



Forest Pathways

Engaging families

and communities with
outdoor arts in wild spaces

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How to use this guide

This guidance is for anyone interested in how to engage families and communities in outdoor arts in wild spaces. It draws on what Forestry Commission England learnt from delivering The Hunters and The Hunted, a strategic touring programme funded by the Arts Council England and delivered by Forestry Commission England, in partnership with Burn The Curtain.

The Hunters and The Hunted was part of a growing body of outdoor arts in wild spaces, as opposed to town and urban spaces. While this document is relevant to anyone commissioning or delivering outdoor arts it will be of particular interest to those considering locating outdoor arts in wild or un-built spaces. And whilst some of the learning (and therefore guidance) refers specifically to promenade theatre, much will be relevant to those commissioning or developing other art forms.

This guidance shares Forestry Commission England's experience of developing an outdoor theatre piece specifically aimed at family audiences, as well as the associated community engagement programme, in this instance working with young carers. It also provides guidance for those considering developing apps related to an outdoor arts experience for family audiences.

Effective family and community engagement is not about following a step-by-step check-list, with set inputs and guaranteed outcomes. It is, instead, rather like the forest-based performances of The Hunting of the Snark, a creative journey, where what happens along the way can be as important as the final destination. Such journeys are best approached with curiosity and an open mind.

As with any journey through the forest, there is no single way through. Some paths take longer but if they reveal new parts of the forest or allow wayfarers to develop resilience or skills, they could be more beneficial than the shortest and most direct routes. Some paths may result in dead-ends or seemingly unsurpassable barriers; we suggest that these are also part of the experience and result in learning and experiences that help us on future journeys.

This guidance, then, does not offer tools or checklists but describes an audience development journey. Reflections from The Hunters and The Hunted offer possible routes and pathways for future Forestry Commission England arts audience development, and share valuable learning from the programme for a wider readership, in particular other commissioners of outdoor arts, those developing family audiences and creators of outdoor arts for families and communities amongst others.

About The Hunters and The Hunted programme

Origins of the programme

In late 2014 Forestry Commission England was approached by Burn the Curtain, who wished to use certain Forestry Commission England sites for their show The Company of Wolves. Forestry Commission England were looking to develop their off-peak offer for ticketed events so thought this would work really well, as it would enable them to try new approaches to engaging families in outdoor arts.

It was also seen as a good opportunity to pilot working with new Forestry Commission England sites where no arts work had previously taken place. The Company of Wolves was therefore presented at three Forestry Commission England sites between 2015 and 2016.

Evaluation of these shows demonstrated strong positive responses from audiences and the initial work with Burn the Curtain had laid the foundations for a productive partnership. This encouraged Forestry Commission England and Burn the Curtain to successfully apply for Arts Council England funding, via the Strategic Touring Fund programme, to further extend the tour of The Company of Wolves and to develop a new show based on Lewis Carroll’s poem The Hunting of the Snark. The piece would be developed specifically for family audiences at a range of Forestry Commission sites and exclusively for Forestry Commission England.

The scope of the programme

This programme included some performances of Company of Wolves (developed independently by Burn the Curtain) but mainly consisted of The Hunting of the Snark, a promenade theatre performance based on the poem. A free-to-download digital app, Snarkhunter, inspired by the poem, was also developed to be used both as a stand-alone experience and an extension of the performances. It enables users to engage with the poem’s text and the forest around them and will continue to be available at two sites until spring 2019.

The Hunting of the Snark was toured to seven sites between April and May 2018 (spring season) and September to October 2018 (autumn season). The sites were chosen to represent a range of types of site and different surrounding communities.

A strand of community engagement work with young carers (and others) sat alongside the performances at three sites: Haldon Forest Park (Devon), Sutton Manor Community Woodland (St Helens) and Hamsterley Forest (Co Durham). At each site Burn the Curtain worked with community partners to engage young carers principally.



Forest site	Characteristics
Haldon Forest Park, Devon 5-7th April 2018	Rural space; community engagement activities with Torbay Young Carers
Sutton Manor Community Woodlands 19-21st April 2018	Community Woodland; area of low arts engagement; community engagement activities with St Augustine's Primary School
Hamsterley, County Durham 3-5th May 2018	Rural space; area of low arts engagement; community engagement activities with local young carers via Jack Drum Arts
Delamere Forest, Cheshire 13-15 September 2018	Semi-rural space
Dalby Forest, Yorkshire 20-22 September 2018	Rural space
Thetford Forest, Norfolk 11- 13 October 2018	Rural space; area of low arts engagement
Bedgebury Pinetum, Kent 25-27 October 2018	Semi-rural space

Outdoor arts and family audiences: existing knowledge

This section outlines the characteristics of outdoor and family audiences, providing context for subsequent guidance.

There is a significant body of knowledge about family audiences and outdoor arts, presented in research, evaluations, case-studies and articles. Much of this focuses on outdoor arts which takes place where populations live and work: town and city centres, parks and so on. There is less learning available related to arts experiences that take place in wilder places, away from built environments. Nonetheless, we suggest that anyone embarking on a programme similar to *The Hunters and the Hunted* will still draw valuable learning from exploring the existing body of knowledge in conjunction with this guidance document.

Further Illumination (p.48) presents an overview of some of the most relevant resources for those considering how best to engage family audiences in outdoor arts.



Outdoor arts

Outdoor theatre can be exciting and enjoyable: working outside the theatre environment can allow a freedom for both performers and audiences. Performers are often placed at the audiences' level, sometimes mingling and interacting with them in a way less common in a theatre setting.

It does of course come with challenges, weather being a key factor, for example, and finding accessible space can be an issue. It can also be expensive to develop and deliver. Furthermore, some have argued that whilst outdoor arts can offer amazing spectacle this tends to be one-off experiences with limited long-term impact and behaviour change.

Outdoor arts audiences

Audience Agency analysis of outdoor arts audiences shows audiences of all ages, with strong representation in younger age ranges (16 - 24 and 25 - 34) and middle age range (35 - 44 and 45 - 54). This is much more marked than for other art form audiences.

Audiences are more ethnically diverse and more representative of the population as a whole, compared to other art form audiences. Younger audiences (16 - 24 year olds) are particularly ethnically diverse, with 44 % from BME backgrounds. Outdoor arts also attract a wider range of people in relation to their engagement with the arts: 35% of audiences are low cultural engagers.

76%
of audiences
travel from within
a 20 mile radius

Outdoor arts are sociable experiences; 76% of visitors attend with other adults and 38% of audience members say their main reason for attending is to spend time with friends and family. The other main motivations for audiences are being entertained and enjoying the environment. Families are particularly (80%) motivated by social and entertainment reasons.

Outdoor arts particularly appeal to local audiences, with visitors most frequently attending events that are under 5 miles away from home (or a 15 minute drive-time). Unsurprisingly, lower cultural engagers are the least likely to travel more than 5 miles from home. Overall, 76% of audiences travel from within a 20 mile radius which suggests a strong link between outdoor arts and place / community.

Audiences are generally very satisfied, rating their experiences highly for quality, value for money and the overall experience.

Urban Versus Wild Settings

Existing research proves that outdoor arts can reach under-represented communities, but – as described earlier - much of this focuses on outdoor arts that takes place in familiar settings; generally urban or at least built spaces. This is perhaps one of the reasons success of outdoor arts can work well as an arts engagement tool: it takes arts to places where people already are, and where they feel most comfortable.

Arts in wild settings draws on many of the advantages of outdoor arts but with one significant difference: audiences have to purposefully travel to experience it. This adds an interesting dimension to programmes like The Hunters and The Hunted, and requires commissioners to think carefully about how they will draw audiences, as they are unable to benefit from coincidental audiences.

Younger
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Family audiences

Recognising the diversity of families

It is important to recognise that families come in all shapes and sizes: mum, dad and 2.4 children is the exception rather than the standard. Family groups can include children of all ages, grand-parents and other family members or friends, so collectively can span a wide age range.

Families have a diverse range of characteristic, needs and motivations. Disability and neurodiversity; ethnicity and faith; social-economic status are all important aspects of families and can result in very different interests, needs and reasons for engaging (or not) with cultural opportunities.

Family Motivations

Families are predominantly looking for an enjoyable and sociable experience, with learning sometimes an important factor. Interactive opportunities and outdoor arts are particularly valued. Your family offer should be designed and communicated with this in mind.

The Whole-Family Offer

Whilst adults may be looking for an experience for their children predominantly, offering a whole-family experience is a key strategy. It isn't always easy, but creating something engaging to children, young people and adults of all ages is a real family offer, as opposed to something fun for children to do whilst the adults wait.

Reaching the whole family can mean reaching new audiences. Whilst parents, grand-parents and carers may visit with their children's interests in mind, there is also an opportunity to engage and excite the adults too.

Value For Money

Value for money is a key consideration for families, which must be taken into account when pricing activities aimed at family audiences. Offering a family discount, which also recognises the variety in family size, can be helpful but more important than price is demonstrating value for money: many families will pay where they feel there will be a quality experience. It's not only about tickets, though, families

need to know that refreshments and gift-shops will be affordable; providing a space to eat packed lunches can be important, as is an experience where they won't be pressed to spend more for the "full" experience.

Families tend either look for a free or cheap offer that they can take part in on a regular basis, fitting it in their busy lives, perhaps on a rainy weekend. These outings will need to be free or low cost and ideally not incur further expense. Alternatively, they are looking for a treat, perhaps for a birthday or Christmas outing, and seek something which offers more of the wow factor. In these cases they are often willing to spend more, however their expectations are higher. Although very different approaches, value for money is a key element in both types of family experience.

Feeling Welcome

A key barrier for families is a fear that they will be unwelcome at the venue / experience. This is particularly true for those with younger children as well as those with children who may behave in less conventional ways. Experiences which allow for (or even encourage) movement and active participation, therefore, can be attractive.

It is also important to think about making families welcome across the whole offer: is there relaxed space in the café? Space for buggies and changing facilities?

Marketing And Communication

Families look for information before visiting, so marketing to families should be proactively communicating that 'this is for families' and giving the practical information they need, to make a positive choice about engagement.

Families are also very well-networked and word-of-mouth is a key factor in terms of attracting or inhibiting family visitors. Building on family visitor satisfaction and finding ways of encouraging them to share their positive experience will result in much positive publicity.

Creating outdoor theatre for family audiences: **The Hunting of the Snark**

In this section we explore the success of The Hunting of the Snark with family audiences, identifying and unpicking key contributory factors.

The Hunting of the Snark was an exciting and engaging theatrical experience, which worked very well for family groups and used a number of different forest settings imaginatively and effectively.

Shows were well attended and most of the three day runs included one sell out show, with an average of 69 audience members per show.



Burn the Curtain's promotional video gives a good flavour of the promenade performance piece.

“

To create and use a natural landscape in such a creative way is beautiful. To see the forest transformed, to see characters nestled in trees, to be given jobs or responsibilities is magical... I've never experienced anything like it.'

Arts engagement worker

“

They took the audience on a journey, they really used the landscape.

Outdoor Arts specialist



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Commissioning the piece



Creating successful outdoor touring pieces like *The Hunting Of The Snark* demands expertise and skills – look for a company with the necessary experience and know-how to design accessible and engaging outdoor experiences for families, for a range of sites.

Burn the Curtain were commissioned due to their reputation as sector leaders in outdoor arts, as well as their previous work with Forestry Commission England. Their extensive experience of creating outdoor theatre for different audiences in wild spaces enabled them to create a promenade piece that worked for the sites and for family audiences.

Creating an engaging experience for the whole family



When developing the piece keep the whole family in mind; consider how to engage family members of all ages.

Clever characterisation and space for improvisation, themes which work on multiple levels and plots which involve audiences actively will support audience engagement with all ages.



It was an exciting and memorable experience and the whole audiences seemed engaged and actively participated.

Outdoor Arts specialist

The show worked for adults and young people of all ages, with audience members of all ages actively participating. The flexible design and scripting meant that actors could, through their characters, enter into improvised dialogue with the audience in authentic and appropriate ways.



The show works well for families, as it offers a layering of themes and ways of engaging. Adults get something from it; it's not purely about their children's enjoyment. Teens react well – the improvised bits allow for the actors to interact with them in ways that feel authentic, "speaking their language"

Actor

The piece worked on different levels, allowing family members of all ages to engage and find enjoyment; this was a conscious strategy on the part of Burn the Curtain. It encouraged a playful engagement for all ages.



It tapped into my inner child, the part that still wants to play in the forest at night... Seeing the familiar forest in unfamiliar ways "Ah we're here!". It's playful, if you're willing to let go of inhibitions."

Arts engagement worker

Further devices worked to keep audience members of all ages actively involved. For example, giving audience members tasks and objects to carry kept them engaged and occupied.



Make sure the company has performers with the right combination of skills and flexibility for a family-friendly performance.

Family-friendly performances require flexibility. Good family-friendly design allows for children to move, make noise and participate in ways that are welcomed, rather than disruptive. This depends on skilled and resourceful actors, with a particular understanding of family-friendly shows.



This type of performance relies on performers with particular and flexible skills. Some sections are tightly choreographed and scripted, but there are also improvised sections. You're part actor, part facilitator. Not all actors have both skills. You have a dialogue with the audience, in whatever way serves the event. You need to be comfortable with physical aspects and demands of the show too. Performers need to be able to change skills and register....to adapt to teens and adults.

Actor

The magical otherness of the night using nightfall to best effect whilst keeping audiences feeling safe



There's something really exciting about starting in the daylight and finishing at dark. It's an incredible journey... you notice it's getting dark and fire is part of the show...the energy shifts as it gets darker. The use of music to move you along....

Arts engagement worker



Burn the Curtain, *The Hunting of the Snark*, 2018. Image copyright: Theo Moye



Nightfall and darkness bring a sense of adventure to forest-based arts. Creating experiences that take place at dusk and in the night, carefully enhanced by lighting, fire and music, can result in a truly magical experience for audiences.

The timing of the performance was an integral part of the piece's success; setting off in daylight and taking the journey as dark fell was part of the magic of the piece. The night-time experience was further enhanced by features such as fire, lights and music.



It gave more excitement and more adventure...the darkness gives an edge especially when they're (young people in the audience) not allowed out that late and wouldn't walk through the woods at night – a real sense of adventure you wouldn't normally do, it created a bit of the unknown. What's going to happen next? Where are we going?? You can't really see. Made it scary and exciting..it wouldn't have been the same in the daylight, some of the special effects wouldn't have worked. The atmosphere wouldn't be the same..

Young carers' support worker



Being in forests at night could be a scary experience. Consider how you will keep your family audiences feeling safe, via elements such as music, placement of performers and audience grouping.

Burn the Curtain created an exciting experience with elements of surprise and adventure that also felt safe for everyone.



You're in the deep dark woods...there was full moon, I could imagine for some kids it could be quite scary but it wasn't because there was too much going on for them to be scared.

Forestry Commission England staff member



We thought the background music was absolutely brilliant, It was really cleverly done and it pulled everyone together. If walking without music it would feel uncomfortable for people. People don't like to move away from their car too much, even in daylight, they don't want to veer off from places they know...The music held the group together, made it feel like a performance, you don't veer off from the music.

Forestry Commission England staff member

The placing of various characters along the way and with audience groups also created an element of safety, as audience members weren't left to feel alone at any point. Grouping audience members into teams also created connection and meant people felt less isolated. These elements all united to give audiences a sense of purpose and belonging and less time to worry or feel anxious.



Consider the practical implications of night-time programming for family audiences; where possible, programme shows during school holidays and at weekends. Consider also the time of year and the length of performance.

A practical issue for family audiences was the finish time for the show: during the spring and autumn performances the finish time was around 9.30pm, a late finish for younger children. The number of children observed in audiences suggests that this wasn't too off-putting but it is impossible to know how many more families would have attended had the show finished earlier. Summer shows would have meant very late finishes and winter shows would require mid-afternoon starts (and potential poor weather): the timing of tours during autumn and

spring were therefore well judged for family audiences. The half-term shows were particularly well attended, which suggests this is a good time to engage family audiences and particularly so for evening events.

The weather had an inevitable impact, with one show being cancelled due to storms. Some of the autumn shows took place on very cold nights with some audience members observed to be struggling with the cold.



Burn the Curtain, The Hunting of the Snark, 2018. Image copyright: Theo Moye

The forest is the star of the show”: using forest sites to best effect



Those designing the show should spend as much time on site as possible, getting to know the space, walking the routes and rehearsing on site. Consider audience needs as well as artistic impact when choosing routes.



Plan thoroughly: imagine the weather in all eventualities, for example. Imagine how audience members with different needs and mobility levels might experience the route and think about alternative routes, providing support navigating the site, and so on.

Burn the Curtain invested considerable time getting to know each new site in order to choose the best routes for each show. Both narrow and linear paths and wider open spaces were used, allowing large groups of people to move comfortably and effectively through the forest. Accessible routes were chosen, wherever possible.



They took the audience on a journey, they really used the landscape. Split people into small groups with individual characters for smaller spaces and used the larger glades and spaces for the ensemble pieces

Audience member

Whilst there are clearly limitations to how widely accessible a promenade performance piece in the forest can be, the piece was designed to allow wide participation and was delivered in a way that felt welcoming and inclusive to people with mobility issues and disabilities. At one site, Rangers talked the route through with the audience beforehand, highlighting any parts of the route that might be more challenging, and offering easier routes. Some of the sites had Trampers (off-road mobility scooters) that could be used by audience members if necessary.

Preparing audiences for their night-time adventure

Family audiences need clear practical information about the show to help them have the most enjoyable experience.



Give audiences the information they need in advance to prepare them for a night-time outdoor experience in the forests. Make clear recommendations about any clothing, footwear and equipment they may need.

Weather is always a risk factor with outdoors arts but even more so in spaces like forests and woods as they seldom contain the shelter and warm spaces to escape to that may be found in town centres and other built spaces.

Audience members appeared generally well-prepared for the cold and the design of the show encouraged movement and participation. Most were observed as appropriately dressed and equipped with torches. However, it was noted that those less accustomed to being outdoors might need explicit information about what to wear and bring.

Burn the Curtain, The Hunting of the Snark, 2018. Image copyright: Theo Moye





Think about how you will meet families' practical needs at sites. These might include warm indoor spaces for before or after the show; refreshments or space to eat packed lunches and picnics; adequate toilet and baby change facilities.

Communicate clearly beforehand what you can – and can't – offer so families can plan appropriately. Family audiences have clear practical needs, such as good accessible toilets and baby-change facilities; indoor space to congregate in before and after performances and refreshments. These details influence their choices about whether to attend. Whilst most Forestry Commission England sites do offer toilets and indoor space, on-site cafes were likely to be closed in the evening. Several stakeholders and audience members talked about the need to offer hot drinks and snacks in particular, referring to how cold it had been on some nights. One practical suggestion was to invite a coffee van to the site.



Give clear information about any limits to the show's accessibility, alongside positive messaging about how you can support audience members with disabilities or conditions that might affect their participation.

Marketing communications made it clear that the show may not be fully accessible for all and encouraged potential audience members to call in to discuss any access-related questions. This meant any access needs could be discussed and addressed in advance.

Working with less-confident family audiences

The Hunting of the Snark engaged confident audiences, who arrived well-prepared for their night-time experience and appeared comfortable with the setting and the experience. However, it is useful to reflect on how families who feel less confident engaging with wild spaces or the arts (or both) might experience a performance like this.

Arts in outdoor spaces offer families a more relaxed way of participating that is often valued by families with young children. These qualities can be particularly useful when working with less-engaged family audiences, who may normally find theatres and cultural spaces off-putting.



Consider how to use outdoor theatre as an audience development tool, capitalising on the freedom that outdoor spaces offer. Productions that welcome or invite interaction and that are performed in relaxed manners can counter people's negative perceptions of experiences of theatre.

Outdoor arts has the potential to act as a tool for engaging family audiences who may not normally choose to attend theatre. Performances in forest settings remove the (potentially off-putting) conventions of traditional theatre and free families to enjoy the experience in a different way. Being outdoors reduces fears that children may disrupt or interfere with performances as there is space to move and less pressure to be quiet. Much outdoor arts actively encourages audiences to move, make noise and take part.

The Hunting of the Snark, with its playful interactive style and relaxed performances was an accessible family offer particularly, for families who might be put off by the explicit or implicit conventions of traditional theatre.



Burn the Curtain, The Hunting of the Snark, 2018. Image copyright: Theo Moye



Where sites are at a distance from your target audiences, consider how you will make it easy for them to reach the location.

Where arts experiences take place in rural locations transport will inevitably be a potential barrier for some. Regular arts attenders will often have the motivation and the means to travel to rural sites, but for less-engaged audiences transport may prove a considerable barrier.

There are no easy answers, but those delivering such programmes should think about this at the earliest stage, and consider budgeting to provide transport to and from the site if possible.

“

The performance is a really good way of opening up people to theatre, they see what theatre can offer them. It's exciting, immersive and unique....It was different and exciting.

Arts engagement worker

“

There's freedom in not being in a theatre – you don't have to worry about how to behave, when to clap and so on... Outdoor space is for everybody.

Actor

Outdoor arts has the potential to **act as a tool for engaging family audiences** who may not normally choose to attend theatre.

Developing digital apps to engage families with forests: The Snarkhunter App

To learn more about the SnarkHunter digital app, please see Burn the Curtain's promotional video:



Press the screen to play the video



© Natalia Patkiewicz

Developing digital apps for use at outdoor sites



Be clear (and realistic) about the purpose of the app. Is it purely to get families to outdoor spaces? To then engage them with the spaces around them? Do you also want to engage them in a specific artistic experience? These may all be possible, but require clarity of purpose when developing the brief.

A digital app, Snarkhunter, was designed to sit alongside the show at specific Forestry Commission England sites. The app introduces characters from the poem and follows the structure of the poem in an interactive way, taking players on a quest at each site. It could be used alone or in conjunction with the show.

The learning from this aspect of the programme will be useful to anyone considering developing apps aimed at engaging families in playful ways with open spaces.

Forestry Commission England staff commented on the ability of the app to engage visitors with the forest sites:

“

It presented a fun way to explore Bedgebury without taking too much detail or learning about the tree collection, but enjoying the space and the place

Forestry Commission England staff member



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It also engaged players with the poem:

“Some were saying it’s similar to Pokemon GO, they were saying that they find it really interesting to find out about the different characters... I was impressed how they remembered the details of the characters at the end – the app was obviously helping them learn about these characters so it really worked. It was quite clever.

Young Carers’ support worker



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There was a concern, however, that in using forests as a backdrop for the Snarkhunter challenge, the app could actually distract families from the forest around them.



A digital app which offers families an enjoyable and shared outdoor experience can be an important part of the family offer. Furthermore, apps like Snarkhunter can also allow those who can’t attend performances to still engage with an arts programme.

Snarkhunter offered families a free and fun activity which could be used at any time. This could be of particular value to family visitors looking for ways of keeping children interested, motivated and engaged outdoors.



Think about the family collectively but also individually: if you seek to create an app that is of interest to primary school age children as well as teens, parents and older family members this will also need to be explicit in the design brief.

Families value group activities that work for a range of ages. Snarkhunter appeared successful in this respect: family groups with a range of ages were seen playing and enjoying using the app at various sites. Furthermore, the young carers groups and primary school children who used the app as part of the community engagement activities represented a range of ages from around 7 up to 16, and feedback was positive.



Consider how you could engage individuals or families in app testing as this will identify glitches or flaws and also offer engagement activities.

Young carers in Hamsterly and Haldon tested the app in the forest. This in itself was an effective engagement activity (explored later) but also helped identify and tackle any glitches early on.

Promoting and supporting use of the app



Where an app relates to a show or time-specific event consider how your marketing can both capitalise on the event promotion without losing the stand-alone identity of the app.



Market the app at appropriate points in the year to maximise impact with families (eg around school holidays).



Where possible make sure visitors are aware of the app before their visit so they can arrive at the site prepared to play. Think, also, about where a digital app sits with all the other activities on offer on site.



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If an app related to an event is marketed in conjunction with the event this can raise the profile of the app. However, the event can overshadow the app, and once the event has passed it may be harder to promote the app.

A practical issue was the need to promote the app to families before their visit, so they would arrive with the app already down-loaded and were ready to play. One site had promoted the app through schools and other channels locally just before summer holidays and felt this worked well in bringing families to the site to play the game.



Identify and address practical issues that might discourage use of the app at an early stage.

Whilst Snarkhunter was attractive and presented an enjoyable challenge to players, there were a number of practical and technical issues which may have impacted on use. Users reported some technical difficulties in using the app, which was perhaps not as straightforward to use as it could have been.

Lack of Wi-Fi in the forest required users to use their own mobile data packages. This may not be an issue for some but young people, who may have more limited data packages, could be unwilling to draw on their data allowances.



It was often necessary to download the app before arriving on site (due to lack of Wi-Fi in the forest). This required prior knowledge of the app and a clear intent to use it on a visit, which in turn depends on proactive and effective marketing.



A related issue was that using the app reportedly placed a demand on phone batteries.

This could also present a barrier to users who arrive without fully charged phones and additionally could put off young people from using the app as they can be anxious about the prospect of being left with low batteries.



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Engaging under-represented communities in outdoor arts: the young carers' engagement work

Alongside the ticketed performances, Forestry Commission England and Burn the Curtain also set out to pilot some focused engagement activities with young carers. This section describes this experience and draws out wider learning and recommendations for delivering strong community engagement; much of this learning is widely applicable but some is particularly relevant to programmes which seek to engage communities in wild locations, away from their familiar spaces.

Young carers were chosen as they often bear challenging responsibilities and therefore frequently miss out on creative activities and outdoor experiences. The intent was to create a programme of engagement activities wrapped around the core programme, that offered meaningful and engaging arts experiences for these young people. Engagement activities were led by Burn the Curtain who worked closely with local organisations and employed freelance arts engagement workers.



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Activities were delivered at three Forestry Commission England sites.

Haldon Forest, Devon: young carers

Participant ages ranged from 10 to 15 years old and mix of genders. None had been to Haldon Forest before.

Activities were facilitated by an arts engagement worker (employed by Burn the Curtain) and Torbay Young Carers. The local Rotary Club gave significant support in the form of transport to and from Haldon Forest.

Activities included SnarkHunter app play testing, attending the dress rehearsal and a week spent on creative activities in the forest, which included creating a forest exhibition for other visitors to enjoy. An exhibition at the Young Carers' centre was also held, to enable parents who struggled to visit the forest to see the work of their young people.

Sutton Manor, St Helens: young carers / primary school engagement

Partnerships with local young carers groups were initially explored but not possible due lack of capacity in the local groups, as well as their difficulties fitting with the established programme timetable.

A productive relationship was then established with St Augustine's Catholic Primary School in Runcorn and activities with a group of 8 to 10 year olds subsequently delivered. These included arts activities in the school and the woods, resulting in the creation of a theatre piece performed to parents and pupils. The SnarkHunter app was also tested in the woods. Activities were facilitated by an arts engagement worker and Burn The Curtain.

Hamsterley Forest, County Durham: young carers

Jack Drum Arts, an arts organisation based in a community near Hamsterley Forest, was engaged as a partner. They made contact with a local young carers group linked to a hospice, and facilitated their involvement.

Activities included playtesting the SnarkHunter app, attending (with parents and support staff) a dress rehearsal performance and creative arts workshops. Jack Drum offered in-kind support to deliver the project as well as a minibus to transport the young people to and from the forest and refreshments.

Jack Drum Arts also supported the attendance of 28 young people at one of the performances; this group included young people from Jack Drum's youth group and a group of Syrian refugees living locally. Furthermore, four young people from Jack Drum's theatre and performance programme performed as drummers during Hunting of the Snark performances at Hamsterley.

“

The inter-activeness of the performance was really good, they could get really involved. We got some young people who got so into it, they were really asking questions, creating part of the play...Some of them can be quite new to this kind of thing, so considering that I was really impressed by how they got into it. It really helped confidence and communication skills, a platform to be part of the performance....One lad was really misbehaved normally but he didn't do this. It shows the importance of these things to help young people with lots of needs, set them free in an open space rather than sitting watching something

Young carers' support worker

Capturing the impact on engagement-activity participants



Develop a clear understanding of the potential positive impact that outdoor arts engagement activities in wild spaces can have. Use this to communicate the value of this work internally and externally.

Young carers, school children and other community members had a positive and engaging experience of the show. Many of these young people had little or no access to creative activities and outdoor play.

Numerous individual stories speak of the value of the programme. For example, one young carer who wouldn't speak on the first day was singing, asking questions and excited to be taking part by the last day. Another teenage boy had arrived rowdy and challenging but by the end of the week of forest-based arts activities turned out to be one of the most focused of the young people, creating pieces of art that showed talent and creativity.

Stories like these build a picture of the overall positive impact of the programme. This provides vital evidence to use when advocating internally for this kind of work and also externally, perhaps when seeking resources.

Target audiences, and the barriers to engagement they face



Have clear targets for community engagement activities in mind, and build your offer around their needs and interests.

At the heart of a successful community engagement strategy is clarity about target audiences and an understanding of the barriers they face. A scattergun or one-size-fits-all approach to community engagement is unlikely to succeed. Getting to know the community or specific audiences you wish to engage, and their interests, needs, motivations and barriers will increase your success in creating an offer that fits.

As described previously, Forestry Commission England and Burn the Curtain worked with specialist organisations such as Torbay Young Carers and skilled Arts Engagement workers to design an engagement offer that was based on a good understanding of the needs and barriers young carers often faced.

Although not a key feature of this programme, community consultation, community involvement and co-creation are other important elements of programme design as they allow for communities that are the target of engagement activities to speak for themselves, saying what works and doesn't, and describing potential barriers to engagement. These approaches will, of course, require building in to early stages of programme development.



Identify barriers to engagement and develop practical ways to tackle these. This might include practical measures such as providing transport, offering cheap or free tickets, and clothing and equipment for outdoor activities. It could also mean communicating positive messaging about being outdoors, tackling any safety concerns and ensuring people have comfortable and safe spaces on site.

Research highlighted a few key barriers (some described previously) that could prevent community engagement with the programme. These included lack of transport to forest sites, cost of tickets, the need for appropriate clothing, lack of positive experience of being outdoors in forest, and concerns about safety in the forest.

The location of sites

The majority of sites were inaccessible by public transport. This presents obvious barriers to families with no car, and for those who have cars the cost of petrol and possibly parking may also prevent them from taking part. This was a key challenge for the community engagement: in Torbay the local Rotary Club had provided free transport for the young carers without which, they couldn't have participated; transport was also provided in other areas.

Unfamiliarity of sites

In each area engagement started by working with target audiences in locations that were familiar and comfortable to them. In Devon, for example, arts engagement activities begun in the young carers' centre and only once trust and familiarity had been built were the young carers taken to the forest. It was felt that to start with forest-based activities would have been too challenging to the young people and their families.

Ticket prices

Ticket price can present a barrier for families. The size of family group can make shows costly for families, especially those with stretched resources. Less engaged audiences are often reluctant to pay for an event when they have little idea of what they might experience and how they might enjoy it. A common strategy, therefore, is to offer free or reduced tickets to target communities. Often, once audience members have had an enjoyable experience, they are then willing to pay for full price for future events. Whilst this has resource implications it is crucial to address financial barriers to engagement when developing new audiences.

Appropriate clothing

Community partners commented how many of the families they worked with were unlikely to have the necessary clothing or footwear for time at forest sites. Jack Drum Arts regularly deliver outdoor work and their solution has been to buy a collection of boots and waterproof clothing for participants.

Concerns about safety in the forest

Jack Drum Arts talked about how many of the young carers' parents had some worries about their children's safety in the woods. They spent considerable time listening to their concerns about woodland safety (one had heard there were adders in the forest) and about safeguarding. It had been important to reassure parents and explain how their children would be kept safe.

Strategies for delivering successful community engagement activities



For large scale partnerships: Be clear who is best placed to deliver community engagement activities.

Organisations like Forestry Commission England are unlikely to have community arts capacity at each site. This highlights important questions for programmes of this kind, should engagement activities be led by the touring company, by local site staff or both? If engagement work is delivered by touring companies (and partners), are adequate resources allocated? And are there opportunities for internal staff to learn about good engagement practice, resulting in increased capacity and expertise for future engagement activities? These questions should be discussed at the early stages of programme development.



Identify community organisations that represent and/ or work with the audiences you wish to reach. Allow time to build meaningful relationships and be aware of their workloads and timetables.

Successful community engagement work would not have been possible without positive relationships with trusted local partners.

Burn the Curtain, The Hunting of the Snark, 2018. Image copyright: Theo Moye



“
Partnership with a willing and able community partner is hugely important. You may have to go to them...They are the key to getting local buy-in.
Burn the Curtain staff member

The relationship with Jack Drum Arts was a vital element of the community engagement in County Durham; Burn The Curtain had previously worked with Jack Drum Arts, who had solid local connections and a trusted position in the community, and were able to not only secure the involvement of local young carers but also to bring other local people as audience members – people who wouldn't perhaps have gone otherwise.

In Devon, Torbay Young Carers (TYC) was instrumental to the success of local engagement work. Burn the Curtain had worked with them previously and TYC had been pleased to be involved in the project. TYC understood the needs of the young carers and was trusted by the young people and their families.



Make sure you build in arts engagement roles as community organisations may not have these skills. Look for arts engagement workers that ideally have experience of working with the specific audiences you seek to engage.

In Devon, the arts engagement worker had a background in social work and community development as well as arts engagement. She had also worked with Torbay Young Carers before so had an existing relationship with the organisation and young carers. This experience enabled her to design and deliver activities that really worked for the young carers, as well as helping build a productive working relationship with Torbay Young Carers. The arts engagement worker in St Helens also had significant experience of working with local communities and young people and was equally skilled and able to design a strong programme for the primary school children.



Be flexible in your approach: however carefully you plan engagement activities you may find that they don't work with your target audiences and communities. Be prepared to adapt and change activities in response to your audiences; this is especially important when working with young people.

Community organisations and the arts engagement workers highlighted the importance of taking a flexible approach to community engagement, especially when working with young people. Step by step engagement plans had been designed with space for reflection after each stage, so the arts engagement worker could revise future planned activities if necessary.



Resources needed for successful community engagement

Recognise the resources needed for effective community engagement and make sure these are built into programme budgets from the outset.

Recognise, also, the time needed to build and develop effective community engagement activities.

Effective community engagement requires resources. Some, such as transport costs and the need to provide outdoor clothing and equipment, have been outlined above. Other resources could be participation funding for community organisations: Burn the Curtain were lucky to find community organisations with the capacity to take part but many community organisations aren't able to take advantage of programmes such as The Hunters and The Hunted. Offering to support the organisational costs such as staff time may be crucial to securing participation.

Time, above all, emerged as a key resource in community engagement.

Time to build trust with less-engaged audiences: Asking families with little or no positive experience of engaging in the arts to not only take part in activities that may feel very strange and new to them but also to come to unfamiliar locations is asking them to take a big step, one that could feel too risky and uncomfortable. It is important, then, to allow time to build relationships with new audiences before you ask them to take new steps.

Time was also an issue in terms of for how long activities would be available to families, once engaged and positive about the offer. For a number of reasons, not least time-limited project funding, activities are often offered over short periods of time, meaning that a gap or loss is felt once activities come to an end. Interviewees talked about families and communities feeling that agencies parachute in and out of their areas and the need to ensure that arts projects are delivered over longer timescales without abrupt endings.

Time to build relationships with community organisations: Where no prior relationship existed with a community organisation time was needed to build a relationship and get buy-in. In some cases community organisations were keen to work with Forestry Commission England and Burn the Curtain but had their own busy organisational programmes and work and found the time-scales (which had already been set) difficult to fit in with. Approaching such organisations early on and ideally agreeing programme timetables in partnership is a positive strategy.



Building an organisational culture of community engagement

Treat engagement as an ongoing process for your whole organisation rather than a time-limited project. This will increase the credibility and effectiveness of your organisation with local communities and target audiences.

Community engagement works best when it is part of a long-term organisational strategy, rather than a short-term project. This can prove challenging where only project funding is available but even where intensive community engagement isn't possible once funding finishes continuing with lighter-touch activities should be prioritised.

One young carer who
wouldn't speak on the first
day was **singing, asking
questions and excited to be
taking part by the last day.**

Getting the infrastructure right

In this section we describe the infrastructure elements which contributed to the success of The Hunters and the Hunted and from this, offer recommendations for future work of this nature.

Adequate resourcing

Recognise the resources, in particular time, needed to deliver effective programmes like The Hunters and the Hunted.

The need for adequate resources for a programme like this was mentioned repeatedly and to some degree has been described previously. Stakeholders stressed the importance of sufficient time and resources for:

- Internal communications and advocacy, in preparation for the programme
- Developing a marketing strategy and collateral
- A sufficient lead in to delivery
- Building relationships with community organisations
- Developing trust with under-represented audiences
- Sharing programme outcomes and learning more widely, internally and externally

There was much reference to the knowledge and expertise of external partners as a key resource. However, the knowledge and expertise that Forestry Commission England staff have was also seen as an important ingredient of this programme; for example, the knowledge that local site staff have of their site, their visitors and their local communities.



Effective partnership working involving multiple organisations

Any touring site-specific show working with different local communities depends on good partnerships and strong working relationships, and The Hunting of the Snark was no exception. Multiple relationships came into play during this programme with different organisations and individuals all bringing their own expertise and specialism to the table. The programme's success depended on these complex and intricate relationships functioning well.

Forestry Commission England staff from national, regional and site teams were involved in the programme in differing ways. Staff in national roles lead on fundraising and developing strategic direction for the programme as well as marketing and other roles; regional staff supported the roll out of the programme and local staff were practically involved on site.

Burn the Curtain was at the heart of the programme, working not only with Forestry Commission England staff but also with local community organisations and the freelance arts engagement workers who developed and delivered community engagement activities.

Given this complex set of interwoven relationships, it is unsurprising that the importance of building effective and positive relationships and partnerships was a strong theme in the interviews with stakeholders.



The relationship between commissioner and arts company is crucial. Regular partnership work builds familiarity and trust.

The relationship of trust between the company and Forestry Commission England teams was an important part of the success of the programme. Company of Wolves had, to some degree, paved the way for The Hunting of the Snark:

The partnership, then, had developed incrementally through the different phases of joint work.

“

Company of Wolves tested and trialled the partnership and created trust; Snark embedded the working relationship further.
Burn the Curtain staff member



Differing organisational cultures can have an impact. Allowing time to find common language is important.

A clear issue for any partnership between large organisations and small arts companies is the potential for culture-clash.

“

You need to find a common language, spend time on that building the relationship. There will be challenges and if you have a relationship you can work it out, if you don't have a relationship it's much harder.

Burn the Curtain staff member

In this case, the partnership between the Forestry Commission England and Burn the Curtain had resulted in a shared appreciation of each other's culture, processes and ways of working. This undoubtedly contributed to the success of this programme.



Touring companies need to be flexible when taking a show to different sites; being able to adapt and work in different ways with different teams.

At each site, Burn the Curtain had to work closely with local staff to choose the best routes for the performance and to deliver the show effectively. Burn the Curtain's flexible approach meant they could work independently where site teams had limited capacity, but also welcomed the chance to involve site staff more where this was possible. This flexibility is important for large multi-site organisations like Forestry Commission England, where local teams will have differing levels of resources to support touring performances and perhaps also differing attitudes towards outdoor arts.



Multi-site organisations should consider different ways of introducing the touring company to site teams.

Large multi-site organisations could, at the start of touring programmes like The Hunters and the Hunted, facilitate introductions and build familiarity through different mechanisms such as inviting touring companies to all-staff conferences or events; introducing them through staff newsletters and other internal communication channels.

Where a company is working on one site, staff from other sites could be invited to visit and see performances, maybe meeting the touring company. Measures such as these can encourage site teams to feel confident in the capabilities of an arts organisation despite having never worked with them, meaning that when the company arrives on site a positive working relationship forms from the start.

Securing buy-in across large multi-site organisations

Organisations embarking on new types of activity across multiple sites should, from the outset, deliver clear and strong internal messaging from senior leaders about how and where this programme fits with organisational priorities. This messaging should be combined with feedback on the positive impact programmes are bringing about and how staff have contributed.

When introducing new types of programme across large organisations it is important to clearly communicate why these new approaches are being trialled, so there is a clear and shared understanding of importance of this kind of work. This messaging will need to come from leaders and senior management and to reach staff across the organisation, regardless of their role.

This messaging should include, as programmes are rolled out, clear feedback about their positive impact (for example, by sharing evaluation internally) and in particular, showing staff in all roles and all parts of the organisation how their involvement has contributed to this success.

Effective marketing to new family audiences

Selling the programme to new family audiences means speaking directly to their needs and interests, and illustrating the value for families of a night-time experience in an unfamiliar location.

As described previously in relation to marketing the app, there was some tension between keeping the artistic integrity of the poem and marketing to families. Some interviewees felt that the marketing collateral was high quality and very attractive but didn't perhaps speak as clearly as it could have to families. One interviewee reported questions from potential audience members as to whether the show was appropriate for family audiences, which perhaps indicates the marketing didn't connect well to families.

A further consideration is, for an offer such as this programme, how to sell an unfamiliar product AND unfamiliar site? This isn't an insurmountable challenge but does mean that marketers have to work very hard to create marketing that convinces families to engage with unfamiliar experiences and unfamiliar sites. A further issue is the night-time programming: family audience research shows that if the offer is big and spectacular families will come out at night but they are less likely to do so where they are unsure about the quality and tone of the event. An additional consideration for companies delivering quieter and more reflective shows is how marketers will manage audience expectations about what they might experience.

Don't underestimate the time needed to build effective marketing campaigns across multiple sites and with external partners that sit comfortably with other marketing activities.

Forestry Commission England found that the short run in to the Spring season meant a very tight timetable for building a marketing strategy as well as producing marketing collateral, getting it to local teams and running the marketing campaign. In addition, as an external arts company was involved, more time was needed for the necessary communications to agree and sign off marketing messaging copy. Autumn marketing was felt to be more effective due to the longer lead in and also because it had drawn on learning from the spring marketing campaign.



Where central marketing teams produce collateral and lead national campaigns, consider how local staff can deliver effective local marketing, and how their on-the-ground knowledge can be drawn upwards to inform national marketing strategies.

Forestry Commission England staff in national, regional and local roles agreed that local sites have the greatest knowledge of and relationships with local audiences and communities and therefore are best placed to lead on developing locally-led marketing campaigns. This would of course require greater resources for local teams, either in terms of staff time and / or cash to pay for local marketing. There was a pot of money available to local teams but only one site drew this down; it is unclear why more sites didn't take advantage of this.

It was found that marketing widely, and in particular off-site, is crucial to reach new and under-represented audiences, who may not yet engage with the offer.



Consider the specific challenges of marketing to families who are less engaged in the arts and / or outdoor activities, building highly targeted marketing strategies.

Broad-brush marketing strategies may work well with families that are already interested in outdoor arts, but where organisations wish to engage less-represented audiences marketers will need to think about more targeted marketing which addresses their interests and understands barriers to their engagement. Marketing staff may have knowledge-gaps in this area, which could be addressed by practical measures such as partnering outreach or engagement staff with marketers.

Measuring the impact of the programme

Forestry Commission England had a range of ways of measuring the impact of the programme, which included:

- Ticket sales (numbers and income)
- Snarkhunter app downloads
- Audience Finder survey data from ticketed performances
- Burn the Curtain feedback postcards and engagement activity reports compiled by Burn the Curtain
- Digital marketing data
- Audience Agency research, including stakeholder interviews, field work and desk research



Develop and implement a strategic approach to measuring the impact of programmes from the outset. Make sure that resources are built into programmes to carry out effective impact research.

Understanding the impact of new and experimental programmes is crucial; gathering relevant audience data is key to understanding whether audience development strategies are working.

Audience surveying tools such as Audience Finder can provide insight into audiences, not only gathering demographic data but also information about group size, motivations for attending, satisfaction rates and so on. Securing a good response rate may mean directing staff (and if appropriate, volunteer) time at completing the surveys with audience members as this results in higher response rates than simply sending out links to online surveys. Training and support for personnel collecting audience data is also important, to ensure they are confident in approaching people and gathering data and also to prevent bias.

The mostly quantitative data gathered via Audience Finder can be complemented by qualitative research with family audiences, which will help commissioners and arts companies learn far more about useful topics such as:

- the elements of an engaging family arts experience
- what barriers prevent their participation, and how these could best be removed
- how to market an outdoor arts experience to families

Post-show qualitative research could explore:

- audience experience and which elements worked best
- practical elements and how these could be improved
- suggestions for future marketing

This can, of course, be extended beyond families to other audiences.



Build a clear evaluation strategy based on feedback and research methodologies that really work for families and less engaged communities.

Asking families to complete surveys outdoors and at the end of a night-time show can present challenges, and these should be considered when planning feedback and research with families. Other methodologies should also be explored, with families' needs central to design.

Creative evaluation methods that involve whole family groups can work well, as can asking young people to complete creative evaluation tasks whilst adults are interviewed or surveyed. Focus groups can also work well, and can be used to inform programme design and marketing strategies as well as to gather audience feedback after a show. It can be hard to secure participation, unsurprising given the demands on busy families, and therefore offering incentives for participation can help.

Evaluating with less engaged communities requires similar care; different communities will need different methodologies and approaches.

Legacy: sustaining the impact of the programme

Stakeholders felt there was clear legacy to this programme and talked about their learning, development and increased confidence as a result of being involved in this programme. Some examples include:

- Forestry Commission England staff feeling more knowledgeable about delivering promenade performances at their sites
- Learning that working with community organisations is key to community engagement and reaching under-represented audiences.
- Burn the Curtain having increased experience of developing digital apps to accompany performance pieces.

Further legacy from the programme was in the relationships that had been formed and / or consolidated through this partnership programme. Forestry Commission England staff (in different roles) and Burn the Curtain had developed stronger and deeper relationships, and Burn the Curtain had also developed strong relationships with Jack Drum Arts in particular, as well as also other community organisations.



Consider longer-term financial strategies for sustaining the impact of time-limited programmes, such as using paid-for performances and offers to generate income to cover community engagement activities.

Some Forestry Commission England staff saw a tension between investing resources in community engagement activities and reduced-priced ticketing versus the need to generate income through events and activities to sustain the sites and infrastructure.



Consider how to capitalise on and consolidate learning and development.

This programme had been a valuable experience for some staff as it had allowed them to try new approaches and build their skills and confidence as a result.



Forestry Commission staff are right inside the show, all the time...they see exactly what's going on. This gives them the knowledge and confidence to take on the next show, work with the next company.

Burn the Curtain staff member

Another member of staff reflected on how being involved in this programme had helped them understand the potential to engage families in outdoor arts; their involvement in the programme left them wanting to see more participative outdoor arts at Forestry Commission England sites. They had lots of practical ideas for future activities.

There is great potential for Forestry Commission England, and similar organisations, to gather staff learning from programmes such as this and share this across the organisation. This could be through external or internal evaluation as well as through internal communication channels such as staff newsletters. End-of-programme conferences, for example, can provide opportunities to share and disseminate learning.



It was absolutely spectacular, and my colleagues agreed...it opened our eyes to what we can do on site, what is possible. We tend not to get too involved in what organisations deliver on site, but this was slightly more involved.

Forestry Commission England staff member

Further reading and resources

There is a wealth of research and evaluation that can be drawn on in planning effective family engagement with outdoor arts in wild places. In this last section we present a selection of the most relevant resources.



Engaging people with the outdoors

Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment: exploring the relationship between visit frequency and attitudes towards the natural environment

Kantar, commissioned by Natural England, 2017

Natural Childhood

Stephen Moss, commissioned by the National Trust

A report describing the nation's "nature deficit" and how children lack opportunities to play outdoors. Contains useful examination of the benefits of connection with the natural world as well as the barriers that stop young people from connecting.

Access to Nature: inspiring people to engage with their natural environment

Icarus, commissioned by Natural England, 2014

An evaluation of the Access to Nature Fund, funded by Big Lottery and managed by Natural England. The report contains interesting examples of projects which engaged communities in natural heritage, as well highlighting some principles of community engagement.

Outdoor arts

Outdoor Arts Audience Report: What Audience Finder says about audiences for the Outdoor Arts

The Audience Agency in partnership with Outdoor Arts UK, 2018

An analysis of outdoor arts audiences, covering what audiences look like, their different motivations and experiences of outdoor arts, how they attend.

Attracting Audiences other artforms cannot reach

Penny Mills, The Audience Agency, 2018

Describes how outdoor arts has the power to reach audiences other artforms can't, as well as the support and development needs of the outdoor arts sector.

Outdoor Arts - above and beyond audience development

Jonathan Goodacre, The Audience Agency, 2018

An article which draws on The Audience Agency's evaluation of some Strategic Touring Programmes and suggests outdoor arts experiences have the potential to go beyond 'audience development' to and to bring about tangible impacts on places and people.

ISAN Access Toolkit: Making outdoor arts events accessible to all

ISAN with Attitude is Everything, 2010

A toolkit on making outdoor arts events accessible to D/deaf and disabled audiences; it covers basic legal obligations under the Equality Act, practical steps that will make outdoor events widely accessible and best practice case studies.

Living Symphonies Toolkit: Planning and Producing Artworks in the Natural Environment

Forestry Commission England, 2014

A toolkit based on learning from the Living Symphonies programme of contemporary music at four Forestry Commission sites.

Family audience development

Family Arts Campaign

A national Sector Support Organisation raising family engagement with arts and culture. They support arts and cultural organisations (and others) to develop their family audiences through a range of means, including their free Family Arts Standards and Age-Friendly Standards quality-marks, through training and events, and an online resources library.

Developing family audiences online training

Family Arts Campaign in partnership with The Audience Agency, 2015

A free online course introducing the family audience development process covering the family audience development process, including developing insight, strategies and campaigns, and using digital channels to target, engage and enhance the family audience experience.

Aimed at those involved in creating and promoting family arts.

Family Arts Standards

The Family Arts Campaign and the Family & Childcare Trust have developed a set of Family Arts Standards, offering clear guidance on how best to welcome families to arts organisations.

Arts Connect Family Access scheme: research

Carol Jones, The Audience Agency, 2016

Research into the barriers felt by low and non-engaged families, especially those from disadvantaged areas. Although the research focuses on specific geographical areas and the Arts Connect offer, the research contains findings and recommendations with wide relevance.

Finding Family Audiences: blog from The Audience Agency

Lucie Fitton, The Audience Agency, 2018

Article sharing insight relating to family audiences drawn from Audience Finder and The Audience Agency's body of consultative research.

Fantastic Family Audiences and Where (and how) to Find Them

Leo Sharrock, The Audience Agency, 2017

Presentation to Family Arts Conference sharing insight from Audience Finder data about family audiences, their behaviours and motivations

What we know about Family Audiences

Helen Ball, The Audience Agency, 2013

Presentation to Family Arts Seminar. Although some of the statistics may be out-of-date, contains a useful outline of two different approaches to a family offer: Trips as opposed to Treats.

Age-Friendly Standards

A national self-assessed accreditation for cultural organisations, designed to complement the existing Family Arts Standards which set out good practice in welcoming families. The Age-Friendly Standards provide specific guidance on welcoming older generations and will help family-friendly organisations ensure older family members aren't excluded.

Family Arts Campaign's age-friendly links & resources

A useful compilation of links and resources which will support anyone developing their age-friendly work.

Engagement Snapshot: Older audiences

The Audience Agency, 2018

An overview of older audiences, their cultural behaviours and traits based on data from Audience Finder.

Family Arts Festival Evaluation and Audience Research Toolkit

Catherine Rose, Catherine Sutton and Pam Jarvis, commissioned by Family Arts Campaign, 2014

This toolkit helps plan evaluation of Family Arts Festival (but can be applied to any aspect of family arts programmes).

Pricing Family Events: Guidance for Arts Organisations

Baker Richards, commissioned by Family Arts Campaign 2015

Practical guidance for pricing family arts experiences of all scales.

Content Guidance Communication for Family Arts Events

Staffordshire University Creative Communities Unit, commissioned by Family Arts Campaign, 2015

A guide to presenting the information necessary to enable families to make informed decisions about attending arts events. Includes key findings from primary research with families and offers advice on communicating suitability and the story behind the arts experience

CultureHive website

CultureHive is a resource for sharing best practice in cultural marketing and is managed by the Arts Marketing Association. The site contains reports on family friendly initiatives, details of projects to increase family engagement, case studies on developing access for family audiences, ideas for creating family friendly resources and practical guides for family friendly programming and building relationships with family audiences

Case Studies

Developing more family friendly productions in collaboration with touring companies

A case study describing how Wriggle Dance Theatre developed their production of *Once in a Blue Moon*, with Déda in Derby. Illustrates how involving families at the various development stages of the production resulted in a final piece that worked really well for family audiences.

Encouraging families to be more adventurous

An outline of the Culture Window pilot project (2011) in Newcastle and Gateshead tested ways that venues would encourage family audiences to play less safe and take cultural risks. During the project cultural venues talked to and learnt from families, as well as asking them to visit venues and provide feedback. Venues learnt what works in terms of attracting families and the family participants increased their cultural confidence and attitudes to local venues.

Active Ashfield: engaging non-arts audiences through creative partnerships

Creative People and Places project First Art shares its experience of weaving arts activities into an established non-arts event. First Art, a partnership linking cultural and community organisations working in former coalfields in NE Derbyshire and NE Nottinghamshire, worked with Ashfield District Council

Other related resources

Mapping and analysis of engagement approaches across the Creative People and Places programme

Sarah Boiling and Clare Thurman, commissioned by Arts Council England 2018
This document presents the key principles of effective community engagement, based on practice from various Creative People and Places programmes. Offers a useful summary of the principles of engagement as well as reference to outdoor arts and family audiences.

Creative People and Places: Our Learning

This Creative People and Places programme webpage has a digest of research, evaluation and case-studies from CPP programmes across the country. These cover a range of useful areas, such as building relationships with people new to the arts; various aspects of outdoor arts; working with voluntary and other organisations; and so on.

Engaging audiences on tour

Tessa Gordziejko, Unlimited Theatre, Arts Professional article 2018

Article which shares learning from Unlimited Theatre's Together project which took three productions to five venues between 2015 and 2017. The article outlines key principles of community engagement for touring companies, and in particular, the tour's practice of local engagement practitioners to lead on audience development for each venue.

The Together Project – a producer's toolkit How can companies and venues do audience engagement better?

A guidance document written on the back of the Together Project (see above), contains useful learning about what works – and doesn't – in terms of audience development and engagement for touring productions.



Burn the Curtain, The Hunting of the Snark, 2018. Image copyright: Theo Moya

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