

UKSPF – Event Evaluation

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Introduction

This project delivery took place over the Friday and Saturday on the last weekend of August 2024. The space we occupied was in the Marlands shopping centre on the ground floor by CEX. We opened the doors from 11am to 4pm on both days.

Prior to the delivery we visited the space several times to ascertain what might be possible. We made two visits with the other two organisations involved in the project (SoCo Music

Project and Zoellogic) and with two of our young participants. As the idea of this work was to engage young people in the planning, we felt it was important that they spent some time in the space. They then had further time with us to discuss how it might be used (physical layout, activities, etc) and what they would like to see in it (clear zones, chill out space, multiple activities).

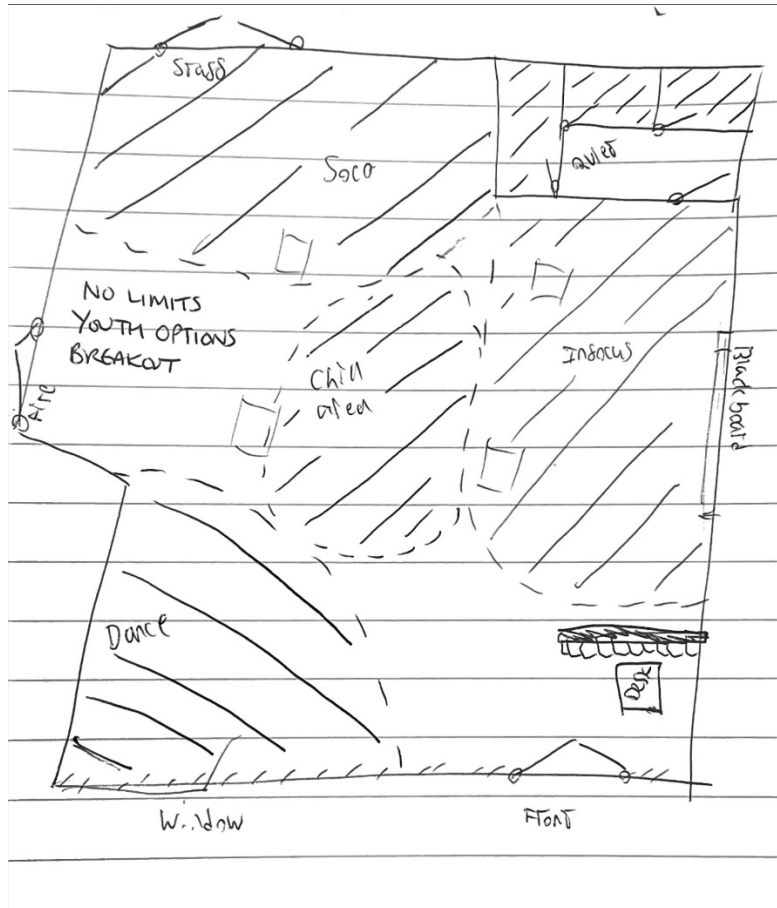


Image 1/ A Young Persons visualisation of how we might occupy the Marlands space from our first visit and discussions with the other organisations involved (barring No Limits who weren't there but we thought at the time were going to be involved)

Purpose/Aims

The key themes we were looking to build on collectively were:

- Visibility
- Accessibility
- Community building
- Relationship to space
- Ownership
- Skill development

IN FOCUS

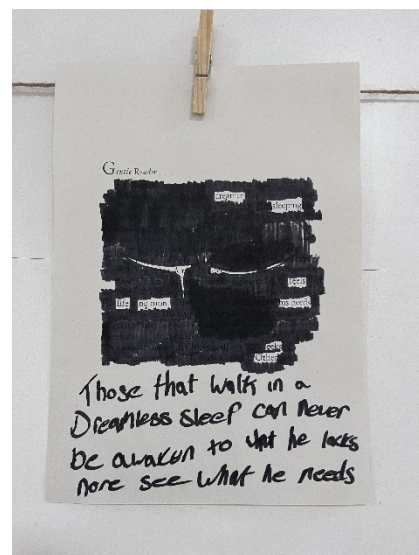
For In Focus this was done through a combination of community presence, creative activities, conversation and survey. The In Focus team consisted of 2 core members of staff both days, one freelancer on the Friday, 2 young people (who were both paid for their time) on both days and one volunteer who helped us get our equipment in and out again.

Over the two days we delivered:

- Mixed media portraits
- Blackout poetry

Mixed media portraits involved an individual having their photograph taken and then using paint or oil pastels reimagining their portrait. The freedom this gives to individuals to express themselves is unlimited as it is not about a level of skill with the paint brush. Whether the participant uses careful brush strokes or just freeform the results they have an equitable outcome.

Blackout poetry is created by using a piece of existing text as a base then the individual uses pens and other mediums to redact sections of text to develop a new piece of creative writing. It is accessible for those who have never written before as well as presenting a challenge to those who have plenty of experience in writing.



We found that the painting was very popular with the youngest age groups whilst the blackout poetry tended to be more appealing to older participants. Perhaps a learning point for us from this would be to find texts with larger fonts at a younger language level – we do not usually work with under 10s, so this was a relatively new experience for us.

Young People's Input/Participation

As creating a space for young people was at the heart of this work, we paid two young people to work with us over the duration of the delivery (at the Real Living Wage). This also meant we were able to get direct feedback from them afterwards about their experiences both as part of our team and about the space and activities.

To keep this feedback comparable, we used a similar series of questions used by another organisation with their young volunteers.

Young Participant Feedback

	Participant 1	Participant 2
Age	24	24
What has your role included at this event?	Helping young people make art, telling parents and older young people about In Focus and the event in general, handing out flyers and inviting people into the space, moving furniture, cleaning art supplies.	Supporting In Focus with their popup event, and interacting with members of the public.
What motivated you to support this event?	I like working with Kristianne and Faye. Hanging out with them is always fun.	It sounded fun.
What skills have you demonstrated and/ or developed?	Communication and teamwork, mainly.	I found myself pretty good at socialising with people, which is an uncommon occurrence for me. I also developed my skill with a camera.
What are you taking away from this event? (I.e. new connection, info about Southampton / young people / arts)	Information about dance and music in Southampton, some work experience, and a good time.	I hope that this event will lead me on to further opportunities in the future.
How could this event have been improved?	A better choice of venue, the Marlands is kind of dead and the space is often empty, which means it's likely to be overlooked.	<i>I think a more welcoming and visually appealing environment would have been a great benefit to the event.</i>
What do you feel worked well / was effective at engaging young people?	The blackout poetry was only good for older young people, but the mixed media portraits were absolutely a hit!	

Are there any other locations in Southampton that you think a similar event would be good?

Outside in the park!

In addition to this one of the young participants contacted us a few days later and said this:

"I greatly enjoyed my time working with In Focus. I was able to gain experience outside of my comfort zone while feeling supported and safe. I felt happy and optimistic the whole time, and it gave me motivation to seek out further opportunities."



InFocus team reflections

What worked well:

This was the first time that InFocus paid young people to work alongside us, which provided us with valuable time to engage with two participants who have been involved in our sessions and shown a broader interest in our activities. We are now supporting both individuals with additional volunteering opportunities to help them develop workplace skills, as they have expressed a desire to work but have struggled to find an entry point.

Between the two activities offered, painting on photographs was the more popular, as it was accessible for the younger participants (under 10s) who visited. However, our engagement with older young people (over 18s) was also successful, leading to new participants joining our DSLR photography workshops.

It was beneficial to have the ability to directly signpost to other organizations within the same space when visitors were not initially interested in visual arts. For some young people, our own activities were not the main attraction, but they still engaged with us while visiting the space. Having a variety of creative activities available introduced young people to new art forms they may not have normally tried otherwise.

What Could Be Improved:

Although it was generous of the shopping centre to offer us the space free of charge, the location within the centre posed challenges. Being in a corner, away from main walking routes, limited our visibility. This required us to frequently send team members out to direct people to our location.

During the initial planning stages, there was a discussion about each organization bringing a gazebo to help create distinct 'zones' (see Image 1, above). This did not materialize, making it difficult to establish the intended separation of activities.

Additionally, not all organizations had the same staffing capacity or youth volunteers present for the two days, which meant our team took on a disproportionate share of the signposting duties within the centre. As our team members are all neurodivergent, this resulted in over-stimulation by the end of the first day, making Day 2 quite challenging for us. In future collaborations, it would be beneficial to establish a clearer division of responsibilities between organizations, as we are significantly smaller than the other groups involved. The increased workload had a tangible impact on us as a team.

Conclusion

There is significant potential for young people to take ownership of spaces in Southampton and utilize them for creative activities. However, until a permanent space can be secured, these temporary spaces need to be easily accessible and situated in locations where young people are likely to encounter them.

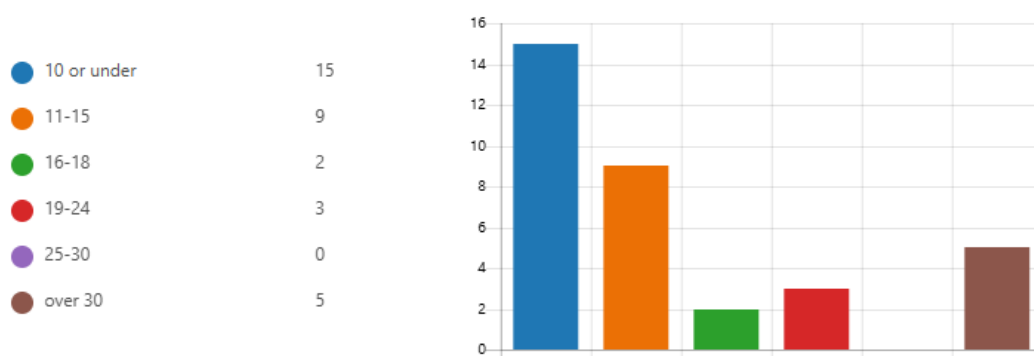
A diverse range of activities is essential to ensure that participants of all ages feel included. Otherwise, there is a risk of alienating certain groups, particularly those aged 16+ who are more likely to attend independently.

To maintain and operate a permanent space, reliable funding is crucial. However, clear agreements also need to be established for temporary pop-up spaces to ensure that all organizations feel included. These spaces should be managed by those delivering the activities, as they are best positioned to understand what is needed to support smooth operations.

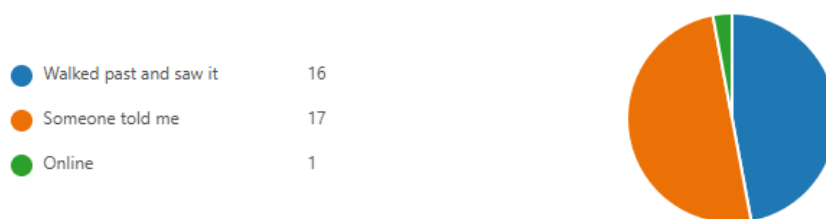
Most importantly, young participants should be at the forefront of these efforts, contributing authentically to the creation of these spaces and the delivery of activities. This approach would support the development of transferable workplace skills, fostering a legacy of youth-led initiatives and building a future workforce for Southampton.

Appendix – Event Feedback Statistics

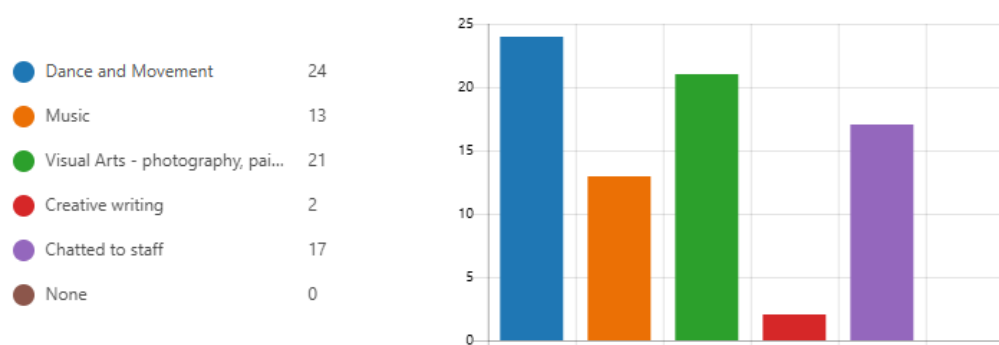
1. What age are you



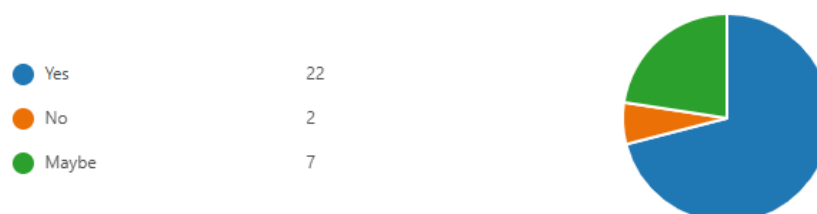
2. How did you find out about this event and activities today?



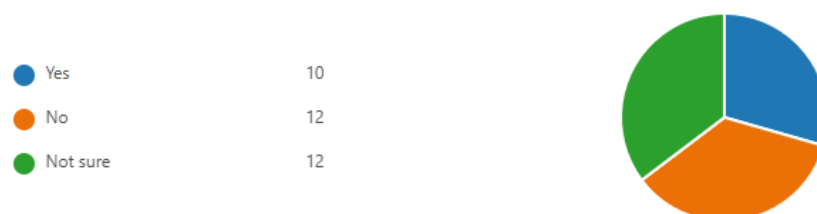
3. What activities did you take part in?



5. Would you be interested in finding out more about working in the Arts and Cultural industries?



6. Do you think there is enough creative activity for young people in Southampton?



7. What would you like to see more of on offer for young people in Southampton

31
Responses

Latest Responses

"Free activities"

"Yes! We love activities and learning new skills."

"Yes, I loved it here."

8. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about Spaces for young people in Southampton

20
Responses

Latest Responses

""

"I loved playing and trying new things."

"I liked the activities and how kind everyone was. "

9. What part of Southampton do you live in (either postcode or neighbourhood do not give full address)

34
Responses

Latest Responses

"Highfield"

"SO14 "

"SO14"