7,000 are active. Somehow interacting on the group and the top posts get seen by around 5,000 people, We have hardly anything in the way of a marketing budget, had the occasional little pot of money to boost Facebook posts and things but mostly the group has grown through viral methods.

But this means, because we have these figures, we can now actually enable those organisations that are part of the project to compare being on family explorers with

other forms of advertising even though it is a very different proposition for them. It means they can get an idea of how many people see the posts that go on the group and so on.

These are, I have just pulled out, obviously 2,000 interactions a month on the group so, I had to be quite careful about pulling out just a small variety of examples to give you an idea of what goes on. This was a call out for reviews. As you can see, I originated that post and we have got lots and lots of recommendations from people about where to visit. I think you are going to be sent this presentation after the event. If you wanted to read some of the conversations, you can do so on the presentation but also you are welcome to visit the Facebook group as well. Search on Facebook for Family Explorers Southeast and you can see what goes on.

This is just to give you a sort of idea of how long the conversation went on and how chatty they are and what sort of warm community they are.

This is an example of somebody posting on the group asking others on the group for recommendations on something, actually no, this is not the one asking for recommendations. This is someone recommending an event at Northern Stage. So they say they would recommend Alice in Wonderland. Then others to join the conversation that second this. We saw it on New Year's Eve, and it was brilliant. Then others seeing that, and peers recommending it. What age? Is 3 a bit too young? They are getting the practical information they need to decide whether this is an event which is good enough. Whereas before they would say, this is for 3-year olds, I won't go. Drums up excitement for particular events because of the conversations going on.

There is the top cut off a little bit there, but this is basically someone asking for somewhere which has suitable terrain for easy access. Someone who might have access issues, they are asking their peers, so they trust the peers to give them honest answer and people jumping in and giving the answers they need.

The venues can also use the group to ask families directly for feedback if they are thinking of running a particular event or they just want to ask families about anything at all they can, I can post on the group on their behalf and the families almost always come up trumps with answering, the Life Sciences centre posted recently a survey, got responses in an hour, asked me to take the post down. Inundated with mails about it.

This is an interesting one because people maybe thinking it is a bit scary, the idea of having a Facebook group where people can originate their own posts and words and all about experiences of visiting venues. This is someone posting saying they could not believe how expensive tickets were for a particular show. This is one of the two premium theatres in Newcastle and Sunderland and some people jumped on and said they completely agree. Ridiculous how expensive it was. As the conversation unfolds you get people going on board and, you see Gemma up there, "super-expensive but absolutely worth it. I have paid less for shows and it is nothing in comparison," so this

goes on for a long time. Mandy has quite a long comment there about why she believes it is worth paying money, it is a great way of talking about an offer, you can learn what families are thinking, it is like eavesdropping into conversations and discovering what you think about the venues. People can teach each other a little bit about the way things are and if a conversation starts off badly it will often unfold in a way so people to gain understanding of why venues do things in a particular way.

Is it changing behaviour? I have a few examples that anecdotally suggest it is. Ceri said, "I can say a theatre trip, as an activity for us as a family, had never crossed my mind, but I wouldn't hesitate to do it again, thank you so much."

"I wanted to say thank you based on recommendations here - as in on the Facebook group - spent the day at Preston Park and had a great time."

When she wrote the original post, she was pregnant. One year later, "we still go with our 7-month-old. In the summer, you can hire rowing boats."

She is seeing it is a good venue and it is clear she went because she saw it on that group and now a repeat visitor because of that. Someone again a repeat booker.

Somebody else says they are going too - great to use the page to get great responses so quickly. This is just from a quick quote from one of the venues, the art gallery: "great resource and the families tell us it makes them feel more connected."

One of the challenges is having really robust evaluation about whether the group is doing what it set out to do. We don't have clear figures about how many people have tried somewhere new as a result of the interaction with the project. We don't know exactly how the people on the family explorers face group are, what demographic they are, it would be useful to have that information. At the moment we are in the process of applying for funding to put a 5-year business plan together and as a foundation for that, we hope to do research to get really firm information. There is loads of anecdotal information, conversations I have shown you for example, good to have some really kind of robust research.

One of the other challenges is Facebook. I think a lot of us have a bit of a love/hate relationship with Facebook. Lots of concerns recently about privacy and constantly changing the rules. I don't know if the marketing people find that there are quite a few frustrations in the sort of constantly tinkering with the technical side of things to make them different. You have to be one step ahead. They were taking my posts down, but I was using PNG screen grabs as images, if I saved them as jpegs, then Facebook didn't take them down.

There is a slight Achilles heel. Facebook is a private company. If it didn't operate anymore. We would need to think of new ways to mobilise the whole peer recommendation side of things.

There is also, our governance, which is complicated. One of the consortium members

is the lead organisation, Seven Stories, so they are the budget holder and have their Chief Executive as the chair of the steering group. That can cause some complications and as far as accountability and fundraising is concerned. We have been looking at the merit in Family Explorers becoming a separate organisation, exploring different options and scaling up because there is a limited amount of content you can have in one e-newsletter and how frequently you can post on Facebook. We are at capacity at the moment for the number of organisations that can be part of the project. So, we would really like to explore ways of enabling other organisations in the Northeast to be able to access the project so we don't have to turn anybody down that fits the criteria. And looking at other ways, going back to the core roots of the project. Thinking quite creatively outside of the box how we can still do what we are doing but perhaps look at new ways of doing it.

So, just turning it back to you, it can be useful for your organisations, it might be difficult for you to set up a Family Explorers-style project tomorrow, but a useful starting point could be in your conference packs, you should have this sheet of paper. Which might be something, if you are not too exhausted going back on the train, you might want to think about, to be scribbling a few keywords in here about how you could get thinking about how your organisation might harness the power of family-to-family peer recommendation. What the barriers are for doing that. What you are doing already that you can perhaps build on. How you can overcome the barriers that might exist and who these people are in organisations that might be able to help you to do that.

FLOOR: I'm June from the National Portrait Gallery. I'm being cheeky, I have two questions. One is to you, Sallyanne, the Facebook group, because it is open to the public, because you are kind of inviting discussion, potentially debate, have you encountered things where there has been real negativity and abuse and is there anything you have had to do that? In terms of other people taking that forward and also to Jane, I wondered if - how much, if at all, perhaps GDPR has affected that kind of ongoing relationship, you talked about that journey, and how changes to GDPR have affected you?

SALLYANNE: A few things. There is an official Facebook policy that all the organisations that are members are aware of, that sets out a strategy for what will happen if somebody posts something on the group that is negative about an organisation. I have to say that of we have hardly ever had to use it in the four or five years of the project. We just had the occasional - I think I can just think of one conversation where people have got a bit nasty with one another, arguing about whether or not they like a venue. I have to make sure, look at every single Facebook profile that asks to join the group, in case they are somebody who is going to try to spam the group in some way. So, you do have to do that. If somebody were to post on the group and say, you know, quite a detailed complaint about a venue, something quite practical, then we would, I would sort of say, "We are listening to you, I'm going back to the venue to ask for a response and we will get straight back to you." So, everybody on the group can see it is being dealt with appropriately. Quite often, if

somebody posts it up, like that one about theatre ticket prices, it is a good idea not to jump straight on to the conversation and be defensive. People who are reading it trust the responses more if peers' sort of argue it on our behalf and that does usually happen.

JANE: So, the pre and post-show e-mails it is already done for people, well they are sent to everyone attending, if we are going in with marketing, on that e-mail programme where we want to encourage them to come again, with an offer of a second visit we will only do that to people who have signed up to hear from us. So, there is a clear division were people who want to hear with us to do with marketing and people who are hearing from us as a service and information e-mails. GDPR obviously took over everything we were doing for a while, I'm sure it did with a lot of you, down to even things like, well the fact that we want to get more people's e-mails addresses, it comes back to the branding and aware campaign. As much as we want people to understand who we are, we want to talk to them, and get them to sign up to e-mails so we are also looking at doing awareness-branding campaigning which encourages sign-up. It is all about consent. You need consent. Even down to Facebook, we used to target people on Facebook by getting their e-mail addresses from our existing software and target them through Facebook by uploading addresses to Facebook, you wouldn't go near that with a bargepole any more. It is too precarious in terms of GDPR. We have to refine how we work. I think it is just having that clear division between what is a service e-mail and what is a marketing e-mail and you have to keep them entirely separate at all times.

FLOOR: Assuming your activity, events involved artists and play facilitators, do you have expectations around their participation in marketing processes? Or reaching audiences?

JANE: At the moment we have a performance called It's Hot It's Not. They are an external company we are working in partnership with. The marketing budget was entirely ours, they worked with me I managed the marketing campaign for it but the input from them is crucial, but in terms of the access that we had to the rehearsal room, getting rehearsal photos and content. We didn't for this show particularly but when a company is as lovely as they are, it is getting the content, rehearsal videos, anything they can give us to help us unpick the show and kind of tell our audiences what to expect more, so it really depends on sometimes who the company is but we always work in conjunction with whoever the production company is. Often it is our own productions, so we have all the access, it is fine, but when we get somebody that is maybe an external company coming in, it is crucial that we have to ensure that we are communicating the right, you know, the right message from the company. We don't want to be selling something which isn't true to what the show actually is. Quite often the company also do their own marketing, Reckless Sleep have their own Instagram, Facebook and Twitter pages, so we are both marketing it at the same time but predominantly the marketing comes from the venue, but it is very much informed by what the company give us and tell us.

FLOOR: You have both spoken about the benefits of speaking to your audiences online, but do you think there is any value in communicating with families through like traditional print marketing?

JANE: I can talk about print. We massively reduced the amount of print, as I'm sure a lot of places have. We used to do leaflets for every show we would distribute through those networks across London. We do a brochure, a public and schools' brochures, which are mailed around May and also in the summer. We do a Christmas leaflet as well. And that is all we do, in terms of print, other than print advertising. We have a big ad in Time Out today. There is still the need for it. Sometimes you almost feel like, the fact that everyone has pulled back from print advertising so much, that, sometimes a really simple postcard mailing for a show, you know double-sided you send through the post, especially with schools, which can go into book bags to take home, it cuts through a bit more, because maybe there is less of it, I don't know. But it definitely, I think, still has its place but it's part of the whole mix, isn't it? Digital takes up so much more of our budget now than print does, but it'll complement each other. You don't have to carve up your budgets. Just be aware where you think you can do it, still. It is a funny one, we have massively changed how we do it. I see posters around for shows and I think look at the Young Vic advertising in Brixton village, it is so cool. I'm getting that subliminal message - why aren't we doing that? It swings both ways.

SALLYANNE: Obviously Family Explorers is a very particular project, not a standard marketing proposition. And so far, I haven't had the luxury of a bigger marketing budget, so that I can employ a mix of communication methods. And for the little budget that we have, it's made so much more sense if we want it get people on the Facebook group or on the e-newsletter, they are online already and can click through something and also the demographic of families, I think, lends itself to Facebook of the sort of age that parents are, and so on and so forth. It is a cost-effective way of reaching families for our particular project. Having said that, one of the things we will explore with our five-year business plan, is ways of generating more income so we can look at other ways of marketing. It will be interesting to find out whether putting leaflets in book bags and those kinds of things is effective for us. It is something that we hope to be able to do in the future.

CAROL: So just a few key points from me to summarise. Big takeaways from this, I think: Don't assume that people know who you are. Unicorn Theatre have been there for 70 years and they produced that wonderful bit of awareness content. Keep it simple, stupid, was one of the things that came into my head. Word of mouth. Keep your communications clear, concise, simple. We saw that lovely example from the Baby Show.

Think about the three big things online that a parent's eyes will go to - the age range, price and experience. We have to take the experience to the touch points and then we have the thing, what does retention mean to you? It is going to be different for each organisation. They had that lovely question, right at the beginning of Sallyanne's

session - what would give families the impetus to try something new? Ask yourself that question. It is always good to start off with a question, it can become an objective or target. Then I think we had three big themes coming out of Sallyanne

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**“help your community  
tell their stories”**

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presentation, this idea of collaboration, collaborate with other organisations. Work together to increase those family audiences and meet your objectives. Start communities of interest. We had that lovely example of the Facebook group there. So, start those communities, and then start and continue the conversation. So, collaborate, community, conversation. And track that community that will add to and defend your value. It's about helping your community tell their stories as well, I think. That is it from me. Extra guidance on family marketing and engagement can be found through signing up to the Family Arts Standards. I'm sure a lot of you have signed up, if you haven't, look at it. Lots of details in your pack. You can look at the [fantasticforfamilies.com](http://fantasticforfamilies.com).

## Provocation: Why is Culture Valuable to Families?



**Debbie Goldsmith**

**Curator of early years and families**

**Tate Liverpool**

In order to address “why is culture valuable to families?”, I thought I would tell you a quick story. I was coming into work one morning and a young mum and toddler were passing the front doors of Tate. The toddler asked can we go in there, the mum said, "not for us," I wanted to say, it is for you. She was heading off in the direction of the soft play centre at the time, that is perhaps a much tantalising offer, but there is the dilemma: what can we offer families as a cultural institution and why is it important that we have a cultural to offer at all? In turn, what have our family visitors taught us? At Tate we are passionate about working with families, learning at Tate Liverpool has been shaped by the vision which includes the democratic and public focused approach to the way in which we work. Risk and curiosity are the heart of values. That encounter on the dock served to harden my resolve to champion putting families at the centre of what we do. So, what have we been doing to put the families at the centre?

One of my favourite programmes that I have had the opportunity to work on has been working with Liverpool families to develop a group called Family Collective. Set up, the concept of the collective was championed by our then Director, Francesca. Having the support at director level, ensured that funding focus was a priority for the gallery. So why did we set up Family Collective? We set it up not nearly as an exercise in consultation to support what we thought families wanted us to be programmed to them. This was a genuine attempt to co-create with our audience, to put our local families at the heart of the programming and the idea of families programming for other families. We wanted them to feel ownership of our collections, to see art works in the flesh, to make personal connections and ultimately to have fun whilst doing it. After all, we are a publicly funded institution at Tate. This collection is their heritage and we want children to be able to walk in and own the spaces, these art works, and enjoy it.

This slide shows our then Director, Francesca, with his family, I can tell how old this photo is. My eldest is now 14. This is the first collaboration of us working collaboratively, a half term programme. Inspired by a sculpture that looks like a bike but for 5 people. This caught their attention and said “family” to them. This shows the group working together, peer led, discussion and sharing of ideas.

This for me is an example of genuine cultural exchange. It wasn't without its challenges. The group is always in flux but around the table, babies, artists and families genuinely sharing ideas.

We met monthly and at first the group had a fixed idea of what they thought we wanted.

This reflects the gallery having the fixed idea about what families wanted. There was a level of expectation on both sides, as a gallery, we have learned from this.

Family collective on this slide, there in the gallery, looking at Venus on the Rocks on the left. I love the way they are discussing the art work, Billy's sketch book in hand. Linda is taking a good look at the sculpture; her body language says it all. She is thinking "what is this in the gallery" how we meant the jump from this nervous group's pre-visit view of us? It comes up again and again – "it is just not for us."

They became an engaged, switched on, and active group of critical thinkers. Our bridge to make this jump was working with one of our artists who we have worked with regularly on projects, Denise Wright. She had a relationship with some of the group via children's centres where she was working as an artist. She often talks about scaffolding in her own work. I love this idea. She was the scaffold for our families. The trust and enthusiasm that she was able to bring to the collaboration and I was able to invest in them with time, space and food. Basically, we just wanted them to have a nice experience.

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***"trust and enthusiasm was  
the "scaffold" for our  
families"***

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This is our neon drawing disco. It was the most well attended activity that I have worked on in all my time at Tate. We had over 300 people per day. Considering we were only running 3-hour sessions each day, that is some family visitor numbers - we made sculptures, we had a disco and DJ. We painted with neon paint and ourselves. Learning with our families, programming with them means we get to learn their interests. On the flip side, we made the group comfortable enough to be coming back to the collection and put at the heart of the programming, which is what we wanted.

This is why creativity and cultural experiences are important for families which is what we have given in terms of skills enabling them to navigate the spaces. As one of our parents said in reference to her son, "he owns this", owned the collection, was in control of his own experiences. Creating a level of confidence that he didn't have when he first stepped through the door.

These slides show Art Buffet. One of our core members who is no longer with us, because she has moved on, said that she had always had an interest in art but never been to Tate before and she got the impression that it wasn't really for families and young people. Comes up again and again. She does say, "I couldn't have been more wrong. Myself and my children were welcomed with open arms and had an experience in the gallery like no other. Seeing the art through my child's eyes was amazing and getting them involved was so much fun."

Art Buffet was one that Denise was able to take back into the community and away from the gallery. This one called Art Picnic, ran along the lines of using lots and lots

of materials that families can choose and make with themselves. These experiences are important to our families - community centres are described as the seed bed of activity, promoting talent across the arts and cultural institutions, I believe, have a responsibility to champion these experiences more than ever as schools see access to cultural experiences drop. Our programmes have been and continue to be shaped by what we have learned from our families. Families want experiences - they have told us they want to continue with artists having face-to-face experiences, and more family time.

This next one is Action Stations designed by Anthony Hall. It was amazingly fun, it involved paint, archery and dangling pendulums in paint.

Creative Studio - this has captured the whole organisation, listening to our families to programme this. It originally came from a meeting over a cup of coffee, with two passionate people who told heartfelt emotional stories about their own experiences in galleries and other venues. This really clicked with us, we could make small changes straight away that would make a massive impact on families accessing the gallery. One of our families told me although they knew our family programme was running, they wouldn't come for fear of being judged by other families, the fact that creative studio was for children with autism gave them permission to come, spend time safe in the knowledge that other parents were in the same boat. One of our regular mums that comes to the sessions, said it has given her the valuable time with her daughter whilst her son is taking part in the activities, which would never normally happen.

Our sector is now one of the fastest-growing industries in the UK. We need to make sure we continue to be open and approachable and listening to what our families want. Creating spaces where children and their families want to visit. In a time when the arts is noticeably shrinking in school, and for some children this will be their only access to a cultural experience, we have a responsibility to make sure that we continue to put families as a priority and for Tate they thankfully are at the top of the agenda. What have our families taught us? I think for now we are still learning..

## Keynote 3: The Value of Intergeneration Activities



### Dr Zoe Wyrko, Consultant Geriatrician

Thank you very much and thank you to Anna and the team for inviting me to speak. I get a lot of speaking invitations too, and there are the ones I feel I ought to do. The Royal College ones and the doctor educational ones, but I jumped at this one straight away.

So, the day has been very different from anything I am used to and it has been wonderful. Two weeks ago, I had a summoning from the ministerial office, Matt Hancock. The minister had been in contact with the production team for the TV programme [Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds], he wanted to meet with me for 30 minutes and I prepared a briefing paper and said I wasn't going to go. I thought I would get a bigger impact from talking to all of you here than by talking to the minister. I'm still hoping he will read the briefing, there is a lot in it.

So, in health, probably similar to your worlds, good ideas don't move fast. If anything moves fast it is because it is bad, and we don't want it to happen. But the intergenerational work seems to be an exception to that rule. I'm going to talk about the importance of it and also, when we were making Series 1, I really struggled saying the word intergenerational, it wasn't a familiar word and now everyone uses it all the time.

A little bit about me. I'm geriatrician by training which means I'm a hospital consultant who specialises in the complex health care needs of older adults. However, I have always had a soft spot for care homes, this is me on my 18th birthday during my year out before medical school when I used to work fulltime as a health care assistant. Two years ago, when CPL Productions, the company behind the TV programme, got in touch and spoke to me about this idea that they had, the concept for the programme, I thought it was really nice. Wasn't anything I'd actually ever previously considered. So, if you told me two years ago, I would be standing here, we'd have won a lot of television awards - so we didn't win the BAFTA, we lost to Love Island, but we were nominated – nominated for ten awards for Series 1 and won eight, which makes the production company and Channel 4 very happy. But actually, more importantly, we have made a real impact on society and I actually wouldn't have believed that that was possible.

Also, at the start I was highly sceptical about whether we were going to produce any changes in the groups that can actually be measured. I definitely thought we'd see people looking better, feeling happier, but I didn't try to do a lot of expectation management, going - we are not going to be able to change anything, we are really not. I'm rarely wrong but on this occasion, I'm so pleased I was. I am aware not all of you will have seen the programme, I will explain a little bit about the concept. And the

idea was to put a group of four-year-olds in with a group of older adults for a set time period and do nursery together. Nothing special at all, actually. Ordinary activities. The hope was, really, bringing a group of potentially disenfranchised older people back into society would have positive impacts on both the physical and mental health and well-being. And to quote the commissioning editor again, more expectation management, "We want to see them throwing their sticks away." Actually, we did, to our surprise. The group were together for under six weeks and in Series 2, it ran for a full three months. It was firmly an experiment rather than research. The reasons for that were, we wanted to actually do it. For health-associated research you have to obtain ethics committee approval. If we tried to get this through the ethics committee, we would still be waiting to film series 1 now. All the volunteers had a thorough psychological assessment beforehand. Children and older people. Anybody could drop out at any time. So, they really were all volunteers. Really, really unusual but nobody dropped out. And actually, we gained people throughout the two time periods. The only difference is, because it wasn't research, I can't publish it in any of our peer-reviewed medical journals, however it went out and was viewed by 2 million people and then has been, you know the clips are constantly watched on YouTube and I get to talk at events, way bigger than any medical journal could reach. So, I'm pleased. We did number of tests on the older adults, I'm using the word "test" loosely. Some of you will have seen and some not. We looked at how they moved, the way they moved, what their balance was like, by measuring and their perceived balance, their fear of falling - it can be crippling in people, it can do more harm than the falls themselves. They wore personal trackers, fancy Fitbits to measure sleep and general activity and we did it at the start, end and mid-point for some. We tested how strong they were by using the grip strength - that induced a real strength of competition, both with the older adults and also all the crew making the programme.

We looked at how they rated their own health. I can tell somebody they are well, but actually if they are not feeling well, it makes no difference at all. We looked at something called frailty, a whole different talk, and I measured mood with a 30-point questionnaire. With the exception of the tracker, all of the tests we used are what we call validated. They are frequently used in clinical practice and research which gave us an assurance that our results could be meaningful. None of the tests were validated for use in quite this way but it was close enough that actually I could be comfortable that what we were seeing was genuine. Well, what did we find? Our findings were the same in both series. And one of the reasons we doubled the length of the 2018 experiment was to see if our findings were sustainable. Our concern was people become tired and fed-up but actually they just didn't. It is really intensive, this is why the older adults you saw were on the fitter end of the spectrum because they took part in this, Monday-to-Friday for the six or 12 weeks and were filming around that. Fairly intensive from 10:00am through to 2:00 or 3:00 in the afternoon. It was hard work and although we would have liked to have people with cognitive impairment involved, we couldn't for practical reasons. What we did see at the start was that our volunteers were miserable. Quite a few of them were either suffering from borderline depression

or actual depression. And even if they weren't scoring as "depressed" there were certain questions or their responses were red flags to me, really.

So, there were feelings of loneliness and isolation, we know that loneliness causes quite poor physical and mental health. They walked very little. And if they weren't walking, they were either sitting or lying down, they didn't do much standing up and standing up is really important for good health. Their sleep patterns were really interesting. Some of the groups slept for huge amounts of time, 12 hours. That is absolutely not normal. And a real pointer towards low mood. A lady who did this told us it was because she had nothing else to do. And then there were others with disruptive sleep. Some from medical reasons. There was one gentleman up every hour-and-a-half throughout the night. I suggested he go and see his GP about his prostate. Others had really odd, really irregular going to bed and getting up times, and it wasn't because they were out partying or had appointments, it was because they had a completely disruptive wake-sleep cycle. Sleep is really important for physical and mental well-being, so you could say, well, it is fine, they can do what they want but it is not good for them. They walked slowly, with walking aids on the whole and were afraid of falling, grip strengths were low, and perceptions of their own health were often really quite negative.

So, what did we do? We did absolutely nothing special at all. We did reading, drawing, playing craft, singing, dancing, art basically. Just ordinary stuff. We did do some themes, for televisual purposes, around improving confidence, getting out and about, memory, but still very, very ordinary activities. They did things together that were already part of or could be part of the children's ordinary nursery routines.

Lots of reading and writing together. Enjoying stories, whether it was fictional stories from books or whether it was actual stories that the older adults were telling about their lives. The days they brought in the photos of when they were the age of the children was absolutely brilliant. You could see how much the children could relate with the person in front of them, they could see that this person was once like them. Stickers. There was a lot of teaching about stickers going on from the children to the older adults.

Music and dancing, so they learned new songs together but actually they also discovered they already knew a lot of the same songs. Or they would know the same words to a different tune or vice versa. The dancing in Series 2 was wonderful. They all learned to dance together. Different types of dancing, the older adults were learning or having ballroom skills refreshed. But the children were doing what they saw on Strictly. The children were used to hearing that music played in that way by those instruments. They met each other's families. So, although what you saw on television was actually the four-year-olds and the really old people, you know, we had almost 100-year age gap in Series 2, we had some who were just 3, turning 4 and fabulous Sylvia, who was 102 turning 103. But we had the children and the children's parents and then we had the children of the older volunteers, the older volunteers themselves

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***“the support the children's parents got from the older adults was phenomenal. They looked to them for a source of advice”***

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and we had the film crew who were mostly in their 20s or so. The amount of support that the children's parents got from the older adults was phenomenal. They looked to them for a source of advice, wonderful to see. Our results were shown in two ways, and the most boring one was the thing we measured. So, I told

Channel 4 we wouldn't measure improvements we would see people being better and happier and I was wrong. Those who were depressed at the start were happier at the end. And what was really, really important is all of those improvements and the links that were built were sustained, so thank goodness for Christmas specials, it meant I got to go back. I saw their world had expanded and many of the volunteers who had been enclosed in their own environment, and these weren't care homes, although we called it Old People's Home for 4 Year Olds, they were retirement villages, people could go out and about but they were living somewhere different.

Their worlds had gone back outside of the four walls. The older adults re-joined groups, choirs, debating groups, conversations, you know conversation groups, they rekindled their connections and interests and some of that was art related hobbies, going back to the drawing class, re-joining the choir or joining a new singing group. A couple of them volunteering again purely as a result of joining the programme, walking speed and balance improved, some participants adjusted the walking aids, went to using nothing or stepped back down to a stick or a trolley, grip strength increased. We didn't do anything special, we didn't have anybody doing stress balls and weight training.

Quite a few of the older volunteers asked the physio, how they got up if they fell. There was no training but we told them how to do it. People rated their own health better, despite them having no changes in their health between the first and second set of tests. Frailty scores raised for the better. I don't have drugs to do that.

Personally though, I feel the changes that we saw by watching and these are the things you could see, much greater than what we measured. This is the advantage to having hours and hours of filming. At the start the older adults didn't talk to each other, all lived in the same place. Arrive in the morning and sit and read the papers we put on for them. Minimal pleasantries, perhaps a gripe or something miserable about what is going on in the news. Then the children arrive and the older adults had a focus that rapidly started to change. The older adults had something to talk about with each other again because what they have done the day before or the conversations the activities they have been doing, then started and sparked things more.

I noticed real changes in our older volunteers' speech. At the start it was single words, David in series one, retired geologist, he didn't join us until week 2 or 3. His daughters

knocked on the door, he is watching it through the windows, he doesn't talk to anybody. I wanted to talk to David because he had a fascinating past, I could not get him to string more than 2 or 3 words together. That was different by the end. He had, he

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***“levels of empathy, thoughtfulness and consideration increased in the children”***

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found his little friend, girlfriend in the Christmas special, a big Eva, he talked, regained the ability to speak. We also saw changes in the children's language as well. So, some of it, Mia Linda's friend, used old lady phrases and it was really funny. So, to have this little girl coming out with broad lady Bristol. Vocabulary, fluency of speech in the children and the older volunteers.

Keeping the children in mind, levels of empathy, thoughtfulness and consideration, particularly for anybody with additional needs increased. That is one of the major things their parents were pleased about, out and about. We didn't teach them that. They just did that by themselves. They weren't told be careful of the old people. They saw what was needed and did it. Our older volunteers become confident in their abilities again, people with head down, put themselves to the back or the side of the group. They wouldn't make eye contact. Victor, in series 2, chap at dun Kirk. For the first couple of programmes, group activities he is joining in but wouldn't be part of the group and that changed. When I went back to the Christmas special, Victor, dancing to some ballet music with a line of children following him like ducklings, if we told him he was going to do that? Beryl, the lady who firmed the relationship with Scarlet, a little girl who lost her mum, she was borderline depressed – now a completely different lady, head up, leading. She has got her place back and knows what her role is, knows she is important. Don't underestimate that at all. We saw that in Series 1 as well.

Friendships, relationships, but friendships *between* the groups, they were equals, very different to the sort of relationship that you get between child and teacher, parent and child. Older volunteers didn't have responsibility for the children. There is the nursery team, film crew, all behind the cameras. We had time as well. All of the interactions between the age groups were able to be high quality. Nonsense conversation, it was a high-quality interaction, didn't have to be worried – it wasn't anyone face down in the screen, wasn't put your shoes on and hurry up. Still learning from each other and the older volunteers expected a standard of behaviour from the children, but it was done in an equal way actually.

Everybody, both the children and the older adults, were listened to, weren't hushed up and weren't worried to speak. That is important. The activity we did was meaningful as well. The purpose was it was part of the children's nursery activities not just to fill time until the next meal or ease boredom. It was important to the older volunteers and there was a reason for it. There was a lot of show and tell going on. With the children, things they would bring in from home, a toy or a book. With the older adults it was the

skills coming out and their talents and knowledge around experience.

Victor on the mic entertaining all ages - Alfie Boe, he is hoping he can sing that well and that presence at the age of 97. The dance lessons in Series 2, wonderful. Phenomenally talented artists in the group, sharing skills, the older people didn't know what to do with stickers or glitter, there was glitter everywhere. Encouraging everybody, I can do that. This quality interaction focused around the arts.

This meaningful activity gave our volunteers something to think about other than themselves. I don't mean that in a derogatory way. They would do things without thinking. Crayons dropped on the floor and they were picked up. The children playing on the climbing frame, can you walk across the wet ground with your walking aid but the reason for doing it. I remember Linda in Series 1 got out of her chair on to the floor to help with the jigsaw puzzle. That is the same lady who ran with her walking frame on sports day, day one, when I met her first she was worried about walking 10 meters and turning around. Absolutely phenomenal. It is nice. We made a nice TV programme and showed if you show older people as older people, they can be healthier and happier. Small children improve their language skills and empathy. I can say the response has been overwhelming, in an unexpected way.

I was worried one of the care home companies or a big charity or organisation would grab this and make it theirs but thankfully, the opposite seems to be true.

What the programme seems to have done is enable groups, care homes, schools, to do that thing they wanted to do for ages but actually had been a bit too scared to try or didn't think they could. I know some groups were doing this beforehand but actually I think we appear to have been a catalyst. Things can look difficult, but it is not. The grass roots projects springing up that will help intergenerationality become normal. That is why I wanted to come here to speak rather than meet the Secretary of State. Usually, because families live closer together and society has changed, and we are where we are and things weren't always that brilliant. Let's build what we have got and perhaps build relationships and links and communities that are stronger than when families lived close together.

So, the different projects out there, there are different types. There are some projects that are specifically about interactions between the children and adults. I have said there is not much out there, but I have been handed 2 new examples today. The one you will be interested in is the one at the bottom. The projects look at the small amount of studies looking at specific arts focused interactions between children and younger people. Music groups, singing, dancing they work. Handed one bit of evidence today.

The other thing that is important I think we have seen through the programme, the top ones, so looking at - can we alter people's attitudes to aging and to older people by having them working together? We can and it is about forming those relationships, and this is something we need to do.

The more arts focused ones, I mentioned we couldn't use people with severe frailty or dementia. This is a way to take part. There are other people who are going to want to watch. Somebody spoke to me a couple of weeks ago, they go and run a, I think a baby music and movement group in a care home. They go in and use the big communal space that is there, and the older people come and listen. Some of them do actually interact with the children. Others don't. If anybody brings a baby or child in, everybody's faces light up. Doesn't matter how severe the dementia is, doesn't matter, they don't interact but bring a child on, it just changes everything.

We didn't measure the children in the first series because we thought it was going to take away focus from our older volunteers - that was unfounded as well. So we showed our older people as people. We showed the lives they have had. Showed the good and bad bits of it. Talk about grief, dying and living. Building the friendships. What you didn't see on the programme was the relationship with the parents and everything else. Lots of people loved Hamish from Series 1. He was a nightmare, (laughter), to say he enjoyed being grumpy was an understatement. Tell us off at every opportunity. I ate a yoghurt improperly at lunchtime. We had people who made impacts, Sylvia, Victor, spent a week on the beach. Having had the film recently about that means more people would have understood a little bit about what that meant. Fred and Ken, on one of my earlier slides with the chicken and bromance, they lived 4 doors apart and hadn't met before the programme.

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**“let's make this normal  
for everybody  
everywhere”**

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This is a way to address the ageism in society as well as getting everybody doing a bit more arts. So local authorities, policy makers can be the enablers, but we need the individual

groups to really lead on this. I have been fortunate enough in one of my other roles, I am working on health care policy for Birmingham and Solihull, to have an intergenerational toolkit that colleagues in Solihull have written and it is basically a quick how-to guide. Risk assess, the first project that started. We started in schools, it went out to our first, so I spoke at school's engagement event 2 weeks ago, first schools project started in Birmingham on the fourth February. There is a huge role for disenfranchised children who don't have families.

This is my art, I am a brass bander. I don't do art. I realise - I am a tuba player to put myself at the bottom of the scale. It is not unusual in lower section band to have people from 9 to 89 in the same group. I was going to have my friend's little boy Jack. Dennis is 89, Jack is 9. Dennis has given him a squirter for the slide on the trombone. They have a friendship. Different to any of the relationships with the conductor or the parents in the band. We have been doing it for a long time in brass bands and I am sure it is in other arts. Let's make this normal for everybody everywhere. Thank you.

## Reflections

HELEN: I would like to welcome Rebecca Blackman from Arts Council England to join Zoe and I on to the stage for a couple of panel questions.

So, from what we have just heard, what is next?

ZOE: In even as short as three years' time, if any of you engage with a school, children's group or older people's group and they don't have a link with their opposite age, we should be asking why and what can we do to enable that.

REBECCA: And also from where I am sat at the Arts Council, we are looking at the ten-year strategy and thinking hard about who we are reaching and I think, for me, the what's next is really focussing on the people we are not reaching and so, in terms of families, there are lots of people who already engage and are very highly-engaged. I think Symia, at the beginning, talked about class and the people who feel, and lots of people have talked about this, feel it is not for them, There is something around our way of thinking, in terms of how we reach those people. It is OK to say not that they have been hard to reach, but that they have been easy to ignore. I don't think we can ignore people any longer.

HELEN: It is interesting, from your perspective, to hear, from your experience today, is there something you will take away with you from today and what is it?

ZOE: Well, what I will take away - I have been sending e-mails, how are we going to get the CBSO, Royal Ballet and other Birmingham arts groups involved in our strategy for the people of Birmingham and Solihull. So connections. If there is anyone in this room who can help me...

REBECCA: In terms of what I'm taking away, it has been interesting for me, because, it has been mixed in a way, half the time people have been talking about how we have this fantastic offer, and what we want. It is a bit like the message saying "we have the fantastic offer, it is really good for you, you need to engage with it". I think there is still a bit of recalibrating that we need to think about, in terms of: are we offering people what they want? And something around supply and demand and that is certainly informing our thinking at the Arts Council as we are developing our strategy, how do we also really listen to people? Really empower people and give them a voice in the kind of cultural activity that they want?

FLOOR: What are your thoughts on social prescribing? Should you go to the doctor and be prescribed an artistic experience?

ZOE: I have really strong feelings about doctors being involved with things that doctors shouldn't really be involved with. And social prescribing is one of the key buzzwords. I think we need to make everything accessible but without doing *to* people... the ability to sign-post, to advise and direct, is essential - but if somebody tells me I should be doing something that will be good for me, my response is fairly instant and not the one

they want. I would like much, much better access for us to know what is going on out there but I hope we don't get to the point where arts are seen as a healthcare intervention.

REBECCA: I think it is interesting, the Arts Council is talking a lot about social prescribing and seeing, to an extent, as an opportunity for the cultural sector. It seems to be the direction of travel. I lead on a programme called Creative People and Places. I will often say I really am uncomfortable when people start saying that somehow art and culture for more working class or disenfranchised people would be good for them. We don't say that to the people who go to the Royal Opera House or ballet, we don't say go because it'll be good for you. It might just be something that you enjoy and so, I think there is something about everyone being entitled and I think that is something that has come up in some of the conversations today about: it should be an entitlement for everybody.

FLOOR: About the intergenerational activities in care homes - I work for a nursery. , we are right around the corner from a care home. I would love to take some of the things I have heard today and yesterday at the Celebrating Age seminar to where I work. As soon as I suggest it, the first thing they will say to me is Safeguarding. Do you have any advice on how you got around that or maybe some examples of best practice I can take as evidence to say this is how we could do it?

ZOE: In terms of intergenerational activities, the older adults are never responsible for the children. You always have the correct number of nursery teachers or responsible adults there that you would have with those children. The other thing we suggest, it needs to be a shared space, that both move into, to do the activity and that anybody can leave at any time. So, the care home in Solihull, they have a sitting room at the front of the house that has been used for that activity. If people want to get DBS checks done, you do the volunteers DBS checks, which cost £6. You don't need more than that. You are never leaving the children and older adults unsupervised. The issue with DBS checks with older people is you need their National Insurance numbers, and most don't have a clue where to find it.

REBECCA: Do you think it was about just doing stuff or was there anything specific about doing arts and creative activity? A few people have asked that of me - well, it could be anything, it could be gardening, it could be cooking. What do you think?

ZOE: I had not put any thought into the fact that what we were doing was art, until I was preparing this talk. And that's actually how it went for the TV programme. The things they did were the things that children do in nurseries anyway. It was only as I have been thinking about it actually that it has struck me, almost everything was art-focussed. The other thing we did a lot of, which wasn't art focussed, was eating. Mealtimes are hugely important. Sitting and eating together - our older adults weren't eating well or properly – helped them to develop proper appetites as a result of being part of the programme.

REBECCA: Interesting. And the eating together has emerged strongly from the Creative People and Places programme, about bringing community and people and groups together, it surfaces lots of time over food. It is really important.

HELEN: Food is a very good point to end on, as well. So that leaves me to thank you Zoe and Rebecca and all of the other speakers today. The Everyman Theatre for hosting us at this wonderful venue, to the team at the Family Arts Campaign for organising the day and not least to all of you for making the journeys to come here. So, thank you very much.



The Family Arts Campaign works via a consortium of representative bodies consisting of:



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