

Capital Developments - Engaging Your Audience

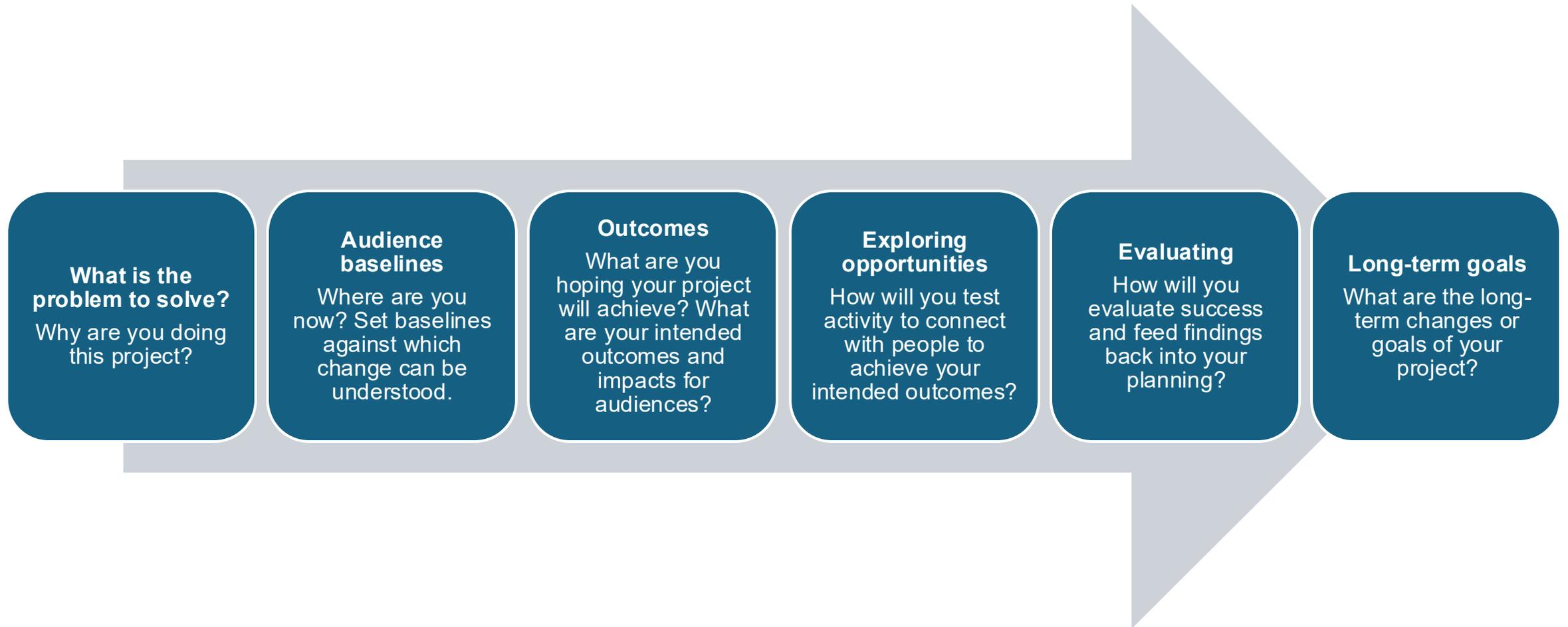
Host and chair

Michelle Carwardine-Palmer
Head of Theatre Management
Theatres Trust

Planning for audience engagement during capital development

Catherine Bradley
Senior Consultant
Audience Agency

Capital development: a programme for audience development and change



Setting audience baselines

What do you know about your current audiences?

- Who engages with you? How often? What do they do? Where do they come from?
- What are your benchmarks for in person, digital and participatory audiences?
- What will you measure audience development and change against during your project?

Data sources may include surveys, ticketing system, participation records, digital analytics, postcodes



Setting audience baselines

How will you meaningfully segment your audiences?

Segmentation: using insight to group people by distinct needs that you can respond to.

- ✓ Evidence – do you know enough about them?
- ✓ Big enough – are there enough of these people to make your activities worthwhile?
- ✓ Reachable - can you find and communicate with them?
- ✓ Homogeneous – do they share enough of the same characteristics to be targeted with the same message



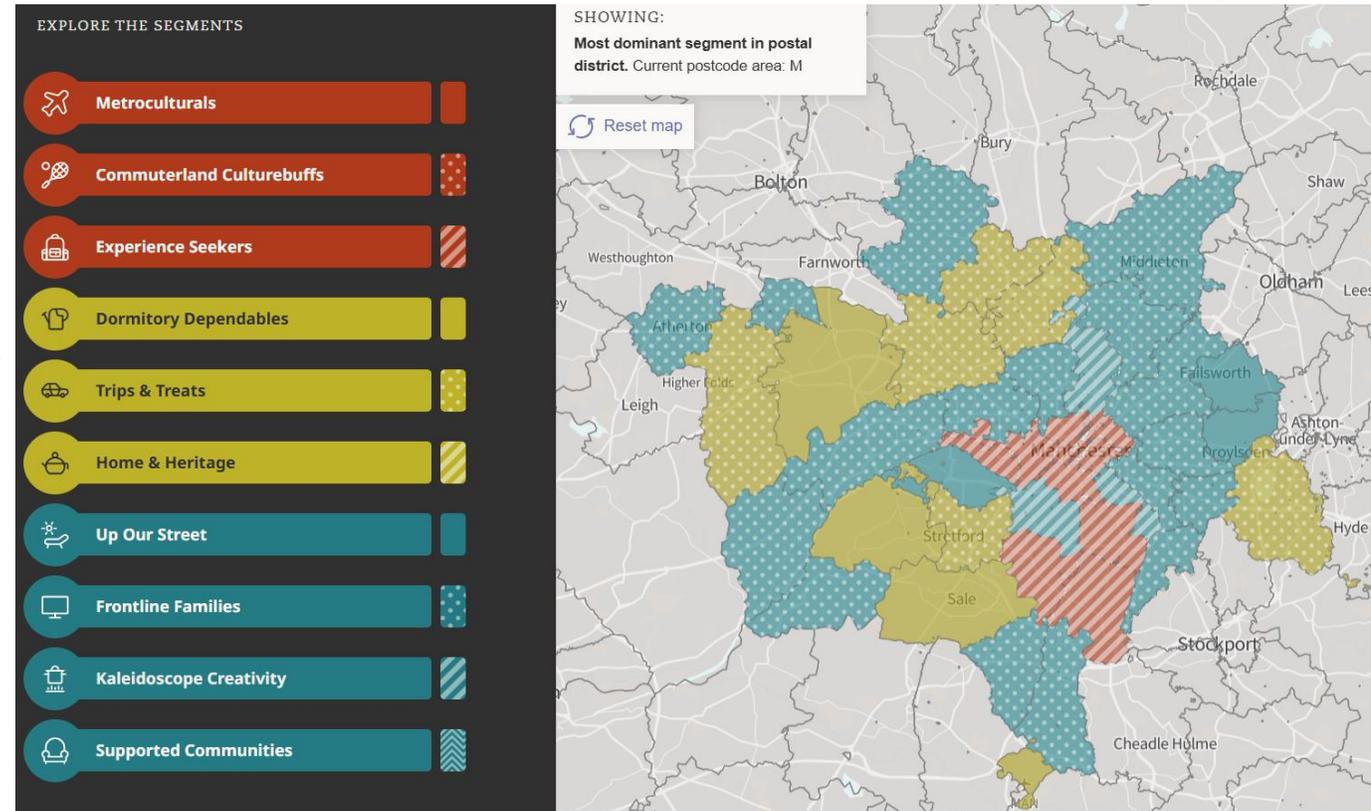
Audience Spectrum: population segmentation based on cultural interests

[Audience Spectrum Pen Portraits | The Audience Agency](#)

Setting audience baselines

Who is missing?

- Who lives in or visits your local area?
[Population Profile Reports | Audience Answers](#)
- Tourism and local authority sources
[Population Profile Reports | Audience Answers](#)
- Audience Spectrum mapping tool
[Audience Spectrum Map | Audience Spectrum](#)
- Schools Engagement and Target Area Reports
[Schools Engagement Report | Audience Answers](#)



Goals and outcomes

What are the long-term goals of your project?

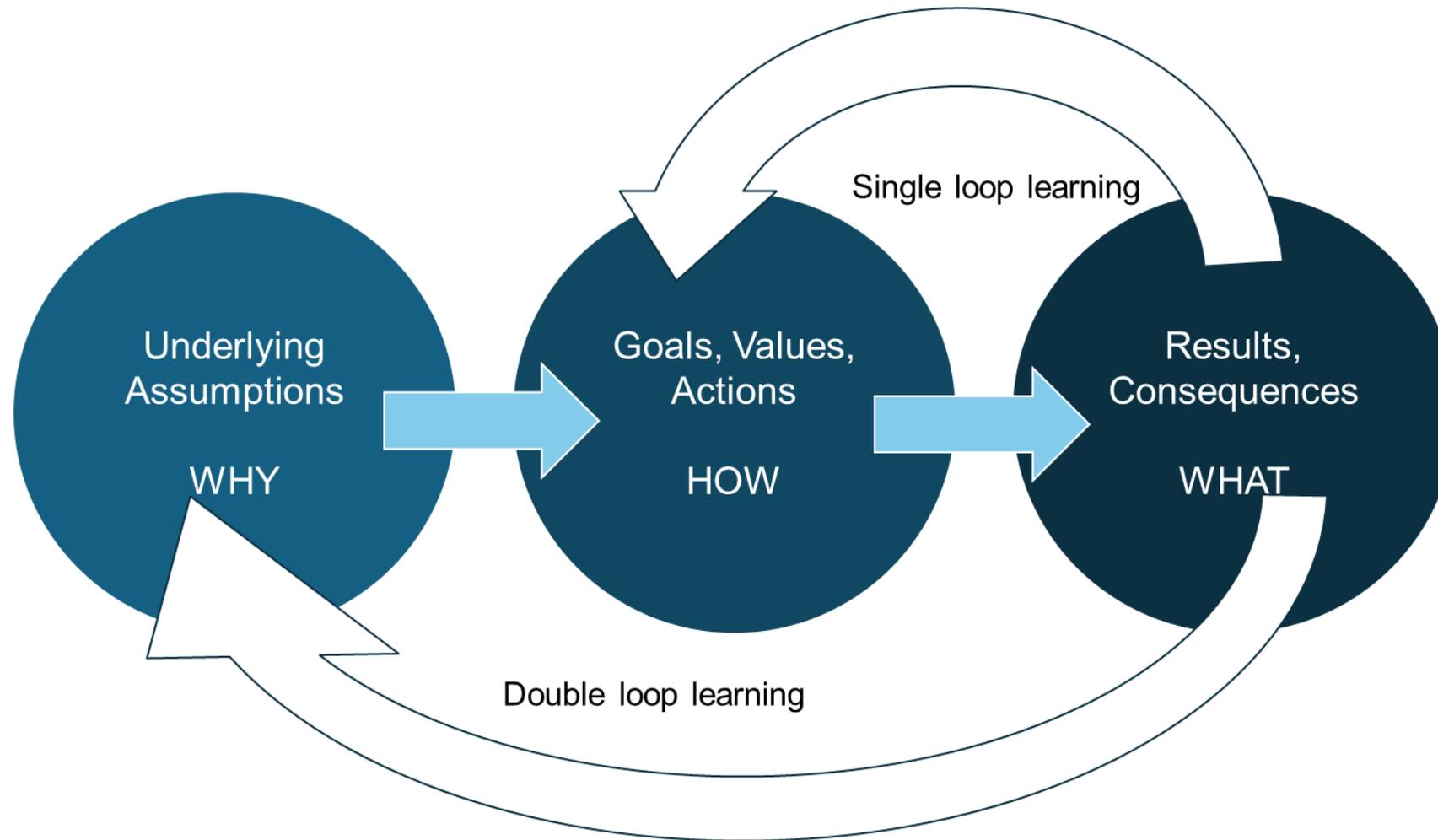
What are your intended shorter-term outcomes for audiences?

Audience outcomes might relate to:

- Finance (e.g. increased audience income, community hires)
- Community (e.g. reaching people you're not currently)
- Wellbeing (e.g. 5 Ways to Wellbeing)
- Education and learning (e.g. schools, heritage learning)
- Environment (e.g. raising awareness, changing behaviour)



Exploring opportunities



Double Loop Learning

Challenge defensive reasoning - fixed ideas, prejudices

Double loop learning = self awareness and awareness of others

Exploring opportunities

Engaging audiences and testing activity during closure

- Different approaches to testing activity
- Different locations
- Heritage Fund Activity Plans
- Engaging/communicating with existing audiences through closure
- Reintroducing the organisation on reopening

Bradford Arts Centre




**Bloomin'
Buds**
Theatre Company

SOUTH
SQUARE



Bradford_
Arts Centre

Touchstones Rochdale



[Touchstones Rochdale -
Your Trust](#)



[What's in Store? - Inside
the Collections - Your Trust](#)

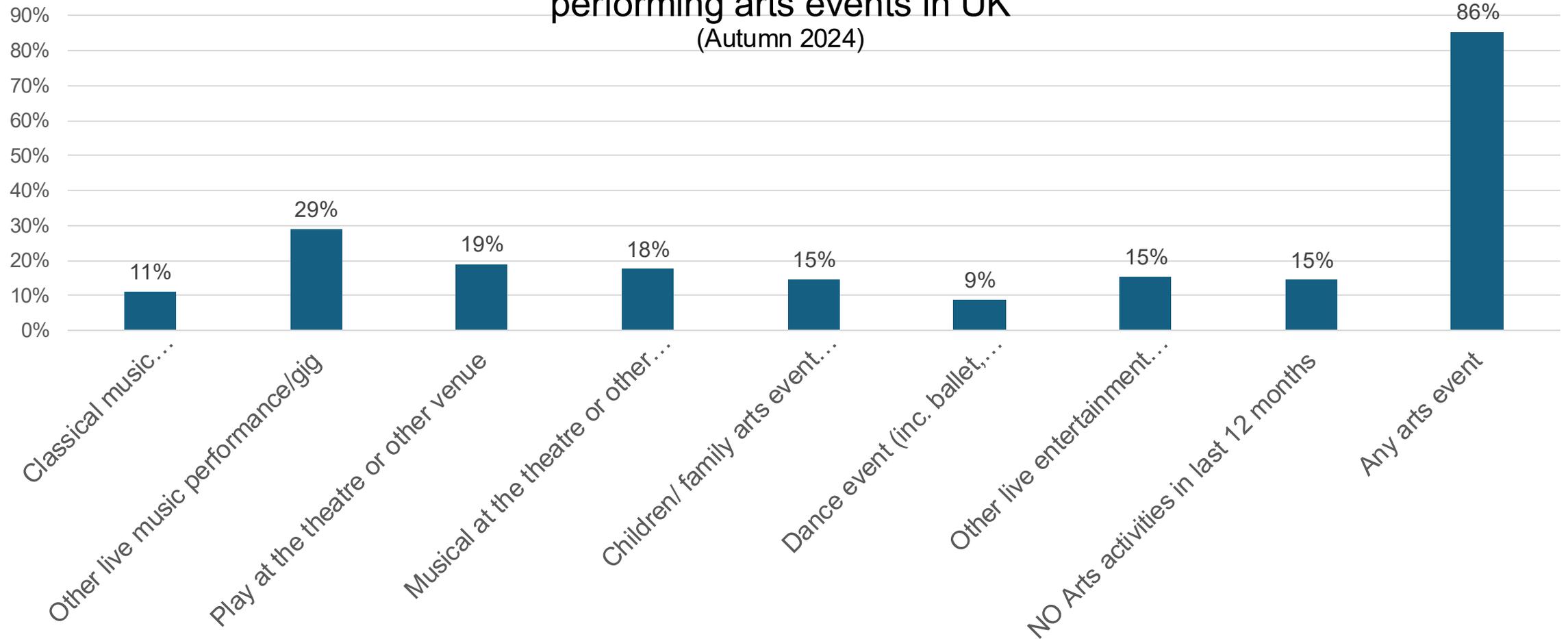


Museum of the Home



Exploring opportunities: wider context

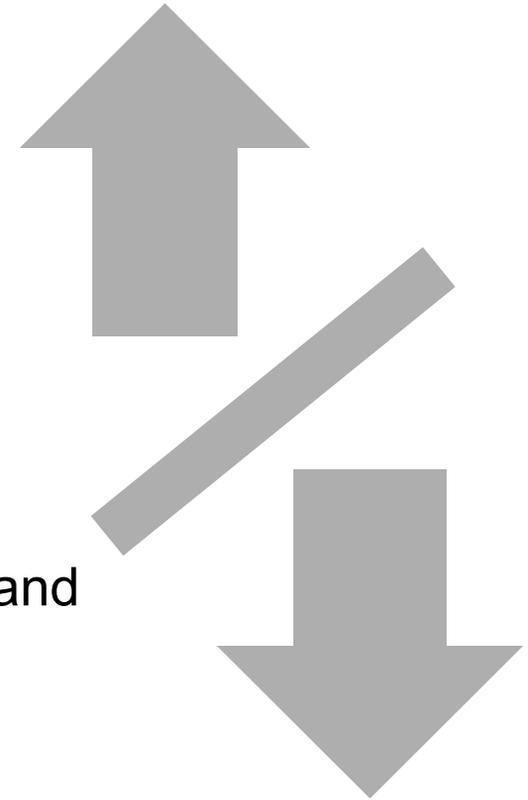
Cultural Participation Monitor national population survey: Attendance at performing arts events in UK
(Autumn 2024)



Exploring opportunities: wider contact

National trends in summary:

- Rise in **family** segments
- Rise in **middle-engaged** groups
- Drop in **older** groups with **traditional** tastes
- **Younger, urban** groups building back
- Home & Heritage (and Commuterland Culturebuffs) down; Trips & Treats and Facebook Families up
- In almost all cases, older and more settled sub-groups are notably lower
- Increased demand for family work, reliable and entertaining 'known' work, musicals/music, 'must-see' etc; also a younger skew...



Evaluation in capital projects

- Designed to measure against intended KPIs and outcomes of your project
- Consistent quantitative data to track progress and change against baselines (e.g. ticketing data, surveys).
- Qualitative data adds depth of understanding and helps to demonstrate impacts in a compelling way



Summative

- typically reporting to funders, stakeholders
- important for publicity – tell a good story
- report back to artists, participants, partners



Formative

- needed for long term programme or projects
- improve within a project
- disseminate learning, initiate change as the project progresses

Evaluation

<https://www.culturalvalue.org.uk/our-work/evaluation/evaluation-principles/>

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Evaluation principles

Beneficial

Robust

People-centred

Connected

Evaluation principles

We want to build a shared understanding of the differences that arts, culture, heritage and screen make to people's lives and to society.

These collaboratively produced evaluation principles are a sharing of ideas to inform how evaluation is carried out and used in the cultural sector.

[View the principles](#)

Thank you for listening

Catherine Bradley
Senior Consultant
Audience Agency

theaudienceagency.org
X [@audienceagents](https://twitter.com/audienceagents)
[The Audience Agency | LinkedIn](#)

Programme delivery and heritage engagement for audience retention

Munya Redman-Bayasi Senior Programmer
Hannah Webb Heritage Engagement Manager
(Maternity Cover)
Capital Theatres (King's Theatre, Edinburgh)

Capital Theatres

- Capital Theatres is Scotland's largest theatres charity, located in Edinburgh.
- We operate 3 venues: the Festival Theatre (1915 seats), the King's Theatre (1125 seats) and the Studio Theatre (155 seats).



The King's Theatre project

- The King's Theatre has been closed for 3.5 years for a major capital project.
- The project encapsulates 3 key areas:
 - Front of House
 - Back of House
 - Mechanical & Electrical upgrades



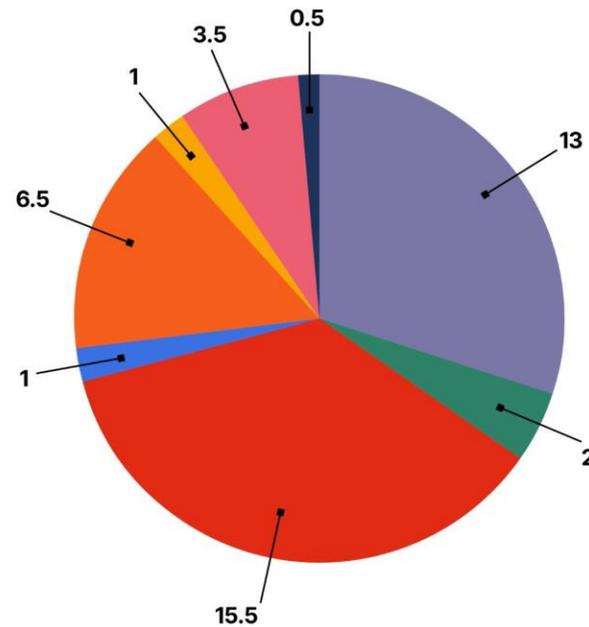
Challenges and opportunities

- The King's is a venue with a specific cultural context and currency in the city, in a less economically affluent area.
- The venue is unique in scale in our portfolio.
- Rebuilding an audience coming out of Covid.
- A highly engaged and loyal audience with a deep connection to the building itself.
- Two other venues with an existing audience base, creating opportunity to relocate and build audiences.

Programming

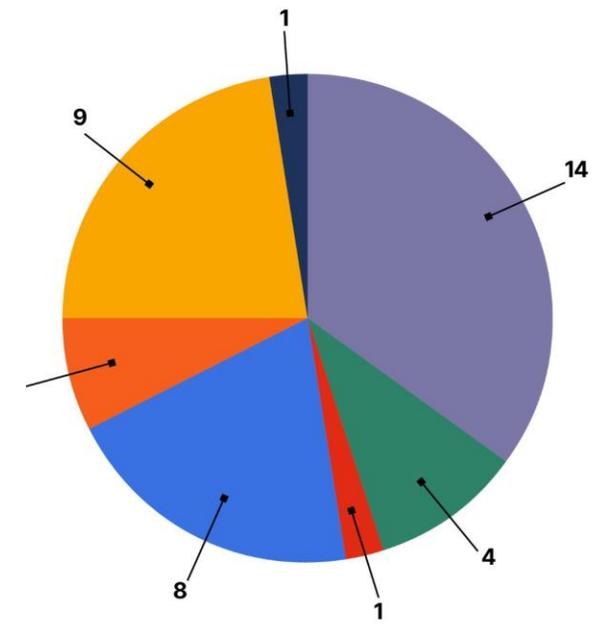
Our programme is divided into 8 genre groups, which drive our artistic output:

- Event Theatre
- Musicals
- Drama
- Dance
- Family
- One-Nighter
- Community
- Experimental



■ Event ■ Musical ■ Drama ■ Dance ■ Family
■ One-nighter ■ Community ■ Experimental

King's Theatre – FY2019/20



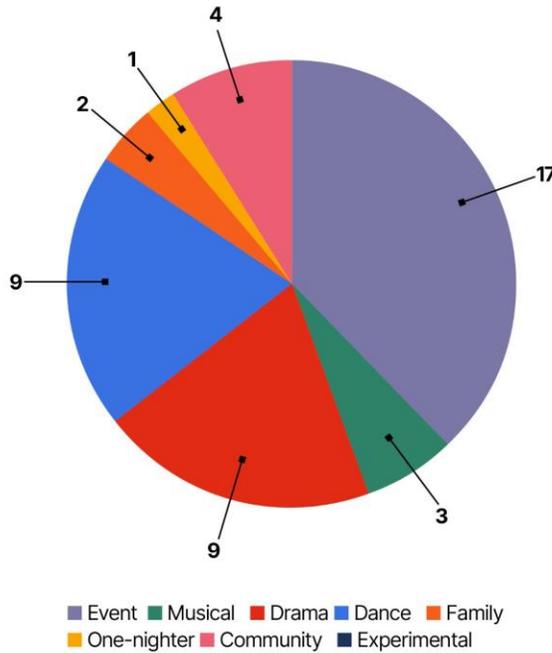
■ Event ■ Musical ■ Drama ■ Dance ■ Family
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Festival Theatre – 2019/20

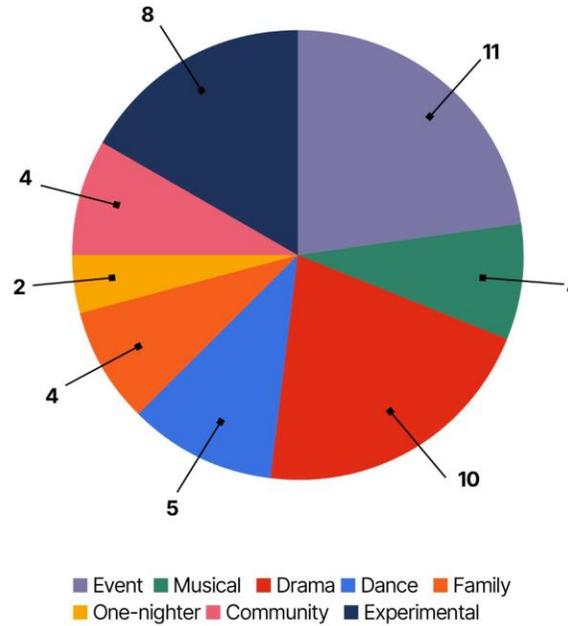
Objectives

- Maintain audiences through strategic programming of key genres and titles: Panto, drama, and community companies.
- Develop audiences across the Capital Theatres portfolio to ensure a robust, cross-demographic audience once the venue reopens.
- Engage the audience through Heritage activities, in venue and in the local community.
- Maintain a sense of belonging and loyalty to the King's Theatre throughout the closure period.

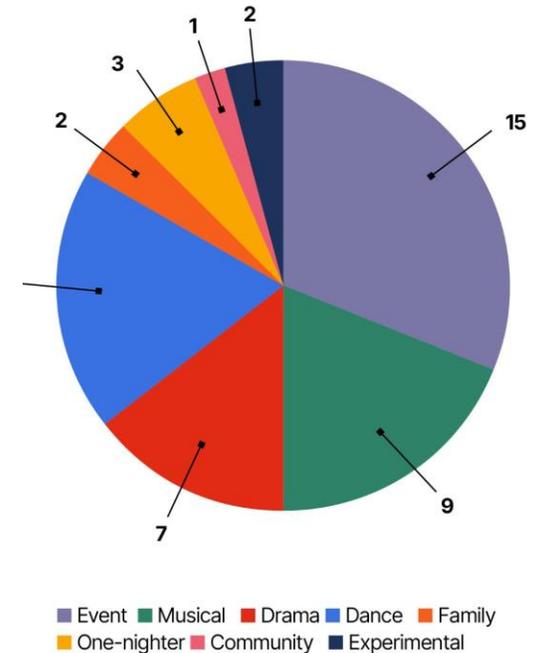
Strategic genre management



Festival Theatre – FY2025/26



King's Theatre - projected



Festival Theatre - projected

Areas of success



Panto sales



Drama sales



Audience development

Alongside the artistic programme, we have built a number of schemes to aid audience development and retention, including:

- 25 & Under scheme (over 5100 members)
- Student Ambassadors scheme
- Access scheme (over 1700 members)
- Friends scheme (over 5300 members, increased by 11% since King's closed)



Heritage engagement

The project has multiple strands to connect with specific groups, including:

- Schools (local and those with a barrier to engage with theatre)
- Students
- People aged 60+ (including those living with dementia)
- Families
- Young people
- Volunteers



Community centres and areas

303 engagements across 20 instances



Schools

1018 engagements across 36 instances



Online

7783 engagements with the People's Archive





Thank you for listening

Munya Redman-Bayasi Senior Programmer

Hannah Webb Heritage Engagement Manager (Maternity Cover)

Capital Theatres (King's Theatre, Edinburgh)

capitaltheatres.com

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Build it and they *might* come...

How we built *The Nest* at pace, driven by our values and opportunity seizing

Luke Shires

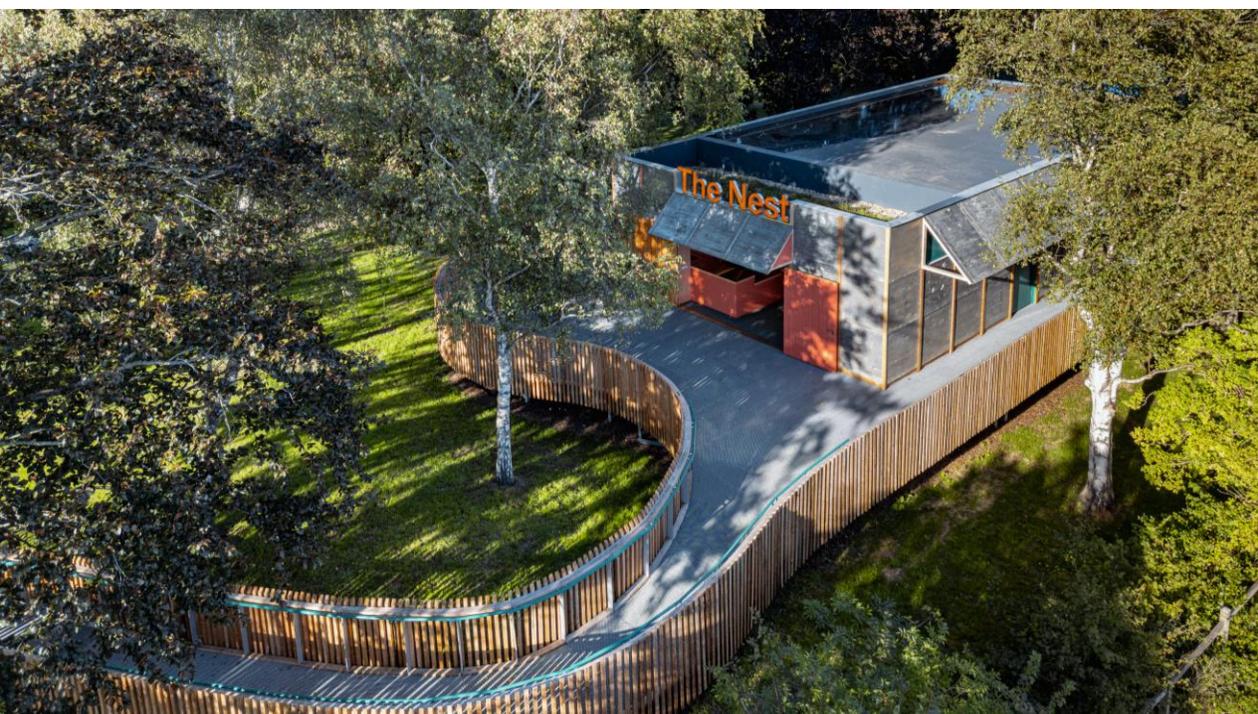
Director of Marketing, Sales, Audiences and
Communications
Chichester Festival Theatre

Supporting local and national ambitions – opportunity seizing

- Our local council were on a proactive journey to improve the nighttime economy of the city
- Emerging artists and small-scale work often struggles to find a home across the country
- *The Pleasance* had a building they wanted to sell
- We wrote the business plan based upon our values in order for ideas to flow from our DNA
- We gave ourselves permission to take risks, fail and learn at pace

Expanding our ecosystem at pace

- From planning permission being granted to our opening weekend was 12 months
- A fast-moving fundraising campaign was fired up alongside the project plan to open the venue....but we didn't have an audience strategy
- Loyalty is our secret weapon at CFT. Stewardship and acquisition strategies intertwining in real time across fundraising and marketing
 - How do we raise the money at pace?
 - How do we find a different and new audience at pace?
 - Are these two things mutually exclusive?



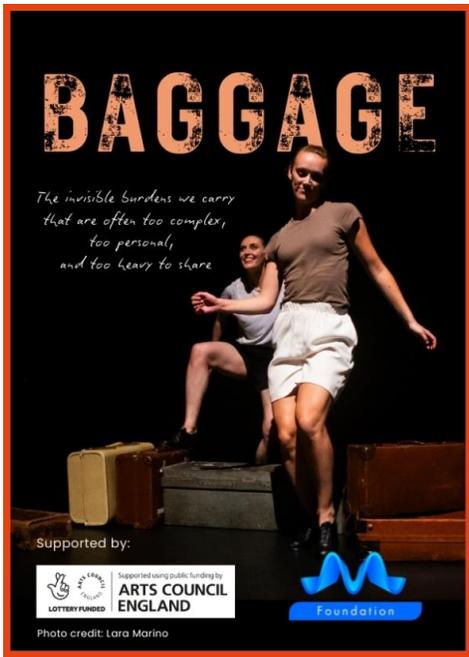
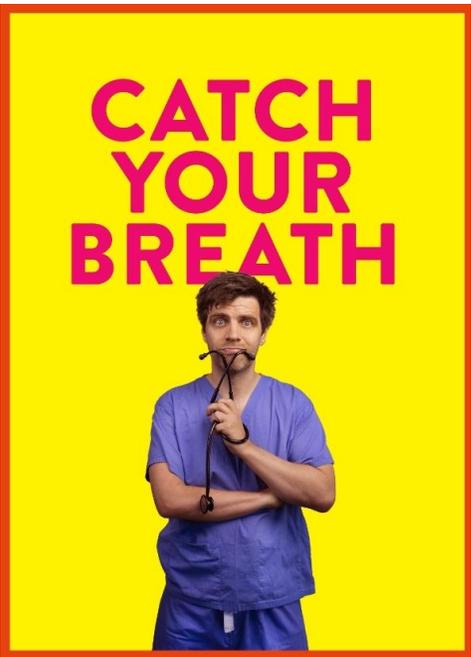
Early results and findings

Audience stats to date (first six months)

- 26% new bookers (comparable with annual CFT stats)
- 18% have been at least twice already
- 9% have come to three shows or more
- 56% came from our closest three postcodes

Programming

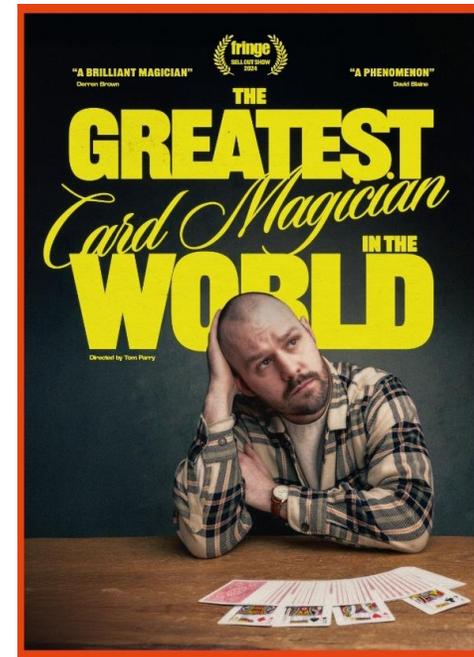
- Our Future Theatre Makers festival had 37% new bookers
- Comedy and Music sell fast to existing audiences
- Dance has highest new booker percentage at 74%
- Early Years is taking a while to find its groove



Supported by:



Photo credit: Lara Marino



You make a plan to change a plan

Separate but together: our journey to better intertwine with the CFT mothership and the hurdles ahead of us

- Constructing an audience development and marketing strategy that encompasses established seasonal patterns alongside week-to-week programming.

Shifting from a temporary to a permanent mindset

- How does The Nest impact programming across all other venues and seasons?
- Should we consider restructuring the vision for our other spaces?
- How do we continually nurture new audiences and not rely upon our existing loyal audience?
- How do we encourage frequency and recency alongside risk taking?

Thank you for listening

Luke Shires

Director of Marketing, Sales, Audiences and Communications
Chichester Festival Theatre

cft.org.uk

Facebook and Instagram: [@chichesterft](#)

Audience Q&A



Host and Chair

Michelle Carwardine-Palmer Head of Theatre Management, Theatres Trust

Speakers

Catherine Bradley Senior Consultant, Audience Agency

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