

Shared Intelligence



# Testing the Accessibility of Arts Council England's Quality and Participatory Metrics



Shared Intelligence, The Mighty Creatives & Sarah Pickthall  
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# 1 **Headline findings**

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- 1.1 Arts Council England’s system of Quality and Participatory Metrics is a new tool designed to gather opinion data from audiences and participants in arts experiences. Each ‘metric’ consists of a dimension, the specific aspect of a production that is being measured, and a statement which is presented to respondents who are asked the extent they agree or disagree. Each metric statement has been designed to test a particular aspect or dimension of ‘quality’.
- 1.2 The authors have assumed that readers of this report will already be familiar with the Quality and Participatory Metrics and have omitted lengthy explanations about the wider aims of the metrics, or the background to their development.<sup>1</sup>
- 1.3 We and the organisations involved with this research found the Quality and Participatory Metrics to be a useful framework for generating insight into people’s experience of arts and cultural events. We have also identified some areas in which the statements might be amended to make them more accessible. We have come to these conclusions by working in collaboration with members of the public from four target groups:
- Children and young people;
  - People with disabilities and other additional or complex needs;
  - People for whom English is not their primary language; and
  - People living in areas of low socioeconomic status.
- 1.4 For the most part, we have suggested amendments based on input from the target groups, generated across three separate strands of research over four separate engagements.
- 1.5 The majority of statements were well understood by people in all groups. This came as a surprise to the research team, which took an over-cautious approach to the project, applying detailed scrutiny to each of the metrics to identify where there could possibly be distinct issues or challenges within the statements for the groups.
- 1.6 There were some metrics which all groups found to have scope for amendment. These were Presentation, Respect, Authenticity, and Intention. Presentation (Q2: it was well produced and presented) was seen as trying to capture two things – the way a performance looked and felt and the degree to which it seemed to have been well prepared and designed. People discussed Respect (P6: I was treated as an equal) in terms of the fair allocation of resources and materials, rather than in terms of whether they were treated how they wanted to be. For Authenticity (P9: it felt like a real artistic experience), groups were confused about what constitutes an artistic experience, while for Intention (P30: I felt able to shape the intention of the project) people found the use of ‘shape’ as a verb and the notion of there being an ‘intention’ behind a project confusing. We discuss these in detail in sections on the individual engagements.

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<sup>1</sup> Detailed [background to the quality metrics](#) can be found on Arts Council England’s website

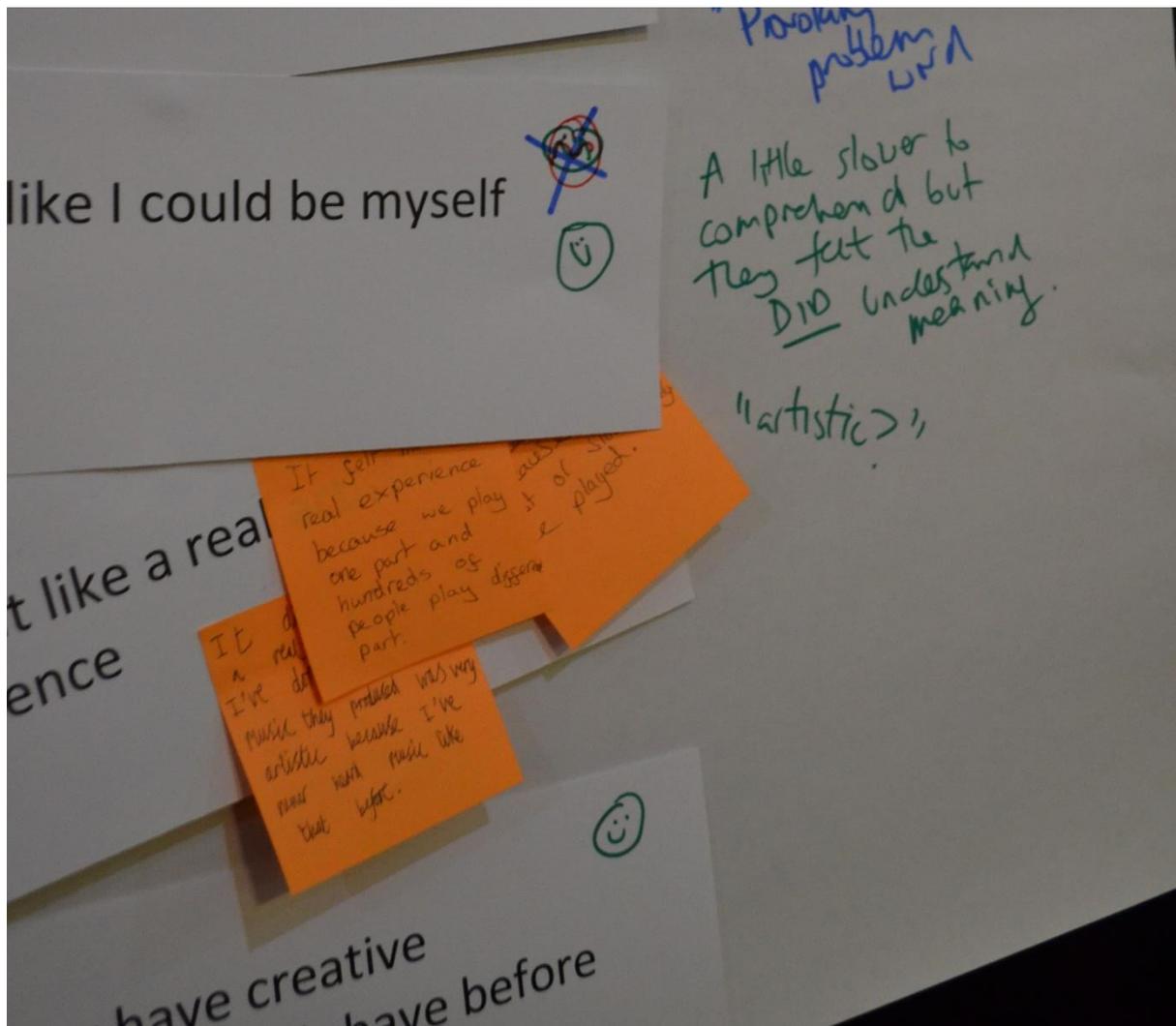


Figure 1: Notes from the children and young people event

- 1.7 We suspect there may be a 'maturity factor' that comes in to play for certain metrics. Worldview (P21: it helped me understand something new about the world) and Relevance (Q8: it has something to say about the world in which we live), were confusing for younger groups, who did not understand that 'the world' in these statements roughly equates to 'society'. Older participants easily understood this.
- 1.8 The role of mediators was an important finding that emerged through the engagement with disabled people, particularly those with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). By mediators we mean supporters, carers, parents, siblings and group organisers. In some cases, mediators interpreted the person in their care's reaction to a performance and provided a response based on that. Alternatively, the mediator would offer their own opinions or would respond on behalf of themselves playing a carer role, with reference to themselves and the person in their care as a 'unit', with specific needs.
- 1.9 Arts Council England should consider the extent to which it will direct mediators' responses. Mandating on whose behalf they should respond is more likely to generate comparable data, but fails to recognise that there is a spectrum of disability, and not all individuals will require the same level of mediation.

- 1.10 Directing how mediators respond can be done in several ways. Our suggestions include changing the pronouns in the statements, or including an instruction within the metrics interface on how to interpret the statements.
- 1.11 Towards the end of this report, we set out some considerations for Arts Council England around the technical implementation of the metrics interface. While the technology used to host the metrics is outside the remit of this research, we believe it is worth raising these concerns for discussion. These include enabling host organisations to modify some of the statements containing ellipsis (i.e. blanks, 'X's, or square bracket marks) according to context. One example of this is the Welcome metric (P27: they made me feel a part of [XXXX]). Other 'back-end' considerations include enabling organisations to pick and choose participatory metrics, including instruction on how mediators should respond, including questions to capture detail on the dynamic of the relationship between a mediator and the individual they are supporting, and including definitions for the more difficult statements.
- 1.12 Overleaf, we present the full set of metrics, followed by a table which lists the metrics against the amendments suggested by different groups over different engagements.

**A final summary table which sets out the metrics for which we have suggested amendments, as well as our recommended amendment based on the different engagements, can be found in Appendix 1.**

## The Quality and Participatory Metrics

### Quality Metrics

- Q1 Concept: it was an interesting idea
- Q2 Presentation: it was well produced and presented
- Q3 Distinctiveness: it was different from things I've experienced before
- Q4 Challenge: it was thought-provoking
- Q5 Captivation: it was absorbing and held my attention
- Q6 Enthusiasm: I would come to something like this again
- Q7 Local impact: it is important that it's happening here
- Q8 Relevance: it has something to say about the world in which we live
- Q9 Rigour: it was well thought through and put together

### Participatory Metrics

- P1 Enjoyment: I had a good time
- P2 Intensity: I felt deeply involved in the process
- P3 Clarity: I was clear about what we were all here to do
- P4 Organisation: the project was well organised
- P5 Responsiveness: the organisers responded well to the needs of the group
- P6 Respect: I was treated as an equal
- P7 Voice: my ideas were taken seriously
- P8 Contribution: I felt like my contribution mattered
- P9 Authenticity: it felt like a real artistic experience
- P10 Support: people in the group supported each other
- P11 Belonging: they made me feel part of the team
- P12 Feedback: I got helpful feedback
- P13 Acceptance: I felt like I could be myself
- P14 Experimenting: I felt comfortable trying new things
- P15 Achievement: I was amazed by what we achieved
- P16 Stretch: I did something I didn't know I was capable of
- P17 Skills: I gained new skills
- P18 Artistic skills: I improved my artistic skills
- P19 Creativity: I feel more able to express myself creatively
- P20 Empathy: it helped me understand other people's points of view

- P21 Worldview: it helped me understand something new about the world
- P22 Friendship: I felt close to other people involved in the project
- P23 New people: I got to know people who are different to me
- P24 Motivation: I feel motivated to do more creative things in the future
- P25 Confidence: I feel more confident about doing new things
- P26 Opportunity: the project opened up new opportunities for me
- P27 Welcome: they helped me to feel part of [XXXX] (company/project/ community group)
- P28 Trust: I trusted the other people involved
- P29 Identity: it helped me to see myself differently
- P30 Intention: I felt able to shape the intention of the project
- P31 Creative Legacy: I now have creative ambitions I didn't have before

Metric	Amendments suggested by target groups			
	CYP	Autistic group	PMLD group (mediated)	Low socioeconomic backgrounds
Q1 Concept: it was an interesting idea			It was a good idea	It was a good idea
Q2 Presentation: it was well produced and presented	It was well presented	It was well presented	It was well presented	It was well presented
Q3 Distinctiveness: it was different from things I've experienced before			It was different from things they've experienced before	
Q4 Challenge: it was thought-provoking	It made me think deeply		It was stimulating	
Q5 Captivation: it was absorbing and held my attention			It was stimulating and caught their attention.	
Q6 Enthusiasm: I would come to something like this again			I (we) would come to something like this again	
Q7 Local impact: it is important that it's happening here	It is important [for XXXX] that it is happening here	It is important that it is happening here [XXXX]	It is important that it is happening here [XXXX]	It is important [for XXXX] that it is happening here
Q8 Relevance: it has something to say about the world in which we live	Amendment agreed after the engagements			
P6 Respect: I was treated as an equal	I was treated with respect	I was treated with respect	I (we) was (were) treated with respect	I was treated with respect
P8 Contribution: I felt like my contribution mattered	I felt like my role mattered to the project			
P9 Authenticity: it felt like a real artistic experience	It felt like a real, professional artistic experience	It felt like a real, professional arts experience	It felt like a real, professional arts experience	
P11 Belonging: they made me feel part of the team			They made them feel part of the team	
P13 Acceptance: I felt like I could be myself			I felt like we could be ourselves	
P16 Stretch: I did something I didn't know I was capable of			They did something I didn't know they were capable of	
P18 Artistic skills: I improved my artistic skills	I improved my artistic or creative skills			
P20 Empathy: it helped me understand other people's points of view	It helped me understand other people's opinions			
P21 Worldview: it helped me understand something new about the world	Amendments agreed after the engagements			
P24 Motivation: I feel motivated to do more creative things in the future	I now want to do more creative things in future			
P26 Opportunity: the project opened up new opportunities for me			The project opened up new opportunities for us	

P27 Welcome: they helped me to feel part of [XXXX] (company/project/community group)	Amendments agreed after the engagements			
P29 Identity: it helped me to see myself differently			It helped me to see us differently	
P30 Intention: I felt able to shape the intention of the project		I felt able to change things and make the project how I wanted it		

## 2 Introduction

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- 2.1 Shared Intelligence, The Mighty Creatives and Sarah Pickthall, a specialist in disability inclusive best practice, were commissioned by Arts Council England in December 2016 to test the accessibility of the Quality and Participatory Metrics that had been developed by and with the sector, to help organisations understand and measure the quality of their work.
- 2.2 Prior to this commission, significant work had been undertaken by Arts Council England and the sector to develop the metrics. The work aimed to give organisations an understanding of what people value about their work, as well as a set of benchmarks for measuring their performance against similar organisations. This work resulted in a set of 12 Quality Metrics (of which 3 were for the use of artists and peers only) which have been tested at over 400 events by around 150 arts and cultural organisations in England.
- 2.3 Alongside this, Arts Council England supported the sector to develop a further 31 metrics to measure the value of participatory arts experiences, including those designed for participatory work produced by, for and with children and young people. In 2015/16 the participatory metrics were tested across 26 events by 13 arts and cultural organisations in England.
- 2.4 Each metric is made up of a dimension, the specific aspect of a production that is being measured, and a statement, designed to elicit a quantifiable reaction (data) from participants which will form a comparable dataset. In order to enable the generation of data items that are consistent and comparable, it is therefore crucial that statements are similarly understood by respondents from a variety of age groups, cultures, socio-economic and linguistic backgrounds, whether or not they have a disability or complex needs.
- 2.5 Reports from earlier work had highlighted some accessibility issues with the metrics. Some of these related to technology, and others related to the metrics themselves. This commission sought to address the latter, though we do set out some discussion points for Arts Council England to bear in mind in terms of the interface between users and the metrics.
- 2.6 We set out the metrics in full at the bottom of this section, indicating for each of the groups whether the metric was well understood, underwent amendment on the day, or had outstanding issues and was amended following further discussion and analysis. Throughout the report, the metrics will always follow this running order, but with those that are not relevant to the discussion left out. We have also introduced a numbering system for ease of reference. P1 denotes the first participatory metric, while Q1 indicates the first quality metric.

### Our approach to the research

- 2.7 Arts Council England specified in its invitation to tender that the research should seek and report on four core groups' views on the accessibility and comprehensibility of its Quality and Participatory metrics. The groups were:
- Children and young people;
  - People with disabilities and other additional or complex needs;

- People for whom English is not their primary language; and
- People living in areas of low socioeconomic status.

2.8 Our approach to the research involved organising four engagement events designed to test the metrics with the core groups:

- An engagement day for young people at Derby QUAD
- A focus group with teenagers with autism also at Derby QUAD
- A focus group with people with PMLD and their carers following a performance of HOME by Frozen Light Theatre
- A focus group with adults from the Fosse area of Leicester for whom English is a second language

2.9 We set out our approach to each of these strands of research in separate sections, but underpinning the whole project were four principles:

- Ensuring that individuals who we ask to help test the metrics statement do so shortly after a recent arts or cultural experience;
- Ensuring arts organisations benefit from taking part in this research by enabling them to engage new audiences; and
- Using the children and young people strand of the research as an opportunity to build research skills and among young people.
- It is better to be over-cautious with testing the metrics than to assume that people will understand them without properly testing them.

2.10 We also undertook detailed desk research and planning at the outset of the project. This allowed us to gain an understanding of the origins and development of the metrics, and gave us the opportunity to anticipate and discuss where we expected participants to run into difficulties with the metrics.

## Planning the research

2.11 We arranged two whole-day planning sessions in March 2017 to reach a shared understanding of the metrics, our approach and how we would go about organising the sessions across the research team.

2.12 We also used this session to reach a shared definition of the potential issues with the metrics and to define what we hoped to achieve. We defined our approach to the process of amending the metrics with the three groups in terms of three stages: testing, understanding and amending.

2.13 Testing the metrics meant asking participants to reflect on the experience they had attended to enable the research team to get a feel for the comprehensibility, applicability and accessibility of the statements for different groups in different circumstances. The main research tool to achieve this was observation of participants' responses to the metrics, though we also thought about how we would probe further, setting out questions we might ask to gather this data, for example:

- Do you understand what the statement is saying?

- Does the language of the statement make sense to you?
- Does it apply to you/your experience?

2.14 The next stage was to focus on any statements which we found were not comprehensible, applicable or accessible. We anticipated several potential difficulties:

- The statement presupposes knowledge/experience;
- uses language that is too complex;
- expresses an idea that is too complex;
- is not appropriate to the experience of the participant (geography, setting, type of experience);
- is inappropriate for the age of the participant; or
- is culturally inappropriate.

2.15 Stage three would be to consider, in partnership with participants, how we might amend the statements. We considered a range of potential ways to amend them:

- Using images/pictures/graphs/diagrams to complement the statements;
- amending the concept of the statement to be more inclusive of particular groups;
- simplifying the wording of the statement;
- identifying whether a statement is expressing too many ideas, and simplifying it where it is;
- making the sentence structure simpler;
- considering not using a statement with a particular group.

2.16 This approach was incorporated into the design of all engagements. Some elements of the above did not factor at all into our research. For instance, at no point did cultural background play a part in people's understanding of the statements, nor was the use of images or diagrams seen as the most useful way of supporting people's understanding of a statement. For the most part however, this provided a useful framework for conducting the research, and will likely be of use in any future attempts to refine the metrics.

2.17 Combining this testing framework with desk research of earlier reports on the development of the metrics, we developed a matrix which plotted some of the metrics against issues already identified and our analysis of where issues might occur. Not all of the issues identified occurred, and indeed many of the metrics were met without any issues at all by the groups. However, the table below reflects our 'principle of over-cautiousness' – that it is better to test the metrics as much as possible than to assume that some are easier and potentially miss out on valuable insights into users' reactions to them.

2.18 Following this is a table indicating whether each metric was understood, amended, or requires further discussion, for each of the three engagements. Where rows have been left blank, these statements were not tested with a particular group.

Metric	Potential difficulty
Q1 Concept: it was an interesting idea	<i>It was a good idea? Or It was interesting?</i>
Q2 Presentation: it was well produced and presented	<i>Too similar to Rigour</i>
Q3 Distinctiveness: it was different from things I've experienced before	<i>Likely to elicit different responses from first time arts-attenders to regulars. Testing distinctiveness of what exactly? I.e. the content, the venue, format etc.</i>
Q4 Challenge: it was thought-provoking	<i>Concept of thought-provoking may be difficult. Synonyms: challenging; it made me think; provocative; stimulating; challenging</i>
Q5 Captivation: it was absorbing and held my attention	<i>Open to multiple interpretations</i>
Q7 Local impact: it is important that it's happening here	<i>Tension as to how to interpret 'here' (this venue, this borough, this city); similar tension with 'important' (of benefit to the venue/area/residents; convenient; significant for a particular reason)</i>
Q8 Relevance: it has something to say about the world in which we live	<i>Assumes knowledge of 'the world in which we live'. Open to interpretation.</i>
Q9 Rigour: it was well thought through and put together	<i>Too similar to Presentation</i>
P2 Intensity: I felt deeply involved in the process	<i>Complex idea. 'The process' might be unclear/open to interpretation.</i>
P3 Clarity: I was clear about what we were all here to do	<i>I.e. I was clear about my purpose in the project; Or I knew what I was supposed to do when I was there</i>
P4 Organisation: the project was well organised	<i>In what sense? Well planned, comms out on time, lunch served at right time, nothing went wrong?</i>
P5 Responsiveness: the organisers responded well to the needs of the group	<i>Do people take stock of the needs of the group as a whole? What needs?</i>
P6 Respect: I was treated as an equal	<i>Do CYP reflect on how they are treated in comparison to others?</i>
P9 Authenticity: it felt like a real artistic experience	<i>What is a real artistic experience? Difficult for first time arts attenders.</i>
P13 Acceptance: I felt like I could be myself	<i>Does the group have this sense of introspection? Do they have a concept of what it means to be oneself?</i>
P18 Artistic skills	<i>Too similar to skills? If the only new skills learned were artistic then why ask the Skills metric?</i>
P19 Creativity: I feel more able to express myself creatively	<i>Does the group associate attending a participatory experience with improved creative expression? Or is it simply doing something new?</i>
P21 Worldview: it helped me understand something new about the world	<i>Does this assume knowledge about the world? Are people likely to see their experience in the context of a wider world?</i>
P26 Opportunity: the project opened up new opportunities for me	<i>How likely are people to know whether new opportunities opened up? Is it too soon to respond?</i>
P29 Identity: it helped me to see myself differently	<i>In what ways? Is introspection a normal response to this experience?</i>
P30 Intention: I felt able to shape the intention of the project	<i>'Intention' a difficult concept. Ability to shape the aims of the project/ ability to shape the direction of the project?</i>

Metric	Children and young people			Disabled people			English as a second language		
	Understood	Amended	Issue	Understood	Amended	Issue	Understood	Amended	Issue
Q1 Concept: it was an interesting idea	✓			✓				✓	
Q2 Presentation: it was well produced and presented		✓			✓			✓	
Q3 Distinctiveness: it was different from things I've experienced before	✓			✓			✓		
Q4 Challenge: it was thought-provoking		✓			✓		✓		
Q5 Captivation: it was absorbing and held my attention	✓				✓		✓		
Q6 Enthusiasm: I would come to something like this again	✓			✓			✓		
Q7 Local impact: it is important that it's happening here		✓			✓			✓	
Q8 Relevance: it has something to say about the world in which we live			✓	✓			✓		
Q9 Rigour: it was well thought through and put together	✓			✓			✓		
P1 Enjoyment: I had a good time	✓			✓					
P2 Intensity: I felt deeply involved in the process	✓			✓					
P3 Clarity: I was clear about what we were all here to do	✓			✓					
P4 Organisation: the project was well organised	✓			✓					
P5 Responsiveness: the organisers responded well to the needs of the group	✓			✓					
P6 Respect: I was treated as an equal		✓			✓				
P7 Voice: my ideas were taken seriously				✓					
P8 Contribution: I felt like my contribution mattered		✓		✓					
P9 Authenticity: it felt like a real artistic experience		✓			✓		✓		
P10 Support: people in the group supported each other	✓			✓					
P11 Belonging: they made me feel part of the team			✓	✓					
P12 Feedback: I got helpful feedback	✓			✓					
P13 Acceptance: I felt like I could be myself	✓			✓					

P14 Experimenting: I felt comfortable trying new things	✓			✓					
P15 Achievement: I was amazed by what we achieved	✓			✓					
P16 Stretch: I did something I didn't know I was capable of	✓			✓					
P17 Skills: I gained new skills	✓			✓					
P18 Artistic skills: I improved my artistic skills		✓		✓					
P19 Creativity: I feel more able to express myself creatively	✓			✓					
P20 Empathy: it helped me understand other people's points of view		✓		✓					
P21 Worldview: it helped me understand something new about the world				✓			✓		
P22 Friendship: I felt close to other people involved in the project	✓			✓					
P23 New people: I got to know people who are different to me	✓			✓					
P24 Motivation: I feel motivated to do more creative things in the future				✓					
P25 Confidence: I feel more confident about doing new things	✓			✓					
P26 Opportunity: the project opened up new opportunities for me	✓			✓					
P27 Welcome: they helped me to feel part of [XXXX] (company/project/community group)			✓	✓					
P28 Trust: I trusted the other people involved	✓			✓					
P29 Identity: it helped me to see myself differently	✓			✓					
P30 Intention: I felt able to shape the intention of the project			✓		✓				
P31 Creative Legacy: I now have creative ambitions I didn't have before	✓			✓					

## 3 Testing with children and young people

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3.1 The children and young people strand of the metrics testing took place over a full-day engagement based at Derby QUAD. Over 40 young people attended on the day, ranging from age 9 to 18, and from primary, secondary and college education.

3.2 Among the secondary and college age group, there was a mixture of young people who were in mainstream education, those who were in mainstream education but with a statement of special educational needs, and those who were educated outside of mainstream education working with Baby People, a specialist music and arts development organisation.



Warm up exercise at the engagement day for children and young people at Derby QUAD

3.3 All of the young people had been to some kind of participatory arts event prior to the workshop, and many had also been to see a performance of *Educating Rita* at Derby Theatre. In terms of participatory arts experiences, these included:

- Clock-making workshops;
- Taking part in a music, dance or theatre production;
- Producing art and designing an exhibition to display it.

3.4 We recognised that while the primary purpose of the event was to work with the groups of young people to test and amend the metrics, the day itself should also be entertaining and rewarding for attendees.

3.5 As such, we designed a programme of activities that included a tour of Derby QUAD's Format Festival exhibition (featuring photography and interactive displays), provided opportunities to socialise, and gave the young people an insight into the benefits and approach to the research we were applying.

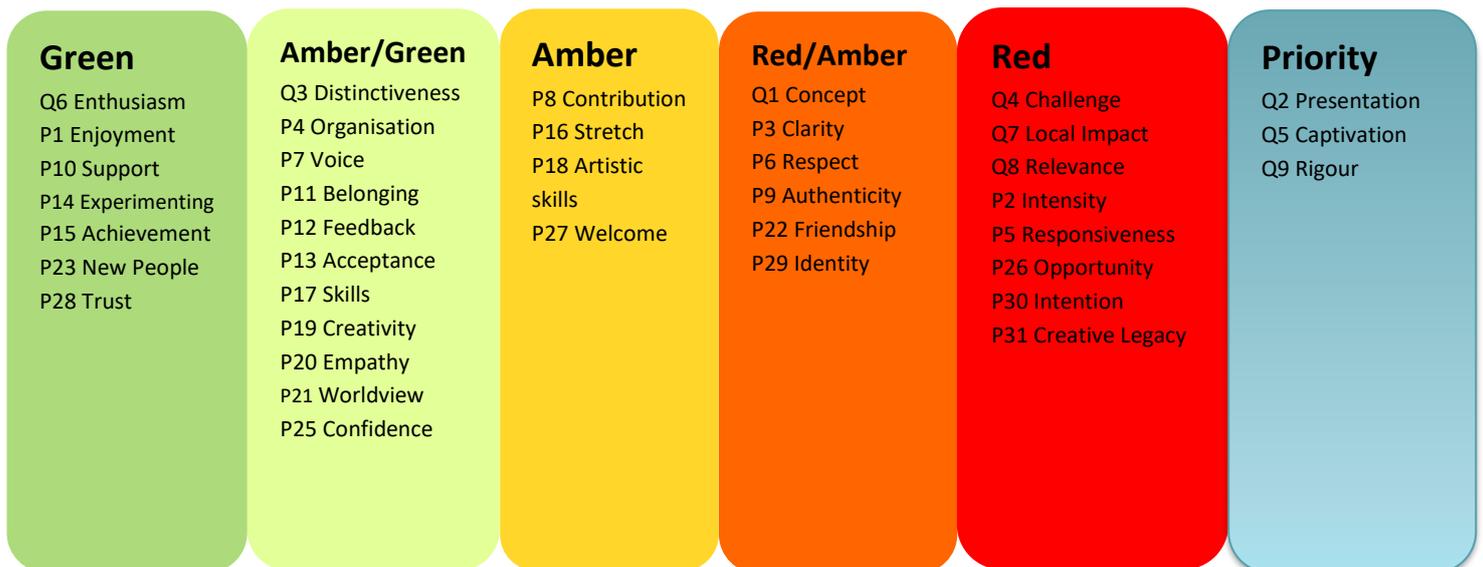
## Our approach to testing the metrics

3.6 A team comprising staff members from Shared Intelligence and The Mighty Creatives facilitated the event, with three young arts administrators who we co-opted as peer researchers leading the facilitation. The young people were split into three main groups: 9 and 10 year olds; 11 to 13 year olds; and a group of young people aged 14+. A researcher from Shared Intelligence worked with the smaller group from Baby People, with the support of their teacher.

3.7 Using printed cue-cards as prompts, and recording our findings on flipcharts, we worked with the groups to test the metrics, understand where and why difficulties arose and subsequently make amendments to the statements.

3.8 In advance of the event, the research team tried to prioritise the metrics according to how difficult we expected the groups to find them. The first stage of prioritisation involved the main research team running through the metrics and giving them a red, amber or green rating. Peer researchers were then invited to do the same. A final stage of prioritisation was undertaken by researchers from Shared Intelligence, along with input from Arts Council England around particular priority metrics. This resulted in the metrics being organised into six categories.

3.9 The metrics were sorted into a running order starting with priority metrics through to green, both to give the research team an idea of which to probe in more detail, and to compensate for time pressures during the event. On the day, it ended up being possible to cover all of the metrics. The diagram below shows the outcome of our prioritisation process.



3.10 The first session was designed to gauge the young peoples' reaction to and understanding of the metrics. Young people were asked to think about the recent arts experiences they had been to. The peer researchers went through the metrics one by one, and asked the groups to say whether they agreed or disagreed with the statements. The young people were invited to provide brief explanations for their responses. This activity enabled the researchers to make preliminary judgements on whether the groups understood the metrics, basing this on observations of their reactions to the statements and their explanations of why they agreed and disagreed. Researchers made a note of which metrics were clearly well understood, and those which would bear more detailed interrogation.



Participants refining the metrics at the engagement day for children and young people at Derby QUAD

3.11 Following the first session, the young people were given a tour of the Format Festival exhibitions, during which the researchers reconvened to share their early findings and to prioritise materials for the second testing activity.

3.12 The second activity involved revisiting the metrics which researchers judged needed further investigation. In small groups, the young people were invited to discuss what they found difficult and how they would have phrased the statements. In most cases, a consensus view emerged and the groups were invited to annotate the statements to record their suggestions for rewording.

## Main findings from the event

3.13 During the day, we were able to test all of the quality and participatory metrics with all of the groups. Four overarching messages emerged from the engagement.

### Most of the metrics were seen as fine, though some could be simplified

3.14 The research team were surprised at all age groups' ability to understand and engage with the statements. The young people in all age groups could respond to use the statements to reflect on

their experiences, and were able to hold discussion and provide explanation that supported this conclusion.

- 3.15 Some statements, while well understood by the groups, were criticised for using unnecessarily complicated language, and would benefit from simplification. These are dealt with in the next section.

#### **Use of the word 'artistic' could be challenging**

- 3.16 For the two statements which contained the word 'artistic' (P9 Authenticity: it felt like a real artistic experience; and Artistic Skills (P18: I improved my artistic skills), young people tended to be less sure of the intention of the statement.

- 3.17 Discussion revealed that some of the young people understood 'artistic' as describing the process of creating something new that didn't exist before. In this sense, they understood painting a picture, choreographing a piece of dance or writing a piece of theatre to be artistic. They did not see following a music score, performing dance or acting in a play as artistic because in their view, someone else had done the 'artistic' work of creating the piece

#### **There was some overlap between metrics**

- 3.18 Young people thought that two of the metrics overlapped: Welcome (P27: they made me feel a part of [XXXX]); and Belonging (P11: they made me feel part of the team). Their feedback was that because of the similarity in the first part of the sentence (they made me feel (a) part of...), these metrics seemed trying to capture the same thing twice.

- 3.19 As part of our interim findings we suggested that there may be scope to merge these metrics, but subsequent discussion with Arts Council England has clarified the intention behind the two. Our understanding is that while Belonging (P11: they made me feel part of the team) captures the extent to which people feel like valuable and active contributors to an endeavour as part of a team of peers, Welcome (P27: they made me feel a part of XXXX) focuses more on the quality of the social induction of an individual into a participatory experience, with importance placed on their reception and interaction with a project and organisation at the early stages.

#### **Ambiguous metrics were interpreted consistently**

- 3.20 In early discussions, the research team anticipated that some of statements might be interpreted in more than one way or have an alternative meaning. However, in cases where we identified two different possible meanings, the young people all had the same understanding of their intention.

- 3.21 For example, for Local Impact (Q7: it is important that it is happening here), it is not clear whether 'here' refers to the venue, neighbourhood, town, region or some other location. However, all young people understood 'here' to mean the venue. For instance, discussing an exhibition which they had designed, one group of young people noted how it was important that their exhibition was helping to brighten up the venue – an underused and unattractive old factory space.

- 3.22 Again, subsequent discussion with Arts Council England has clarified that this is not the interpretation of this statement that was anticipated by those who developed the metrics.

- 3.23 Similarly, for Clarity (P3: I was clear about what we were all here to do), we thought there might be two interpretations. This statement could be taken as a statement of purpose (i.e. I was clear that

we were here to perform a piece of music), or as a statement around the clarity of instruction (i.e. I was clear that we had to sit in a circle, and work in groups to rehearse our lines). All of the groups understood this statement to mean the former – a statement of purpose.

## Discussion on the metrics

- 3.24 While the majority of the metrics were well understood by the young people, there were some which were more challenging for this group. We were able to amend many of these on the day but some required further refinement in discussion with Arts Council England.

### Amending the metrics

- 3.25 Some of the metrics for one reason or another were found to have room for improvement. Where possible, we worked with the young people to generate suggestions on how the more challenging aspects of the statement could be amended. We detail the more difficult metrics and their suggested amendments in blue below.

#### **[Original] Q2 Presentation: it was well produced and presented**

##### **Presentation: it was well presented**

- 3.26 Young people understood the ‘presentation’ aspect of this statement, discussing how the presentation of a performance is the way it looks and feels including the quality of the venue and set, and how the artists came across. They were less confident about the ‘well produced’ aspect of the statement but tended to infer that it meant something about planning and preparation.
- 3.27 This statement may be interpreted as trying to capture two things: that the performance looked and felt good (was well presented); and that the effort that went into its design and delivery was of a high quality (it was well produced). The change suggested by the young people simplifies the statement but risks ignoring the ‘well produced’ aspect, though we feel that this is captured in the Rigour (Q9: it was well thought through and put together), and Organisation (P4: the project was well organised) metrics.

#### **[Original] Q4 Challenge: it was thought provoking**

##### **Challenge: it made me think deeply**

- 3.28 The groups could grasp the intention behind this statement but thought that the phrase ‘thought-provoking’ was quite difficult. Their feedback was to “use shorter words or something that’s easier to understand”, and they suggested the alternative phrase ‘it made me think about lots of things’. We recognise that this might not fully capture the intention behind the metrics, and have suggested a redraft of ‘it made me think deeply.’

#### **[Original] P6 Respect: I was treated as an equal**

##### **Respect: I was treated with respect**

- 3.29 In discussions about what it meant to be treated as an equal, young people talked in terms of receiving the same treatment, for example through the equal distribution of materials and resources or receiving equal levels of support from a teacher. None of the young people thought that this statement was trying the measure whether they thought they were treated with respect.

**[Original] P8 Contribution: it felt like my contribution mattered**

**Contribution: I felt like my role mattered to the project**

- 3.30 Although this statement did not cause as much difficulty as others, the groups still felt that ‘contribution’ was an unnecessarily difficult word. They understood contribution in the context of a participatory arts experience to mean having ideas or playing any part that contributes to the successful planning and execution of a production, “even if you’re doing a boring job”. Using the word ‘important’ might however lead young people to think in terms of the gravity and status of their role, rather than whether it was in some way beneficial to the overall running of the project. We have suggested a further redraft to try to mitigate this.

**[Original] P9 Authenticity: it felt like a real artistic experience**

**Authenticity: it felt like a real, professional artistic experience**

- 3.31 As discussed above, the groups struggled with the idea of artistic. They saw this as describing the process of creation, rather than an aspect of performing or directing a production or experience. When we suggested that this is testing whether they felt the experience had been comparable to what experienced artists would expect, they homed in on the word ‘professional’, as in a real professional artistic experience.

**[Original] P18 Artistic Skills: I improved my artistic skills**

**Artistic Skills: I improved my artistic or creative skills**

- 3.32 Again, young people struggled with the concept of artistic. They suggested introducing the word ‘creative’ to ensure that the statement is trying to capture the improvement of skills that are broader than creating an original piece of art, theatre or music from scratch.

**[Original] P20 Empathy: it helped me understand other people’s points of view**

**Empathy: it helped me understand other people’s opinions**

- 3.33 This statement was not met with the same level of difficulty as others, though some of the group struggled with the phrase ‘points of view’. They suggested ‘opinion’ as a more accessible word.

**[Original] P24 Motivation: I feel motivated to do more creative things in the future**

**Motivation: I now want to do more creative things in future**

- 3.34 Again, although young people were not entirely confused by this statement, they did struggle with the concept of motivation. Suggested changes included talking about enthusiasm to do more creative things in future rather than motivation to do so, though we recognise that this may risk overlapping with the Enthusiasm metric (Q6: I would come to something like this again). Our analysis is that the statement is measuring an individual’s motivation or desire to do more creative things in future as a consequence of taking part a particular experience. We would suggest that ‘I **now want** to do more creative things in future’ captures the link between an event and an individual’s motivation to take part in more creative things, while removing the potentially confusing word ‘motivation’.

### Metrics for further scrutiny

- 3.35 In addition to the metrics which the young people amended on the day, there were some metrics that we have amended but feel will bear further scrutiny as Arts Council England takes them forward. The redrafts in this section did not come from the young people during the engagement, but are a product of subsequent discussion and analysis from the research team.

**[Original] Q7 Local Impact: it is important this it is happening here**

**Local Impact: it is important [for XXXX] that it is happening here**

- 3.36 As discussed earlier, while there was consensus in young people's interpretation of this statement, this was a different interpretation to what had been anticipated by those who produced the metrics. Discussion with Arts Council England has clarified that this statement was intended to capture the social, cultural or political significance of an event taking place in a particular geography, not a specific venue. However, young people understood the statement to mean 'it is good for the venue that it is happening here'. We have suggested a redraft above which can be modified by organisations using the metrics to make this clearer.

**Q8 Relevance: it has something to say about the world in which we live**

**Relevance: it has something to say about modern society**

- 3.37 For this statement, the groups tended to be confused by what was meant by 'the world in which we live'. They asked whether we meant the whole planet and all of humanity, our own individual daily worlds, or something about the UK. They also asked whether it meant the physical world, or was more about social values. Furthermore, when we explained that the metric concerns relevance, they asked "relevant to whom?" – to them, to people in general, or to the audience.
- 3.38 Discussion with Arts Council England at the interim findings stage clarified that for this statement, 'the world in which we live' is roughly synonymous with 'the society we live in' or 'modern society'. We have suggested a redraft above to reflect this.

**P11 Belonging: they made me feel part of the team**

**Belonging: I felt like I was part of a team**

**P27 Welcome: they made me feel a part of [XXXX]**

**Welcome: I was made to feel welcome**

- 3.39 We deal with these two metrics together as the groups thought that they were trying to capture the same things. The first part of the sentence 'they made me feel (a) part of' was said to be one reason for this.
- 3.40 Furthermore, young people were confused by the square brackets '[XXXX]' markings in the Welcome metric. We think that it is not obvious to them that the [XXXX] signifies that this part of the sentence changes depending on the experience.
- 3.41 Our initial suggestion based on feedback from the group was to merge these two metrics. However, discussion with Arts Council England and within the research team has brought some clarity to these metrics. We feel that Belonging (P11: they made me feel part of the team) attempts to capture the extent to which individuals felt included as part of a group of peers working towards a similar goal,

whereas Welcome (P27: they made me feel a part of XXXX) tries to capture whether the extent to which they felt socially accepted and welcome at the initial and early stages of an engagement, both by their peers and by the project organisers.

**P21 Worldview: it helped me understand something new about the world**

**Worldview: it helped me understand something new about society**

- 3.42 Again, there was difficulty about what was meant by 'the world'. Very similar to Relevance (Q8: it has something to say about the world in which we live), young people asked what scale this was meant to refer to, and whether it is about the tangible and visible world, or more about social values, attitudes and perceptions.
- 3.43 Discussion with Arts Council England clarified that this statement is trying to capture whether attending a participatory arts experience imparts on people something new about society or different cultures. Our amendment reflects this.

**P30 Intention: I felt able to shape the intention of the project**

- 3.44 This statement proved to be the most difficult across all age groups. In particular, two parts of the statement were challenging: the verb 'shape', and the concept of a project's intention. In discussion with the groups, the suggestion was made that 'shape' could be replaced with 'change' or 'control'.
- 3.45 However, we were not able to work through an alternative way of describing the intention of a project with children and young people.

## 4 Testing the metrics with disabled people

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- 4.1 The second target group with which Arts Council England wanted to test the metrics with was disabled people, particularly those with profound and multiple learning disability (PMLD) and other complex needs such as autism.

### **Our approach to testing the metrics**

- 4.2 Although we originally planned one single engagement to test the metrics with people with disabilities and other additional or complex needs, we ended up carrying out two separate engagements. The first took place at Derby QUAD, with members of Q Club, an after-school club for children and young people aged 5 to 18. Half the group are children on the autistic spectrum, the other half have been referred due to having additional educational support needs.
- 4.3 A total of 3 young people participated in this first workshop, all of whom were able to communicate verbally with ease.
- 4.4 The second engagement was carried out at Attenborough Arts Centre with people with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD) and their family members and care workers. This took place immediately following a production of HOME by Frozen Light Theatre. HOME was an immersive, multisensory experience specifically designed for people with PMLD and their parents and carers.
- 4.5 After a production of HOME, Sarah Pickthall, a specialist in disability inclusive best practice, facilitated a workshop with support from a researcher from Shared Intelligence. Three people with PMLD aged between 17 and 21 (none of whom were able to communicate verbally), three young care worker supporters, two additional supporters including a family member and a group agency manager attended this workshop.

### **Main findings from the events**

- 4.6 Because of the different needs and characteristics of these groups, some of our findings from the research are specific to one or other of the engagements. However, a lot of the reaction to the metrics was similar across the groups. We summarise our main findings below.

#### **Arts Council England should give due consideration to how to work with particular groups**

- 4.7 This engagement was difficult to manage. It was difficult to elicit responses when individuals are present who need specialist and complex care. This is of note for the future, when responses to the Quality and Participatory Metrics are sought from these groups of people.

#### **Among the groups, most metrics were fine**

- 4.8 Participants in the first group at Derby QUAD were high functioning autistic teenagers, and for them many of the metrics were very easily understood, though at times semantically challenging in terms of perceived logic. For example, members of the group took the statements very literally, which led to confusion for instance around 'thought-provoking' with some wondering how you can provoke a thought.

4.9 As with other engagements, the research team expected more of the metrics to be challenging for this group, but for the most part, they were understood. A small core group of metrics did raise issues and these are dealt with below. For those speaking on behalf of those with PMLD, the questions were similarly understood/ evoked similar reactions. However, it must be stressed that the questions would not have been understood directly by those with PMLD but were deliberated by those caring for them in different ways with varying degrees of understanding as to the perceived experience for those experiencing the performance. We discuss the metrics that caused issues below.

#### The role of mediators

4.10 One of the most important findings from this strand, if not the whole piece of research, is the critical role that mediators play in eliciting responses to the metrics (by this we mean support workers, carers, parents, siblings, and group organisers). Particularly in the second engagement with the PMLD group, support workers, carers and family members often mediated on behalf of the individual in their care, and either answered based on their own interpretation of the individual's reactions, or in some other way. We deal with the role of mediators in a separate section below.

#### A spectrum of participation

4.11 A further finding from this strand was that there is a 'spectrum of participation', which impacts on the applicability of some of the participatory statements. For example, responding to the Artistic Skills and Voice metrics (P18: I improved my artistic skills; P7: my ideas were taken seriously), the family members and care workers attending HOME by Frozen Light felt these metrics were not applicable to their experience – as none of the audience had been involved in the planning or creation of the work. We think this highlights the need to account for a spectrum of participation that runs from immersive, interactive performances such as HOME, through to experiences where participants are involved in many aspects of the production, from ideation to finished work, usually over a longer time.

#### Amending the metrics

4.12 For some statements, the groups thought these were more difficult and would benefit from rewording or simplification. Between the two engagements, there were sometimes different reasons given for why the statements were challenging and different suggestions for making them more accessible. These are set out below.

#### **[Original] Q4 Challenge: it was thought-provoking**

#### **PMLD group - Challenge: it was stimulating**

4.13 For the young autistic group taking part at the QUAD, the phrase 'thought-provoking' was seen as unnecessarily complicated. They suggested 'it made me think' as a potential redraft of the statement.

4.14 For the PMLD group, support workers, carers and family members suggested that the idea that something is 'thought-provoking' to the individuals in their care is not appropriate. Instead, they discussed how they reacted to the performance, responding to the visual and auditory stimuli and human interaction through patterns, gestures and vocalisations or repeating words used by the actors. They described the performance as 'multisensory and stimulating', rather than thought

provoking, for the people in their care. As such, we have suggested 'it was stimulating' as a potential alternative to this statement, which captures the idea that experiencers react and respond to a stimulus (i.e. the performance). This also makes more sense than 'it made me think' in cases where the response is being given by a mediator.

**[Original] Q2 Presentation: it was well produced and presented**

**Presentation: it was well presented**

- 4.15 The QUAD autistic group fully understood this statement, but the support workers mediating for the PMLD group found it potentially confusing. Supporters, carers and mediators in the PMLD group were comfortable with the 'well presented' element of this statement, discussing how they admired the performers' flexibility and dexterity in being able to carry on with the show even when members of the audience reacted in unexpected ways. However, they were less clear about the meaning of 'well produced'.
- 4.16 From our experience in testing this metric, we feel that there is overlap between the 'well produced' part of the statement, and the Rigour (Q9: it was well thought through and put together) and Organisation (P4 the project was well organised) metrics. Our suggested redraft removes this overlap, focusing on the presentation aspects of a production.

**[Original] P6 Respect: I was treated as an equal**

**Respect: I (we) was (were) treated with respect**

- 4.17 Among those taking mediating roles within the PMLD group, discussion around this statement rightly concerned the idea of being treated how you would expect to treat others, or receiving treatment appropriate to your needs. Among the younger QUAD autistic group, while some of the discussion captured the essence of treating people with respect, there was some talk around treating everybody the same, including devoting the same amount of attention and support to one individual as everybody else. We think that recasting the statement as 'I was treated with respect' mitigates this ambiguity of interpretation, and captures the idea that the metric is trying to elicit responses around how individuals were treated, rather than whether they received the same treatment as others.
- 4.18 In situations where a mediator has to respond to this statement, the use of the first person pronoun "I" may limit mediators to responding on behalf of themselves, failing to capture their perspectives on whether the individuals in their care were treated appropriately. We have suggested a rewrite to try to account for this, and discuss mediators in more detail below.

**[Original] P9 Authenticity: it felt like a real artistic experience**

**Authenticity: it felt like a real, professional arts experience**

- 4.19 As with the children and young people's group, both groups engaged through the disability strand of the research found the word 'artistic' to be potentially confusing in this statement. People discussed how the performance "was an immersive experience...was modern and arty...but what constitutes a real artistic experience?". The QUAD group suggested 'real, professional arts experience' over 'artistic experience', which still touches on the authenticity of the experience.

**[Original] P30 Intention: I felt able to shape the intention of the project**  
**Intention: I was able to change things and make the project how I wanted it**

- 4.20 This statement caused difficulty for both groups. In particular, people struggled with the notion of the intention of a project, and whether this referred to its intended outcomes, or its overall shape and direction. Suggestions from the QUAD group included 'I was able to change things' or 'I was able to make it how I wanted to be'. Based on these, we have suggested a redraft above, though we feel this statement merits further scrutiny.

**[Original] Q7 Local Impact: it is important that it is happening here**  
**Local impact: it is important that it is happening here [XXXX]**

- 4.21 Groups' responses to this statement focused on the venue in which the experiences were held, rather than on the significance of the event being held in a particular geography, with the PMLD group for instance commenting on the importance of accessible parking, toilets and changing facilities. This was not the interpretation anticipated when the statement is originally drafted, and we have suggested an amendment that allows the statement to be modified depending on circumstance, and is likely to generate responses that are more in line with the anticipated interpretation.

### **The role of mediators**

- 4.22 One of the most significant findings from this research emerged from the PMLD engagement. For all the metrics, it was the carers who responded. However, they did not always respond in the same way. An understanding of the role of mediators (by which we mean supporters, carers, parents, siblings and group organisers) in eliciting responses from certain groups is therefore critical.
- 4.23 Across all of the metrics carers responded in one of three ways. For some, they would respond on behalf of themselves – an experiencer of the performance, unwittingly. In these instances, it would be their opinion alone that they communicated. For example, mediators offered their own opinions about the quality of the idea of the performance in response to the Concept statement (Q1: it was an interesting idea).
- 4.24 For other metrics, the carer would interpret the reaction of the individual in their care and make a judgement based only on that. For example, for the Stretch metric (P16: I did something I didn't know I was capable of) carers discussed how the individuals they were caring for got more involved in the performance, made particular or new gestures and or showed traits of involvement and engagement than might have been and for the Challenge metric (Q4: it was thought-provoking), they interpreted the individuals' reactions to the various multisensory stimuli in the performance.
- 4.25 The third way in which carers would respond was on behalf of themselves as carer, or on behalf of themselves and the individuals in their care as one 'unit'. That is to say, they either responded on behalf of themselves referring to their specific responsibilities and skills, or on behalf of themselves and the individual in their care, recognising the distinct needs that they have and their role. In response to the Identity metric (P29: it helped me to see myself differently), for example, carers discussed how they hadn't ever seen the individuals with PMLD respond in this way and how this might impact on their role as a carer, seeing new possibilities for their role and work. Similarly,

responding to the Skills metric (P17: I gained new skills), carers discussed having learned new skills from the performers such as different ways of creative engagement for those in their care and new ways in which they might support and encourage connection and involvement in the world.

4.26 The latter two types of mediated response are likely to be highly sensitive to the relationship dynamic between the person supported and cared for and the person giving that support and care. For example, for parents and siblings of someone with PMLD who often struggle to find activities they can do as a family, it is very significant to discover a new activity they are confident they can do together. This is important context for responding to metrics like Motivation (P24: I feel motivated to do more creative things in future).

4.27 There is a discussion to be had about whether to mandate how mediators should respond for each of the metrics. On the one hand, without making it clear how mediators should respond, it will be difficult to generate data that is comparable across performances. On the other hand, this fails to recognise that there is a spectrum of disability, and that some people may be more able to respond to the metric than others. Similarly, the dynamic of the relationship between the cared-for individual and the carer will come into play.

4.28 When considering the role of mediator, this is not only a consideration for those supporting someone with PMLD, but may be something that arises for anyone translating or supporting someone to make a personal response. The table below shows the metrics for which we have evidence of mediation.

Mediators responded on behalf of themselves as experienter	Mediators responded on behalf of the person in their care	Mediators responded on behalf of themselves as carer or themselves a unit
Q1 Concept: it was an interesting idea	Q3 Distinctiveness: it was different from things I've experienced before	Q6 Enthusiasm: I would come to something like this again
Q2 Presentation: it was well produced and presented.	Q4 Challenge: it was thought-provoking	Q8 Relevance: it has something to say about the world in which we live
Q9 Rigour: it was well thought through and put together	Q5 Captivation: it was absorbing and held my attention	P5 Responsiveness: the organisers responded well to the needs of the group
P3 Clarity: I was here about what were all here to do	P11 Belonging: they made me feel part of the team	P6 Respect: I was treated as an equal
P4 Organisation: the project was well organised	P16 Stretch: I did something I didn't know I was capable of	P10 Support: people in the group supported each other
P9 Authenticity: it felt like a real artistic experience		P13 Acceptance: I felt like I could be myself
		P17 Skills: I gained new skills
		P21 Worldview: I learned something new about the world
		P24 Motivation: I feel motivated to do more creative things in future
		P25 Confidence: I feel more confident about doing new things
		P26 Opportunity: the project opened up new opportunities for me
		P29 Identity: it helped me to see myself differently
	P31 Creative Legacy: I now have creative ambitions I didn't have before	

4.29 We have been able to suggest amendments for some of the metrics for which we have evidence of mediation. These amendments take into account the discussions had around the metrics themselves, as well as the way in which mediators responded to the metrics, i.e. whether they responded on behalf of themselves, the person in their care, or themselves and the person in their care as one. For some metrics, we have not suggested an amendment but have included our analysis around how people responded as evidence of mediation.

Metric (answered on behalf of themselves as experiencer)	Analysis	Suggested Amendments
Q1 Concept: it was an interesting idea	Carers referred to it being 'a good idea and not something you see a lot of', and 'interesting with a lot of things happening at once'. The statement is trying to capture the value of the idea and the level of interest provoked, which overlaps with Captivation	Concept: it was a good idea
Q2 Presentation: it was well produced and presented.	'Well produced' overlaps with Rigour.	Presentation: it was well presented
P9 Authenticity: it felt like a real artistic experience	People confused about what makes an artistic experience.	Authenticity: it felt like a real, professional arts experience
Metric (answered on behalf of the person in their care)	Analysis	Suggested Amendments
Q3 Distinctiveness: it was different from things I've experienced before	Discussions around how the people with PMLD had never been to anything like this before	Distinctiveness: it was different from things they've experienced before.
Q4 Challenge: it was thought-provoking	Not thought-provoking but stimulated the people with PMLD and made them react and respond	Challenge: it was stimulating
Q5 Captivation: it was absorbing and held my attention	It made the people with PMLD focus and respond, but there is overlap with Challenge.	Captivation: it was stimulating and caught their attention
P11 Belonging: they made me feel part of the team	Discussions around how the people with PMLD were made to feel part of the team.	Belonging: they made them feel part of the team
P16 Stretch: I did something I didn't know I was capable of	Carers didn't realise how much the people with PMLD would get involved in the performance.	Stretch: they did something I didn't know they were capable of
Metric (answered on behalf of themselves as carer or themselves a unit)	Analysis	Suggested Amendments
Q6 Enthusiasm: I would come to something like this again		Enthusiasm: I (we) would come to something like this again
Q8 Relevance: it has something to say about the world in which we live	The performance meant something to everyone involved. Home is an accessible topic.	
P6 Respect: I was treated as an equal	'Everyone was equal, which doesn't mean you do the same thing for everyone'	Respect: I (we) was (were) treated with respect
P13 Acceptance: I felt like I could be myself	Carers discussed how they were not worried about the cared-for individuals reacting negatively or being disruptive	Acceptance: I felt like we could be ourselves

P17 Skills: I gained new skills	Carers hadn't seen the individuals in their care respond like that before. They also felt confidence about their abilities as a carer.	
P21 Worldview: I learned something new about the world	'Society is becoming more accepting of disability'	
P24 Motivation: I feel motivated to do more creative things in future	'I'll look out for more things like this in future'	
P25 Confidence: I feel more confident about doing new things	People responded as a carer. In this case, the metric becomes a composite of Motivation, Identity and Creative Legacy.	
P26 Opportunity: the project opened up new opportunities for me		Opportunity: the project opened up new opportunities for us
P29 Identity: it helped me to see myself differently		Identity: it helped me to see us differently
P31 Creative Legacy: I now have creative ambitions I didn't have before	Having been to the performance, carers felt there was potential to do similar things in future. They would be less apprehensive.	

## 5 Testing the metrics with adults

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- 5.1 The third strand of the research involved testing the metrics with a focus group of adults from the Fosse neighbourhood, a low socioeconomic status area on the edge of Leicester city centre. All those in this group also spoke English as a second language. Nine adults attended the focus group after they and their children had been given free tickets to see Digitopia, a performance that combines dance with digital technology, at Curve Theatre Leicester.
- 5.2 Following the performance, parents and their children had also been offered a 30-minute stay and play run by the production team, to learn more about the show and interact with some of the technology. Three of the people who attended our session stayed for this.

### About participants

- 5.3 Nine adults participated in the focus group. These ranged in age from 27 to 42, with one 17-year-old in attendance with one of her parents. Eight participants provided post code data anonymously, and this enabled us to see that all eight postcodes were in areas of Leicester classified as being among the 50% most deprived areas of the country. Six of the eight postcodes were in the 20% most deprived.
- 5.4 All of the adults spoke English as a second language. Participants' first languages included Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish and Gujarati.
- 5.5 There was a balance in terms of people's exposure to the arts. One person often referred to having watched ballet performances in Moscow in the past, while others described their level of engagement with the arts as limited to occasional trips to the cinema.

### Our approach to testing the metrics

- 5.6 Because this engagement focused on adults, and adults are far less likely to regularly attend participatory arts experiences we were instructed by Arts Council England to focus on the quality metrics.
- 5.7 It was therefore difficult to test the participatory metrics as most had not attended a participatory arts experience. We were however able to look at some participatory metrics with those who had stayed on with their children to attend the stay and play.
- 5.8 The session took the form of a facilitated group discussion. The facilitator asked each of the attendees to firstly introduce themselves and say what they thought about the performance. A member of the research team took notes on what people said, which provided some evidence of their ability in English and the sort of vocabulary they use.
- 5.9 The facilitator then introduced the concept of using metrics to capture people's feedback on arts experiences. Running through the quality metrics one by one, participants were asked to say the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each statement in relation to Digitopia. We took notes and observations of their responses, which served as the basis for our analysis on the usability and accessibility of the metrics.

## Findings from the event

5.10 In total, we tested all nine of the quality metrics with the group, and three participatory metrics. As with other groups, we found that most of the metrics were found to be fine by the groups.

### Amending the metrics

5.11 While the majority of the metrics were met with little to no difficulty, there were some with which the group either struggled or thought could be made easier. Below we set out the more difficult metrics and the suggested amendments.

#### **[Original] Q1 Concept: it was an interesting idea**

##### **Concept: it was a good idea**

5.12 Participants did not raise any issues with this metric, and indeed seemed very comfortable responding to it. However, based on the two discussion points following, we believe there is scope to change the statement.

5.13 Firstly, we think this metric can be interpreted in two ways: as a reflection on the quality of the idea underpinning the production (it was a good idea); or as a reflection on the production's ability to provoke curiosity, interest or attention (it was interesting). If the metric is designed to capture the latter, there is overlap with the Captivation metric (Q5: it was absorbing and held my attention). As such, we assume the metric is designed to elicit reflections on the quality of the idea behind a production.

5.14 Secondly, during the first part of the focus group when asked to talk about their impressions of the experience, all participants used the word interesting, and not in the same way. Some participants discussed how the amount of activity on the stage held their attention, while others said the idea behind the performance was good. 'Interesting' is one of the most commonly used words in the English language<sup>2</sup>, and we believe that for speakers of English as a second or other language this may be a 'go-to' way of describing things, rather than as a word for genuine critique.

5.15 Based on the two points above, we have suggested 'it was a good idea' as a potential redrafting of the statement. This captures the fact that the metric is measuring the quality of the idea rather than the level of interest elicited by the performance.

#### **[Original] Q2 Presentation: it was well produced and presented**

##### **Presentation: it was well presented**

5.16 Although this statement was well understood by the group, as with earlier engagements it was pointed out to us that it is trying to capture two separate things. Participants described how production means the preparation and design and design of a performance, while presentation is what the producers want the audience to see and includes the smooth-running of the show: "presentation even includes whether they fall over during the show!".

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<sup>2</sup> 'Interest' (and its derivations interesting, interested etc.) is the 142<sup>nd</sup> word on the New General Service List, which lists English words in order of frequency. (Browne, C., Culligan, B. & Phillips, J. (2013). The New General Service List. Retrieved from <http://www.newgeneralservicelist.org>.)

**[Original] Q7 Local Impact: it is important that it is happening here**

**Local Impact: it is important [for XXXX] that it is happening here**

- 5.17 The immediate response to this statement was “where is here?”. People were confused by this statement, and questioned whether important meant for Leicester, for the Curve Theatre, for the community or for something else. Participants discussed how there was a need for more specificity with this statement, particularly around clarifying what ‘here’ means. Based on this feedback, we have suggested a redraft, which requires that the statement is modified according to the context in which a performance is held.

**[Original] Q9 Rigour: it was well thought through and put together**

- 5.18 While the group understood this statement, we have included it in this section as some of the discussion surrounding this metric mirrored that prompted by the Presentation metric (Q2: it was well produced and presented).
- 5.19 People thought that the ‘well produced’ aspect of the Presentation metric (Q2: it was well produced and presented) was capturing the same thing as the Rigour metric (Q9: it was well thought through and put together) in that both focus on the preparation, design, and execution of a production. If our suggested amendment to remove the ‘well produced’ part of the Presentation metric (Q2: it was well produced and presented) is accepted, we believe that the Rigour metric (Q9: it was well thought through and put together) will still capture data around the extent to which a production is well produced.

**[Original] P6 Respect: I was treated as an equal**

**Respect: I was treated with respect**

- 5.20 The discussion around this metric was similar to that in the children and young people’s strand in that people discussed the fair allocation of resources and support, rather than discussing whether they felt they were spoken to appropriately and with respect. This is likely because they were responding on behalf of their children, but nevertheless we feel this statement should be amended so as to remove the risk of this confusion.

## 6 Considerations for the metrics interface

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6.1 Although it is not within the remit of this research to address issues around the technology used to support the metrics, we have during the course of our work uncovered some issues that we feel Arts Council England will want to consider when appointing a service provider to take this work forward. We set these out below.

### Amending statements

6.2 Prior to the research, one of the existing statements, Welcome (P27: they made me feel a part of [XXXX]), included ellipsis, presumably for later amendment depending on the type of event, host organisation or some other factor. The [XXXX] part of the statement proved complex for younger groups to understand.

6.3 It is our assumption that Arts Council England intends to give organisations access to the 'back end' of the metrics in order to fill in this part of the statement according to the circumstance. This will also mitigate the confusion experienced by younger groups. Some of our amended metrics may also benefit from this functionality in order to be as clear and accessible as possible.

### Mediation and the metrics interface

6.4 Our work has also shed light on the importance of mediators and mediated responses in making the metrics as accessible as possible. If the metrics are to be used to generate a coherent, consistent and comparable national dataset, it is essential that those mediating are clear on whose behalf they are responding. As set out earlier, this may be on behalf of someone in their care or on behalf of themselves as carer with an individual in their care, or on behalf of themselves as interviewer. However, the role of mediation will also likely extend to parents with young children.

6.5 This raises an important issue to address around how specific Arts Council England wishes to be in directing users in a mediator position to respond to statements.

6.6 Mandating whose behalf people should respond will go as far as possible towards ensuring a consistent and comparable dataset, but fails to recognise that there is a spectrum of ability in terms of which metrics people can respond to. If the decision is taken to direct respondents on how to respond, this can be achieved in a number of ways. Some of the changes to statements set out in the section on testing the metrics with people with disabilities are simple pronoun changes that reflect on whose behalf the mediator was responding. An alternative way of achieving this would be to include some sort of marker or instruction with each statement on how mediators should respond.

6.7 Understanding the relationship dynamic between the mediator and the person who they are mediating for will also be material to these discussions. Arts Council England may want to consider how the metrics interface can deal with these issues, for instance prompting users to respond in a particular way, or having an additional multiple-choice question to capture the type and strength of relationship between two individuals.

### Including explainers for the metrics

6.8 As mentioned in the section on testing the metrics with children and young people, part of our facilitation toolkit for the children and young people's event was a crib sheet of agreed definitions to

use when explaining the metrics to the groups. For many of the metrics, we did not anticipate having to provide explanations, and as such only produced explanations for the 19 most difficult metrics following our prioritisation process. These can be found in Appendix 2.

- 6.9 These were particularly helpful in generating a shared understanding among the research team and peer researchers as to the intention behind the metrics and statements. To enable Arts Council England and user organisations to generate consistent and comparable data, it follows that a similar set of explainers are included in the interface, whether for all statements or for those that pose the most difficulty.

#### **Picking and choosing metrics**

- 6.10 It is our understanding that for participatory metrics Arts Council England intends to let organisations using the metrics pick and choose which to use in measuring the value of their event. Our finding and discussion on the spectrum of participation from an immersive, interactive performance to a multi-session co-produced product leads us to believe that this is a useful way of deploying the participatory metrics, as some organisations will not feel it useful to receive feedback on all of the dimensions covered.

## 7 Appendix 1: Recommended amendments

Original metric	Suggested revised metric (based on the engagements)
Q1 Concept: it was an interesting idea	Q1 Concept: it was a good idea
Q2 Presentation: it was well produced and presented	Q2 Presentation: it was well presented
Q3 Distinctiveness: it was different from things I've experienced before	Q3 Distinctiveness: it was different from things I've experienced before Q3 Distinctiveness (mediated): it was different from things they've experienced before
Q4 Challenge: it was thought-provoking	Q4 Challenge: it made me think deeply Q4 Challenge (mediated): it was stimulating
Q5 Captivation: it was absorbing and held my attention	Q5 Captivation: it was absorbing and held my attention Q5 Captivation (mediated): it was stimulating and caught their attention
Q6 Enthusiasm: I would come to something like this again	Q6 Enthusiasm: I would come to something like this again Q6 Enthusiasm (mediated): I (we) would come to something like this again
Q7 Local impact: it is important that it's happening here	Q7 Local impact: it is important [for XXXX] that it is happening here
Q8 Relevance: it has something to say about the world in which we live	Q8 Relevance: it has something to say about modern society
P6 Respect: I was treated as an equal	P6 Respect: I was treated with respect P6 Respect: I (we) were treated with respect
P8 Contribution: I felt like my contribution mattered	P8 Contribution: I felt like my role mattered to the project
P9 Authenticity: it felt like a real artistic experience	P9 Authenticity: it felt like a real, professional arts experience
P11 Belonging: they made me feel part of the team	P11 Belonging: I felt like I was part of a team P11 Belonging (mediated): they made them feel part of the team
P13 Acceptance: I felt like I could be myself	P13 Acceptance: I felt like I could be myself P13 Acceptance (mediated): I felt like we could be ourselves
P16 Stretch: I did something I didn't know I was capable of	P16 Stretch: I did something I didn't know I was capable of P16 Stretch (mediated): they did something I didn't know they were capable of
P18 Artistic skills: I improved my artistic skills	P18 Artistic skills: I improved my artistic or creative skills
P20 Empathy: it helped me understand other people's points of view	P20 Empathy: it helped me understand other people's opinions

P21 Worldview: it helped me understand something new about the world	P21 Worldview: it helped me understand something new about society
P24 Motivation: I feel motivated to do more creative things in the future	P24 Motivation: I now want to do more creative things in future
P26 Opportunity: the project opened up new opportunities for me	P26 Opportunity: the project opened up new opportunities for me P26 Opportunity (mediated): the project opened up new opportunities for us
P27 Welcome: they helped me to feel part of [XXXX] (company/project/ community group)	P27 Welcome: I was made to feel welcome
P29 Identity: it helped me to see myself differently	P29 Identity: it helped me to see myself differently P29 Identity (mediated): it helped me to see us differently
P30 Intention: I felt able to shape the intention of the project	P30 Intention: I felt able to change things and make the project how I wanted it

## 8 Appendix 2: Explainers of the metrics

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1. Captivation – it was so good that you didn't want to look away. It seemed to go really quickly because you were so focused on it.
2. Rigour - The (theatre production/dance performance/film), was a good example of what a (theatre production/dance performance/film) should be. The creators put a lot of thought into how it was put together.
3. Presentation - it looked good, it felt like a slick, professional and expert example of (a theatre production/dance performance/orchestral performance)
4. Challenge - it made you think of lots of different things, not just whatever was happening during the activity.
5. Local impact – **(2 interpretations)** The arts experience being held in the town/city/geography that it is has wider benefits for that town/city/geography e.g. if there isn't a lot of art and culture in an area it's good because it brings something new

**OR** where it's held makes a difference to people's experience. For instance if a show is put on at a town hall as opposed to a big theatre people who might not normally go to that sort of thing might be more likely to.

6. Relevance – it represents or discusses issues which are important today in the real world.
7. Intensity – it made you feel like a genuine professional actor/dancer. You felt like you were actually in the production. E.g. a play about something sad – made you really feel sad for the characters.
8. Intention – it **didn't** feel like what you were supposed to do/achieve had already been decided. It felt like you were able to change how things went, or bring your own interpretation of how things should go.
9. Creative legacy – you left feeling like you want to do more dance/acting/singing etc.
10. Opportunity – you left the activity/event feeling like you had new opportunities or choices. For instance, you left wanting to carry on doing activities like that, or you were given specific information about other activities. You left having made new friends, or with a new set of skills.
11. Responsiveness – if you went somewhere where the group had a specific need (e.g. if a lot of younger children turned up) would you feel like the organisers would be able to accommodate that or change the activity a little bit to suit them.
12. Respect – the organisers respected your input, they treated your ideas with respect and didn't just ignore you.

13. Friendship – was everybody friendly, the organisers, teachers, other participants?
14. Clarity (2 interpretations) – you felt like you know what you had to achieve during the activity – you knew why you were there and where you fit in to the whole thing – you knew your purpose.
15. Concept – it was a good idea. It wasn't just interesting or captivating, or it wasn't just that you learned new things, it was that the whole idea itself was good. E.g. a documentary about wildlife is interesting and educational, but is not necessarily a good, interesting idea.
16. Authenticity – if you took part in e.g. an acting workshop/dance, you felt like that's how real actors/dancers would approach it. It wasn't dumbed down to suit you.
17. Identity – would you feel different about your own personality/skills/abilities/interests after attending?
18. Contribution – when you said or did something, they listened and used it. If you had an idea did you feel like it would have been used or at least taken on board?
19. Welcome – did you feel they wanted you there? Running the activity didn't feel like just something they *had* to do, they were really happy you were there and wanted to make you a part of it.

Europoint Centre, 5-11 Lavington  
Street, London, SE1 0NZ  
020 7756 7600

[www.sharedintelligence.net](http://www.sharedintelligence.net)  
[solutions@sharedintelligence.net](mailto:solutions@sharedintelligence.net)