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1. Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

Festival of the North East (FotNE) took place throughout June 2013, across the whole of the North East. It had begun as an idea of the musician and Folkworks Artistic Director, Kathryn Tickell to celebrate the heritage and current creativity and innovation of North East England, and took shape to herald the return of the Lindisfarne Gospels in 2013, with planning starting in earnest in summer 2011. It was delivered by a Steering Group and (from August 2012) a small staff team. This report reflects upon the experience and outcomes.

1.2 10 key numbers:

- 165 events attracted approximately an estimated 134,000 audience members
- At least 147 people or organisations were involved as partners, supporters and funders
- Projects within FotNE estimated to have brought in around £4M partner investment
- Around £1M worth of in-kind support estimated to have gone into projects within FotNE
- 89% of project-leaders responding to an online survey were motivated to take part by a desire to help promote the region
- 66% of respondents thought FotNE contributed well or very well to promoting the region
- 75% of respondents rated FotNE as good or very good for celebrating the region's innovation and creativity
- 70% of respondents to an online survey rated FotNE as good or very good for creating positive PR for the region
- 98% of respondents to an online survey thought FotNE should happen again in some form
- Media coverage worth at least ££769,705 was generated, mainly across the North East but including some high profile national coverage
- Around £445,256 of Arts Council England, Grants for the arts funding was invested into individual projects, alongside £225,000 into the festival itself, which supported the team, marketing and £67,000 investment directly into projects

1.3 Key points from feedback

Purpose and Planning

- Celebration of North East's heritage of creativity and innovation understood and welcomed as opportunity to be part of something big
- Openness and organic evolution of purpose and theme welcomed
- Leaving purpose and theme relatively 'loose' worked for most people, some would have preferred 'tighter' definitions and more focused approach
- Lead in time and human resources were limited, leading to some impact on planning
- Process was open, transparent and worked well in involving a range of people
- High levels of satisfaction with experience of working with FotNE

Who was involved and what they gained

- FotNE involved around 150 organisations of a wide range of specialisms and scale

- There was a good regional spread of events, with a concentration of events in Tyne & Wear, especially Newcastle, Gateshead and Sunderland
- FotNE provided an opportunity for many organisations to be part of the same Festival
- Local authorities engaged well on the whole, some significantly
- Most people motivated to be part of a major regional festival to help promote North East England and increase their own profile and to support audience development
- Positive feedback on impact of FotNE creatively and within the cultural sector
- Good levels of contribution to people's aims and motivations, especially in relation to promoting the region and its innovation and creativity (75% respondents rated contribution good or very good on celebrating region)
- Divergent views of audience and visitor development (42% rated contribution good or very good on encouraging people to visit the North East, but 27% poor or very poor)

Programme and direction

- Good artform and specialism spread was achieved, including significant heritage projects
- Excellent projects happened that would not otherwise have done – and FotNE catalysed new ideas and partnerships (eg 67% respondents rated contribution good or very good on encouraging new creative programmes)
- Short lead in time affected the way programme ideas developed, but did not stop creation of some large-scale ambitious projects and a massive, inclusive region-wide programme
- Programme may have lacked a clear 'story' and enough signature projects which clearly related to that to establish an identity beyond reflecting pride in North East culture

Funding

Key points

- Sponsorship raised £45,000, indicating good support from business
- Project partners contributed significant amounts of funding and in kind support – potentially around more than £4M in total
- Significant investment through Grants for the arts and local authorities

I.4 Conclusions

The report draws a number of conclusions based on its analysis of feedback:

- there is an appetite for regional activity that brings together the cultural sector together
- the theme of the North East as a place of creativity and innovation is a potentially rich one
- Developing FotNE at a time of economic hardship and hard political choices has been a positive experience for those parts of the cultural sector that became involved, giving an important context for things that may not have happened otherwise, or in different ways.
- The creative tension between 'openness' and 'curation' in the programme was the subject of much debate, with divergent views on how successfully it was held. The benefits of involving a diversity of people appear to have outweighed the consequent challenges
- FotNE did not have a significant impact in terms of increasing audiences, and audience development requires a specific focus for thinking, planning and investment of resources

- The funding of the festival, although significant in quantum, was stretched in relation to the original ambitions for programme and profile
- The Festival is a significant achievement for the Steering group, team and partners
- Most people felt a repeat of the festival would be welcome, but that if FotNE was to happen again it should not be annually and should reflect certain criteria

Recommendations

1. The Steering Group should share this report or a summary with the North East Cultural Partnership and others, and share consideration of whether to begin discussions with potential partners about another Festival of the North East. This should be done as soon as possible to give as long a lead in time as possible for any potential future festival.
2. Any future festival should seek to involve regional tourism and inward investment bodies in its governance, planning and promotion
3. The Steering Group should take immediate steps to protect and preserve for potential future use the brand of 'Festival of the North East' and any associated domain names, databases and other archives and assets
4. If a decision is taken to do another Festival, or other should consider a similar festival, it should be on the basis of happening every 2 or 3 years, to give adequate time for developing realistic resources and plans for delivery. A delivery framework, governance and Festival Director should ideally be in place at least 2 years before the Festival occurs, and notice given to regional organisations, artists and potential partners at least 2 years before.
5. If a decision is taken to do another Festival, it should reflect the following principles:
 - It should embrace the full range of culture and innovation in the North East – ie arts, heritage, museums but also engineering and science
 - It should adopt clear focuses for its audience engagement and marketing targets
 - The programme should combine a small number of 'signature' flagship projects co-commissioned or developed by the Festival and promoted by them alongside a more open programme largely developed and promoted by partners
 - Involvement should be promoted to NPOs, MPMs and the like, but also to community and voluntary organisations and to individuals with great ideas
 - It should involve Local Authorities as key partners but not be led by them
 - It should connect to regional/national events or anniversaries, but not to be led by them
 - The festival should ensure its depiction of regional identity is international and outward-looking and look to involve diverse communities and children and young people
 - The lead in time for development should be adequate for the scale of ambition
 - If an ambitious festival cannot be realistically resourced and planned it should not happen

2. Aims

This evaluation has been commissioned via NewcastleGateshead Initiative from Mark Robinson of Thinking Practice to provide an independent view of FotNE. It aims to

- Describe what FotNE set out to do, what was achieved, and how this was done
- Assess the difference FotNE made in terms of the work made, people and places reached and how artists, arts and cultural organisations worked together or with other partners
- Describe learning from the experience of developing and delivering FotNE, especially in terms of regional identity and promotion, of joint or collaborative working and of their individual or collective cultural practice
- Make any appropriate recommendations to the Steering Group

3. Methodology

This report is based upon both quantitative and qualitative data collected by NewcastleGateshead Initiative, partners and people involved in Festival of the North East and interviews conducted by Mark Robinson of Thinking Practice. (See Appendix I for list of consultees.) The aim was to capture information on and the views of a cross-section of people involved, and to offer the opportunity to feed in to all project partners. This included:

- Pre- and post-festival electronic surveys to capture qualitative feedback and quantitative information on financial and in-kind support. (A link to the survey was sent by email to 211 people and completed anonymously except where people chose to give contact details. 47 people completed the survey, a response rate of 22.2%. This is not high enough to claim the responses are statistically reliable, so this information has been treated as indicative and correlated to findings from the interviews.)
- In depth interviews with 22 project leads and other people involved in developing the Festival (See Appendix I for full list of consultees)
- Analysis of the Festival programme – using website listing as the basis for this – and of Festival budgetary information
- Post-festival evaluation meeting with Local Authority Liaison Group
- Post-festival evaluation meeting with the Steering Group

The report aims to reflect the diversity of views and the overall consensus and give an independent reflection upon this where appropriate.

4. How Festival of the North East came to be and how it was delivered

Like many of the individual projects that came to be part of it, the idea of a Festival of the North East had a long gestation, leading to the month-long festival of 165 events in June 2013. It began as an idea of the musician and Folkworks Artistic Director, Kathryn Tickell in 2009, to celebrate the heritage and current creativity and innovation of the North East of England. At the time, the idea was felt to be too ambitious to achieve.

The confirmation in January 2011 that the Lindisfarne Gospels would be brought back to the North East for summer 2013, however, gave the idea new impetus and focus. The Gospels were contextualised as not simply religious artefacts but as also outstanding examples of a long heritage of creativity including the first railways and significant inventions and innovations in the industrial revolution and subsequently, as well as in the realm of arts and culture.

After a number of discussions amongst interested organisations in the region, a Steering Group was brought together to over see the development and delivery of the Festival, and met for the first time in July 2011. This brought together representatives of key sectors, Arts Council England as the key stakeholder, and of NewcastleGateshead Initiative, identified as a suitable 'host' for the Festival team given its experience of running major festivals and history of working regionally. (See Appendix 2 for full list of members of the Steering Group.) The Group was complemented by a Local Authority Liaison Group that acted as a connected to the ANEC DCMS Officers Group to provide both strategic and practical connection to all 12 local authorities in the region. (See Appendix 3 for membership.)

Four Artistic Advisors were identified to help bring the festival together, with the originator of the Festival, Kathryn Tickell, being joined by musician Paul Smith, playwright Lee Hall and sculptor Anthony Gormley. It was decided that a month-long festival would precede the exhibition of the Gospels in Durham, with its own separate month-long exhibition and associated cultural programme more closely related to the Gospels and related sites.

The first call for project proposals was put out in Autumn 2011, with proposals received by November 2011. Henceforth a rolling call out for further proposals ran until Autumn 2012 to actively address gaps in the programme, for example geographic locations. Two public meetings were held in June and September 2012. The Festival Producer was appointed in August 2012, and the rest of the team in October 2012. (See Appendix 3 for team members.)

For around 13 months, from July 2011 – August 2012, the festival was managed entirely by the steering group via in-kind staff time and office space. This included developing the theme and overarching structure, writing the funding bid, recruiting the team, creating goodwill amongst potential participants and sorting the ever-growing list of proposals. This was a significant 'hidden cost' or contribution, which needs to be noted as a consideration in establishing future festivals.

The Festival programme was developed and confirmed between August 2012 and April 2013, a process led by Festival Producer Jonathan Best, assisted by the advisers and Steering Group and a Festival Manager, Mo Lovatt. After launching at the Culture Awards event in April 2013, the festival ran throughout June 2013. A total of 165 events took place across the region¹, developed by around 150 organisations or individuals. (Given the nature of the festival and the projects it is actually hard to put a definitive number on how many were involved.)

The Festival model was one of a core team developing the programme framework, including making connections between people with ideas, venues and producers for specific events or projects, and suggesting a shape to the month, but with partners producing and funding their projects independently, with a small number of projects receiving investment from FotNE. (15 in total, with the largest investment £10,000.)

A fundraising consultant was employed to assist with raising sponsorship, which was particularly successful for a first or potentially one-off event, with £45,000 raised from three sponsors. The core team, marketing and programme investment from FotNE were supported by investment of £225,000 from Arts Council England. Funding was not confirmed until several months later than had originally been hoped by the Steering Group, which led to later appointments of the Festival team, which in due course led to a truncation of the planning and development time for the festival and projects within it.

Projects managed their own fundraising, with 19 projects receiving funding from Grants for the arts, and many benefiting from funding from local authorities. This process was helpfully supported by involvement of Arts Council staff in relevant meetings, and a degree of co-ordination of applications. Inevitably, however, the competitive nature of funding meant that some potential projects were not supported. The timescale for developing projects also militated against drawing in funding from other sources such as trusts and foundations.

The Festival Direction did not involve specifically curating or commissioning projects although a budget was made available to seed fund a small number of projects that might give the Festival shape and profile. The Festival direction was, instead, focused on stimulating and assisting creative connections and attempting to co-ordinate events across the region, whilst ensuring a good spread geographically and in terms of arts form or cultural specialism. It also involved looking to create a small number of flagship events within a larger, programme open to involvement from many kinds of people and organisation. The benefits and challenges of this approach are discussed in Section 5.

Once the key elements of the programme were in place, the Festival Producer moved onto other freelance opportunities, and the co-ordination of programme and marketing moved to the Festival Manager and the other members of the team, including the external marketing agency Hundredth Monkey.

¹ Number taken from www.festivalne.com, includes some tours and runs of projects.

5. Reflections on the experience and learning

5.1 Purpose of Festival of the North East

Key points:

- *Celebration of North East's heritage of creativity and innovation understood and welcomed as opportunity to be part of something big*
- *Openness and organic evolution of purpose and theme welcomed*
- *Leaving purpose and theme relatively 'loose' worked for most people, some would have preferred 'tighter' definitions and more focused approach*

The extent to which an idea moves from 'what if we...' to a major festival successfully is dependent to a large degree on how compelling its purpose is, how widely that is understood and how well it is turned into actual activity. The purpose of FotNE is described by many as having evolved during the development of the Festival, although what is clear from consultations is a fairly consistent understanding of a core purpose, around which a number of interpretations were allowed to develop. Some people felt this was a healthy, organic, process that allowed for richness to develop, whilst others felt this led to some diffusion and dilution of impact in relation to high-level programming and audience/visitor attraction.

The most commonly expressed core purpose of the Festival, as articulated by those taking part and the core team, was to celebrate and raise the profile of the North East's cultural heritage of innovation and creativity, using the return of the Gospels as a focus and example. Whether it was primarily focused on raising awareness *in region*, for the cultural sector or for local people, or *beyond the region*, for potential visitors, was less consistently clear to people.

The connection to the Lindisfarne Gospels was generally felt to have been a starting point rather than a shaping principle, but very much gave an 'occasion' to the Festival for some people – a reason for it happening in 2013, rather than at another time. Some local authorities also saw the Festival as an appropriate opportunity to continue the momentum creating by the large-scale events in the North East as part of the Cultural Olympiad and the Olympic Torch Relay. The separation from the Gospels in timing terms did appear to have confused some people even where they thought it was logical. Some others, though, appear to have missed the connection completely, with one person commenting that 'it seemed an strange time to do it – i.e. just before the Lindisfarne Gospels.'

That the purpose – and its logical extension into planning and programming - was not 'nailed down' too tightly was commented upon positively by a number of interviewees: 'it could become what people wanted it to be' as one person put it. The spirit of 'let's do something' was welcomed by many, as was a perceived focus on celebrating culture rather than seeking to create economic impact. Creating a large festival which was made up of many, many parts, within a broad theme, was felt by some, especially smaller organisations and those outside of the regularly funded parts of the cultural sector, to bring additional kudos to their projects.

For some, however, this spirit of openness meant that some of the core messages and purpose of the festival were at risk of being ‘drowned out in a morass of small projects’ as one person suggested.

Some projects responded very powerfully to the theme of celebrating regional identity, creativity and innovation, responding artistically to what one person described as ‘what the North East stands for historically, where it came from industrially, and what it’s doing now’. A high proportion of projects related to the cultural heritage of the region, not just those 14% of projects that could be classified as heritage or museum projects or events. There is little in the Festival programme that explicitly looks to the *future* of creativity and innovation in the region, although a number of projects showcased new talent and innovative ways of working. One interviewee summed this up as an unresolved dilemma about to what extent FotNE wanted to be ‘folky’ and to what extent it wanted to be ‘edgy’. This is something to be considered for the future, and relates to the degree to which the festival wants to focus internally or externally.

5.2 Planning and development

Key Points

- *Lead in time and human resources were limited, leading to some impact on planning*
- *Process was open, transparent and was felt to have worked well in involving a range of people*
- *High levels of satisfaction with experience of working with FotNE*

The planning and development of FotNE evolved in a way that was consistent with its purpose of bringing together many people and events across the North East to celebrate the region’s culture, and heritage of creativity and innovation.

The Steering Group came together from what might be called an ‘alliance of the willing’ – a small number of key people in major organisations willing to act as advocates and advisers around particular areas, and provide a straightforward governance overview. The group included representatives from Arts Council England, as a key stakeholder and funder, Bridge North East, representing the interests of children and young people, NewcastleGateshead Initiative, with their experience of visitor attraction, major festival development and of the Culture10 programme, The Sage Gateshead, the largest arts organisation in the region, and Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums, one of the region’s Major Partner Museums and previous Renaissance ‘hub’ lead. This group also worked closely with a Local Authority Liaison Group, and with the ANEC-supported DCMS Officers Group.

This governance structure reflected where the idea had come from and how it evolved, and the strengths in the region in festival development and delivery. It was very much a *working* steering group that was active in programme development, working with Advisers and bringing together people in relevant sectors. The amount of in-kind support from the organisations involved in the Steering Group should not be under-estimated. Although the

connection with local authorities was an important one, it was felt crucial that the festival was very much sector-led.

NGI provided a facility through which FotNE was able to contract and to process financial arrangements.

The key challenges to planning and development of FotNE were the classic elements of time and resource. By the time funding was agreed for the core team, the time available to develop such an ambitious project was short. This inevitably had an impact on the kinds of creative conversations and projects that could be developed by FotNE with partners, and what one interviewee called 'the creative joining of the dots' was weakened. It is a considerable achievement that the programme was as coherent as it was thematically, whilst being so open, given the lack of time for those creative conversations.

The lack of time to develop projects impacted creatively on a number of projects, and on the marketing. It was felt by some that with longer lead in time, more connections could have been made between the various creative drivers in the region, and more consideration given to attracting particular audiences. The open meetings of those interested in taking part in the Festival, and subsequently those included, were especially welcomed by people as an opportunity to make connections and to develop partnerships.

With those caveats, however, the overall consensus was that the small Festival team had done remarkably well within the time, money and resources available to them, and people's experiences of them were generally positive. The team was often described as positive, helpful and flexible and there was a real appreciation of the difficulties of doing something of such a scale on such relatively small resources. Although the team was small, it gave individual project producers and partners a sense of being connected to something bigger. (Being situated at NGI may have helped with this.) As one person put it, they felt they had the benefit of 'extra muscle.' The transition of leadership at the end of the Festival Producer role had not been clear to some people, despite the best efforts of the Steering group and team to communicate this, leading to some confusion, although this was not felt to be a serious issue.

The qualitative feedback is in keeping with the results from the online survey. Figures 1-3 illustrate high levels of satisfaction with people's experience of working with FotNE, with almost all respondents rating it average or above in all areas in the pre-event survey. Even with hindsight, post-event, ratings show high levels of satisfaction, especially in the areas of support from the project team and communication during both the development and delivery phases.

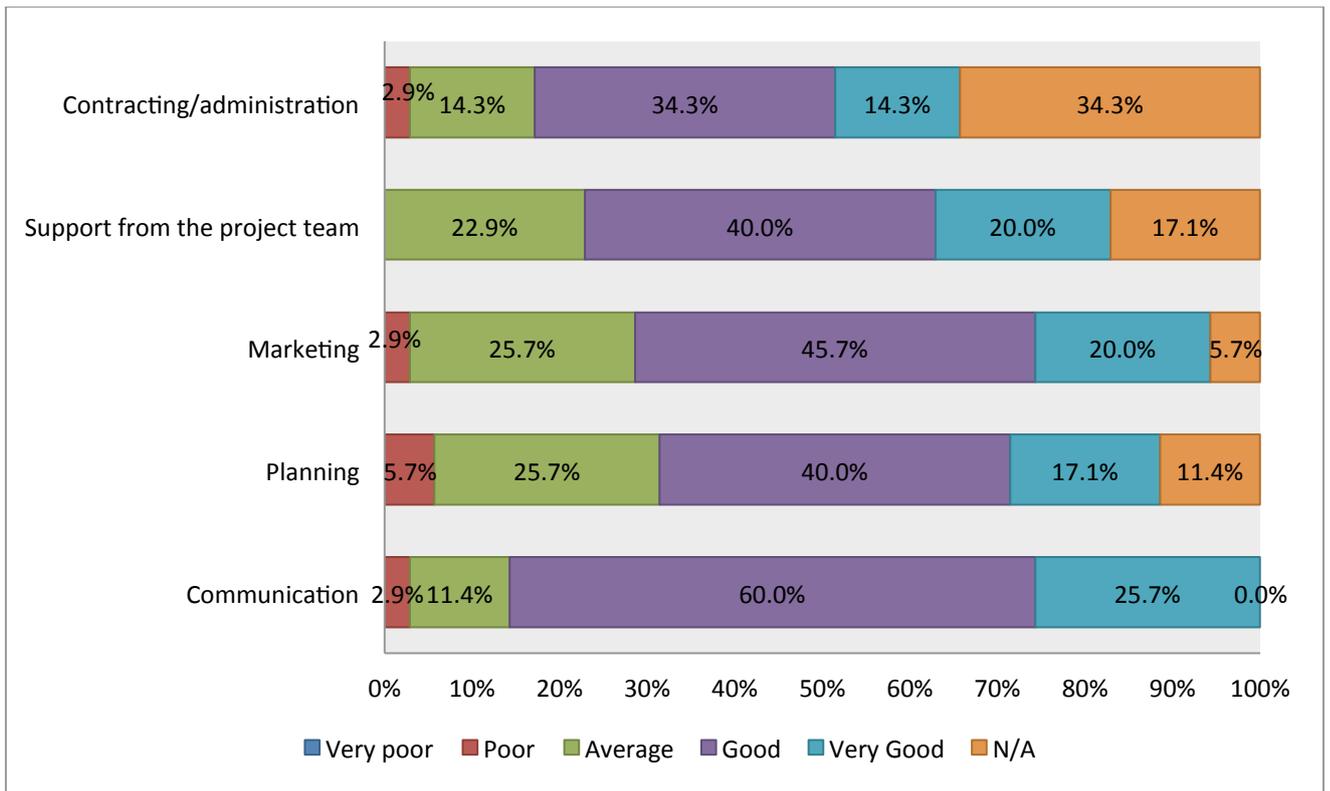


Figure 1 Experience of working with FotNE (pre-event)

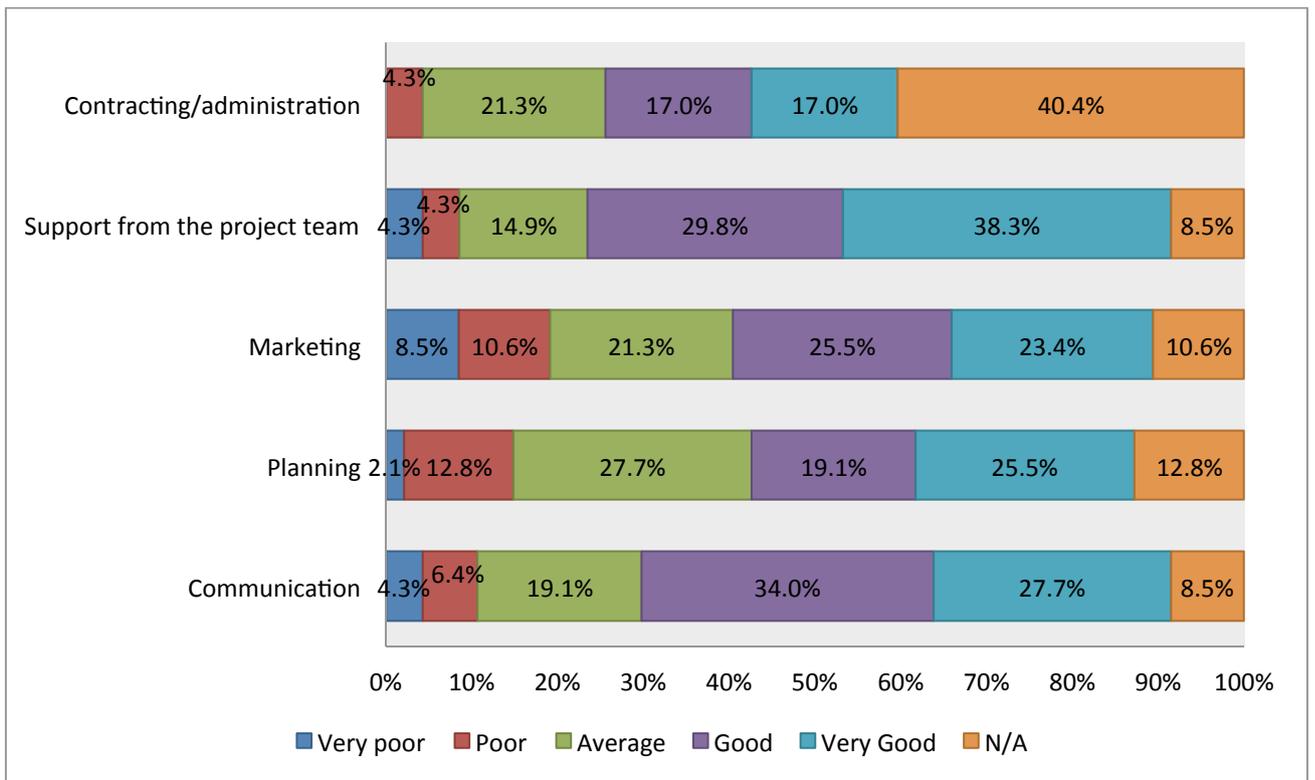


Figure 2 Experience of working with FotNE in development phase (post-event survey)

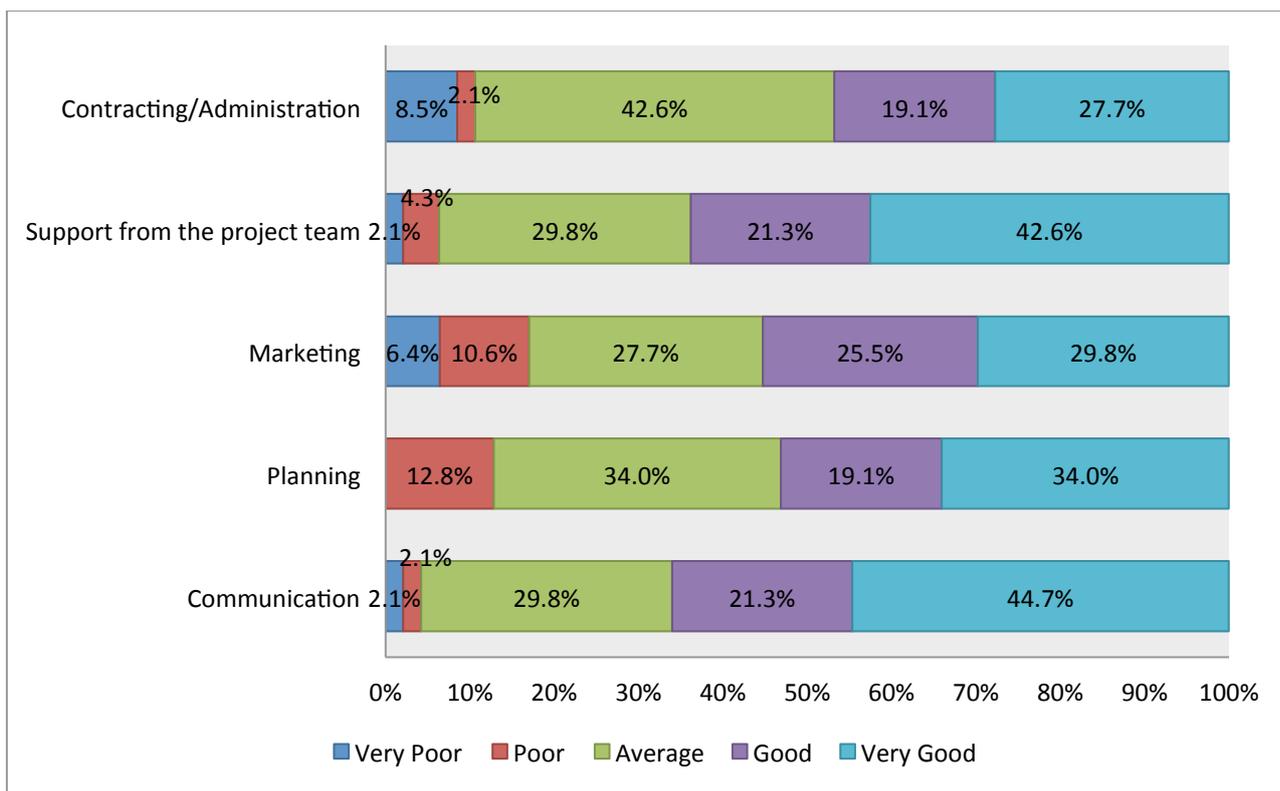


Figure 3 Experience of working with FotNE in delivery phase (post-event survey)

5.3 Who took part in FotNE

Key points

- *FotNE involved around 150 organisations of a wide range of specialisms and scale*
- *There was a good regional spread of events, with some parts taking particular advantage*
- *FotNE provided a rare opportunity for small and large organisations to be part of the same Festival, promoted alongside each other*
- *Local authorities engaged well on the whole, some significantly*

Due to the nature of the Festival it is easier to look at the people involved in creating and promoting the events and projects that made it up, rather than the audiences.

With such a wide range of types of organisation, with events in many different types of venues, including non-venue public spaces including open air ones, without centralised or co-ordinated ticketing, consistent data collection would have been extremely difficult and was not a priority. Although some individual projects collected audience data, it impossible to make accurate reports about numbers or demographics. Estimates suggest that the 165 events attracted approximately 134,000 people.

It is impossible to accurately identify the proportion of visitors from outside the North East, but the general consensus of those interviewed is that there was no significant evidence of out-of-region visits, with the main exception to this trend being *Foghorn Requiem*. Some people reported that their events or exhibitions had attracted new visitors to their venue,

with people travelling within the region, and this was particularly the case where non-traditional venues were used, for example the Mining Institute.

It was always the aspiration that FotNE would appeal to organisations of all sorts and scales. This was, to a very large extent, achieved. The organisations and people that developed projects for FotNE were a diverse range, from large cultural organisations such as Sage Gateshead and Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums to small heritage and cultural organisations and individual artists, via Universities and community groups.

Some projects enabled established arts organisations to work with community groups. The ‘Salamander’ project, for instance, gave Theatre Royal Newcastle the context to work with local schools and the Steel Sports and Social Club Dormanstown, as well as with the Infant Hercules Male Voice Choir and local musicians and writers.

The survey suggests a good mix of types of organisations, with around a third (32%) charities, 15% local authorities, and 25 selecting the ‘other’ category. (Figure 4)

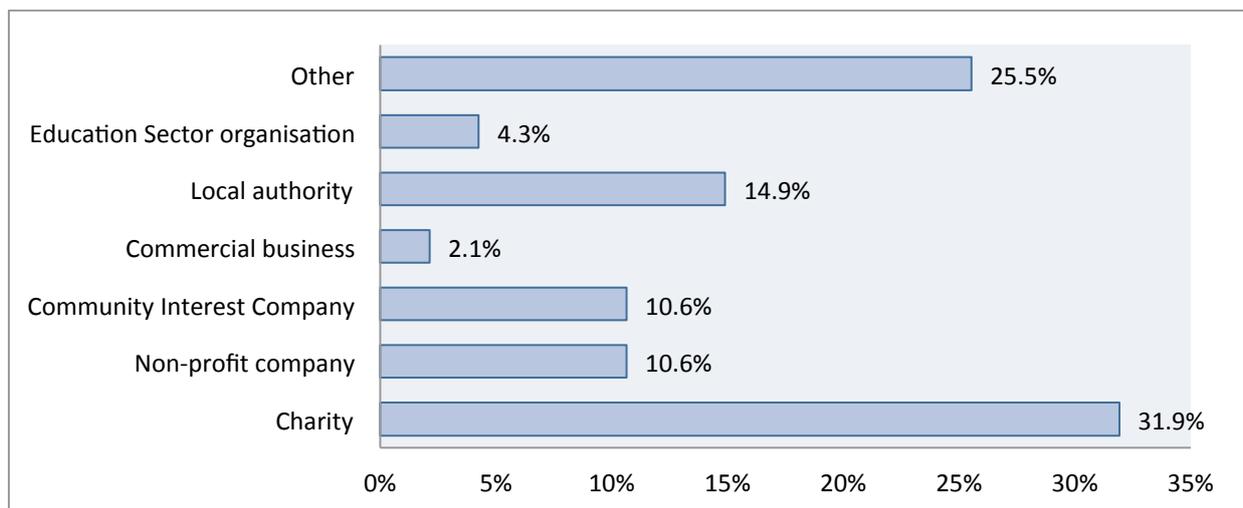


Figure 4 Organisational type

The spread of projects and events across the region was dependent upon a combination of organisations, venues or sites, plus local interest and capacity to respond to the festival, especially as represented by local authorities. (Some local authorities had other priorities; some engaged in a major fashion.)

Analysis of the events suggests a reasonable regional spread in number, with a concentration of events in Tyne & Wear, especially Newcastle, Gateshead and Sunderland. Some local authority areas, such as Northumberland, saw the festival as a clear opportunity to increase the number of events, and to follow up major programmes of events during the Cultural Olympiad and Olympic Torch Relays in 2012. Durham has relatively few events within the festival, with the particular circumstances of the Lindisfarne Gospels and a related programme taking place in July a key factor in this, rather than any lack of interest per se.

It should also be noted that Figure 5 illustrates the *number* of events, and not the *scale* of those events. A relatively high proportion of events in Newcastle and Gateshead were single performances, whilst a number of those in local authorities with relatively fewer events were major one-day festivals such as Riveting Stuff in Stockton, for instance or *Foghorn Requiem* in South Tyneside, perhaps the largest single event in the festival.

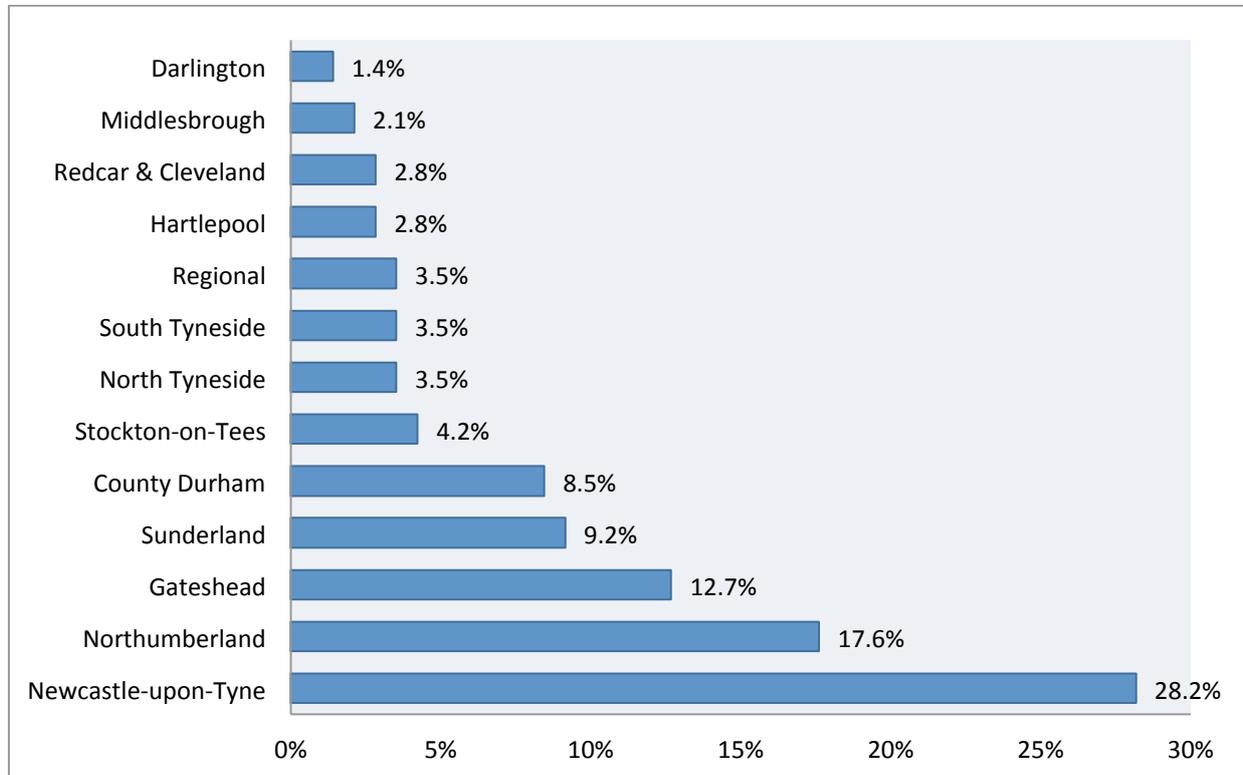


Figure 5 Geographical spread by local authority and % of number of events

FotNE was built, as an idea, around involvement of a wide range of people involved in and enjoying culture in the north East, and as described in the previous section, did reach most parts of the region and of the cultural sector.

Local authorities were all supportive of FotNE, although the extent of their involvement varied, depending on its fit with their strategic objectives, other calls on their time and resources, and the amount of independent cultural organisations in their area.

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, for instance, invested more than £100,000 plus in kind and staff support into Riveting Stuff, a major festival celebrating the Tees Valley’s heritage of engineering invention and expertise, also collaborating with other Tees Valley authorities on related exhibitions. This formed part of the authority’s strategic emphasis on festivals and events, complementing others such as SIRF, Stockton Weekender and a major cycling event, and aimed to attract positive regional and national media coverage for the town. South Tyneside Council saw the festival as an opportunity to bring to fruition, working with Grit and Pearl, an idea for the Souter Lighthouse that had been discussed for some years – *Foghorn Requiem*.

Some other authorities, however, were supportive of the Festival but more semi-detached from its development and delivery. Most authorities had promoted the Festival to organisations in their area.

Cultural organisations – from across the whole range of voluntary and professional arts, film, heritage and other specialisms – were at the heart of the festival, but often worked with non-arts groups or venues – from universities and libraries to social clubs and pubs. The subsidised arts and museum organisations that receive public funding on a regular basis via Arts Council England – known as ‘National Portfolio Organisations’ or ‘NPOs’ and ‘Major Partner Museums’ or ‘MPMs’ – made up a significant proportion of the programme, but very far from the majority. (Around 17% of projects were funded, according to the survey, from NPO funding.) Different views of this are discussed in Section 5.5 about programme below.

For many people, one of the strongest elements of the Festival programme was that it combined what might be called by some ‘the usual suspects’ – NPOs and MPMs, major heritage sites - with many others who are not regularly funded by Arts Council, or are run by smaller voluntary organisations. A good proportion of projects were supported by Grants for the arts and a strong argument can be made that FotNE was helpful to some organisations in attracting Arts Council and local authority investment. At the same time, local community and student groups were able to engage with the festival, whilst feeling part of something bigger and more significant than they would normally.

Several individual artists and people from small groups reported learning about FotNE from coverage in The Journal and from hearing Kathryn Tickell on the radio. There is some evidence to suggest that FotNE tapped into the networks in the cultural sector very effectively, and that word of mouth worked well to bring projects into the festival. (See Figure 6 for how people responding to the online survey had heard of FotNE.)

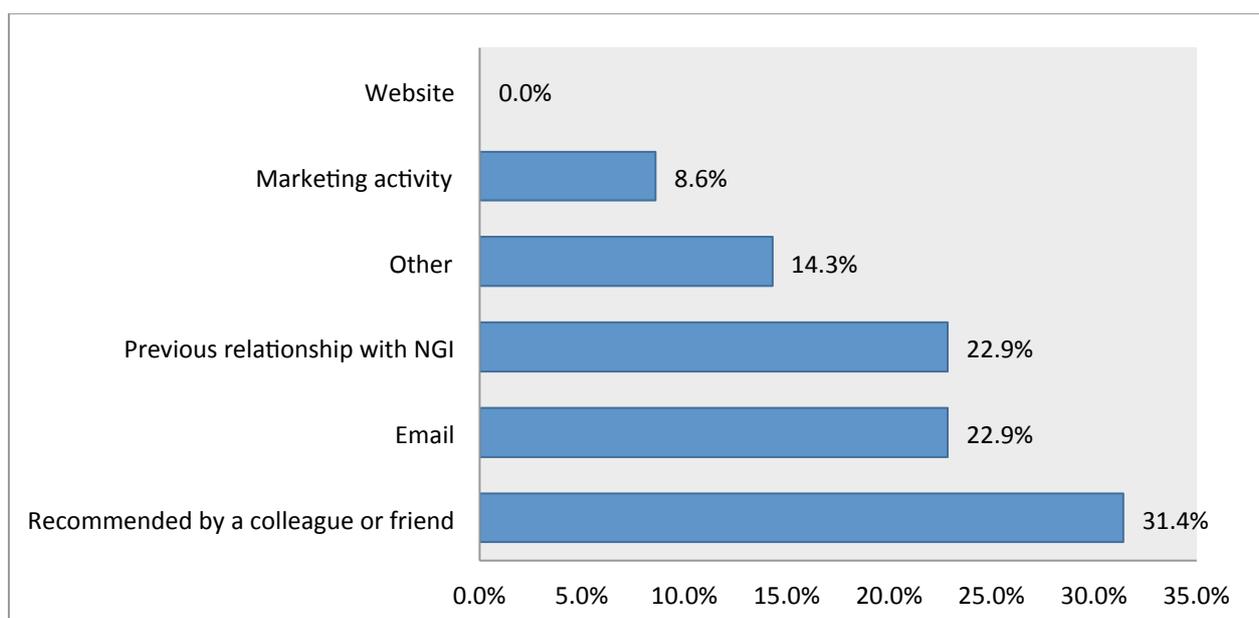


Figure 6 How people had heard about FotNE

5.4 Motivations for involvement and what people gained

Key points:

- Most people motivated to be part of a major regional festival to help promote North East England and increase their own profile and to support audience development
- Positive feedback on impact of FotNE creatively and within the cultural sector
- Good levels of contribution to people's aims and motivations, especially in relation to promoting the region and its innovation and creativity (eg 75% respondents rated contribution good or very good on celebrating region)
- Divergent views of contribution to audience and visitor development (eg 42% rated contribution good or very good on encouraging people to visit the North East, but 27% poor or very poor)

There is a great deal of consistency about why such a diverse range of people and organisation chose to get involved in FotNE. Whether it was a small artist-led group, a community heritage group, a pub welcoming a singing session, a local authority developing a project costing a six-figure sum, or an artist or producer spotting an opportunity to bring a long-dreamt of project to fruition, almost everyone was keen to be part of a major regional festival to help promote North East England and increase their own profile.

To a lesser degree people also hoped to benefit from marketing support, from that large festival, and to increase their connectivity to others. People tended to have audience development aspirations for their involvement in FotNE, either to engage new audiences or to attract visitors from outside the locality, although neither the Festival nor most projects had specific targeted strategies for audience development.

Figure 6 shows the responses from the online survey, which are consistent with the views expressed by interviewees. Figure 7 illustrates which specific areas of their work respondents wanted involvement with FotNE to enhance, and the strong interest in audience development is clear.

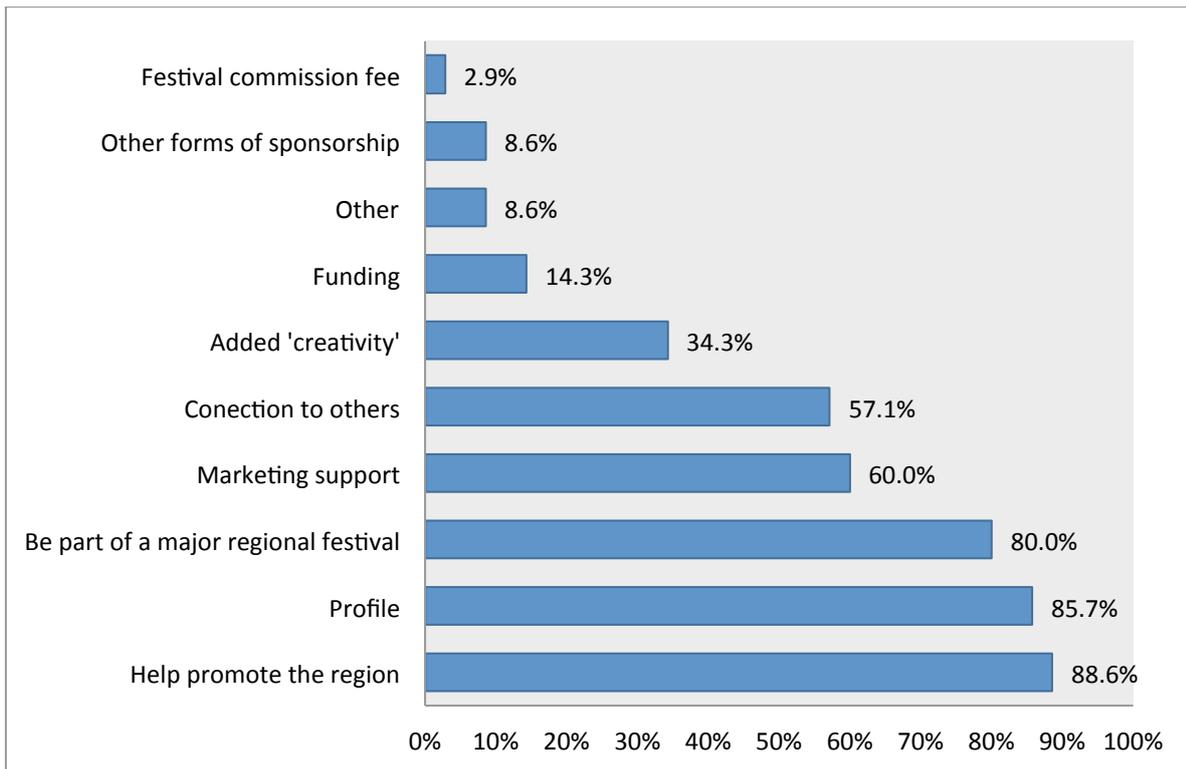


Figure 7 What people hoped to get out of working with FotNE

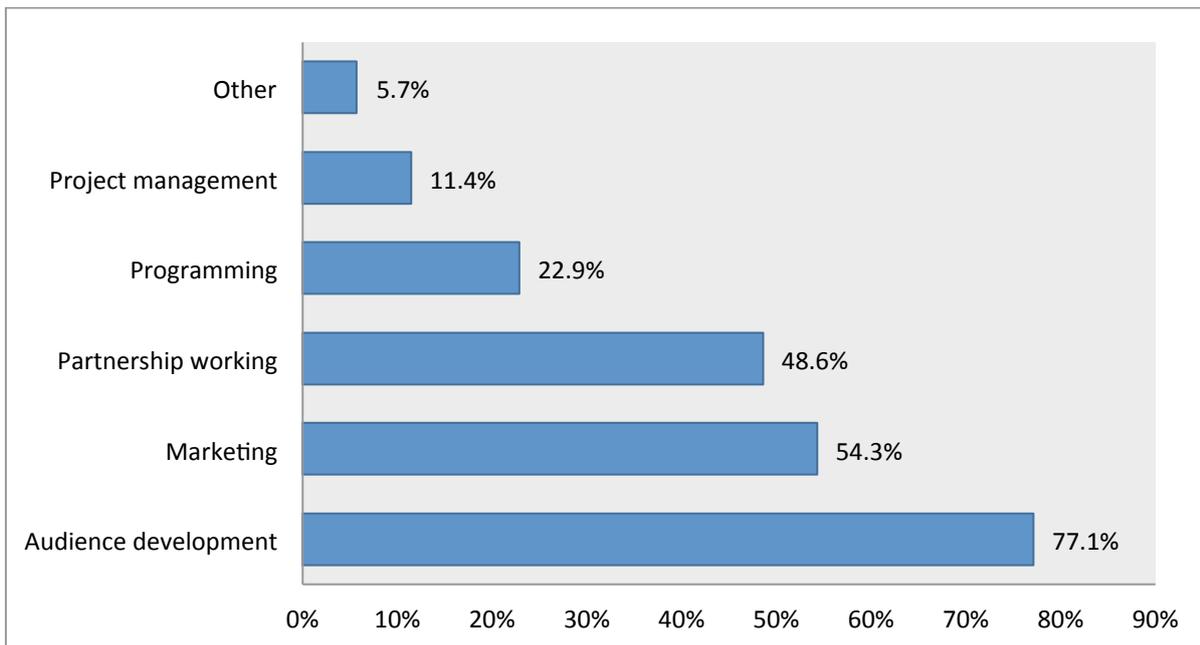


Figure 8 Areas of work people hoped would be enhanced by working with FotNE

Generally people felt that FotNE had helped to promote the region (66% of those who completed the survey saying it had contributed well or very well), but there was a consistent theme that it had done this primarily within the North East, and only to a lesser degree externally. There was recognition that reaching beyond the region may not have been an explicit aim, and that resources limited what was possible. 17% of survey respondents thought FotNE contributed to promoting the region poorly or very poorly. Some interviewees

commented that FotNE was a good illustration of the scale of challenge for the North East in achieving national media profile for its cultural activities. In the online survey, 72% of respondents felt it had contributed strongly or very strongly to being part of a major regional festival and 66% felt it had contributed strongly or well to their profile.

There was a strong consensus that FotNE had been extremely beneficial in bringing together potentially disparate elements of the cultural sector in the North East, at a time when the danger of them 'splitting' was great. (This danger was seen to stem from a number of factors – varying attitudes and choices from local authorities around reductions in funding for culture, the emergence of the 'LA7' group of local authorities in relation to the North East Local Economic Partnership (LEP), and the Tees Valley LEP working more separately, and general competition for available funds at a time of shrinking public sector funding.) The process of making FotNE, and in particular the large 'project partner' meetings were felt to have been helpful in this respect, especially by those without other obvious regional networking opportunities. Some people felt more of this would have led to even greater benefits, especially where connections to the NPOs, heritage and museums networks and local authorities could have been made.

FotNE worked for many as a way to explore, establish or stress North Eastern cultural identity. The tension between 'folky' and 'edgy' or 'cutting-edge' was troublesome for some, but helpfully unresolved for others. For many people consulted, the programme – and the ability of people in the region to pull it together – was a vindication of the idea that there is a North Eastern regional identity in addition to the various local identities people may feel, a common culture with roots in forms of expression, welcome for diverse strands of influence, concerns with industry and making, and creativity and innovation in many forms. Some projects suggested the importance of this historical and recent past of the region, but also the way in which the North East had influenced the world. There were, however, some people who suggested that local identities and reluctance to travel suggested the notion of a region was fraying, now that it had in many ways been dismantled as an administrative construct.

In general, FotNE was felt to have been a good context to explore regional identity, and to have created a very positive picture of the region's cultural sector at a time of pressure. Whilst some people felt there was an element of 'preaching to the choir' about this, and the most commonly expressed view was that there was little evidence of audiences moving around the region in the way many hoped, it was also suggested from some projects that being part of a bigger festival had been helpful in attracting new audiences and participants, and of participants feeling pride at being part of the larger festival line up. This was, in at least some cases, connected to a sense of regional pride, as well as the specific heritage or cultural value of their project.

In terms of audience development, the lack of pre-agreed target areas and the difficulty in collecting reliable and consistent data on audiences from so many project partners make it impossible to be definitive about the success or otherwise of FotNE. Based on people's knowledge and descriptions of their own events, there is limited evidence of impact on

audiences, and a widespread sense that 'North Eastern cultural types' would have been aware of the Festival, which had a high profile regionally, but non-attenders and those beyond the regions were largely ignorant of the festival. Some suggested that lack of branding at individual events also led to some people not being aware enough of actually being at a FotNE event when they were.

The ambition to highlight the whole region's cultural offer to the whole region, with audiences moving about the region more than usual was, it was generally felt, not realised to any great extent, perhaps because it was not realistic in the first place. The concentration of events in one month led to competition between festival events for audiences, and to events being readily available 'on the doorstep' meaning less incentive to travel except for the truly exceptional. One person commented: 'I think the festival condensed six months of culture, heritage and arts projects into one month which split established audiences and did not generate new audiences sufficiently.'

Figure 7 (below) illustrates the survey responses to how much involvement had contributed in relation to people's motivations. Figure 8 illustrates the contributions people felt it had made towards particular areas of their own work.

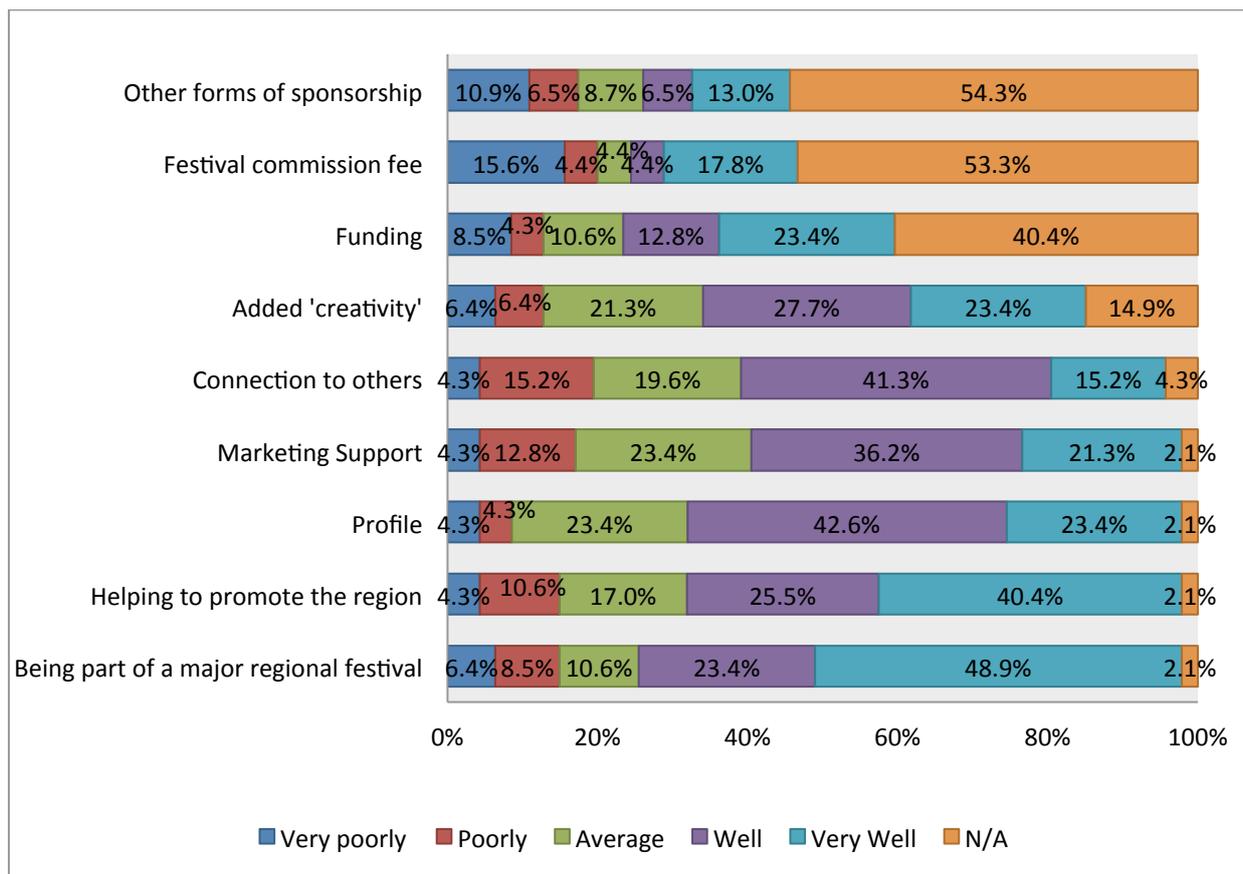


Figure 9 Extent to which involvement in FotNE contributed to motivations

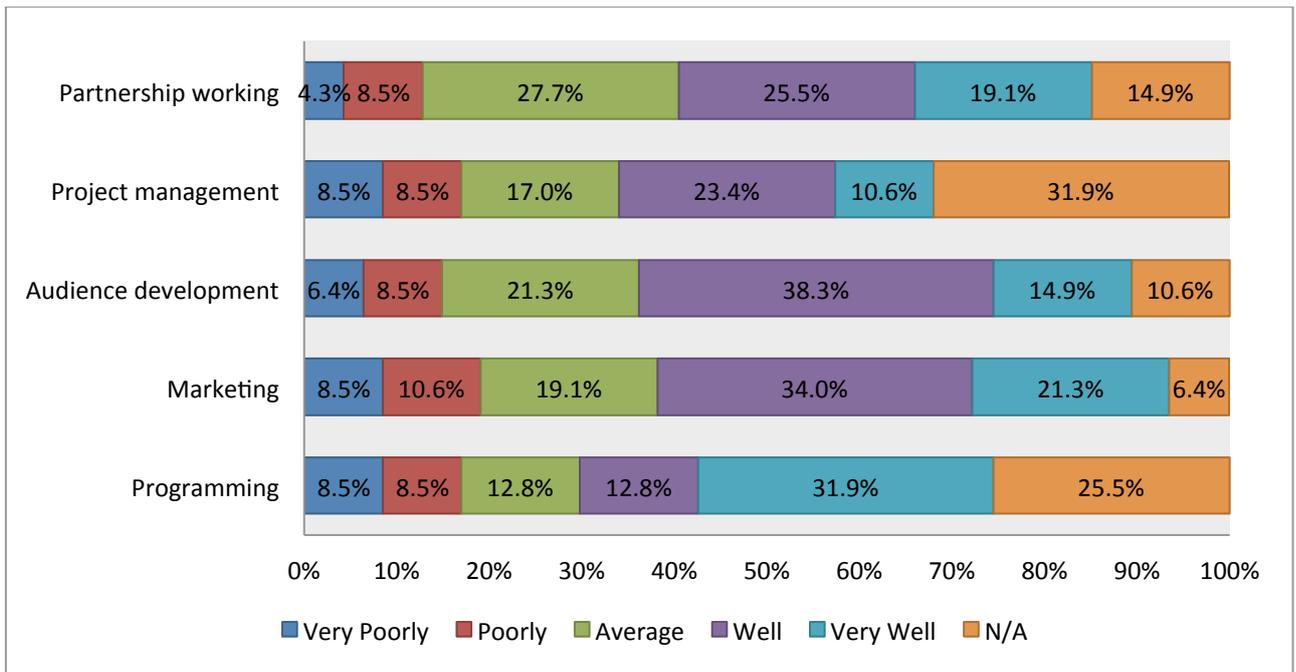


Figure 8 Extent to which involvement in FotNE contributed to areas of work

The ability of a festival to draw diverse people together was clearly demonstrated by FotNE. This worked best where there was either a clear mechanism or space for them to come together – eg in the planning meetings or local authority grouping, where there is a connector in the shape of a producer or director, as can be seen for instance in the PLACE commissions managed by Arc, and where time allows for the organic development of connections.

Figure 10 illustrates survey respondents’ rating of the impact of FotNE in key areas.

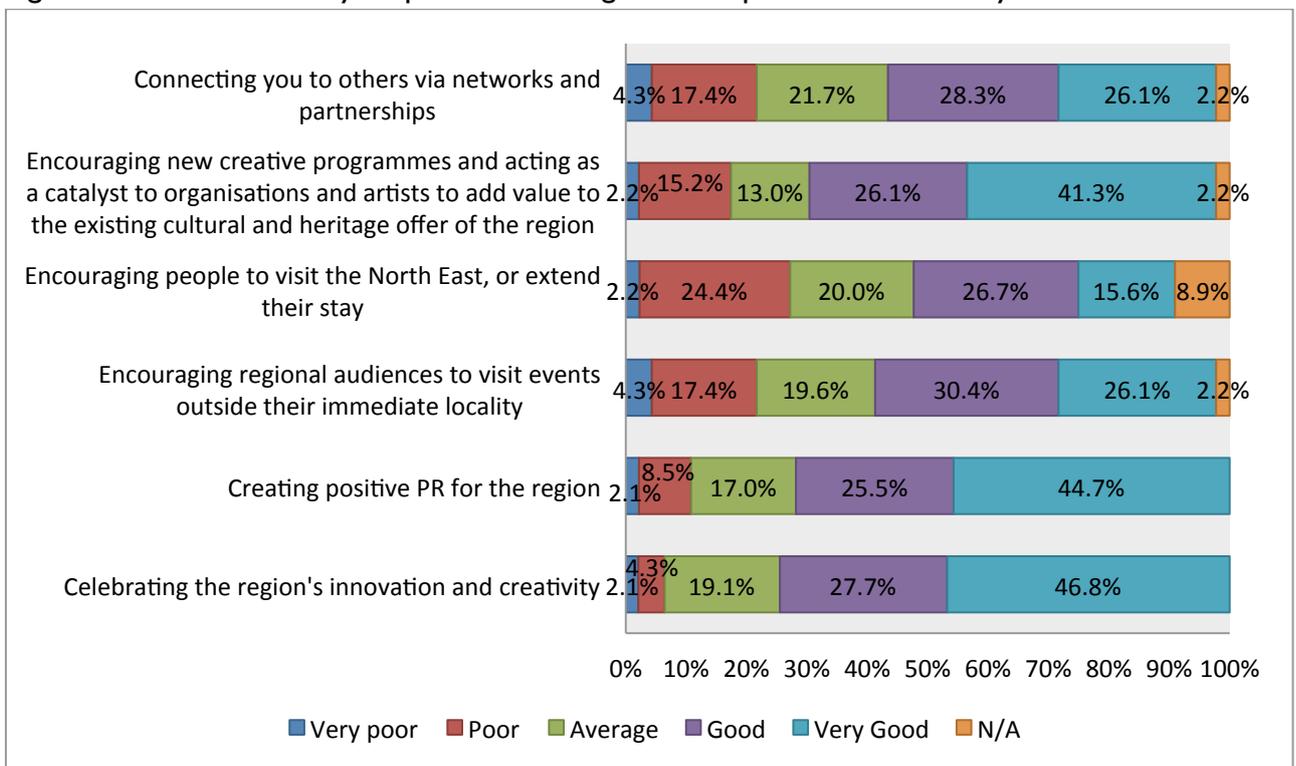


Figure 10 Rating of FotNE against key areas

5.5 Programming and direction

Key points

- Good artform and specialism spread was achieved, including significant heritage projects
- Excellent projects happened that would not otherwise have done – and FotNE catalysed new ideas and partnerships (eg 67% respondents rated contribution good or very good on encouraging new creative programmes)
- Short lead in time affected the way programme ideas developed, but did not stop creation of some large-scale ambitious projects and a massive, inclusive region-wide programme
- Programme may have lacked a clear ‘story’ and enough signature projects which clearly related to that to establish an identity beyond reflecting pride in North East culture

Figure 11 below illustrates the artform and specialism spread of projects (drawn from the website listing, each given a dominant definition). This is a good spread of artforms and heritage, although the low proportions of dance and film are notable. The high proportion of exhibitions is likely to be significant in terms of numbers of people reached as most of these ran for the whole month. It is noticeable that there is a relatively small proportion of digital projects in the festival, although some works such as *Barographic* combined technology and arts in imaginative ways, and few film-related projects and the two ‘100...’ projects were significant web-based projects.

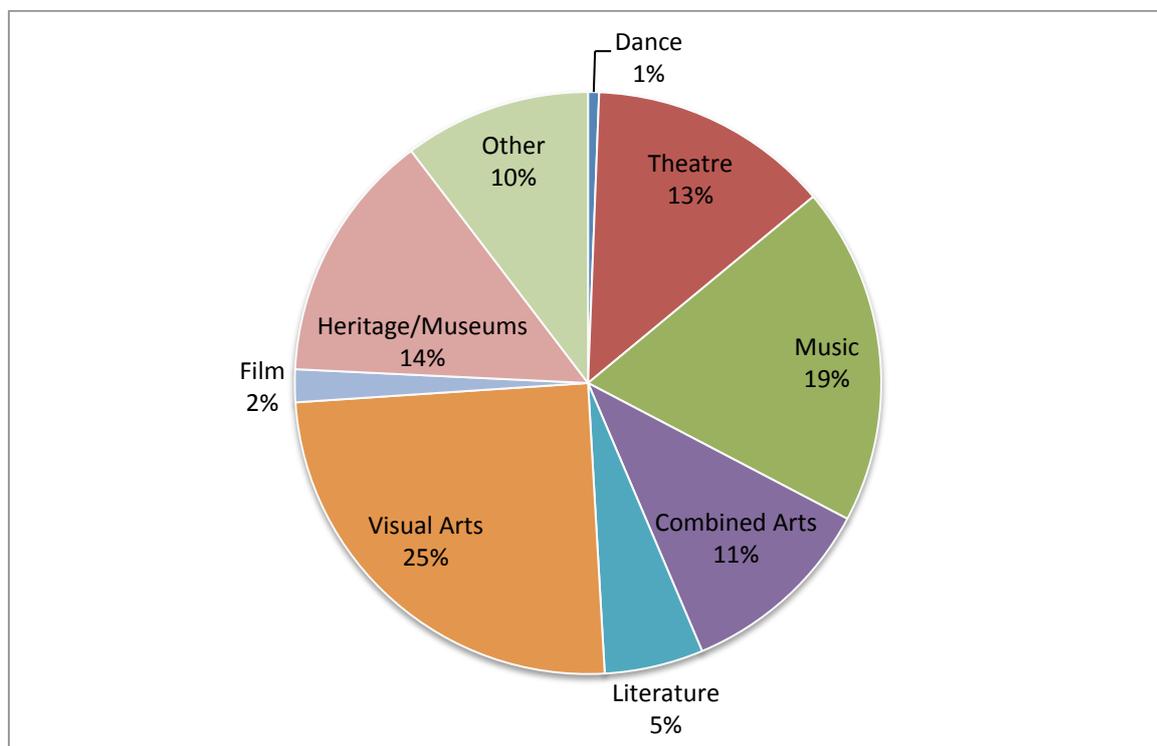


Figure 11 Breakdown of events by artform/specialism

Views of the programming of the festival were extremely divergent. What some saw as an essentially, and positively, open process, which gained from mixing scales without worrying overly about quality as an entry criteria for inclusion, giving kudos to all the projects, others

saw as too broad, with the potentially significant projects diminished by being amongst so many other ‘uncurated’ projects, leading to less media and public attention for both individual projects and the larger whole.

What was almost universally welcomed was a focus on projects for what they could bring to the overarching theme, and for their creative potential. As one interviewee commented, ‘It encouraged adventurous new work and prioritised artistic rather than commercial benefits, which was refreshing.’ This comment makes a virtue of the unforced interest in outside visitors. A number of people commented on the Festival Producer and Manager’s interest in supporting the development of ideas, not simply selecting projects, or shoehorning into a pre-dictated schedule.

The festival stimulated an aspiration in some people to try new projects with new partners, leading to new and reinforced partnerships. A number of examples could be cited where the Festival context for an event or project made it easier to bring in partners, sponsors as well as to attract Grants for the arts funding – such as *Guts* at the Mining Institute. (The encouragement of first time applicants to Grants for the arts was a beneficial side effect of FotNE.) Where these factors are not available in sufficient quantity or at the right time, connections become more random or more down to good fortune than planning.

It was very clear from analysis of the programme and from the interviewees conducted that FotNE had acted as a catalyst for many projects, with many people commenting to the effect that ‘if it had not been for the Festival our event would not have happened.’ This was often not simply about funding, or the occasion the festival had lent to an idea, but came from creative conversations with the team and the creative challenge of responding to the theme. This applied across all areas and scales of project.

The ‘History of the North East in 100 Objects’ and ‘History of the North East in 100 Places’ were creative responses to the theme and to the opportunity/challenge to ensure the heritage sector was well reflected in the programme, leading to engagement by the North East Historic Environment Forum as well as the museums sector. Similarly, Stevie Ronnie, originator of the *Dear Angel* participatory project described developing an idea to do with letters home to recast and rethink it in the light of the festival, utilising the Angel of the North as a symbol of the region, and reimagining letters in all their current possible forms.

Another individual artist identified the catalytic nature and immediate impact of being part of FotNE: ‘My piece was developed specifically for the festival and it would not have been realised or funded without the festival’s support. It has raised the profile of both me and my work and significantly advanced my career as an artist.’

That even most parts of the festival with investment from FotNE had begun in response to the call for proposals was generally welcomed, rather than being from a more directorially-based commissioning or curating process, although a minority of people felt the call should have been more selective rather than open.

The key dilemma for the festival team was commonly understood as centring on Curation v Openness, and there are very divergent views about whether the attempted blending of the two should be replicated in the future. There were also different views of the role of established organisations, especially Arts Council's NPOs and MPMs.

Whilst some of them felt they were too busy 'with the day job' to get heavily involved, for others FotNE was an opportunity to showcase themselves in a slightly different way. Some smaller organisations felt the bigger ones had greater profile within the festival. Conversely, some people felt it was a shame that more NPOs had not become involved in the festival and would like to see them taking more of a lead in project development, perhaps taking the opportunity to nurture newer artists in the manner of Arc's PLACE commissions.

On balance, the openness appears to have influenced FotNE positively, in terms of reaching the parts the regional initiatives may not, and reflecting the diversity of cultural interests and regional identity. This creative balance allowed projects of all scale to enjoy what was described as 'a sense of being part of a wider ambition'.

Some people felt the festival lacked, with the exception of *Foghorn Requiem*, the kind of break out, high profile project that could draw national attention and showcase the region externally as engaged in culture of the very highest quality and innovation. Although there were a number of obviously very high quality projects, some people felt these ran the risk of 'getting lost' in a large number of relatively unremarkable, if solid, events. Examination of the programme suggests a number of potentially exceptional projects, but no overarching 'festival story' about now in which to place them.

Some people expressed a view that the picture of the region drawn by the festival was overly backwards looking – to the region's industrial heyday – rather than forward looking, although there were projects which looked to new artists, and to regional themes such as renewable energy. The opportunity to explicitly connect to other regional campaigns, such as the NE.volution campaign for greater regional powers, or the emerging ANEC NE Cultural Partnership, was noted by a number of people. It was also suggested by some people that the festival programme as a whole seemed a little insular and inward looking, and that future festivals ought to look to how the North East is connected to the rest of the world.

One thing most people agreed shaped the festival was the short timescales for planning. From first Steering Group meeting to Festival in less than 2 years is a short period for such a major regional undertaking. More crucially still, the time from feedback on proposals to the festival was less than a year for most people. The general consensus was that given this fact, the programme was a very good mix, and had a number of real high points in it

The short timescale did however present specific challenges for programme development. Especially for the largest projects such as *Riveting Stuff* and *Foghorn Requiem*, this inevitably meant that certain elements of the potential projects had to be sacrificed or compromised, as both practical and strategic partnerships for such major projects take a long time to develop.

(Arguably such projects may not have happened if they had not already been in gestation for some time before the Festival called for proposals.)

To some people the festival programming felt rushed, with a lot of events appearing to be what people were doing anyway as opposed to being new, innovative, creative in true keeping with the theme. The programme suggests an element of ‘badging’, which was helpful in providing regional coverage and enabling people a sense of involvement despite other priorities or lack of resources. As the leader of one of those projects commented ‘It made potentially small projects seem bigger and part of something more important, involving the community in feeling proud to belong.’

5.6 Funding

Key points

- Sponsorship raised £45,000, indicating good support from business
- Project partners contributed significant amounts of funding and in kind support – potentially around more than £4M in total
- Significant investment through Grants for the arts and local authorities

The core budget for co-ordination and promotion of FotNE was £270,000, which was supported by investment from Arts Council and sponsors. This was spent on the core staff team, marketing and promotion and investment into 15 projects felt to be key to the overall programme structure. Individual projects then raised and spent their own funding for their own projects. Unfortunately FotNE/NGI did not collect data on the budgets of each project, which would have been useful for benchmarking the scale. There are, however, some observations that can be made about funding, which suggest that partners’ investment in the entire Festival programme in total can be estimated to have totalled something in the order of £4 Million, plus around £1 Million worth of in kind support.

This is an estimate based on information provided by respondents to the online survey and information provided to the FotNE team. A figure of around £1.35 M investment was provided by 22 projects. Given there were 165 projects applying a multiple of 3, to allow for larger projects being more likely to report, is arguably conservative. Analysis based on averaging responses across small, medium and large exhibitions and performances and calculating on the basis of the number of each suggests a similar figure of £4M. In kind support of £158,000 was indicated by 23 projects, but this is more likely to be more consistent across the 165 projects, hence the estimate of around £1M in kind support.

Whilst impressive these figures should, however, be treated with some caution as an estimate only, and therefore subject to error in either direction. They do however strongly suggest that the Festival became of a major scale as a result of its approach of involving a diversity of scale and types of partner whilst devolving financial responsibility for projects.

Perhaps the first, most significant and unarguable observation to be made is that the Festival was made with huge commitment from the participating projects: it was the sum of its parts. The ‘in kind’ support for festival projects was particularly significant. It also attracted significant investment from Arts Council, local authorities and sponsors. Those responding to the survey – which might be up to a third of projects, potentially less – indicated an ‘in kind’ contribution of £357,233. This suggests the ‘in kind’ support could easily be estimated at around £1,000,000.

55% of respondents to the survey indicated that their project had been supported by Arts Council England’s Grants for the arts programme. Arts Council estimate around £445,256 was invested into individual projects within FotNE, in addition to the £225,000 invested into the core festival budget. A number of other applications were unsuccessful, leading to projects not happening. Given that Grants for the arts is an open application programme, and highly competitive, this is a significant sum. It also demonstrates good co-ordination between Arts Council and the FotNE team, and was useful in attracting artists and first time applicants.

An identical number of respondents indicated their project had benefited from local authority funding, although it is not clear whether this is as part of an annual programme, or specifically for the FotNE project. It is clear that some local authorities invested significantly into projects, either of their own creation or in partnership with other organisations.

Attracting three major sponsors for a one-off or inaugural festival is a good achievement, and suggests good support from business and HE to the idea of a regional festival. Indications from project partners are that there was significant other, more local, sponsorship from business.

17% of respondents indicated their projects included funding from Arts Council NPO funding, suggesting a reasonable take up of the festival by NPOs, but also potential for growth.

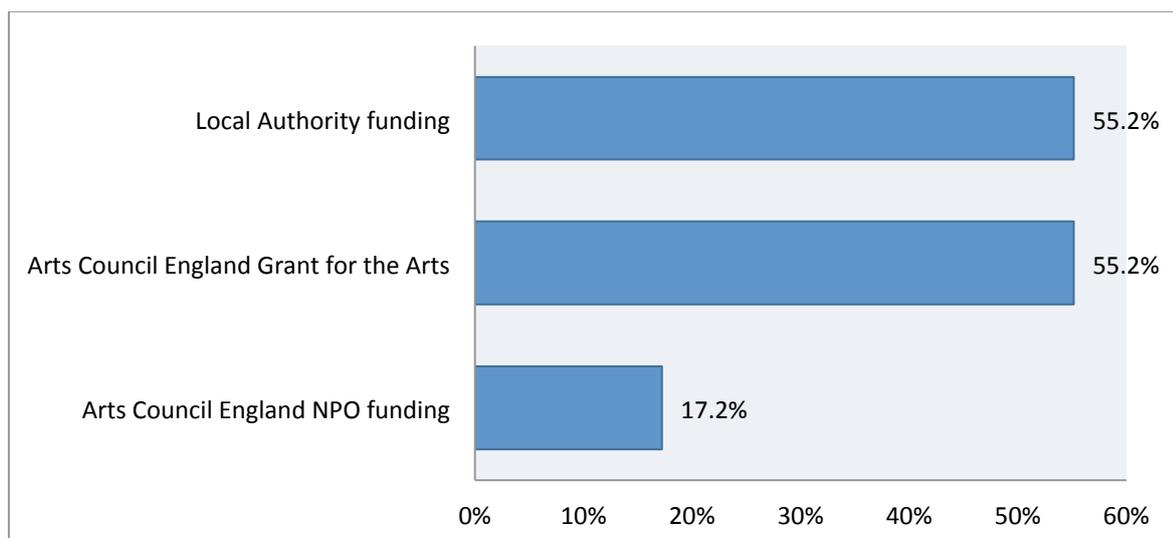


Figure 12 % of projects receiving funding from ACE/Local Authorities

5.7 Marketing and promotion

Key points

- Excellent profile within the North East, but scale and nature of programme made it difficult to extend beyond
- Short lead in time, scale of programme, relatively small budget and lack of clear audience targets made it more difficult for marketing to meet all desires
- Support for partners good but expectations could have been clearer
- Significant AVE, especially in region, minimum £769, 705

FotNE attempted to market and promote a month-long festival, containing 165 events, across the whole of a region of 3,317 square miles, featuring heritage, historic sites, family events and walks alongside almost every artform you can name, plus websites, to people in the North East and beyond. This was a hugely ambitious thing to do, especially on a budget of around £54,000 including design and web costs.

FotNE commissioned marketing agency Hundredth Monkey to oversee marketing and PR. The basic marketing strategy was to draw people in using social media and a single piece of print in the shape of the Festival newspaper and direct them to the www.festivalne.com website for more detailed information and films which would illustrate the programme. A toolkit was created for partners to use in their own marketing efforts, with 394 downloaded.

200,000 newspaper-style brochures were printed by NCJ media and 135,000 of those were distributed through copies of The Journal, Evening Chronicle and Evening Gazette on Wednesday 24th April. 60,000 were distributed via partners and stakeholders and to outlets via a distribution company. 5,000 were left over at the end of the festival.

The Festival website received 41,054 visits from 29,575 unique visitors, with average length of visit a respectable 2 minutes and 29 seconds. (By way of comparison, average stay on any web page is estimated around 43 seconds.)

Weekly e-newsletters were distributed to over 1,000 subscribers over ten weeks and were also shared across the Festival's Twitter and Facebook account. The @FestivalNE Twitter account built to over 4300 followers. The Festival Facebook page currently has 1234 'likes' and our weekly reach has increased by 20% since May and 67% since February. Instagram proved to be the least 'engaging' of the three social media channels, in total, 113 people posted their festival pictures using #festne

Northern Stars were engaged to produce a series of 'teaser' films in the run up to the festival to be used on the website and across social media sites as well as being shared with partners to use. The first film was also shown at the Culture Awards. The first of these had 2214 hits on YouTube, although subsequent films had considerably less, indicating the success of the launch events. The Legacy film is awaiting its debut.

One of the most visible aspects of the marketing of FotNE was the festival bus, sponsored by Go North East, unveiled on the launch day and used to take media on a region-wide tour. The bus was in service on various routes and was used as a venue for the *It's Playtime* project.



Figure 13 The Festival Bus

Regional press and media coverage was strong, with especially good coverage from titles within Festival supporters ncjMedia, The Journal, Chronicle and Journal Culture magazine. Beyond the region there was less coverage, with *Foghorn Requiem* the notable exception, gaining national coverage across print, radio and web from sources as diverse as The Wire and Yachting World. (Figure 14 below illustrates the dominance of regional coverage.)

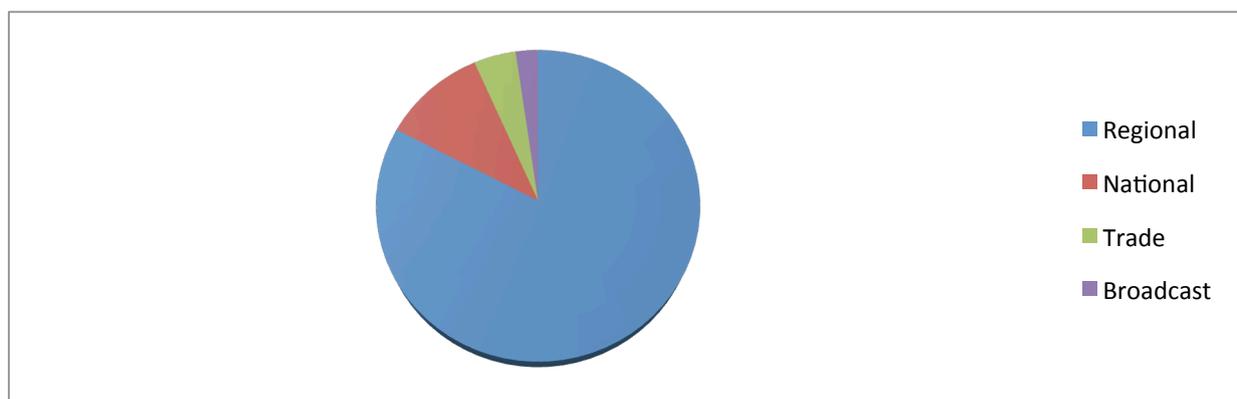


Figure 14 Media coverage by type

425 press and media stories have been tracked for individual events or the festival as a whole. Estimating their value is notoriously difficult. The value of the coverage gained was a minimum of £769,705, although common ways of estimating Advertising Value Equivalent (AVE) would multiply this figure by 2 or 3 to reflect that it was editorial coverage, and almost universally positive, suggesting an AVE of between £769,705 and £2.3 Million could be claimed.

People's views on the marketing and promotion in many ways reflected views of the Festival. People were hugely appreciative of the efforts of a small team working with a relatively small

budget on such a large programme. Although many people felt the print brochure lacked punch and a clear 'story', the feel was generally appreciated, and the difficulty of providing information on so many events was widely understood. Stronger 'themes' within the overall theme may have helped, and certain events could have been more strongly promoted. The openness of the programme meant that some did not regard the branding as a 'quality mark'.

People's views of the efficacy of the marketing in relation to their projects varied depending on their expectations and understanding of what the central team could do. Some felt they had anticipated more direct support, and had therefore fallen short, in the end, on their own marketing, leading to smaller audiences. Others planned to do more themselves. This suggests the importance of absolute clarity of what the Festival team can realistically offer in terms of marketing, and what is expected of projects.

The short lead-in time to the festival impacted on marketing and promotion. It takes time to build a brand for a festival – more than one iteration usually – and the profile in the North East was high, within the cultural sector. The bus was felt to have been a very good initiative in building awareness, and people spoke very positively of it as a great metaphor for the festival, moving around the region. (Although inevitably, there was some feeling that it had been less visible outside of Tyneside.) Greater branding actually at events, such as banners or pop-up stands, would, some felt, have assisted with brand building.

The late launch of the programme also meant that early engagement with national journalists was difficult. *Foghorn Requiem* did receive a huge amount of national and international attention, but because this was – quite healthily in other respects – being led by South Tyneside Council the Festival message became secondary and somewhat diluted. Whilst Kathryn Tickell and Paul Smith were very helpful as Artistic Advisors from a regional media perspective, that Antony Gormley and Lee Hall were not as visible as originally intended made national profile for the 'festival story' more difficult.

The lack of identified focus for the Festival in terms of message and audiences made the marketing task more challenging. A clearer focus on either promoting the region's culture or attracting audiences would have allowed both core team and project partners to make more strategic choices and connections. Some people commented upon a lack of connection to the place marketing efforts of, for instance, local authorities, although a lack of capacity regionally for this kind of promotion was also noted. It was suggested that involving tourism or place marketing expertise in the Steering group of any future similar event would be helpful.

The social media aspect of the marketing and promotion was widely felt to be very good, especially from Twitter-users. People appreciated the promotion the core team was able to give their events, and twitter became integral to projects such as Dear Angel. However, this success was also seen as adding to what one person called the 'echo chamber' effect of the cultural sector talking to itself. It is noticeable that the #FestNE hashtag appears to have been used more by project partners and promoters than by attending members of the public.

6. Conclusions and recommendations for the future

It is not the purpose of this report to decide whether FotNE should be repeated, that is for the Steering Group and other regional bodies to decide in the light of this report and the future opportunities in the region. This section will, however, make some concluding observations and recommendations.

6.1 Conclusions

1. The scale of FotNE, especially given the tight funding environment and the short lead in time, and people's responses to the experience of putting it on show there is **an appetite for regional activity that brings together the cultural sector together** to promote itself with a higher profile than individual 'ongoing' activity can. This appetite is partly creative – about the kinds of work that can be done right across the cultural sector given time, opportunity and context – and partly developmental in terms of audiences and reach, with a commonly expressed desire to engage people in the North East not currently engaged, and those beyond who might come and visit, with the attendant economic and other benefits. The potential to bring in other regional players – from ANEC to tourism and business networks – and to work productively with regional agendas and strategies was commonly identified, though this should not compromise the cultural activity. The extent of in kind or hidden contribution from project partners, especially those heavily involved in planning and project management, was considerable, and should not be under-estimated in considering similar events in the future.

2. The breadth and depth of the FotNE programme, the quality of many of its events, and the way in which the full range of the cultural sector responded suggests **the theme of the North East as a place of creativity and innovation is a potentially rich one**. It would benefit, however, from greater elucidation, and a greater emphasis on drawing out the current and future narratives from that broad theme. It is also important that the celebration of regional culture and identity does not become an insular, self-referential activity, but that the region demonstrates its outward-looking and international aspects also.

3. Developing FotNE at a time of economic hardship and hard political choices has been a positive experience for those parts of the cultural sector that became involved, making things happen that would otherwise have not, or in different ways. **It gave an important context for ambitious projects, stimulating artists and councils alike to progress ideas that would otherwise have remained in the notebook.**

4. The creative tension between 'openness' and 'curation' in the programme was the subject of much debate, with divergent views on how successfully it was held. On the whole the benefits of involving a diversity of people appear to have outweighed the consequent challenges in terms of distinct messages to audiences, difficulties in marketing such diversity, and perceived lack of visibility for individual projects. **The whole was more than the sum of its parts, but subtly different from what some originally envisaged.**

The message perhaps became one of regional identity and inclusion in creativity and innovation rather than selected projects and international quality. This is a choice to be made each time a festival is made. It is important, however, that inclusiveness extends to 'those we don't already know', and whilst there are excellent signs of this happening, analysis of the programme suggests some artistic, cultural and ethnic communities could be involved more.

5. The funding of the festival, although significant in quantum, was stretched in relation to the original ambitions for programme and profile.

It was dependent to a large degree on Arts Council England, for core and programme, which is unlikely to be a reliably sustainable position. The short lead in times made attracting other funders difficult, although sponsorship was extremely successful given this was the first time. The funding available for the core was lower than hoped, which impacted on the scale of team as well as programme and marketing budgets. Given these restrictions, the Festival is a significant achievement for the Steering group, team and partners.

6. Whilst the events themselves generally had good attendances, FotNE did not have a significant impact of audiences in terms of increasing audiences, bringing in new attenders or encouraging movement around the region. This may have been because of density of programme, tight marketing budgets, lack of audience focus or a combination, but it is clear that **audience development requires a specific focus for thinking, planning and investment of resources.**

7. Most people felt a repeat of the festival would be welcome, but that if FotNE was to happen again it should not be annually and should reflect certain criteria.

The Gospels had given this Festival a specific occasion, even if it had not then becoming a defining principle of programme design, beyond timing. Ensuring the Festival retained the specialness of 'an occasion' is important to people, which a bi- or tri-ennial approach might facilitate. (Although even longer gaps of 5 or 10 years were also suggested, on a 'Festival of Britain'-style basis, the downside of this being the need to reinvent team/infrastructure each time.)

The scale of programme should, most people felt, be smaller and more manageable, either through more curated programme or somehow 'narrowing the gate' of the open call for projects, but this would impact on the ability to involve so many people.

Figure 15 illustrates the survey responses to whether FotNE should be repeated in some form, showing 42% of respondents though yes, every two years. It should be noted, though, that the interview responses tended to put more conditions upon repeating the festival, emphasising the need for quality control, adequate lead in time, clear decisions around focus in terms of audiences and regional/national and resourcing which matched ambition.

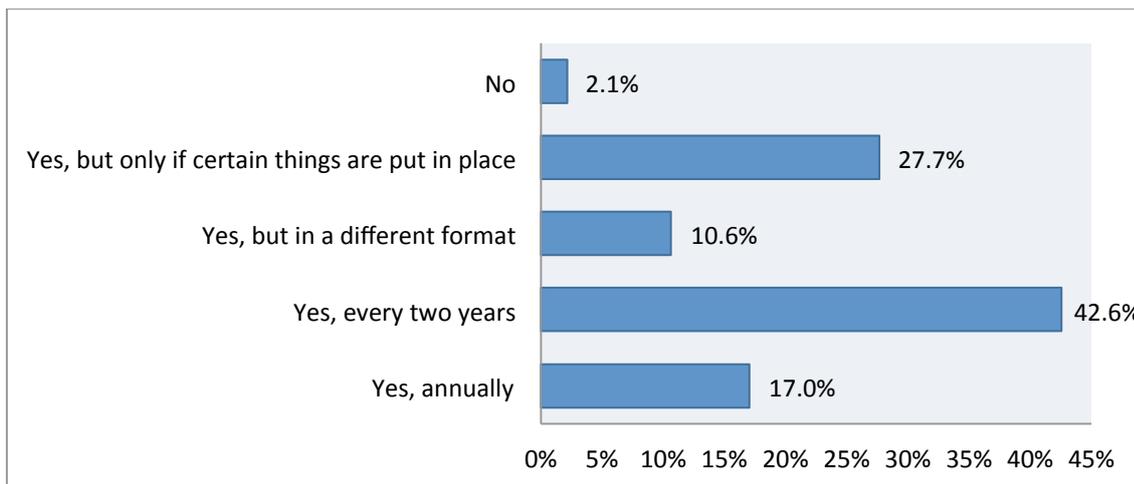


Figure 15 Do you think FotNE should be repeated in some form?

6.2 Recommendations

1. The Steering Group should share this report or a summary with the North East Cultural Partnership and others, and share consideration of whether to begin discussions with potential partners about another Festival of the North East, in particular Arts Council England in relation to Cultural Destination funds or other sources of core and project funding, and potential headline sponsors. This should be done as soon as possible to give as long a lead in time as possible for any potential future festival.

2. Any future festival should seek to involve regional tourism and inward investment bodies in its governance, planning and promotion

3. The Steering Group should take immediate steps to protect and preserve for potential future use the brand of 'Festival of the North East' and any associated domain names, databases and other archives and assets

4. If a decision is taken to do another Festival, or other should consider a similar festival, it should be on the basis of happening every 2 or 3 years rather than annually, to give adequate time for developing realistic resources and plans for delivery. A delivery framework, governance and Festival Director should ideally be in place at least 2 years before the Festival occurs, and notice given to regional organisations, artists and potential partners at least 2 years before.

5. If a decision is taken to do another Festival, it should reflect the following principles:

- It should embrace the full range of culture and innovation in the North East – ie arts, heritage, museums but also engineering and science where these are experienced in creative ways
- It should adopt clear focuses for its audience engagement and marketing targets
- The programme should combine a small number of 'signature' flagship projects co-commissioned or developed by the Festival and promoted by them alongside a more open programme largely developed and promoted by partners

- Involvement should be promoted to NPOs, MPMs and the like, but also to community and voluntary organisations and to individuals with great ideas
- It should involve Local Authorities as key partners but not be led by them
- It should connect to regional/national events or anniversaries, but not to be led by them
- The festival should ensure its depiction of regional identity is international and outward-looking and look to involve diverse communities and children and young people
- The lead in time for development should be adequate for the scale of ambition
- If an ambitious festival cannot be realistically resourced and planned far enough in advance it should not happen at such a scale

7. Thanks and acknowledgements

Many thanks to all the people consulted during this evaluation process, but especially to Mo Lovatt and Amanda Airey within the FotNE team for their support, and to Ian Thomas at NGI for assistance with the online survey.

Written by Mark Robinson, Thinking Practice
August 2013

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Appendix 1: List of consultees interviewed or met

Jeanie Adams, Hundredth Monkey
Richard Barber, South Tyneside Council
Chris Batstone, Arts Council England
Jill Bennison, producer
Paul Burns, Tees Music Alliance
Peter Dillon, writer
Dora Frankel, Dora Frankel Dance
Michael Gandam, Arcus Animations
Bill Griffiths, Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums
Richard Hollingshead, Grit and Pearl
Scott James Illingsworth, producer
Justin Keeper, Mushroom Works
Reuben Kench, Stockton Borough Council
Fiona Macpherson, Northumbria University
Ed Milner, Sage Gateshead
Emma Ogle, Sage Gateshead
Suzy O' Hara, producer
Stevie Ronnie, writer
Andrew Rothwell, Newcastle City Council
Teresa Threadgall Theatre Royal, Newcastle
Annabel Turpin, Arc
Nigel Walsh, Northumberland County Council

Group evaluation sessions were also held with:
Local Authority Liaison Group
Steering Group

Appendix 2: Members of Steering Group

Keith Bartlett & Nick Malyan, Lindisfarne Gospels
Chris Batstone, Arts Council England
Carol Bell, NewcastleGateshead Initiative
Bill Griffiths, Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums
Ros Rigby, Sage Gateshead
Anthony Sargent, Chair
Kathryn Tickell, Artistic Advisor
Dawn Williams & Leila D'Aronville, Bridge North East

Appendix 3: Local Authority Liaison Group

Richard Barber, South Tyneside Council
Anne Besford, Middlesbrough Council

Steve Bishop, North Tyneside Council
Mike Crawshaw, Darlington Borough Council
Karolynne Hart, Gateshead Council
Joanne Hodgson, Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
Stephen Howell, Durham County Council
Reuben Kench, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
Trina Murphy, Sunderland City Council
Andrew Rothwell, Newcastle City Council
Nigel Walsh, Northumberland County Council
David Worthington, Hartlepool Borough Council

Appendix 3: Festival Team

Amanda Airey, Production Administrator
Jill Bennison, Project Manager
Jonathan Best, Producer
Sheila Chapman, Sponsorship
Laura Cresser, Festival Administrator
Mo Lovatt, Festival Manager
Suzy O'Hara, Project Manager

Appendix 4: Festival Partners, Supporters and Funders

Partners

Alan Reed Art, Alex Swift, Amble Town Team c/o Amble Development Trust, Amber Films, ARC Stockton Arts Centre, Anthony Lo Guidace, Arcus Studios, Arts Centre Washington, Arts Council England, ASSIGN, Backscratch Theatre, BalletLORENT, BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Beamish – The Living Museum of the North, Bellingham All Acoustic, Berwick Visual Arts, Blyth Renewables Festival, Bowes Museum, Bridge North East, Bridie Jackson & The Arbour, Carriages Tearoom, City Library & Arts Centre Sunderland, Crisis Skylight Newcastle, Dance City, Dansformation, Darlington Borough Council, Dawn Felicia Knox, Dawn Williams, Discovery Museum, Dora Frankel Dance, Drama in the Dale, Durham County Council, East Durham Artist Network (EDAN), Emily Allen, English Heritage Belsay Hall, Castle and Gardens, English Heritage, Friends of Blackhill and Consett Park, Friends of the Red Kites (in the North-East), Gateshead Council, GIFT, Great North Festival, Grit & Pearl, GNT Media, Hartlepool Borough Council, Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership, Hatton Gallery, Helen Larmouth, Hexham Arts Forum, Hexham Book Festival, ICMuS Summer Music Festival, ISIS ARTS, Jack Drum Arts, Jenny Lawson, Kate Craddock, Kids for Kids UK, Kieran Hurley, Kirkleatham Museum, Laing Art Gallery, Leila D'Aronville, Lindisfarne, Lindisfarne Priory (English Heritage), Live Theatre, Locomotion – The National Railway Museum at Shildon, Looka Teesside, Middlesbrough Council, mima (Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art), Modular, Monster Ceilidh Band, Morpeth Antiquarian Society, Monkwearmouth Station Museum, Mushroom Works, National Centre for Literary Arts,

National Glass Centre Sunderland, National Trust, Network Artists Limited, New Writing North, Newcastle Centre for Literary Arts, Newcastle City Council, Newcastle City Library Service, Newcastle Gateshead Initiative, Newcastle University, Newcastle upon Tyne Bach Choir, North East Historic Environment Forum, North of England Civic Trust, North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers, North Tyneside Art Studio, North Tyneside Council, Northern Architecture, Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art, Northern Print, Northern Spirit, Northern Stage, Northumberland County Council, Northumbria University, Opera X, Oscar Mike, Ouseburn Trust, People's Theatre, Rachel Powell Ltd, Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council, Richard Grainger, Roots and Wings, The Sage Gateshead, Seven Stories, Shipley Art Gallery, Side Cinema and Gallery, Society of Antiquaries, Souter Lighthouse & The Leas, South Tyneside Council, Spindleston, St Gabriel's Church Heaton, St Mary's Church Holy Island (with the Holy Island Partnership), St Mary's Church Ponteland, St Nicholas Cathedral, Stevie Ronnie, Streetwise Opera, Switchback, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, Sunderland City Council, Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens, Tees Music Alliance, Teesdale Action Partnership, The Cyrenians (Arts & Media Programme), The Great Debate, The Larks, The North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers, The Sage Gateshead, The Unthanks, Theatre Royal Newcastle, Tyne & Wear Archives and Museums, Tyne Theatre and Opera House Preservation Trust, Tyneidols, Tyneside Cinema, Unfolding Theatre, Vince Taylor, Visual Artists in Rural Communities, Washington F Pit, Woodhorn Museum, Words across Northumberland, Vamos!, Visit Kielder, World Monuments Fund Britain.

Principal Funder

Arts Council England

Lead Supporter

GO North East

Festival Supporters

Association of North East Councils

ncjMedia

Teesside University

