



Making Change
National Conference Evaluation
November 2023

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Making Change

11-13 October 2023

Introduction

From 11-13 October 2023, The Culture, Health & Wellbeing Alliance (CHWA) held its third national conference (2019 Derby, 2021 Online). The event was designed to be a provocation, celebration and conversation centred on all elements of creative health; what changes are needed in the sector, where our energy is best placed, and how to create meaningful, sustainable change under existing limitations whilst also keeping ourselves healthy and well. The conference consisted of 4 panels and a choice of over 40 breakout workshops (if attending in person) over three days. Considerable attention was given to programme a diverse a mixture of breakout subjects, styles and art forms, as well as reimagining preconceived conference ideas by building panels of people at different stages, scales, and working with varied demographics and processes.

CHWA recognises the importance and rich cultural offer of often overlooked regional towns like Barnsley, and it felt important to nurture existing partnerships and showcase the fantastic offer by hosting the conference here and bringing people to the town. CHWA partnered with and was supported by a variety of local cultural organisations, including our two host venues, Barnsley Civic and Parkway Cinema, Barnsley Museums, Barnsley Library, Cooper Art Gallery, Digital Media Centre, Creative Recovery, Horizon College, and is grateful to Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council and South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority for supporting several bursaries for attendance. In addition, CHWA engaged with a variety of local independent suppliers, such as The Yorkshire Food Company, Pilot Theatre and Blackford Sports to further support businesses in the region.

The following evaluation documents an overview of the event and the planning process, alongside thoughts, feedback and learning from CHWA Staff, volunteers, and attendees. It also includes reports from specialist evaluators in a variety of areas. CHWA's mission was to create an event that echoed its core values of collaboration, caring, inclusivity and commitment to positive social change. Through our working group, we built the event alongside consultants, artists and those working in the cultural sector. Disability advocacy organisation Cloverleaf and its' members also provided additional access support and consultancy. We hope this culture of care is reflected in this evaluation.

Evaluation: How We Approached It



Something we often hear from colleagues working in the sector, and have felt ourselves, is that mindful and intentional evaluation can sometimes suffer as a result of a lack of time or resources.

As part of Making Change, we wanted evaluation to feel embedded, relevant and a meaningful tool by which we could move forward beyond the event. Our National Coordinator and Executive Director had a series of open discussions, where they both challenged notions and reasons for evaluation, and realised some changes needed to be made to the existing approach.

Our new [Creative Health Quality Framework](#) is a tangible representation of the values that we want to use to underpin the work and approach of everything we do at CHWA. They provide a strong foundation for decision making and help keep us open to questioning our own views and practice. We want them to be a consistent, key tool in measuring the success across different elements and areas of the work, so we devised a new evaluation form that reflected both this and built on our work around Theory of Change. We also recruited a group of in person evaluators, with specialisms in various areas that we knew needed attention, whose reports are included here. Two of these evaluators also provided consultancy around access, inclusion, and diversity in the planning stages of the event.

Our main question when gathering feedback on the conference was:

“How has this event changed or informed your practice?”

When discussing this, we realised that, if we wanted to get a true picture of change, that immediate feedback wasn't going to be the best method. However, we needed to balance this with the want to capture thoughts and energy whilst it was fresh in peoples' minds. We decided to add a legacy element to the evaluation process, where we will pay 6-8 practitioners to have in depth follow up conversations with CHWA three months after the event.

We also understand that evaluation forms have limitations, particularly around access or those who are less comfortable with writing, so with support of our working group, we devised additional creative ways to give feedback, with particular attention to accessibility and variety of formats. This included:

- A QR/Texting feedback option
- Audio and video feedback
- Visual displays/upvoting
- Ballot Boxes
- Staff support to give feedback if needed

The Quality Framework and its' principles reflect the best practice standards that CHWA wishes to uphold in all their work. By evaluating the conference (and other future work) against this framework, we hope that there will be greater cohesion and consistency of standards across the different strands of CHWAs work, and that feedback becomes a useful driver for change.

The People: A Snapshot

As part of the creative health sector, CHWA are too aware that numbers and figures rarely capture the richness, dynamism, and energy of such an event, but we have put together a snapshot of attendance to give you a brief idea of impact.

217 people attended Making Change in Barnsley

97 people attended the event digitally

92 individuals shared their work or practice at the conference through panels, breakouts and performances, and several more had their work featured in our pre-pack, digitally and on film. This included young people, emerging artists and a number of marginalised groups.

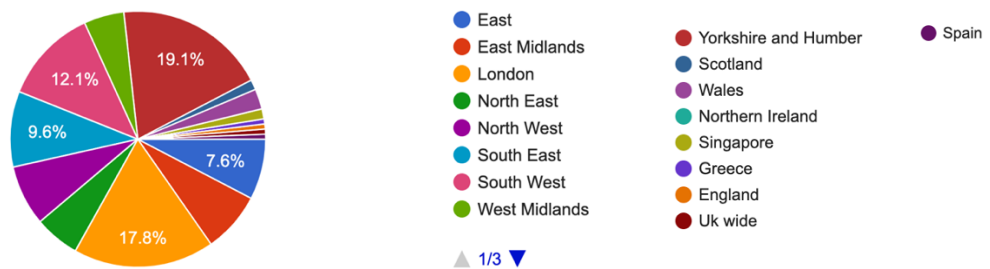
157 people filled in CHWA's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Form

Demographics

Location

Where are you based?

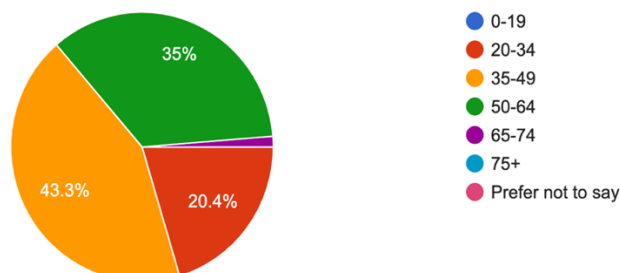
157 responses



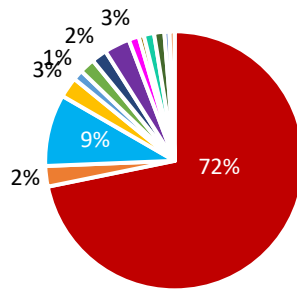
Age

Please select your age bracket

157 responses



Heritage
156 Responses



- White British
- Any other White background
- Any other ethnic background
- Black or Black British: African
- White Welsh
- White European
- Black or Black British: Caribbean
- White Irish
- Asian or Asian British: Pakistani
- Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background
- Asian or Asian British: Indian
- White Scottish
- Asian or Asian British: Chinese
- Mixed: White and Asian

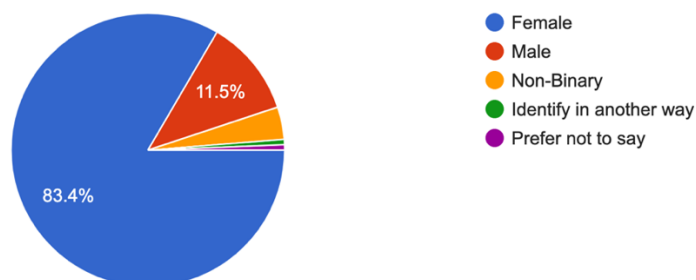
People were also given the option to self-describe ethnicity/heritage. Further descriptions are below:

Category Chosen	Further Description	No. of People
White British	British/Irish mix	2
White British	White Canadian	1
White British	Jewish heritage on one side	1
Any other ethnic background	East European Jewish	1
Any other white background	Mixed White European (Jewish)	1
Mixed: White and Asian	Half Malaysian Half Czech	1
Asian or Asian British	Chinese Singaporean	1
Black or Black British	Afro-Caribbean	1

Gender

Please choose the gender you most identify with:

157 responses



Accessibility

Creating an event that felt inclusive and accessible by design was a priority for CHWA. We worked with Cloverleaf Advocacy and our working group as consultants on accessibility, and encouraged attendees to share their individual needs with us ahead of the event. CHWA contracted My Clear Text to offer live captioning, and pre-booked a team of BSL interpreters (this was later cancelled due to not being needed). There was also a dedicated [access page](#) on our website. Other considerations were:

- Quiet and Safe Spaces
- Reserved Seating
- Visual Story
- Videos, maps and access guides
- Option for carers and those with dependants to discuss specific needs
- Free companion tickets
- Tiered level pricing and bursary options
- Pictures of spaces and staff, highlighting particular skills such as MHFA

24% of conference attendees identified as **D/deaf, disabled** or having a long-term health condition, and **15%** identified as **neurodivergent**.

50% identified as being a carer, with 34% of those caring for children. CHWA received **35 official access requests** and **24 allergies/intolerances**.

Common themes among access request were:



“The accessibility and accommodations throughout the entire festival were exemplary. Well thought-out and suitably signposted. Having live captions was good, as that is something that can benefit everyone.”

“Excellent information sent in advance, particularly for those with access needs. Having a quiet space, MHFA on site and the option to leave as and when needed was much appreciated.”

“I have also been raving about the thought and care put towards accessibility. It is rare to see in my experience and I know that many people greatly appreciated it.”

“Congratulations and well done for setting such a great accessibility benchmark. As a wife, mum and sister within a very neurodiverse family, I am so happy to see the visual story you have created. If only everywhere did this!”

“Thank you so much for the captions. I don't sign at all so would not have been able to access the conference without it. It's not something many organisations consider but it's really appreciated.”

Reflection

This information highlights that our average demographic at this event was a non disabled white British female, ages 35-49, who is neurotypical and could have caring responsibilities.

Whilst this is somewhere reflective of the sector, CHWA did note that the average age is lower than the average age of respondents of our recent UK Creative Health Survey. This could be a reflection of CHWAs active decision to advertise an open call for contributors to the conference in the hope to actively support more emerging practitioners, who are often younger.

Whilst the diversity of heritage is much higher than previously, it is still not a diverse audience. This was also raised as a point by some attendees. CHWA wants to help change this, also acknowledging the realities of where creative health is currently and what can be achieved. CHWA will look to offer further targeted callouts in future, focussing eligibility on specific demographics. It will also try to further link up with parts of the sector that are global majority/disability led, and further promote opportunities within these communities.

We recognise that creating a truly accessible event takes a considerable amount of time, energy and budget which should be properly factored in to running events; we also know the attention to accessibility is not always the norm currently. We will be publishing a separate resource on the cost of accessibility, providing guidance to other organisations looking to create accessible events, and reiterating the importance and resources involved to those funding activity. We received a wealth of praise for accessibility, and also some suggestions for improvement.

Financial Summary

Ticket Sales

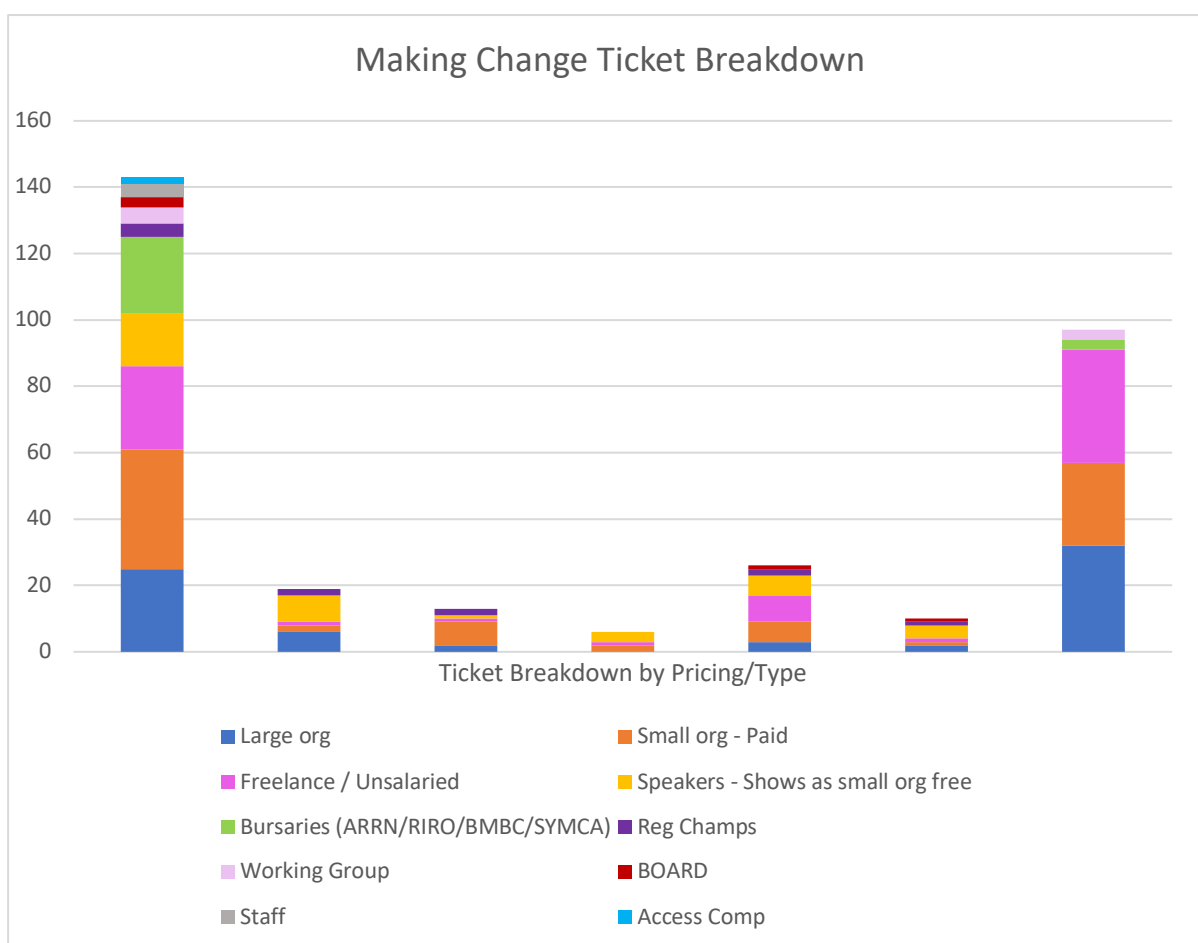
Table 1 shows the ticket price points and target sales. Ticket prices were tiered to make them more accessible, with larger organisations supplementing the cheaper tickets. There were also a handful of requests from those wishing to attend but who had financial barriers to access, who were encouraged to book whichever ticket felt viable for them. Table 2 is a summary of actual ticket sales by attendance type.

Table 1

		Price points			Number of tickets			
Type of Ticket		Large org (100%)	Small org (60%)	Freelance (40%)	Large org	Small org	Freelance	Bursaries / free tickets
In person	Full Conference	275	165	110	20	14	10	99
In person	Two Day (Wed/Thurs)	245	147	98	10	10	10	0
In person	Two Day (Thurs/ Fri)	225	135	90	10	10	10	0
In person	One Day (Wednesday incl evening meal)	100	60	40	5	5	5	0
In person	One Day (Thurs)	150	90	60	10	15	15	0
In person	One Day (Fri)	75	45	30	5	5	5	0
Digital	4 panels	75	45	30	30	20	30	30

Type of ticket		Large org	Small org	Freelance	Bursaries / Free Tickets	Total
In person	Full Conference	25	36	25	60	146
In person	Two Day conference (Wed/Thurs)	6	2	1	10	19
In person	Two Day conference (Thurs/ Fri)	2	6	1	4	13
In person	One Day conference (Wednesday incl evening meal)	0	2	1	3	6
In person	One Day conference (Thurs)	3	6	8	6	23
In person	One Day conference (Fri)	2	1	1	6	10
Digital	4 panels	32	25	34	6	97

Below is a further breakdown by ticket price/type.



CHWA exceeded their sales goals on in person Full Conference and Digital Tickets, and didn't meet sales goals on other ticket types.

Overall, the **Full Conference** ticket option was the most popular.

For full conference attendance, the **small organisation** ticket option was most popular.

One Day tickets were most popular on the **Thursday** (the busiest day in the conference programming)

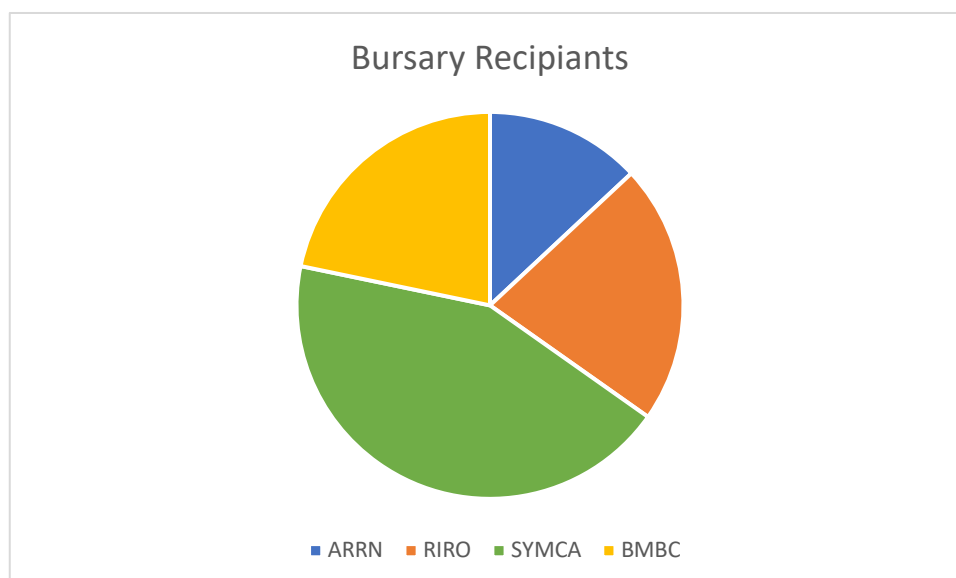
The most popular ticket option amongst **freelancers or unsalaried attendees** was **One Day (Thurs)** or **digital** attendance.

Least popular ticket options were the **one-day Wednesday** and **Friday** tickets.

Bursaries / Free Tickets

One free ticket was issued to each person contributing to the conference in any way. In addition, free tickets were given to staff, evaluators, regional champions, board members and working group members.

With generous support from South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority, Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, Reaching Out Reaching In and the Artists Represent Recovery Network, CHWA was able to offer **23 bursaries to emerging artists**, many of whom were also from marginalised groups.



Income Vs. Expenditure

After EventBrite fees of £2076.73, the total net income from ticket sales was **£21,036.71**.

An additional **£5700** came through in bursary funding, making the total income **£26,736.71**

The original budgeted income for the event was **£32,290.45**. This included a ticket sale target of **£27415.45**. Ticket income was **£6378** under target.

Ticket income was made up of **£16962.19** in person ticket sales, and **£4074.52** digital ticket sales.

This

Total expenditure for the event is still being calculated, but is approx **£33,896**. Some of these costs were covered from CHWA's core budget.

Biggest areas of spending were **venue** and **food costs, speaker fees, accommodation** and **live streaming**. This was in line with what CHWA expected.

Overspend occurred **speaker fees** and **accommodation**. This was mainly due to the programme and number of contributors being bigger than initially intended, and the negotiation of fees for some invited speakers.

Planning and Operational Summary

Programming

The programme was a mixture of panels and breakout sessions curated through an open call out process, professional recommendations and invitations. Preference was given to applications that came with a provocation/activity/question that would help other attendees explore their own practice, rather than simply sharing their own processes or findings. All open call artists were offered a free ticket and a stipend of £150.

The open call naturally attracted a younger, more emerging cohort of practitioners. This meant that some needed a little more handholding in pre-conference liaison, but it was important to CHWA that these voices were given a platform.

Panel titles were all given an arboreal theme; a result of many discussions around connectedness, slow growth, reflection and sowing seeds of change. The key goal was that the conference didn't exist in a vacuum, and that it felt like an impetus to spark further action. This was resoundingly achieved and can be noted in the survey responses below.

Response to the programme was very positive overall, however some people did feedback that they would have liked more unstructured time to network, or that the programme felt very full at points. Others would have liked to have seen more colleagues from healthcare, more young people and more diversity of heritage and dis-ability.

Breakout Activities

Conference attendees had a choice of 41 breakout activities across the three days. These were a mixture of practical workshops, seminars and conversations.

Some notable positive sessions from feedback were the panels 'From the Roots Up: Where Systems Create Values and Structures' and 'Not a Single Tree but an Ecosystem' and Breakouts 'How to Use the Quality Framework,' 'How to Create a Trauma Informed Organisation' and 'Build Your Own Creative Health Toolkit' with NCCH. The Pop-Up Philosophy Café and Strategic Approach to Creativity and Wellbeing Week were also popular.

Pastoral Care / Environment

CHWA was conscious to make the whole event calm, comfortable and enjoyable. Conversations were ongoing with the working group, colleagues and board members from the start of the planning process around creating a space where people could 'come as they are,' and minimising stress and anxiety. Considerations included:

- A Wednesday afternoon 'soft start' and Friday lunchtime finish to avoid overwhelm/exhaustion and provide options for cheaper travel
- Pre-conference activities specifically designed to ease travel anxiety
- A quiet room and prayer room available at all times
- Regular comfort breaks and down time in between activities

- Avoiding over programming and offering the chance to switch to digital attendance if needed, plus the option of joining some panels digitally to work around other commitments.
- A relaxed panel space where people were encouraged to come and go as they needed to
- Language Guidance
- Emphasis on taking care of ourselves reiterated during the event
- An inclusion and access officer on hand to help facilitate any issues that arose if needed
- Mental Health First Aiders on site

We received great feedback around organisation, staffing and pastoral care. In particular, attendees really appreciated a visual cue of staff in branded t-shirts and clear signage, as well as walking buses to other venues. Having staff stationed at various key points around the town, such as the train station, during arrival was also a big hit.

'I want to thank the conference organisers for curating a fantastic conference, with such wide-ranging programming and inspiring/thought-provoking speakers. They held the space with such care and thoughtfulness. I felt I was always in very safe hands. A big thank you.'

'Felt very well cared for during the conference. Lots of volunteers around who had obviously had training and knew what the conference was about and where things were.'

'Well organised and I appreciate all the thought and care into making it accessible, particularly the visual stories. Great venues and easy to get around.'

'Overall, great organisation and a really welcome feel - as someone who came alone for professional development - not attached to organisation.'

"This is so fab!!!! Congratulations and well done for setting such a great accessibility benchmark. As a wife, mum and sister within a very neurodiverse family, I am so happy to see the visual story you have created. If only everywhere did this!"

"I want to feedback to you how exceptional I thought the planning of the event was. The attention to detail was fantastic, and as a speaker, ensured I felt not only informed but comfortable about the arrangements for the day. From the photos of the relevant rooms, to the expectations around the use of powerpoint, language and even the 'come as you are' dress code. This clear steer ensured I understood the 'feel' of the event and, for example, that I didn't need to produce a lengthy powerpoint. It was evident a great deal of consideration had been given to the 'feel' of the event and the different ways different people would engage with it. This attention to detail was refreshing and very welcoming. So thank you!

Conference Literature

In line with CHWAs environmental policy, all literature for the conference was distributed digitally. CHWA produced a variety of documents for attendees and speakers:

- Speaker/Attendee Pack
- Pre-Conference Resource Pack
- Visual Story
- Speaker Biography Document
- Digital Attendee Pack

One of the key challenges of sharing this information was how to do it in the most logical and useful way, particularly when key parts of the programme were constantly evolving and needed to be shared at different points. The approach seemed to have a mixed response amongst participants – whilst some people found it extremely useful, others found the sheer amount of information overwhelming, or simply did not engage with it, which mean a lot of work for the conference staff in directing / assisting attendees.

Venues

The conference took place at multiple venues across Barnsley. This was a great opportunity for attendees to really get a feel of Barnsley Town Centre, but did present additional challenges in terms of staffing and assisting attendees.

Digital maps and videos were provided to attendees, however not everyone felt comfortable using these. Evening events in the Town Hall, Museums and Libraries were a great way to encourage further networking and socialising. Some of the layout and geography of the venues made engaging more difficult. The size of the host venues meant having designated lunch areas and sufficient seating were difficult, which some attendees did feed back was an issue for them. It also made the foyer crowded and quite noisy, and differentiating between areas difficult for visibility of walking buses and evaluation stations, which would have benefitted from a more obvious presence. Partnering with Barnsley cultural venues was a fantastic way to enhance the local feel of the event, promote the innovation in the region. Many of the partners also offered in kind or subsidised support in the form of activities or space, and was overall a really positive experience.

Reflection

The diversity of panellists in terms of expertise/experience and work across the different levels made for much more engaging and energised conversation, and also gave an opportunity for individual artists to feel seen and heard.

Including emerging/early career artists in the programme was one of the primary reasons for selection via an open call out, in turn this meant that some breakouts were better facilitated and received than others. Some attendees have fed back suggestions for going forward. CHWA will consider the moderation/CHWA presence in the room for future events to help practitioners and attendees feel supported, and review the staffing plan to increase on the ground contact.

There appeared to be a preference for face to face instructions, which was sometimes difficult for the team to manage. Next time considering a hybrid of digital and printed material, particularly maps, investing in more on the ground staff and signage, and being much more explicit about any digital resources in the introduction/welcome would help. Also considering how best to disseminate information, such as web based vs. a specific conference app. Also considering the logistics of venues in terms of size/space/noise would be useful.

Evaluation

CHWA offered a variety of creative means of giving feedback (listed above), most of which were engaged with, however more traditional verbal/written feedback was still preferred over methods such as texting, audio and video. Ballot box feedback was particularly popular, however, due to a logistical error some of this feedback was not available for analysis.

Common Themes and Phrases



Evaluators Reports

We asked others in the wider creative health sector whose work was aligned with areas that we knew needed attention, to attend the conference and provide a feedback report.

Evaluator 1- focus on active engagement (healthcare and youth)

“Great conversations however I wonder whether the conversation has progressed over the past couple of years. I think for some the intention is clear that there needs to be change but it was clear from the conference that there are some things which require change.

Representation is important at all levels, but the only time race was mentioned was when someone of colour mentioned it. This can be exhausting for those from the communities that are underrepresented in these conferences.

In the workshops I attended they can be replicated in youth settings however in the creative health space it would have been beneficial to have more young people involved rather than just a performance. If young people are participants, then perhaps they should be part of a steering group for the conference or be co-produced by them.

Based on the creative health quality principles the conference enabled collaboration through conversations during breaks, it allowed me to be reflective over my own practice and think of ways of developing my work further. The panels and workshops did encourage creativity, but I didn't always feel safe based on my points mentioned before. There also were some examples of lived experience but also should be contributors with lived experience also.”

Evaluator 2 – Focus on healthcare engagement and local impact

The conference provided so many opportunities for participants to consider how learning can be applied locally within the ecosystem they work within.

I had several conversations with people working in healthcare settings about what they had achieved and the challenges they face. There seemed to be a level of frustration about the pace of change for creative health work, constantly competing within a clinical system focused on managing crisis.

It was great to meet other Public Health colleagues involved in Creative Health work and we reflected that as a sector, we can provide a valuable engagement link between Local Authority and the wide scope of health & care sectors.

I was particularly impressed by the panel session Thursday a.m, so much of the discussion resonated in terms of local impact and healthcare engagement.

I'd be really interested in how our Creative Health Associates can add value to help us make meaningful change at a local level. We need to build powerful partnerships with them and involve them with local networks.

I'd like our Creative Health partnership to focus on how we develop an Alliance model for people centred commissioning including workforce development plans and to understand in more depth how Greater Manchester, Calderdale, Gloucester etc have made this work in their areas.

Take away points for me were:

- Dedicate sufficient time and creative leadership to re-invest in prevention
- Empower practitioners to be equal partners in decision making
- Understand that Culture is an essential frontline service.
- Progress happens at the speed of trust
- Strive for greater diversity in our Creative Health leadership

Evaluator 3- Focus on Access and Inclusion

Overall, I think the inclusion and access were excellent. The staff were friendly, helpful and approachable and the 'walking buses' were an excellent idea, I know there were a few issues with this on Wednesday, it was recognised and made clear to everyone the following morning as to who was leading and when. I saw staff in the Interchange on the mornings and there were plenty around the venues and easily recognisable.

The captions were great, very quick and responsive and included all the mutterings and chats whilst things were being settled which certainly added to the inclusion aspect, nobody was left wondering what everyone else was laughing at.

My only comment would be the gender-neutral toilets which were not advertised as such beforehand. It was mentioned during your introduction, but many would have popped to the loo on arrival, and it may have caused some distress/confusion having entered the toilet block to find members of the opposite sex in there. (I myself thought I had taken a wrong turn into the gents). I know this was out of your control as the Civic are doing work to the areas but it could have been clearer.

I unfortunately only attended one of the breakouts but it was certainly a welcoming and friendly space and it seemed that many made acquaintances during these on the opening days which certainly gave the whole conference a friendly feel.

Well done to you all for your hard work, you certainly met everything in your quality framework principles.

Evaluator 4- Focus on Diversity and Inclusion (Notes taken from Zoom conversation)

Re. EDI - your after comms will be really important; talking about what went well, what you noticed, how you want to improve in this area. People with barriers or who are

underrepresented often need a few extra steps to get themselves to a point where they feel comfortable/trust engaging – so seeing the consistent commitment to EDI as more than a one-off conversation will help keep them familiar with you and see that this is a priority for CHWA. Hopefully the more they see that they will eventually attend something, have a positive experience and become truly invested.

It's great that you're doing the separate piece of work on access too – the cost of this needs to be seen widely in the same way we give it space in a budget line. It needs to be deliberate! We're living our values and that needs to be acknowledged – but it's also about how are these standards met so it doesn't come at a cost to the team (capacity etc.).

It's a balance between people feeling included and taken cared of and a level of self-management, which I felt was definitely there at the conference. Access needs were met, and you went to another level of trying to provide comfort for people, which was wonderful.

The evening events were a great idea, but wondering if something more social/light touch might have been better after a full on day, with one activity, then some signposting or support for people who wanted to mingle, go for food etc. Everyone's needs are going to be different but keeping in mind your core purpose and making sure that's fulfilled in the daytime, anything else is a nice bonus.

All the panels and conversations were enriching and valuable, I felt we skirted a little around really diving into inequality/health inequities, and specifically talking about particular types. For example I feel race inequality wasn't really discussed in a bit more depth, and think it would be good to consider a space where people can meet at a certain time and convene around a particular identity eg. Race. It's just about informally checking in and connecting really, rather than being disparately spread throughout a room where you're the minority. That can be quite taxing and draining then it's easier to check out and disengage. I've done it in the past and people seem to find it useful.

Overall I thought the conference was wonderful – the hard work was obvious and it went really well.

Survey Responses

44 people responded to our [post-conference survey](#), which is **14%** of overall attendees. 41 of these were in person attendees. Below is a snapshot of the results:

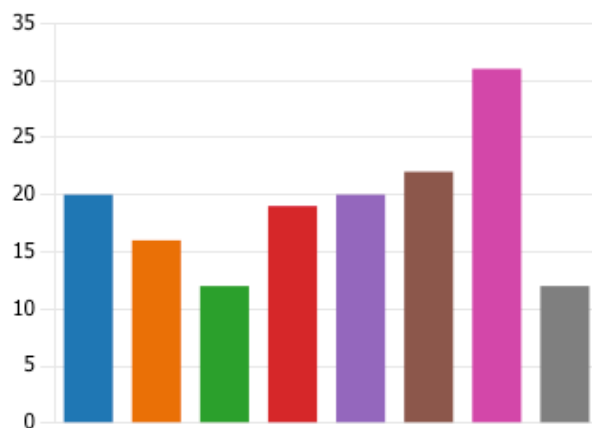
When asked 'Has the conference **influenced or informed your practice** in any way, **89%** of responders said **yes**, and **11%** of responders said they **expected it would** in the future.

The following areas have been taken from the Creative Health Quality Framework.

4. Specifically, has it influenced or informed your practice in any of the following areas

[More Details](#)

● Person Centred	20
● Equitable	16
● Safe	12
● Creative	19
● Collaborative	20
● Realistic	22
● Reflective	31
● Sustainable	12



5. Do you feel you have the infrastructure, support and resources in your region to champion these changes and the wider work?

[More Details](#)

● Yes	12
● No	7
● Unsure	25



This shows that people felt most influenced in relation to being more **realistic** and **reflective** in their work.

Most of those surveyed feel **unsure** about whether they have the **local support** to help grow their work in the areas they would like.

Responders were invited to tell us more if they wished. For those that responded no or unsure, the most common theme was **funding**, followed by individual and organisational **support**, and **sector knowledge**.

Yorkshire & Humber had the **highest area** of 'No' and 'Unsure' responses - 11 out of 15 people – however this was expected as it was also where most responders are based.

77% said the conference gave them **new contacts, networks or support systems** that they plan to connect with in the future.

Conference Summary

We asked delegates to sum up their experience of the conference in one word.



One Small Change...

We know that changing the state of the sector is impossible for one individual/organisation, yet we often hear about the immense pressure people feel under to spin all the plates / fix systematic issues / continue to innovate. We invited people to consider what one small change they could or might make as a result of attending the conference.

Overwhelmingly, the most common responses fell under **reflective practice/self-care** and **wellbeing**, and drawing on the **strength/support of the sector** for a sense of connection, morale and growth. Here were some of the responses:

“Provide more specific Creative Health guidance to support people to make the strongest possible applications for funding.”

“It has shown me the importance on synergising the disparate aspects of my work, to make it more manageable and impactful, in the progression of LONG-TERM change. It has also showed me how important it is for our team to be sharing the knowledge we are collecting, to bridge cultural and health providers rather than watching as they remain in silos of values and intensions.”

“Use CHWA channels to find more like-minded practitioners in my region.”

“Apply the Creative Health Framework as a way to think about our resilience. Think and advocate for TIME.”

“Shift from trauma informed to trauma competent.”

“I have already questioned one organisation I work with about how they are not paying freelancers and those with lived experiences for a planning meeting, so yes I am doing things differently since attending the conference”

“Improve staff wellbeing”

“Think about how participants can be prepped to be safe in projects, especially around inclusive language and when talking about diversifying creative health projects”

“I will take better care of myself. I didn't realise how many of the problems I face are faced by all creatives in similar situations. It made me feel quite angry really. The situation is frustrating and slow.”

“I might approach commissioners a little differently - opening up a conversation from the first contact.”

“Make training and support more available for practitioners with whom we work. Make regular contact with others so we feel a stronger sense of strength in our community. Explore better organisational structures.”

Other things we're hearing...

The following comments and suggestions have been taken from a visual feedback, ballot boxes, surveys and social media:

"I thought the digital experience was good. I really appreciated the zoom chats after the panels. I would have like to have access to some of the performative events that I understand were happening as well. "

"The whole event was incredibly interesting and stimulating. It was a joy to be in such an energetic space with so many creatives striving for similar goals. The event felt really professionally organised with a great balance of flexible options."

"When will we move beyond talking about sustainable practice to focusing on regenerative practice?"

"I would love to see more healthcare stakeholders in attendance at future CHWA conferences. Perhaps this is something that NCCH can be involved in strategizing in the early stages of event planning, in future years."

"Overall, I thought it was really good. It sometimes felt too big and too overwhelming including the amount of information available to read before hand. But it was all of good quality."

"There was so much choice with the break out sessions - I would have liked to attend many that clashed. Could some of these be repeated throughout the day at future conferences, rather than lots of new break out sessions? By day 2 I was quite frazzled by the wealth of information, but also very inspired by hearing all the great work happening across the country"

"Finding the breakouts was at times a little confusing - providing attendees with a print-out/personalised email just before the conference detailing their breakouts and locations would have made things easier and more likely to start on time!"

"thank you and the rest of the CHWA team for a thoroughly enjoyable and thought provoking conference. In the past I have come away from conferences feeling woolly headed and exhausted. However despite feeling tired from all the talking I feel energised and positive. It is refreshing to have the space to reflect but more so that I have some very clear actions to implement. So congratulations, well done and bravo!"

“I would also welcome more neurodivergent-friendly environments for networking throughout future conferences. The open hall was too loud for me to feel comfortable networking within, even though there were many people that I wanted to talk to. I found that my best networking happened at the dinner venue on the first day, during pub outings with other conference guests, or during break-out sessions.”

“What an absolute triumph you two and your amazing team made happen this week. Just wanted to say a big BIG thank you. As a newbie (both as artist and in starting up the Addiction Recovery Arts Network) this week was nothing less than an inspiration. Truly inclusive, truly transformative.”

Going Forward – Outputs vs. Artputs?

Taking inspiration from Cambridge Curiosity and Imagination, and allowing us to further build on our ‘Artist in Residence’ opportunity from this year’s conference, CHWA is interested in exploring Artputs as a means of evaluation; an artistic response which better captures the process, story, and depth of what’s happened in a project. This could be anything from a performance piece, to a mural, set of images or a short film – or a mixture of all of these!

Reflection

The feedback we’ve received for the event has been resoundingly positive overall. **Specific appreciation for access, pastoral care and organisation** were prominent, whilst **important highlights** around **representation, programme structure** and **environment** have given us things to take forward and prioritize in future planning. It has also highlighted and reaffirmed the need for such events, as many people talked about feeling isolated, burnt out or frustrated with current systems. This is particularly important for those in minority groups, freelancers, early career artists or those with lived experience who may not have strong support networks.

Survey results and wider feedback indicate that CHWA’s main goal of informing/influencing practice was very successful, and we’re expecting more clarity on this in our 2024 legacy interviews. Successfully creating a caring and nourishing environment is also clear from the one-word conference summaries. Taking permission to slow down was resoundingly the most common thread across attendees, with reflective being the main quality framework pillar that attendees felt the conference had influenced.

The evaluation process and response to the conference has been extremely useful, in that it has highlighted areas of both strength and weakness, and given us a clearer view of the current feelings of people working in the sector.

Visual feedback methods were overall successful, however could have benefitted from a more prominent / professional display to help boost engagement. Text feedback option wasn't engaged with by attendees, and didn't enhance the experience.

Learning and Growth

National Coordinator Thoughts

Overall key take aways are around having more staff for various aspects of the event so elements can be properly 'held' – such as volunteering and access, or social media – both in the planning and execution stages. I'd also recommend not having the bulk of planning fall over the summer period as waiting for responses caused delays in programme announcements and other logistics, having a knock-on effect on wider elements and potentially ticket sales. Negotiating ticket sales to end as late as possible for both in person and digital events will also help maximise finances.

The variety of the programme was fantastic and really well received. In particular including the performance and artist in residence gave a lively and creative feel to the event.

Some extremely useful contributions from the evaluators include building in a place/space for underrepresented groups to convene, to further help with feelings of safety at future events. This could be a 30/60 minute optional meet, with no agenda, so that people can gather and connect with others that have a shared lived experience. The inclusion of more young people and global majority voices in particular would be welcomed. The idea of an artput is also an exciting prospect which would be an ambitious project for CHWA to consider, depending on funding/staff capacity.

Going forward, a key focus for CHWA would be to develop an approach for growing the diversity of our membership and increasing opportunities for marginalised groups, and ensuring that our approach and commitment to this is consistent, visible and evolving. Seeking advice from our wider network and board would be a good starting point for this.

I think the conference has been a huge success and look forward to seeing how it develops for the next one!

Action Points

In addition to the considerations through the evaluation, the following points have been identified as key areas for action going forward:

- Measurable steps to diversify membership and event attendance, which could include callouts targeting specific underrepresented demographics, and extended efforts to link and share with organisations led by global majority artists, younger people and those who identify as D/deaf, Disabled and neurodiverse.
- Reviewing staffing and volunteering approach for conference 2025, considering a specific staff lead on access, and having a national volunteer callout with expenses paid
- Looking at practicalities of holding conference at a different time of year
- Reviewing the programming structure and potentially streamline/build in more unstructured networking time
- Investing in evaluation and considering potential Artput approach
- Build in 'holding space' for underrepresented groups
- Developing a plan to better link with colleagues working in health, community practice and social justice
- Conduct 6-8 paid 'legacy' case studies in Jan 2024, to further measure longer term impact of event
- Producing a resource report on the costs of creating a truly accessible event
- Developing an approach to sharing updates on our progress with CHWA members

CHWA would like to thank Arts Council England, consultants and partners in Barnsley and further afield, as well as all of their staff, working group, board members and conference contributors and attendees for your input into Making Change.

Conference Photos: [Michael Aiden Photography](#)