

# Access to Arts Evaluation Report

A programme of creative activity and visits for vulnerable people  
2009 – 2010, Nottingham, UK



Developed and delivered by  
**Double Impact**  
with  
Framework and City Arts



**Funded by**  
The Transformation Fund

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# 1. Introduction

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Access to Arts is a programme of visits to arts venues, supported by creative activity, designed to increase the independent use of these venues in Nottingham by vulnerable and socially excluded people.

This evaluation reports on a six-month programme funded through the Transformation Fund, engaging with 68 adult learners to provide an innovative, inclusive and accessible route into learning.

The programme targeted service users of Double Impact, Framework and City Arts. These are vulnerable people who experience significant social exclusion due to a wide range of factors including substance misuse/ dependence, homelessness, poor educational and offending backgrounds, mental health problems and long-term unemployment.

The programme has used the arts to engage participants often inhibited with numeracy, literacy and well-being problems or fears of traditional learning styles. It strived to give participants opportunities to discover excitement, enrichment and potential in learning, to progress at their own pace, engage in new ways of learning, and include them in the cultural life of the city.

It was anticipated that regular participation would support individuals' levels of engagement and retention within their support service and enhance progress towards personal goals related to substance abuse, education and employment.

Double Impact has been developing arts-based activities with this target group for the past five years. In 2007-8 Double Impact led a 12-month programme of workshops and visits to arts venues working with Framework and City Arts, with an extensive evaluation.

The key findings from this evaluation indicated that there was a demand and potential for developing further provision and have shaped this phase of Access to Arts.

## 2. The Programme

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The overall aim of the programme was to offer innovative, supported, informal learning opportunities for vulnerable people from 'hard to reach' groups, achieved through partnership between service providers and arts providers. To deliver this the programme sought to:

- Introduce a programme of supported visits to arts venues
- Provide a programme of different creative opportunities, including workshops at Double Impact and City Arts, an artist's residency and a city centre exhibition exploring new spaces and times for informal learning
- Enable exchange between participants and organisations to inform provision and programming
- Provide opportunities to engage in informal learning involving the use of new technology
- Research and identify structures and strategies for partnerships to secure support and funding for ongoing activity

The intention was that this approach to delivery would support the following outcomes:

- Increase the creative, intellectual and social skills among participants, which would lead to an increased take up of personal development opportunities and increased integration with the community;
- Increase the independent use of arts venues in the city by participants;
- Increase skills in building new audiences for arts venues and providers;
- Initiate a forum for participants, service and arts providers for support, partnership and exchange of learning.
- Produce a forward partnership plan to support future funding and delivery

### 2.1 Visits to Venues

The core of the project was a six-month programme of regular weekly visits, managed by a Visit Coordinator, through which participants engaged with local arts venues and services. Already working closely through established relationships with key arts providers including Nottingham Playhouse and Lakeside Arts Centre, the project involved other arts providers including Broadway Cinema, Nottingham Contemporary and the New Art Exchange. The programme enabled regular, meaningful contact with the arts for participants in a supported structure. Each weekly visit was supported by the venues through practical workshops, reduced price tickets, talks, tours and suggested opportunities for further visits. Visits introduced visual arts, digital arts, music, dance, drama, heritage, photography and film in mainstream, commercial and alternative venues. To support the programme venues were offered induction and training on working with vulnerable people and 'hard to reach' groups, delivered by the referral partners and participants.

## 2.2 Creative Opportunities

Double Impact and City Arts offered participants practical arts workshops to engage participants with their own creativity and compliment the visits programme. Delivered by artists, the content maintained a flexible and responsive approach. It included a range of activities such as painting, drawing, printmaking, sculpture, ceramics, textiles, digital photography, film and animation.

The City Council's Light Night in February also created an opportunity for Double Impact participants to stage an interactive art piece and contribute to the city's cultural offer.

Towards the end of the six-month period an artist worked more intensively with participants over two weeks to create a collaborative work. They explored a new model of workshop practice, introducing new times and space for creative learning, with emphasis on new technology and the collective, democratic nature of the group.

## 2.3 Partnership Development

'Open Forum', a new city-wide forum for participants and organisations involved in arts and health has been initiated through this programme, offering mutual support to exchange experiences and information to inform training and programming in Nottingham.

In recognition that smaller scale programmes, such as Access to Arts, have limited resources for developing sustainable delivery, this programme has also invested in specific research to identify the structures and strategies needed to enable partnership work to maintain co-provision and development. The research was undertaken by City Arts and explores new delivery ideas for practical partnership activity and the foundations for longer term funding. It also provides advocacy material to present to local and national departments and agencies, Arts Council England and Charitable Trusts active in this area.



## 3. The Evaluation

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This evaluation reports the experience of participants involved in the Access to Arts Programme, and its effect on arts venues and partners. It is a self-evaluation written and produced by the Access to Arts delivery team.

It has involved the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data throughout the programme.

The evaluation has three main purposes:

- To celebrate the experience of the programme
- To inform potential funders about its worth
- And to inform decision-making about how to improve and shape future initiatives of this kind

Underpinning the evaluation were the following assumptions:

- A range of data gathering methods would be necessary to capture the experience of the participants and partners.
- Involving participants in the evaluation process would be empowering and facilitate understanding their own experience, and illicit more honest responses
- Creative methods would provide a more comprehensive portrait of participants experience than words alone.
- Given a six-month programme, where continuity of participation was uncertain, emphasis would have to be on the short and medium-term outcomes.

### 3.1 Evaluation Design

The main aim of the evaluation was to document the experience of the participants and partners in the Access to Arts programme and provide evidence of its usefulness to inform future policy decisions. Specific objectives were to:

- Identify whether participants' involvement in the Access to Arts programme enhanced their confidence to access arts venues more independently.
- Assess the impact of the programme on participants creativity and personal development
- Examine what impact the programme may have had on arts venues and partner organisations.

### 3.2 Database for Evaluation Report

Data for the findings which follow were based on 42 preliminary questionnaires on registering for the programme and a total of 19 questionnaires after each cycle of visits (for various reasons - joining the programme late or leaving the final visit early - some participants missed filling in these forms, the percentages in the text refer to percentages of those who returned the questionnaires,) case study interviews with three participants, interview responses to questions on impact and organisation from the partner organisations, excerpts from the group journal, observations of the visits and post-visit discussions by participants and the co-coordinator, participants comments and artists' feedback from the workshop and residency aspects of the programme and photographs of art work. The report's artworks have been produced by



participants in the programme and all comments in italics stem from them, except where stated otherwise. Photographs of the visits were taken by participants or the Visits Coordinator.

### 3.3 Ethics

The evaluation adopted a participatory approach to the collection and analysis of data underpinned by the ethical principles of collaboration, confidentiality, negotiation, and accessibility. The exact procedures adopted were as follows:

- Confidentiality was maintained throughout in interviews, observations and recording of experience.
- Participants' real names are not used in the report, only their role designation is used. Where it was not possible to keep participants anonymous, clearance was sought from the individuals concerned and permission to use them has been granted.
- Permission was given by the group for the inclusion of excerpts from the collective journal.
- To ensure accuracy and fairness, aspects of the report that affected particular groups were shared with them for the opportunity to comment on their observations in the context of reporting.
- In the interests of furthering learning about the programme the final report is available to all participants, partners, other arts and health organisations and the wider public.

Copyright of the report lies with Double Impact.



## 4. Visits Programme Findings

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The visits programme was supported by a coordinator who organised the four six-week visit programmes, maintained contact with and provided support to participants. Part of this role involved imparting information about the venues and events, transport information and maps as well as letting participants know where they could get this information for themselves to keep abreast of future events. To support attendance the coordinator sent a text or telephoned through details of the coming visit each week as a reminder, to build a register of who to expect on the day, and backfill any spare places with participants on the waiting list.

Emphasis was placed on making the visits informal and accessible encouraging enjoyment, discussion and debate. Each visit was followed by a café visit to relax, chat and discuss what had been seen and heard. It also provided an opportunity for the coordinator to give details about the following week's visit and other local arts opportunities, and the participants a chance to comment and contribute to the group diary, one of the methods of gaining data for the evaluation.

Each visits programme offered twelve spaces – four places for each referral partner. It was up to each partner organisation to decide how to fill their four places. A referral form was developed to include data required by the Transformation Fund, participants' expectations, how often they visited arts venues, details of their skills and interests, mobility needs, and other issues that could effect their participation and the programme's risk assessment.

The form also asked participants to sign up to the programme's ground-rules:

- To not use alcohol or non-prescription drugs before during or immediately after the programme visits.
- To be sensitive and respectful to each other and to staff supporting the programme.

The programme delivered 30 group visits to 12 different venues with 37 individuals from three partner organisations attending the visits programme. Referrals from the three organisations were split between 43% from Double Impact, 30% from City Arts and 27% from Framework.

### 4.1 Expectations

Before joining the visits programme participants were asked what benefits they hoped to achieve through the programme. 46% indicated that they wanted to meet people and socialise, and 27% wanted to learn more about the Arts, one person was keen *"to get my creative part of myself engaged again. To be inspired to use my creative skills"*, another's motivation was *"maintenance of sobriety"*, a third *"to have a deeper understanding of what's on display and group discussions"* and another shared that his motivation was for his own *"personal development – meeting people. I love culture, it educates you and expands your mind"*.



## 4.2 Independent Access

One of the objectives of Access to Arts was to increase independent access to arts venues by vulnerable people. This was an ambitious task especially in a short-term programme of six-week slots or even two six-week slots (some participants signed up more than once). Some indicated that depression and not having anyone to go with had prevented them from having the motivation to go out, with an average of 60% saying that before the programme they rarely or never visited a cinema, art gallery museum or theatre. By contrast, at the end of the six-week programmes 84% said that they felt more confident about visiting new places.

On completion of the programme participants were asked if they would return to venues again. Of the five most visited venues in the programme, 90% said that they would return to The Art Organisation; 86% would revisit Nottingham Playhouse; 86% would return to the Broadway Cinema and 80% would return to Lakeside Arts Centre and 71% would revisit Nottingham Contemporary. (Interestingly once practical sessions linked to exhibitions was introduced with the Visual Arts Education Officer at Lakeside 100% of participants said they would return).

Participants are now taking the initiative. One of the participants from the last six-week programme has set up a new self-run group, Abstract Space, for people who enjoyed meeting for Access to Arts visits and want to keep going. They will decide together what to go and see, making the most of the free cultural offer in Nottingham and enjoying the company of the group.

When asked if the project had made her feel differently about anything one participant responded with yes, she now felt that the *“arts in the city is accessible to people like me”*.

Daniel mentions in his case study that his highlights were the performances and linked workshops at Nottingham Playhouse. The group were able to watch rehearsals and contribute by reading parts. This gave the group a better understanding of the play they were about to see. He felt glad he had the opportunity to see really diverse performances and states that he is *“keen to carry on going with other friends”*

Independent access was also generated and maintained through the friendship groups that developed in the programme. Staff on the visits endeavoured to make the occasion relaxed and accessible, establishing a positive group atmosphere and encouraging social interaction. As a result friendship groups formed, and on several occasions participants mentioned that they had met up with each other outside of the visits for social events. One participant commented that what she'd appreciated most was, *“getting out and meeting people and sharing the whole experience”*

Socialising for many was a vital part of the programme, and on several occasions participants indicated that going to the café after the venue visit provided an opportunity they didn't have elsewhere to talk about arts with other interested people. As one participant commenting on what she most valued confirms,

*“just being involved with like-minded people who probably have the same preconceptions about things as I had”*

### 4.3 Confidence

Helping participants gain confidence was a key part of encouraging independent access. This was achieved in a number of ways - through the friendships that developed, the group itself, the sharing of experience, and the structure of the programme. 33% of people referred to the programme stated they had current mental health issues, and 24% of this total identifying they had depression and anxiety. By the end of the programme 84% said that they were feeling more confident and 89% felt more motivated; 95% keen to try something new and 84% feeling more confident to visit new places.

Many participants gained confidence from the group experience itself. For some it was gaining confidence to appreciate art and express their opinions in a safe environment. Grace noted that,

*“an honest account of how you find it, this was encouraged, critiquing something, having the right to do it. You don’t have to like everything and it was good to be able to discuss things with others and find out that some people feel the same way”*

Grace also explained the importance of the group for her in trying something new, she *“might not have necessarily chosen to visit the ballet”*, however *“I really enjoyed it”*, she admits it was good to do things she wouldn’t have done otherwise on her own without the group. The most important aspect for her was being part of the group, the *“companionship”* and *“social aspects”*.

A visits journal and digital camera were available for each visit for participants to document their experience. The camera was used by the participants on occasion, and initially the journal was only used by a few. The coordinator tried introducing a digital audio recorder as an alternative and this was used by some, but as participants became more confident with the concept of sharing their views comments and drawings were added to the journal each week.



## 4.4 Diversity of the Group

The diverse nature of the group (of different ages and vulnerabilities) was a really positive aspect to the visits experience. The co-ordinator observed that there was a good atmosphere and camaraderie in the group, people were accepting, listening and supportive of each other. Several participants recognised this as a strength, one person noting, *"It has made me appreciate people's difference more"*, and another commenting,

*"it gives you an awareness of how other people live; and how they are; and how they visit groups, and what they do with their time; and what's out there"*

Indeed several participants commented to the coordinator that they felt this open acceptance of each other also helped participants feel more open and willing to experience new, sometimes challenging, artwork. By the end of the programme 84% said they felt more confident in meeting new people and having their opinions valued by others.

This group confidence was also observed by the venues. On more than one occasion venue staff made unprompted comments that they had really enjoyed talking with such an engaged and enquiring group.

## 4.5 Structure and Support

The structure of the programme itself - having a place to go each week - was a critical factor in giving participants confidence in meeting and talking with people. For many these visits were a way of filling their time with positive activity. Due to previous addictions, housing, or mental health issues, people were leading isolated, sometimes disordered lives. Having something structured to do on a Wednesday afternoon, to get out and about and access a provision that wasn't related to personal problems had value for them as something diversionary, social and positive. One participant expressed that the most helpful aspect of the programme for her was

*"being part of a group and having something else to focus on apart from problems!"*

What facilitated this process was the consistency of the visit's staff who helped participants overcome initial anxieties of being in unfamiliar environments with unfamiliar people. Warm welcomes from the venues were key in fostering confidence too.

*"This was my first time with the arts group – it was great and thought provoking experience. It was a good crowd to enjoy my first experience of being at the Nottingham Playhouse and cannot wait for the next meeting. Brilliant!"*

Two participants were approached to volunteer for the final six-week programme, and they provided valuable support to the group. Daniel was particularly keen and provided key support to another participant with learning disabilities, as well as helping organise taxi transport after evening visits.

Access to Arts covered the costs of the visits, including tickets, refreshments and transport. Taxis were on offer for return journeys after evening visits, which was appreciated and taken up by the majority of the participants, some commenting that wouldn't have felt confident attending the evening activities if this support had not been available. Childcare costs were also budgeted for, with one participant taking up the offer.

## 4.6 Creativity and Intellectual Skills

Another major objective of the programme was to engage or re-engage participants with their own creativity and 38% said before joining the programme that an expected benefit was to use their creativity to learn more about art. By the end of the six months 79% of participants said they had learnt more about being creative as a result of their involvement. Participants talked about the art they were making at home directly inspired by the talks and activity during the visits led by curators, programmers, directors and artists.

The quality of arts on offer through the venues played an important part in expanding participants experience and intellectual thinking around the power and relevance of the arts. One participant's comment in the visits diary reveals her connection with the Pork Knocker Dreams exhibition at The New Art Exchange,

*"Beautiful, still sculptures with mystery and grace, full of stories – fascinating...  
Dance Like Your Dad – I found this very poignant, as I've recently lost my Dad.  
Fascinating to work out how the artist choreographed the movements"*

A new addition to the programme was Nottingham Playhouse's extended offer to provide a programme of contrasting plays linked to an activity for each theatre visit. The offer provided an opportunity to compare and contrast styles of theatre and included talks, tours, meeting with the Artistic Director, script reading sessions and a chance to observe and engage in a rehearsal. This was welcomed by the group, and served to provide more context and a 'way in' to the performances, as the following two comments, about The Caucasian Chalk Circle workshop and play suggest:

*" I have never done anything like this before and found it really interesting. I found I had a voice I forgot I had! That was the workshop... the play we are half way through and liking it a lot – very clever and enthralling"*

*" The workshop in the afternoon was really interesting I loved it. We're half way through the play now and I'm really enjoying it. Because of the workshop in the afternoon, it made me watch and listen to the play more than I normally would as I'm very easily distracted"*



The Playhouse Education officer observed that

*“a sense of unity presided amongst the group as users had opportunities to discuss personal memories and issues related to performances, this provoked further thought and discussion... after the show”*

Another participant mentioned that the Playhouse workshops had directly inspired him to join the Double Impact drama group.

The introduction of practical activities and more in-depth introductions to the exhibition at Lakeside were also much appreciated by the group. The Visits Coordinator noted that most participants were initially very sceptical of The Quiet Revolution exhibition of assemblage works using household objects, but through discussion and some practical making she noticed a dramatic change in opinion and new appreciation of the works:

*“ The exhibition was thought provoking, didn’t expect to enjoy it but actually did. The sculpture making was great”*



## 4.7 New Horizons

From the evidence in the interviews, questionnaires and observations, the visits programme has been successful in broadening the horizons of many of the participants, challenging and changing perceptions of what art is and can be.

It also helped to break down barriers, helping participants realise that they can access different kinds of art in the city, including theatre, ballet, classic concerts and contemporary art. The value participants placed on venues differed, and one or two visits were not appreciated by a



few. But on the whole the variety of the programme allowed individuals to connect with the art form and themes that engaged them most, as well as encouraging them to have and share an opinion and be open to new experiences. One person said that what she most appreciated was

*“experiencing the difference in venues and types of art, doing something completely new... appreciating something never done or experienced before”*

Daniel shared his expectations and experience of going to the ballet, his comments were echoed by several other participants:

*“I never thought I’d see a ballet, it was not for me.... I cannot believe it”. He was very impressed with the dancers and costumes. When he told his mates he had been to the ballet they couldn’t believe it, he responded with “well if you haven’t seen it, then you don’t know what it’s like, you might as well give it a try”*

He also talked enthusiastically about his role as volunteer on the visits programme; his key worker noted his positive involvement and enjoyment of the role. He has expressed an interest in further voluntary work and hopes it might lead to paid employment opportunities. He has since made enquiries at The Art Organisation. He commented that his Mum has noticed he’s getting out more and glad he’s trying new things *“it’s the best thing that’s happened to me in a long time”*



## 4.8 Reconnection with the City

Several participants stated that the programme had enabled them to see what the city had to offer and to understand what they are a part of. Seeing society and culture as something that they could contribute to, and that their contribution was legitimate and valued has helped motivate them to re-engage with life and society, feel included and able to exercise their right to access its public spaces.

One participant shared how the programme had helped him rediscover a sense of self worth: *“involvement in the arts confirms project members are more than the substance to which they*

*are addicted*". He also went on to note that the programme had provided the focus for him to practice skills in communicating with others, trying something new and feeling motivated.

Amongst the Double Impact participants who regularly attended the programme, and who the evaluation was able to track, the organisation has reported 17 positive outcomes for this group including four participants who have moved into improved housing, two who have begun accredited courses at college and two who have moved into full-time work. Although it is difficult to attribute the extent of the programme's influence in these achievements over other factors in people's lives, some of their individual testimony helps to indicate its value:

Alan summarises his experience,

*"I have been in denial for so long, I want to recover and stop the drink, not spend money on drink. I want to get into painting...I am interested in pursuing something to do with the arts as a career"*. He has since enquired about starting an accredited arts course at college, with support from an employment support service. He spoke about how the project had made him feel differently about trying new things:

*"If you don't know, why not go and have a look, keep an open mind"*.



## 5. Creative Activity Findings

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Another aspect of the programme was to provide an additional variety of opportunities for participants to develop their own creativity, and engage with new technology. The programme engaged 56 people with these creative opportunities.

Double Impact held a drop-in weekly arts workshop at their service base in Nottingham and City Arts delivered a block of six animation workshops at their centre. Towards the end of the six-month programme a two-week artist residency took place to provide access to a new space and a new way of working. In addition Nottingham City Council also commissioned Double Impact to deliver an interactive art piece for Nottingham's Light Night festival in February. The creative output from these activities were presented together as a public exhibition at The Art Organisation in March 2010.



## 5.1 Weekly Drop-In Workshops at Double Impact

In the initial weeks time was put aside to discuss with participants what they hoped to get from attending the sessions and what they had gained from previous arts workshops at Double Impact. It was important for them to feel ownership of the arts group and input ideas for themes and media. The intention was for the sessions to offer the space, time and support for participants to develop as artists. At the outset each person was given a sketchbook and folder to record and develop their work.

During discussions about what kind of arts provision participants wanted, comments included

*“I want time to finish the artwork that I start, instead of having to start something new each week whether I’m ready or not.”* Through this process three objectives were agreed upon.

- A relaxed atmosphere where no-one felt rushed
- Time for people to develop and finish their work
- A safe environment where there was respect for everybody

This approach helped to distil some initial apprehension felt by some of the participants.

Daniel said he had doubts that his own artwork *“wasn’t good enough”*, however with encouragement from his key worker now believes it’s good to just *“have a go”* and appreciates that *“it opens up all sorts.”* Another participant,

*“felt a bit daunted at the thought of drawing but completely enjoyed it once I got going. Now I don’t want to stop”*

Managing the drop-in environment on these terms was at times a logistical challenge but one the artists were committed to. The approach evolved in response to the individuals’ pace and interests each week. The timing of each topic was determined by how long the participants felt they needed. This approach evolved into workshops that often had several different art activities running at once. The artists worked closely with each participant to co-ordinate the sessions.

*“Because we would often have new participants arrive and also some people who didn’t attend each week, we felt it was important that we allow new people to join in a project partway through, and also to keep someone’s work available for them to continue with even if they missed a few weeks. We were keen that participants always felt welcome to come and join in, whatever might have prevented them from attending a previous session”. (artist)*

Participant feedback confirms their appreciation for this approach,

*“Engrossed. Thoroughly enjoyed it. Allowed to do my own things – pastel drawings. Not done any for years. Very happy with finished product and the service and resources I was given’*

*“For few weeks I do find [the] arts workshop the most pleasure and inspiring activity in Double Impact. Lots of help, careful attention filling the day with love and creating something new”*

Some themes and media were more popular than others; the clay work was very accessible and many people who attended these sessions were keen to develop their ideas in clay and not try other media. Others however were keen to experiment and relished the opportunity to explore working with different materials.

*“ I absolutely love the art group. I haven’t done art since primary school so it’s an amazing opportunity to try it again. I love using the variety of materials – felts, clay, pastels and scratchboard. it is a couple of hours a week when I can escape, relax and express myself freely”*

The artists worked hard to support participants to feel that they were the artists in the project with responsibility and ownership of their work and the outcome, resulting in the final exhibition of their work.

*“ thanks really enjoyed our art group, drawing, sculpturing using clay and media seems to change my mood, my feelings can effect my work, also reckon is really cool we can have an exhibition and meet new people in a safe environment”*



### **5.1.1 Use of New Technology**

The introduction of new technology within the workshops received mixed responses from the participants.

A ‘stand alone’ computer printer was purchased and used as an active part of the workshops within the room. This enabled the artists and participants to scan, make copies and print directly from camera cards during and at the end of each workshop session as a creative and documentary tool.

Participants were encouraged to choose which photographs to print and put into the project album and in return they asked for copies of their own work to keep and put into their folders. At Christmas several participants asked for prints of their artwork to give to their families as presents. As using the printer and digital camera each week became a regular activity the technology was embraced as a useful tool to aid and share creativity. The workshop artist also noted:

*“One participant was so impressed after using the printer that she bought the same model for her own use, telling us that she felt confident that if she had any problems with it she knew that she could ask us for help. When she returned the week after buying it she had discovered a function that we hadn’t yet discovered, which was a boost for her confidence and very useful for us!”*

A laptop was introduced later, enabling use of the Internet as a resource for images and ideas, as well as an opportunity to discuss the Access to Arts website and forum.

However, at Double Impact, attempts to introduce digital media as the focus of creative activity had less successful results. A project to manipulate artwork from the previous week’s work using a photo software program was only embraced by one participant who already used computer software at home. Another attempt to make a digital film of melting ice sculptures was met with disinterest, and as a result the activity was not undertaken. The artist reflects:

*“We realised that for the participants to take up the opportunity to use a new piece of equipment or software it must appear to be useful, relevant and meaningful to them. The times we were less successful in getting people involved were when we didn’t manage to incorporate it fully into the program of work ...when we failed to make the outcome appear worth making the extra effort or risk involved in learning something new. When the new technology, software and equipment were providing useful and quick resources as well as copies of traditionally produced artwork, they were used as an integral part of each week’s project”.*



## 5.2 City Arts Animation Workshops

These sessions were open to individuals who access the Arts on Prescription programme at City Arts, some of whom also attended the Access to Arts visits programme.

Seven people attended the six sessions on a regular basis, and the project provided an opportunity to explore a new medium and produce a group piece of work in collaboration.

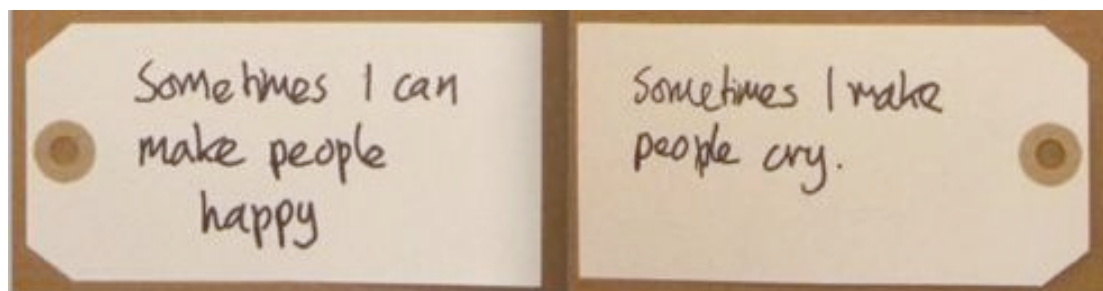
Participants' feedback suggests they appreciated working together, and one person commented *"I have gained concentration and used my mind on different things"*

However it was acknowledged that the length of the project only allowed basic skills to be learnt. It was acknowledged that more workshops would have enabled editing time during sessions, and greater skills development.

## 5.3 Light & Dark

Light Night is a winter festival event, staged by Nottingham City Council, welcoming its residents to come out and enjoy a special night – time spectacle. In 2009 Access to Arts staged a mobile art piece, *Happy Days*, engaging with the public and contributing to the Light Night experience, and this year the programme was commissioned to come back and contribute to Light Night 2010.

Light and Dark was an art piece devised by two artists, and delivered by an Access to Arts team of nine participants from Double Impact. The piece created dancing lines of coloured light and labels, a snapshot portrait of Nottingham people, and a website where all the labels could be read.



The piece received a positive response from the public, engaging over 250 people on the night. The spectacle attracted a wide range of people of different ages, of different kinds of background and experience, all keen to share and interact with the team. The team in turn appreciated the opportunity to engage the public in a creative dialogue.

*" it was fun, insightful and interesting night. I love the idea of using art to connect to the public on a deeper, more personal level. It was great that everybody and anybody could get involved in the creation of the piece, and I felt privileged to hear people's stories of the light and dark sides of their lives"*

*" Definitely one of the best things I've done this year. I enjoyed the fact that I got people writing in different languages. I'm amazed at the whole idea of it, that people were genuinely curious and keen to get involved"*

For the team of participants this was a new kind of activity, and quite a challenge, to step out on the street as part of an artwork. The activity generated a real energy and sense of camaraderie



among the team. They expressed their enjoyment and pride in the success of the project, their surprise in their confidence in approaching the public and their appreciation of the opportunity to become visible and valued contributors to the cultural life of the city.

*“great to see the city come alive, with everyone coming together, there was a lovely atmosphere, amazing night. Really good to get stuck in”*

Nottingham City Council Principal Arts Officer has supported the development of arts activities with Double Impact service users and was keen to commission Double Impact, she sent the following message to congratulate the team,

*“I hope you are able to pass on my thanks to the whole team who delivered Light and Dark. The concept was excellent, both in terms of its relevance to the group and to the event... I am delighted with the outcome. I think it shows how well Nottingham is able to engage on a very personal / individual level with its public on such a busy night”*



## 5.4 Artist's Residency

The specific aim of this element of the programme was to give Access to Arts and participants the opportunity to work alongside an artist and be part of the process of devising, and creating artworks. The residency was rooted in exploring the notion that it is possible to create a space where people from a wide range of backgrounds and with a vast array of skills and experience can interact, work and create together, away from concepts of hierarchical structures and terms like service provider and service user.

36 people from the three delivery partners accessed the 10 days of the residency. It provided a different format to the workshops, offering a more intense experience over a two –week period, opening up new spaces and times for informal learning. The group worked collectively to explore an idea and experiment with new technology, producing a final piece of work that can be shown beyond a single exhibition at conferences, festivals and events in and beyond the city.

The group decided on a name for the activity, 'Collective Production'. It was agreed that the aim of the project would be to work collectively to create a portrait of the environment through themselves (the group) and the people around, drawing out that which we have in common, rather than that which sets us apart. This was largely achieved through filmed interviews with members of the public across Nottingham city centre.





### 5.4.1 Residency Structure

The project was less clearly structured than participants had been used to, and this approach had mixed success. It was successful because it challenged individuals to step out of themselves, find a voice and become active creators. It also challenged them to do this safely in a group environment. The end result of this was a sense of empowerment and purpose. A participant fed back that they had learnt,

*“ With the right help I could have my own creativity outlet. With the right opportunity I’d make those ideas happen”*

Challenges in communicating the exact nature and scope of the residency, both amongst key partners and to potential participants, led to some of the participants expecting a series of skills-based workshops, essentially a handing-down of a skill from skilled to non-skilled. Whilst this had never been an ambition of the residency, it led to some unmet expectations amongst participants.

Another issue for the project was the loss of the planned shop space where the project was to take place. This led to the use of a more traditional art space, which reduced opportunities for the level of public interaction that had been intended.

Despite these issues the residency was very well attended with an average of 14 people attending each day. All felt that a longer residency would have been beneficial; the artist fed back that a longer residency would have allowed time for him to develop the method of working so that people could begin to understand the difference between a residency and a series of workshops and appreciate the opportunity to experience a more reflective and organic process of shared learning.

The majority of work created utilized new technology and participants were involved in the collection of material using digital video, stills cameras and audio recorders. This inspired some participants into considering accessing film courses in the future. Another participant commented that *“ I am more confident with my camera and I see things in a different way”*.

### 5.4.3 Creative and Intellectual Development

The residency was devised with emphasis on supporting participants to collectively explore the boundaries of their skills and experience; to learn from each other and together make the most of what they could individually bring to the table.

For example, in a group going out to film, there may have been one person who felt happy being on camera, one person happy talking to the public but didn’t want to be filmed, one person happy operating the camera/tripod, and maybe one other who was cautious about taking on a role but was curious. Invariably such a group would come back with everyone having done a bit of everything through watching each other engaging with the activity in different ways. Something that at first seemed daunting and overwhelming became possible and even desirable for participants,

*“ I really enjoyed the challenge of facing the British Public and asking them for some of their time*

*“I learned how to speak out when I needed to and how to be more confident”*

Everyone had a hands-on experience of digital filmmaking. Participants also tested their social skills, learnt from more confident team members, integrated with wider society, and experienced being in a position where they were not only asking the questions (rather than being asked), but had also devised those questions themselves.

Participants were happy to share the benefits of their involvement:

*“ Since starting the course on Monday I have found this course brilliant in terms of how we as a group of people have learnt collectively and learned the skills of creating animation, photography and filmmaking and I have found it has improved my confidence and self –esteem. My time I feel has been well invested”*

*“ I think I have become more confident, able to interact with others, how to rediscover Nottingham, how to create films and use animation”*

‘Research in action’ was the nature of this activity. As a result of wanting ongoing activity, members of the group have felt sufficiently empowered by the process that they are keen to do it for themselves. Two of the participants have self-organised into running an ongoing group and website, Abstract Space, to meet weekly, independently of any ‘providers’ until such time as there may be funding for future activity, or the group finds funding for itself. Four other participants involved in the residency have expressed an interest in volunteering opportunities and joining the ‘Open Forum’.



## 5.5 Public Exhibition

The programme's creative activity culminated in a weeklong public exhibition at The Art Organisation. The show included three short films from the Collective Production residency, a stop motion animation from the City Arts workshops and six months worth of artwork from the Double Impact drop-in sessions. Around fifty people helped to celebrate the opening of the show including staff, board members and directors from the partner organizations, 18 of the participants as well as professionals and service users from arts and health field in the city. As part of the opening speeches two participants volunteered to share their positive experience of the programme.

Feedback was positive from those who attended, one service director commenting that the artwork was extremely engaging. The Art Organisation reported that it had been a popular show from their perspective, with many visitors expressing their appreciation of the artwork.



## 5.6 Access to Arts Website

A website was set up near the start of the project, with an online forum facility built into it. The intention was for participants to use it as a place to post feedback about their experience of the project, to see their work displayed online as it progressed, to inform a wider audience of programme activities and to support the objectives of the face-to-face Open Forum. Training sessions for participants were planned into the project around the Open Forum meetings but due to the pressure of delivering other aspects of the programme and the ambivalence of participants towards the website, development of the resource was deferred. It continued to be used as a means of notifying participants and a wider audience of key programme events and of

showcasing the Light Night event to the general public. Potentially it will be a resource that is adopted by the Open Forum who will decide how best to use it in the future.



## 6. The Venues - Findings

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The 07/08 phase of Access to Arts built good working relationships between the programme and Nottingham Playhouse, Nottingham Castle Museum and Galleries, Broadway Cinema, Lakeside Arts Centre and The Art Organisation.

Two new contemporary art centres have opened within the last 18 months, Nottingham Contemporary and The New Art Exchange. It was envisaged that Access to Arts could provide a link with their education, outreach and community activities as they build their identities in the city. A new relationship with Nottingham's Royal Centre was also developed during this recent programme.

### 6.1 Engaging New Audiences

All of the venues involved felt the programme complemented the education and learning ethos of their organisations.

Many of the venues commented that their audiences did not always reflect the diversity of the local community. Some felt that 'the arts' in general presented a barrier preventing a wider demographic accessing their venues and programmes. The organisations in receipt of public funding spoke of their duty and desire to engage with harder to reach audiences but were concerned that their capacity makes it difficult to achieve this. Venues talked about their *"conscious responsibility in making work accessible"*, and their commitment to ensuring *"arts should be available to as many people as possible"*.

The Access to Arts programme helped to confirm and address this. A disparity emerged between some participants' perceptions of the arts not having relevance for them, and the actual reality of experiencing it. Some participants spoke initially about the *"arts not being for me"*, however once they took the plunge, many asserted that their perceptions began to change, and they became more open to visiting new venues, trying new activities and visiting the venues independently.

Venues talked about the programme's success in *"opening doors wider"*, and Nottingham Playhouse affirmed that the programme had allowed them *"to engage with a group of people not thinking that it is on their cultural map"*, and extended the skills of their staff in working and responding to the needs of more vulnerable groups. The New Art Exchange appreciated that the programme enabled an environment where participants and gallery staff were able to take part in a two-way discussion, and Nottingham Contemporary welcomed a *"great opportunity to get an honest understanding of the audiences needs"*.

### 6.2 Awareness Training

Awareness training around working with 'hard to reach' groups, was offered to arts venue staff; there was a low take up from the venues despite several possible dates being offered. The feedback was that, although interested in the training, the majority of arts venues staff were too

overloaded with work in other areas to attend. The key venue contacts, many in education and / or outreach roles, felt confident in their ability to work with harder to reach groups, however they stated that widening awareness within their organisations would still be useful. Access to Arts will continue to explore, with venues, how best to deliver this, potentially through the Open Forum.

### 6.3 Extending the Offer

Feedback from participants and venues indicated that the most successful visits were the ones that had been planned specifically for the group. Indeed attending public talks appeared to alienate some participants and confirm some of their negative perceptions.

The coordinator noted that the most successful visits didn't necessarily require a practical workshop. A warm welcome with an opportunity to view and discuss the art with knowledgeable staff at the group's own pace, proved to be key factors in supporting participants' positive experience and engagement.

Most venues engaged well with the programme and many are keen to play a greater role in the design and planning of future programmes. Towards the end of the programme Access to Arts invited the venues to two meetings, both of which were well attended, to gauge their support and help plan for future provision.

Venues felt that this work, if longer-term, could be embedded and supported through their current education programmes, including volunteering and accreditation opportunities. In order to achieve this some have suggested ways to formalise a partnership, and explore a joint approach to delivery. Others were not sure they could commit to a consortium approach and favoured a more informal network.

Both Lakeside Arts Centre and Nottingham Playhouse offered additional activities to complement the visits programme, and both have suggested that more sustained visits from the same group could enhance the relationships made and help them improve and extend their offer. Nottingham Playhouse suggested extending individuals' engagement from six to twelve weeks, enabling a greater *"quality of experience"*, in order to *"better target what is being offered in responding to people's needs"*. Nottingham Contemporary expressed a wish to develop a more tailor-made offer to help in *"breaking down barriers to visiting a contemporary art gallery"* and exploring getting *"involved in the venue in different ways"*.

It was felt that Access to Arts was a good model that links policy priorities with provision. To strengthen their commitment the venues also suggested a consistent evaluation framework to share learning between Access to Arts and the venues. This could help all parties communicate outcomes for reporting and advocacy purposes, as well as shape and inform ongoing delivery.

## 7. Managing the Programme - Findings

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The programme was delivered in partnership between three voluntary sector organisations, Double Impact, City Arts and Framework, with Double Impact initiating and managing the programme.

Successful working relationships existed between the partners through co-delivery of the 2007/2008 Access to Arts programme; partners had already developed ways of working together, addressing issues that inhibited delivery, and sharing the learning achieved through an extensive evaluation.

The management of the partnership was further supported through the two focus group meetings open to participants and partners to track experiences and shape the programme as it developed.

### 7.1 Planning and Delivery

One of the requirements of the funding body was that a work plan for the project was devised and agreed upon. This initial thinking process meant that partners were clear from the start about their own particular roles and responsibilities within the delivery of the work. There was an enthusiasm, commitment and support for the activity from all partners throughout the project, despite staff and funding changes at Framework.

Appropriate levels of staff support were planned into the budget from the start from City Arts, with the other two organisations providing support in kind to the visits strand of activity. This enabled good equality of participation. Extra support needs for high support participants were met by other members of partner staff where necessary, for example an Occupational Therapist accompanied one participant, and a City Arts staff member was able to support a visually impaired man to attend a six week programme of visits. Clear policies around risk assessment were in place from the start of the project, which minimised inappropriate referrals.

Issues around low attendance were identified early on and constructive attempts were made by the partnership to address this. Due to the trust that existed between the partners, there was good cooperation to deal with any issues as they arose, such as any challenging behavior from participants, or on one occasion concerns over a misunderstanding between a front of house staff member and a participant.

However, one significant issue was the underestimation of how much time would be needed to manage the project. This was in part due to the proposal having to be written in a short space of time with a limited turnaround time between notification of the award and the start of the activity. Fortunately the project manager was supported by Double Impact to spend a significant amount of her paid time to manage the programme. Added to this was the fact that the proposal itself was ambitious in its content, and in retrospect may have contained too many elements for the strict timescale of six months allowed by the funders.



The Double Impact manager fed back that the experience of managing the activity was complex and intense and had some impact on communication between the partners. It was a challenge to schedule in enough partnership meeting time with many key staff managing heavy workloads outside of the project. More face-to-face meetings would have been beneficial to ensure good understanding of the processes involved and the aims and objectives of the activity, for example complex referral procedures took a while to bed in.

There was commitment to leave aspects of the programme flexible and open to input from participants which helped participants' access and investment in the programme, although this approach did mean that on occasions there was little time to think through, develop or communicate ideas and changes to partners and other participants.

Due to time pressures some aspects of the programme felt rushed. Some key decisions were left rather late such as booking premises for the residency, leading to issues of suitability later on. There was a lack of clarity at times between key staff about the intent and importance of certain more complex elements of the project. It was felt that the programme would have benefited from a paid project manager, with support from staff within Double Impact and Framework staff teams included as support in kind.

Half way through the programme Framework lost funding for part of its service that was involved in the programme and two key staff members were lost in quick succession. Rather than try and find a new partner at a late stage in the project, the remaining staff member was consulted, who agreed to champion the project within the organisation and take responsibility for making referrals. Due to her personal commitment to, and belief in the work, Framework were able to continue as a partner and their referrals remained regular. This did impact on the support they could offer other aspects of the activity but the other partners successfully backfilled this.

Despite these challenges the partners were able to refer and support participants' access to the programme successfully and report on the benefits of the programme for their service users. They are keen to continue developing future provision together, and given City Arts' experience of, and networks with, arts and health provision locally, the organisations are exploring repositioning City Arts as the lead agency within the partnership.

## 7.2 Partnership Research

Building on connections made with health and social care organisations, arts providers and participants in the city, the programme also had a focus on researching and developing local partnership to support ongoing provision. Having experienced issues of capacity and gaps in funding in the past, this research was seen as critical to the future development of the programme.

City Arts led the action research, exploring practical ways to exchange learning between organisations, and between organisations and participants, to enable increased co-operation and improved provision in the future.

The programme's participants, partners and venues were interviewed and a report was produced. The research addresses concerns of exclusion and marginalisation of vulnerable groups from mainstream cultural provision, and through its findings offers creative solutions through partnership and practical activity. The report helps to inform the findings and recommendations of this evaluation.

## 7.3 User Forum

A key positive outcome of the partnership work was the initiation of the new citywide arts User Forum, the 'Open Forum'; this created real opportunities for completely new partnerships to be formed for work beyond the scope and timescale of this programme.

Over the duration of the project the relationship between Double Impact and City Arts in particular, strengthened, and increasing trust led to a development of City Arts' role within the partnership – as the potential driver of the User Forum. The burgeoning support from the various arts venues became more apparent and a decision was made to redirect funds to enable a key staff member from City Arts to work up a proposal for future funding of the activity. Discussions and thinking around a new model for the proposal leaned towards the repositioning of City Arts as the lead agency within the partnership, a logical progression which intends to bring benefits for participants and both organisations.

The Forum is working to support and develop Access to Arts activity in Nottingham, to share experience and exchange information about what is on offer. 30 – 40 people have attended each of the three meetings to date, with an impressive representation from participants, artists, arts organisations, statutory service providers, health and education organisations.

The intention is to retain a loose shape for the Forum, while it is still growing and learning, before gradually growing more formal processes and structure as it becomes clear what interests and issues can be addressed, and what skills and time people can bring to them. The Access to Arts website is acting as an initial information and contact point.

The forum has begun with four working groups exploring:

Exhibitions: to raise awareness of this forum and offer exhibition opportunity to forum members.

Information: to build a network of contacts to share details of arts provision and activity.

Activities Group: to raise awareness of this forum, to offer creative development opportunities to forum members.

Venues Group: to develop a collaborative approach to support continuing Access to Arts activity.

The Forum anticipates forming additional working groups to look at Training, Partnership and Website work in the future.



## 8. Summary of Key Findings

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### 8.1 Visits programme

#### **Independent access**

Feedback from participants confirmed that many felt the programme introduced them to venues and experiences that have inspired them to return independently with friends. A new self-run group has emerged, led by participants, for people who enjoyed meeting for Access to Arts and want to keep it going.

#### **Enhanced confidence**

Many participants felt they had gained confidence from the programme, appreciating being part of a group with purpose where their opinion and voice was valued. The relaxed environment, welcome from the venues and support from staff encouraged people to try something new.

#### **Support and structure**

The regularity of the visits, organisational support, consistency of staff and volunteer support helped to create an accessible and safe environment for socialising and sharing experiences and opinion. The energy, diversity and encouragement of the group itself was also a strong motivator.

#### **Creativity**

The quality of the arts and activities on offer played an important role in expanding participants experience, creativity and intellectual thinking around the power and relevance of the arts. Practical activity and discussion with knowledgeable staff at the venues stimulated participants to engage with the art on a deeper level.

#### **New Horizons**

The programme helped participants challenge perceptions of what art is and can be and appreciate doing something new, some people discovering or renewing connections with their city. Many have been inspired to continue visiting arts venues, with others motivated to engage in volunteering and formal education.

### 8.2 Creative Activity

#### **Structure**

The Double Impact weekly art group was run as a drop-in space with a focus on creating a relaxed, safe environment where participants could develop as artists at their own pace. Although this proved quite a logistical challenge the artists' commitment to this approach was valued by the participants.

Contributing to Light Night brought added experience and opportunity for the team of participants who helped deliver the work. Participants expressed their pride and appreciation of the opportunity to contribute to the city's cultural offer.

New spaces and models of working were explored. The residency structure wasn't communicated clearly enough to some participants who were expecting a more traditional series of workshops. This led to some disappointment, however it also challenged participants to become active creators themselves and work in a more democratic, collaborative way. It was felt by all that a longer residency would have provided a greater opportunity for more reflective, shared learning.

The end of programme exhibition was well attended and well received by all, and was a fitting way to reflect and celebrate participants' achievements on the programme.

### **Use of new technologies**

Attempts to introduce new technology to the Double Impact weekly workshops had mixed results. Participants were reluctant to engage in developing work where technology was the focus of the creative process, but welcomed technology as a resource for supporting more traditional creative activity.

The animation and residency used technology with more success, as these were programmes participants signed up to in the knowledge that digital equipment and processes would be used. All participants had a hands on experience of digital filmmaking, however both activities felt more time would have been helpful in supporting the lengthy editing process.

The Access to Arts website wasn't used by participants as hoped, but did become an integrated element of the Light Night work. It has potential to be useful to the Forum's future developments if web design training is offered to interested members.

## **8.3 Venues**

### **Engaging new audiences**

Access to Arts helped confirm and address the barriers preventing a wider audience accessing arts provision in Nottingham. Awareness Training for venue staff was not taken up by the venues though it was considered still useful and something that would need to be carefully timetabled in the future.

### **Extending support**

Well attended meetings between Access to Arts and the key venues have helped define and develop their continued support for the programme. The activities for each visit provided by Nottingham Playhouse and Lakeside Arts Centre helped deepen participants' experience of the art and their relationship with the venue. It was agreed that extending individuals' engagement in the programme from six to twelve weeks would help venues develop a more targeted offer and a better quality of experience. Some venues also offered potential placement and qualification opportunities.

Most venues engaged readily with the programme and Access to Arts was seen as a good model for linking policy priorities with provision. A common evaluation framework has been suggested for future activity to help organisations communicate outcomes for reporting to policy funders and share learning.

## 8.4 Managing the programme

### **Planning issues**

Existing relationships between the delivery partners helped to set up the new programme quickly in response to the short notice of the funding opportunity and pressure from the funders to commence delivery almost immediately.

There was enthusiasm and commitment from the organisations to support this new phase of Access to Arts, however the pressurised planning stage had some impact on the management and communication between the partners.

Despite Framework experiencing a loss in funding and staff half way through the programme's delivery they were still able to refer to the programme through the commitment of key remaining staff.

Despite these setbacks the partners were able to refer and support participants access to the programme successfully.

In hindsight the proposal was over ambitious in its content and underestimated how much time would be needed to manage the programme. A paid project manager to support Double Impact's staff and organise more face-to-face communication between partners would have benefited the delivery, although the commitment and hard work of the staff involved helped minimise the impact of this on the quality of delivery for participants.

### **Partnership Research**

The research gathered comment and ideas from the key venues involved in the programme and reflects participants' experiences. The findings offer solutions through partnership to address longer-term provision of activity to develop the work of Access to Arts, and have shaped a new funding proposal.

### **User Forum**

Access to Arts has successfully instigated a citywide forum that is creating real opportunities for new partnerships to explore work beyond the scope and timescale of this programme.

To date the forum has met three times, and attracted an impressive representation from participants, service users, artists and professionals involved in arts and wellbeing agendas. The action research and forum are seen as a useful legacy of the Access to Arts programme and a practical way to develop future strategy and funding to support its future.

## 9. What Next?

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### 9.1 Recommendations

Given the participants', venues', and delivery partners' enthusiasm, commitment to and value of this programme it would be helpful to find ways to:

- Continue supporting vulnerable groups and individuals to access the arts venues and events Nottingham has to offer.
- Given City Arts' experience of and networks with the arts and health agenda, explore repositioning City Arts as the lead agency within the partnership.
- Work closely with venues to extend their offer to develop a more cohesive programme incorporating more activity and discussion utilising the expertise of the venue staff
- Extend individuals' participation in the visits from six weeks to a longer engagement – perhaps twelve weeks.
- Continue offering a regular practical space and time for individuals to explore their own artistic practice at their own pace.
- Gain resources to support and develop a longer artist's residency with input from participants on its design.
- Explore placement and accreditation opportunities within the programme and wider partnership.
- Work with Nottingham City Council to identify further opportunities for Access to Arts to contribute to the city's cultural events calendar.
- Work with venues to identify practical ways to support their staff's professional development in hosting and welcoming more vulnerable adults.
- Find ways to continue the support and development of the User Forum to build and extend this area of work across Nottingham.
- Employ a coordinator to manage the programme's partnerships and development.

## 9.2 Future Development

The partner organisations have been discussing the findings from this recent programme and are seeking support to develop the future of Access to Arts - to include:

- Extending the supported visits programme from 6 to 12 week programmes, and including two day trips per year.
- Offering regular creative workshops and a summer 'artist in residence' programme.
- Exploring a model of feeder workshops for participants to support their access from the referral agency on to the visits programme.
- Supporting venue-led workshops and activity.
- Developing volunteering options within the Access to Arts programme that could feed into existing venue's volunteering schemes.
- Researching appropriate / optional accreditation for participants through partnership with a local college.
- Providing awareness training and support planned in partnership with the venues.
- Developing the User Forum further, with possible links to the Community Cohesion agenda for Nottingham City.



# 10. Acknowledgements

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We would like to thank all the partners and people who have contributed to the compiling of this report with a special appreciation to the participants of Access to Arts who have contributed so much through consultation, the User Forum and Focus Group.

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Workshop Artists

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Community Artist/ Double Impact and City Arts

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## **Venues**

**Broadway Cinema and Media Centre**

Stuart Little

**Lakeside Arts Centre**

Ruth Lewis-Jones

**Nottingham Castle Museum & Galleries**

Rachael Evans

Jo Kemp

**Nottingham Playhouse**

Andrew Breakwell

Allie Spencer

**Nottingham Contemporary**

Bo Olawoye and Associate Artists

**New Art Exchange**

Ian Sergeant and David Schischka Thomas

**The Royal Centre**

David Longford

Neil Bennison

**Wollaton Hall**

**The Art Organisation**

Liam Woodgates

## **Artists**

Karen Elkins

Charlie Slade

Ian Nesbitt

Anthony Donnelly

## **Funders**

Transformation Fund

## **Supported by**

Nottingham City Crime & Drug Partnership

Nottinghamshire County Drug & Alcohol

Action Team

## **Partners**

### **Double Impact**

Double Impact staff team and

Board of Trustees

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The participants

### **Framework**

Pip Barwick

James Boulter

Pat Bent

The participants

# 11. Appendices

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## 11.1 Profiles of Partner Organisations

### **Double Impact**

Double Impact is a non-statutory drugs and alcohol agency founded in 1997, recognised by the Nottingham Crime & Drug Partnership as the primary provider of drug treatment aftercare in the city. The organisation's primary aim is to enable people recovering from problematic drug and alcohol use to move away from social exclusion, towards education, vocational training and employment, as the primary means of social reintegration and sustained positive lifestyle changes. Double Impact supports this process by providing opportunities for personal growth and learning, including high quality arts provision.

### **City Arts**

City Arts is a leading participatory arts organisation dedicated to building confidence, skills and communities through the arts. Believing that active engagement in the arts can enrich people's lives, City Arts works in a wide range of art forms with diverse groups and individuals, prioritising those who are marginalised or disadvantaged, to help bring this about. City Arts has developed particular expertise in research-based work, particularly in the area of arts and healthy communities, including 'Art in Mind', and 'Arts on Prescription', both ground-breaking community arts programmes developed and evaluated in partnership with the University of Nottingham. They are also leading a region-wide arts and health Big Lottery Research programme bid in partnership with universities, health and arts organisations across the East Midlands.

### **Framework**

Framework's mission is to help homeless and vulnerable people by providing high quality housing, support, prevention, and training services. They enable people throughout Nottinghamshire to live independent lives by offering choice and opportunity. The links between homelessness and poverty, social exclusion, family breakdown, domestic violence, drugs, alcohol and mental health difficulties are very strong. To tackle these issues their services include: Accommodation; Advice and Day Centres; Education, Volunteering and Employment - learning and training services; Floating Support - preventing homelessness by helping vulnerable people in their own home.

## 11.4 Case studies

### Case Study One

Daniel is a white British male, is 42 years old and began accessing Double Impact around two years ago (2008). This has been a lifeline for Daniel who says that he experienced a lot of 'closed doors' and he's not had good experiences of services where he currently lives in inner City Nottingham. He stated that Double Impact was the best service that he had come across. Daniel has always been very interested in art and painting; his first memories were of doing art at school. He has a large collection of artwork at home and has always liked visiting museums and galleries. His first involvement at Double Impact was when he started accessing the service, and getting involved in setting up an exhibition at The Waterstones Gallery 'View from the Top'. He also recalls an exciting trip to Liverpool as part of the last Access to Arts programme and visiting exhibitions such as Gustav Klimt and about the slave trade.

He said that he had doubts that his own artwork *"wasn't good enough"*, however with encouragement from his key worker now thinks it's good to *"just have a go"* and says that *"it opens up all sorts"*.

Daniel has been a very active member of the Access to Arts programme and hasn't missed many of the art groups. He has really enjoyed the sessions and states, *"I never thought I'd see a ballet, it was not for me"*, he said, *"I couldn't believe it"*. He was very impressed with the dancers and costumes; however he didn't understand much of the story, but once reading the booklet understood a lot more. Daniel talks about *"lost years"* and that in his own area, his mates would rather go down to the pub and clubbing, *"it's normal"*. When he told his mates he had been to see the ballet they couldn't believe it, he responded with *"well if you haven't seen it, then you don't know what it's like, you might as well give it a try"*. Daniel thinks that people in his area wouldn't really be interested in art and that there is not much going on in the local community. He is trying to get away from going down to the pub all the time *"I am interested in a lot more"*.

Access to Arts:

Access to Arts *"is a good release for everybody, everyone can be really open and talk about things"*.

On the whole Daniel has really enjoyed Access to Arts, although there was some tension between some members of the group sometimes. He didn't really enjoy a couple of the exhibitions like Star City and David Hockney at Nottingham Contemporary, however they were quite interactive and he liked using the sketchbooks. He did state however *"I was happy to give it a go"*.

Daniel was keen to highlight a couple of the events that stood out for him, visits to Wollaton Park for example. He loved the way the tour guide told ghost stories and the history of the place. He stated, *"the guy was really good and handled the group really well"*. Nottingham Playhouse was another highlight for Daniel. He liked that the sessions were really interactive. The group were able to watch rehearsals and contribute by reading parts. This gave the group a better understanding when the words came up in the show. He had the opportunity to see shows that were really diverse and states that he is *"keen to carry on going with other friends"*. He says, *"I always looked forward to the sessions and has even made friends"*. The Access to Arts group is planning to continue meeting up on Wednesdays independently beyond the programme.

### Creative Skills:

Daniel was first inspired when he attended a trip by Double Impact to Grafton Sands and saw standing figures on the beach by Anthony Gormley. This gave him an idea for a planned exhibition called 'Openings'. Whilst walking on the beach he found two pieces of stone with holes in, he took them back with him and made a sculptural piece for the exhibition called 'Open Erosion'. Daniel said *"I took ownership of this and put it up myself"*.

In past workshop sessions, Daniel says that he and others have felt rushed as there was a need to complete work at the end of each session, *"this is difficult when people are vulnerable"*. This time during Access to Arts; *"work can be continued in different sessions"*; this has helped his creativity as it has *"given me time to think"*.

Daniel has also been involved in digital photography sessions and learnt how to superimpose images onto one another. Other workshops at the venues have included the use of photography, for example at the Lakeside Arts Centre. He thinks it is important as he has also been able to *"support others in the group"* and that *"I get a buzz from it and it costs nothing"*. Daniel also attended some of the film sessions during the residency and took a friend along and introduced him to the artist, his friend also makes short films. During these sessions he met an elderly couple in the street in Nottingham and was really happy that he met them; *"the workshops gave people the chance to meet people you wouldn't normally talk to"* and the exhibition *"got people out and away from what they know"*. Daniel volunteered to help set up the show and dismantle it. He said that he was glowing after all the thanks he got from staff in helping out; he said that this *"has given me confidence and better social skills"*.

### Future Outcomes:

Daniel often talks to his mum about his experiences and he says that his mum has noticed he is getting out more and glad he trying new things and enjoying himself, *"it's the best thing that has happened to me in a long time"*.

Daniel is very interested in getting involved in voluntary work that potentially leads to full-time employment opportunities. He says that he has since been to The Arts Organisation (one of the partner venues) and *"wonders if there is any voluntary work for me there"*. He said that this came about because his key worker had noticed he was really involved and really enjoying supporting other people.

## Case Study Two

Grace is an African -Caribbean lady who is 52 years old. She starts off by saying that she has had a lot of problems in her life and really bad things have happened. More recently she has joined the Academy at Framework Housing Association (2009). At the Academy she has been doing cooking courses and also a Reiki course, both were excellent. Unfortunately she thinks that the project has come to the end of it's funding, so she can't carry on there now. She first got onto a mosaic project at The Arts Organisation and heard about Access to Arts. Grace had never done anything like that before and had learnt a lot. She said that she felt a sense of pride to see the work up on the outside of The Arts Organisation building and could walk past and say *"I did that"*.

In the past she has visited art galleries and the theatre, although very infrequently, *"I have never really been to a big pop concert or things like that "*. She states, *"I began to look forward to the visits"* and mentions that the good performances were memorable. She admits that she might not *"necessarily have chosen to visit the ballet"* however *"I really enjoyed it"*. She did say that it was either, the Halle Orchestra or BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, that was a bit noisy and she probably wouldn't be tempted to do that again. *"Some plays catch the imagination and some films are a bit hit and miss"*, but she admits that it was good to do things she wouldn't have done otherwise on her own without a group.

Grace most enjoyed meeting up as a group, she mentions the *"companionship"* and *"social aspects"* being important to her and has been very happy to access as many sessions as she could. For example she was amazed at the visit to Sneinton windmill, *"I have walked past on numerous occasions but had never thought to go in"*, she was really surprised once she got up to the top to see the views of Nottingham and also really enjoyed the bread making. Grace mentioned that she would have liked the opportunity to tap into some of the extra arts workshops as she felt that they were only open to participants at Double Impact.

Grace never really felt that she wanted to visit the Nottingham Contemporary and said, *"I just didn't fancy going, I can't explain why but I'm not really interested"*. A particularly memorable exhibition for Grace was 'Pork Knocker Dreams' at The New Art Exchange. She said that she had found the exhibition very challenging as it had wax effigies that were scary, *"I was not sure what to think, it was the stuff of nightmares"* and stated that it had left her with a lot to think about. Grace felt well supported by the staff and it was good to be able to discuss things after seeing things that were a bit challenging. The best play was Forever Young at Nottingham Playhouse *"it was very entertaining, amusing and a lot of fun"*. Another highlight for Grace was an exhibition of South African artists at the Lakeside Arts Centre *"it was hard to imagine being treated like that and living through that"*.

Grace now feels that she has a little more confidence to be able to appreciate art and it was a safe environment that enabled people to give your own opinion about the shows and exhibitions viewed;

*"an honest account of how you find it, this was encouraged, critiquing something, having the right to do it. You don't have to like everything and it was good to be able to discuss things with others and find out that some people felt the same way"*.

### Barriers to access:

Grace still faces some barriers with regard to accessing some of the events. She discussed that whilst she wants to get involved *"sometimes, I lack motivation"*. If some of the sessions take place twice in one day, she would rather just attend one of the sessions as she lives quite a distance away from the city centre. She sometimes felt a little unsafe at night and was happy

that taxis were provided late at night in order to get home as she has experienced fights taking place on the tram at night. Whilst Grace admits that the Access to Arts programme has not really had much impact on her social life, she is quite interested in continuing to meet with the group on Wednesdays *"I am so used to doing something on a Wednesday, otherwise I will be thinking what am I going to do?"* Grace states that she still feels more confident to do things with a group than more independently at this stage.

#### Future Outcomes:

Grace said that she had got a lot out of the programme through the different people that she had met and mentions that

*"it gives you an awareness of how other people live; and how they are; and how they visit other groups; and what they do with their time; and what's out there",*

she said that it was a good way to find out about other things that are on and that it gives her a good opportunity to network with others.

Grace feels that Access to Arts has made her want to visit more things and that the programme has made her more ready to do that and has given her chance to think *"it would be good to try new things"*. When she tells people that she has been to the ballet, they are impressed. As for the future, Grace is keen to try things that involve new learning opportunities and would be interested in courses *"if they are at right level to start"*. She has also thought about volunteering but needs to feel ready; as yet she is not sure.

Grace finishes by saying

*"I was impressed the way it was run as it could have been logistically difficult to organise, the staff we not too many so people looked out for each other and looked after themselves".*

### Case Study Three

Alan is a white British male aged 47. He describes himself as an 'alcoholic' and says that he has not really done art in his life but since he came to Nottingham he started doing art as therapy. *"I quite liked it, although I'm not very good at it"*. Alan continued his artwork as a day patient over a three-year period in order to help him treat his alcohol issues. When he was discharged, he then started accessing Double Impact. It was here that Alan began the Access to Arts project,

*"it came up as an opportunity. I hadn't really thought about going to see plays or the theatre, I might have been interested in the past but it had never really crossed my mind"*.

Alan says that he has enjoyed the variety of art galleries, theatre and museums. He mentions that he really liked the guided tours. One of the highlights was an exhibition at the Lakeside Arts Centre, one of the pieces of work were cowhides that were sewn together. On one side you could see the fur and then on the other the veins *"you saw the furry side and then the insides, I'm not sure it was art but I could see where it was coming from"*. He laughs saying that it was a *"good experience but not my idea of art"*.

There is nothing that he has disliked about the programme *"I've enjoyed it all"*. Alan feels that the programme has made a difference to his creative skills,

*"I'm not trying to become an artist, I am a skilled wood worker and I make picture frames. I am interested in producing abstract art though and I've tried loads of new things"*.

Alan mentioned that he felt that some of the workshop sessions at Double Impact during some of the initial Access to Arts programmes had been rushed; *"the teacher went through a lot of things, it was too rushed, you felt you needed more time"*. Alan has been happy how the workshops have been delivered this time, leaving more time to work on a piece of work over a number of weeks, instead of finishing in just one session.

Another important element of the programme for Alan has been meeting new people. He talks about thinking of himself as a bit of a *"loner"*. During the programme he mentions that some of the participants have disabilities

*"I have been in the system for 5 years now, so I'm very used to that environment and meeting different people. Over this time it's improved my social skills, it's certainly done me no harm"*.

Alan also mentions that he now feels part of the group and has felt comfortable. Alan comments on enjoying the digital photography sessions and was interested in *"using different techniques"*. He also discusses how helped make a short film, he attended all but one of the sessions over two weeks and videoed people in Nottingham City centre *"it's help to raise my confidence with people"*. Alan was very happy with end result and some of the other artwork that the group had produced that was displayed on the wall, *"it was quite a quick time to do the work, good fun and good to be part of something that happened every day"*.

The Future:

Alan has since been on a cultural visit with the newly formed group who are still meeting every Wednesday now that sessions have finished. Alan says

*"I have been living in denial for so long, I want to recover and stop the drink, not spend money on drink. I want to get into painting"*.

Alan has since enquired about starting an arts course at NCN College and is hoping to apply to get a place, Working Links is currently supporting him to do this. Additionally Alan is also involved with the 'Brough Superior Project' at Nottingham Castle Museum (Nottingham City Council). The project consists of a community group that is being trained to restore a vintage car from the 1930's. The project has also involved a trip to the Rolls Royce car company in Nottingham. Alan seems hopeful about the future and says

*"my priority right now is to keep on track with my recovery and move forward to look for employment. I am interested in pursuing something to do with the arts as a career".*



## 11.2 List of weekly visits

### **Programme One 7th October - 4th November**

Nottingham Castle - Paul Sandby, Talk & Exhibition  
Lakeside Arts Centre - Life Less Ordinary Talk & Exhibition  
Broadway Cinema - Dr Parnassus, Film & Talk  
New Art Exchange, Pork Knocker Dreams, Talk & Exhibition  
Nottingham Playhouse - Caucasian Chalk Circle, Workshop & Play  
The Art Organisation - Talk & Planning Meeting

### **Programme Two 18th November - 23rd December**

Broadway Cinema - Taking Woodstock Film  
Nottingham Contemporary - David Hockney, Frances Stark exhibition & workshop  
Nottingham Playhouse – The Little Mermaid Rehearsal and Beauty & the Beast Pantomime  
Green's Windmill - Tour & Bread Baking  
Nottingham Playhouse - The Little Mermaid Play plus post show talk  
The Royal Concert Hall - Christmas Carol Concert

### **Programme Three 6th January - 10th February 2010**

Lakeside Arts Centre - The Quiet Revolution exhibition  
Nottingham Contemporary - David Hockney exhibition public talk  
Broadway Cinema - Up In The Air film  
The Theatre Royal - The Nutcracker, Moscow City Ballet  
Wollaton Hall guided tour  
Bonnington Gallery – Metallic Sound exhibition and focus group meeting

### **Programme Four 17th February - 31st March 2010**

Lakeside Arts Centre - New Photography exhibition & workshop  
Nottingham Playhouse - Forever Young workshop & play  
The Royal Centre - BBC Philharmonic Orchestra Classics Concert & workshop  
Nottingham Playhouse - The Island talk & play  
The Art Organisation - Access to Arts Artist's Residency  
Nottingham Contemporary - Star City exhibition & workshop  
Nottingham Playhouse - A Day in the Death of Joe Egg talk & play

### 11.3 Examples of Visit Journal Pages

