

# WARWICK OF UK CITIES PROJECT THE MEASURING ARTS & CULTURE ON WELLBEING



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The intended audiences for the series include cultural workers, organisers of cultural events, funders, policymakers at the national level and in local government, as well as academics. The series aims to provide accessible, research-led accounts of issues related and relevant to the development of the DCMS UK City of Culture Programme and connected initiatives supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, Arts Council England and others.

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The project has a particular focus on increasing the use of arts, humanities, and social science research to match the scale of opportunity for evidence-based learning afforded by the DCMS UK City of Culture Programme.

The project is committed to sharing insights and data that can benefit and inform the UK City of Culture Programme and other place-based cultural investments, mega-events, and initiatives.

## **MEASURING THE IMPACT OF ARTS AND CULTURE ON WELLBEING**

**Margherita Musella** – WHAT WORKS CENTRE FOR WELLBEING

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# MEASURING THE IMPACT OF ARTS & CULTURE ON WELLBEING

WRITTEN BY MARGHERITA MUSELLA ON BEHALF OF THE WHAT WORKS CENTRE FOR WELLBEING

**As the UK's third City of Culture (UK CoC) award draws to a close, there is a unique opportunity to reflect on what works to improve wellbeing in place-based arts and culture initiatives.**

The research outlined in this paper was conducted in August-September 2022 by Dr Rafaela Ganga, Dr Kerry Wilson and Laura Davies from the Institute for Cultural Capital (ICC), Liverpool John Moores University. It was funded by Spirit of 2012 and the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). This paper was written by Margherita Musella on behalf of the What Works Centre for Wellbeing. Data and evaluation relating to Coventry UK CoC 2021 was provided by Mark Scott, Warwick Business School.

As the UK's third City of Culture (UK CoC) award draws to a close, there is a unique opportunity to reflect on what works to improve wellbeing in place-based arts and culture initiatives. Each award is a testing ground for how to successfully embed systematic evaluation research practices in UK CoC programmes. Through this, we can understand how place-based arts and culture affect our quality of life, thereby informing policy and investment decisions.

Evaluations of wellbeing interventions and pilots constitute a key source of evidence on the drivers of our quality of life and social capital. So what does the growing body of evaluation research tell us about the wellbeing value of arts and culture interventions? What are the factors that enable wellbeing outcomes and reduce social inequalities?

This paper reflects on key findings from a new rapid review on what works to improve wellbeing in arts and culture interventions, connecting research findings with the priorities of policy-making. It looks ahead to future wellbeing and place-based research, making recommendations on how to generate and sustain wellbeing value creation through arts, culture, and heritage interventions.

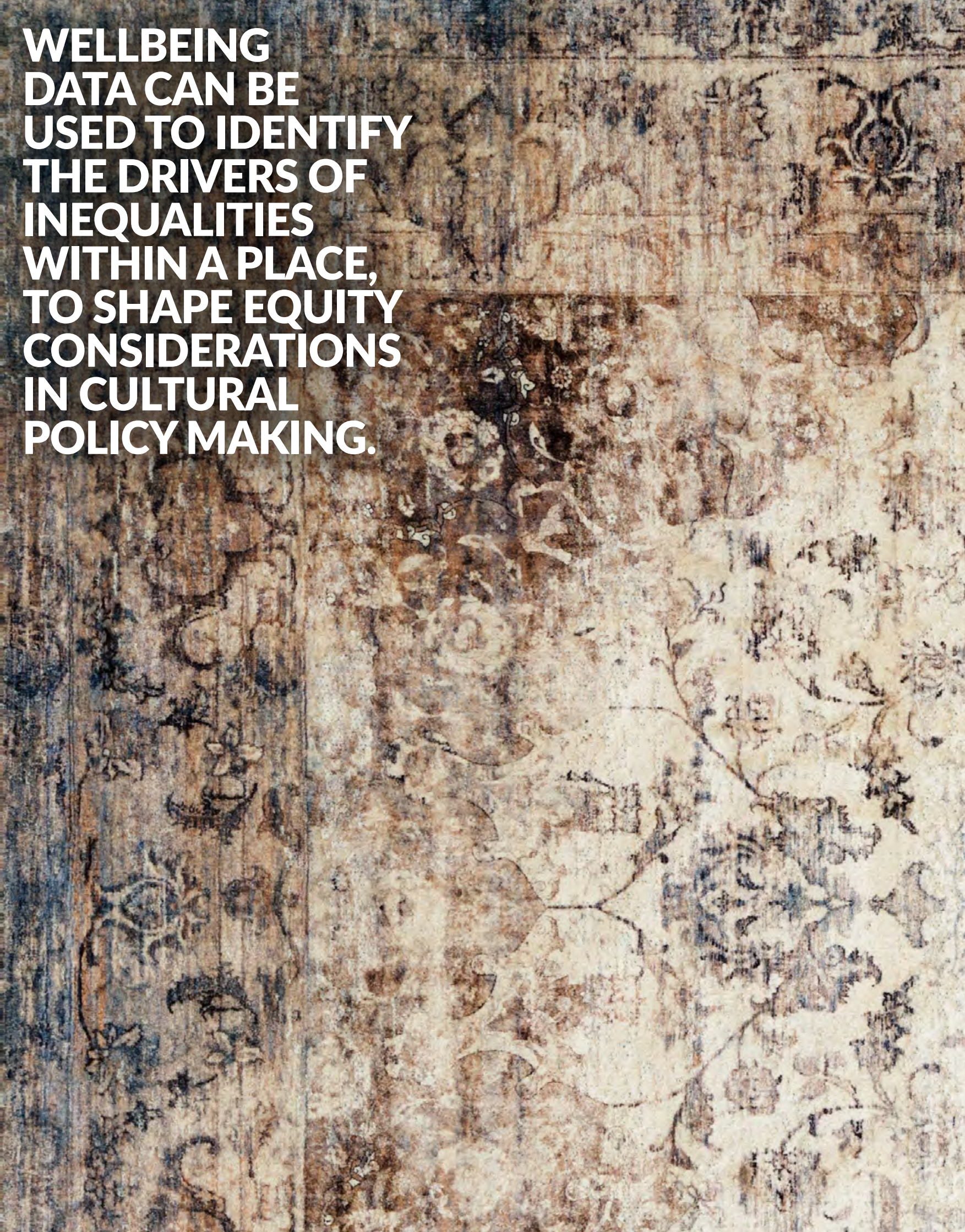
# SETTING THE CONTEXT

## Wellbeing as a lens

Personal wellbeing concerns whether an individual is feeling good and functioning well; community wellbeing is being well together. National wellbeing tells us how we are doing as individuals, communities, and nations; levelling up's overall goal is that the people living in a nation have happy and fulfilling lives. Looking at wellbeing and its drivers at individual community, and national levels offers a lens through which we can understand the impacts that cultural participation has on subjective wellbeing and mental wellbeing. These impacts can have important community-level outcomes, such as social support networks, cohesion, and neighbourhood belonging.

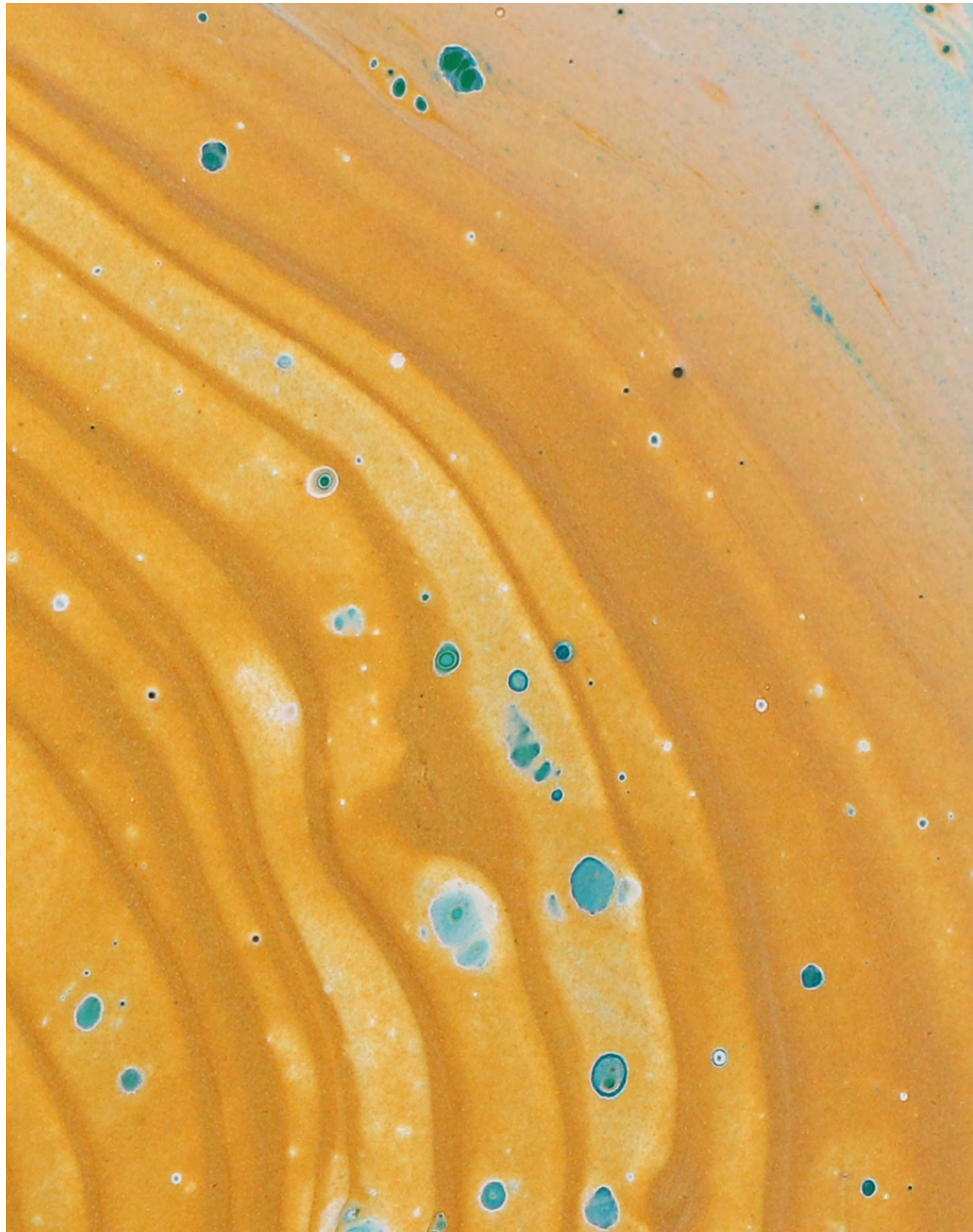
Wellbeing data can be used to identify the drivers of inequalities that exist within a place, to shape equity considerations in cultural policy making, and to inform the ways in which community-level interventions are designed and implemented. The UK's national measure for subjective wellbeing—the Office for National Statistics' ONS4—is the overall measure of wellbeing for the Levelling Up White Paper's 8th mission, and it is key to tracking the country's spatial disparities.

In this sense, using a wellbeing lens to evaluate cultural policies can shed light on how arts and culture interventions mitigate or exacerbate social and health inequalities.



**WELLBEING DATA CAN BE USED TO IDENTIFY THE DRIVERS OF INEQUALITIES WITHIN A PLACE, TO SHAPE EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS IN CULTURAL POLICY MAKING.**

Well-established wellbeing methodologies are now available through the government's Green Book Supplementary Guidance on Wellbeing. These methodologies help evaluators and decision-makers robustly, consistently, and confidently incorporate wellbeing evidence in the policy and appraisal process. The methodologies rely on both the overall national wellbeing framework and subjective wellbeing measures that can capture the broad social and economic impacts of arts and culture in value-for-money terms.



### Wellbeing evidence on arts, culture, and heritage

*The wellbeing statistical landscape in the UK*

In 2011, the UK's Office for National Statistics (ONS) began a large-scale effort to track national progress across 10 domains of life (Figure 1).



Figure 1: The 10 Dimensions of Wellbeing, Office for National Statistics (ONS).



The Measuring National Well-being programme is made up of 43 indicators that capture progress across the domains. The **What we do** domain includes participation in arts and culture, and how satisfied we are with our leisure time.

For England, the Taking Part survey and now the Participation survey provides further insight into some of the barriers to attending arts events and participation and it includes analysis by group-level variables.

The inclusion of national wellbeing measures like personal wellbeing and mental wellbeing in several large-scale national surveys provides a wealth of data on the correlates and potential predictors of individual wellbeing in the UK.

Policy makers can use this information to design, monitor, and compare cultural policies using a wellbeing lens.

### What the evidence tells us

Arts and culture have obtained increasing recognition as an area that directly influences policy. In 2014, the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Wellbeing Economics (APPGWE) presented evidence on the positive relationship between subjective wellbeing and cultural policies, and the impacts of participation on key wellbeing drivers like employment and health.<sup>1</sup> Early evidence from the What Works Centre for Wellbeing sheds light on the wellbeing value of specific activities, including visual arts, music, physical activities, and volunteering. More recently, visits to cultural assets have also emerged as having both direct—through visits/access—and indirect effects, with people valuing the access that family, friends and future generations will have.<sup>2</sup>

We know that arts, culture, and heritage make up an important part of our leisure time. Data from the UK's largest longitudinal

*Investing in arts and culture: Wellbeing evidence gives a robust means of measuring the value of non-market goods. Arts and culture play an important part in all our lives, and wellbeing data will help make the case for spending in these areas.*

#### APPGWE Area of Policy 4

household survey, Understanding Society, suggests that increased engagement in arts events, historical sites, and museums is associated with higher life satisfaction.<sup>3</sup>

Research on the links between wellbeing and participation in arts and culture has been steadily growing.

**DATA SUGGESTS THAT INCREASED ENGAGEMENT IN ARTS EVENTS, HISTORICAL SITES AND MUSEUMS IS ASSOCIATED WITH HIGHER LIFE SATISFACTION.**

The recent establishment of the National Centre for Creative Health signals a strong commitment to understanding the contribution of arts and creativity to health and social care.

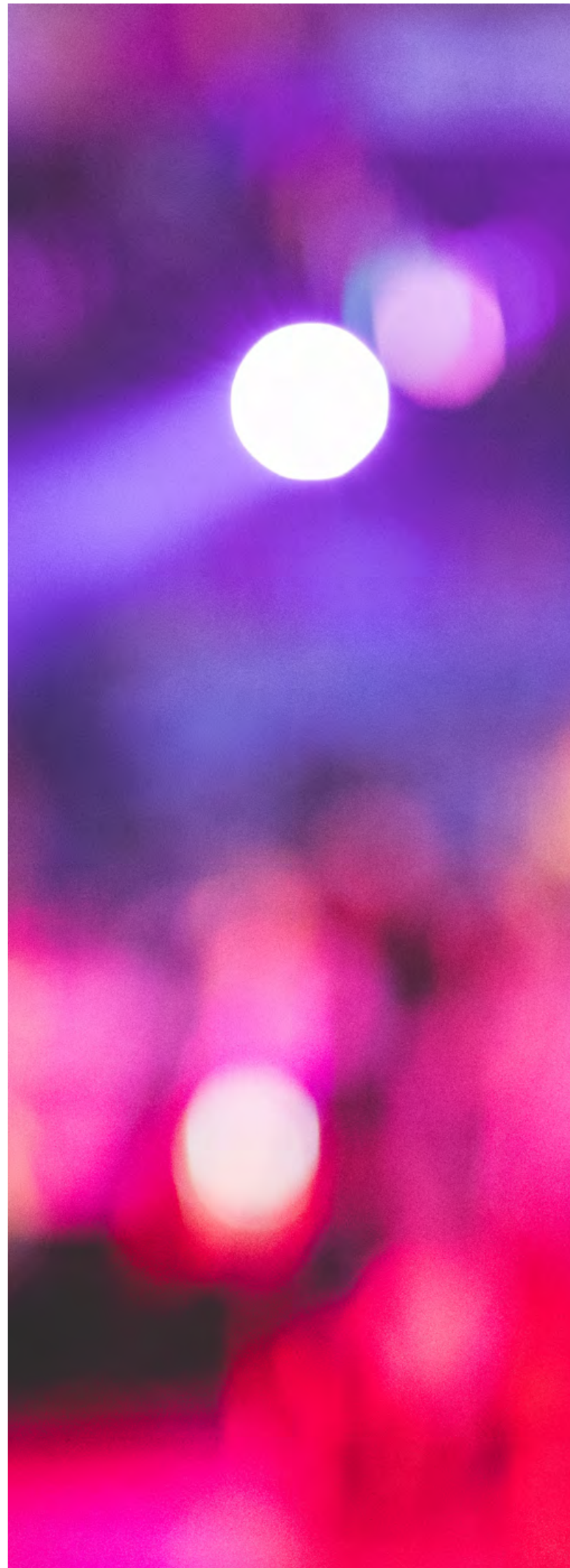
In addition, the renewed focus on Place in cultural policy and funding objectives—including the Arts and Humanities Research Council's (AHRC) investment in Place as a research theme—puts arts and culture at the centre of our understanding of social impacts at neighbourhood and community levels.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Christine Berry, *Wellbeing in Four Policy Areas: Report by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Wellbeing Economics* (London: New Economics Foundation, 2014). Available at [https://neweconomics.org/uploads/files/ccdf9782b6d8700f7c\\_lcm6i2ed7.pdf](https://neweconomics.org/uploads/files/ccdf9782b6d8700f7c_lcm6i2ed7.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Christine Berry (2014)

<sup>3</sup> Daniel Wheatley and Crai Bickerton, 'Measuring changes in subjective well-being from engagement in the arts, culture and sport,' *Journal of Cultural Economics* 43, (2019) 421–442. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10824-019-09342-7>

<sup>4</sup> DCMS Cultural Development Fund Cultural Placemaking scheme <<https://culturalplacemaking.com/>> and Arts Council England's Creative People and Places <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/creative-people-and-places-0>



### Social inequalities and the importance of place

Within communities, the effects of arts and culture span key social capital outcomes. These can include social relationships, sense of belonging, and pride of place.<sup>4</sup> Loneliness research provides insight into the positive effects of participation on social connectedness, both in adulthood and later life.<sup>5/6</sup>

Evidence also highlights that the cultural policy impacts can differ between geographical places. Work done as part of WELLCOM—through the Centre’s programme funded by the Economic & Social Research Council (ESRC)—uncovers some of the factors that affect community engagement with place-based arts and culture resources. Engagement appears lower in areas that are rural, multicultural, or among the most deprived 10%. The quality, design and attractiveness of the neighbourhood infrastructure (including accessibility of transportation and the availability

of green space) are characteristics that may explain lower participation in deprived communities. Furthermore, where the opportunity exists to participate in arts, culture, and heritage, cultural norms and collective behaviours may weaken motivation to do so.

WELLCOM’s findings also suggest that the wellbeing benefits of cultural engagement may be greater for those living in deprived areas. As people engage more frequently, mental distress decreases and mental health functioning increases; a change that is more noticeable for those living in the most deprived areas.<sup>7</sup>

### Using wellbeing data in policy appraisal

The growing body of wellbeing research on arts and culture can now be more easily mobilised by policy and used to inform spending decisions, thanks to its inclusion in the HMT Green Book 2020 and in the Green Book Supplementary Guidance on Wellbeing Appraisal.

Previous work done by Simetrica Jacobs and the London School of Economics to develop the Wellbeing Valuation approach has helped build consensus on the monetisation and value of subjective wellbeing impacts.<sup>8</sup> Wellbeing is now included in the government framework for valuing culture and heritage assets, and there is a wealth of information on good (and weak) practice methods and uses to inform policy spending decisions. The HM Green Book Supplementary Guidance emphasises wellbeing as a key component in the assessment of costs and benefits to a society. It introduces a simple but effective measure of wellbeing: the ‘Wellbeing-adjusted Life Year’ (WELLBY). This is defined as a one-point change in life satisfaction on a Likert scale between 0 to 10 for an individual for one year. The use of the WELLBY approach as a metric allows evaluators to capture the full social and economic benefits of cultural policy actions.

<sup>5</sup> Anne-Marie Bagnall and others, *A systematic review of interventions in community infrastructure (places and spaces) to boost social relations and community wellbeing*. Presented at the Society for Social Medicine & Population Health Annual Scientific Meeting, 4-6 September 2019, University College Cork, Ireland

<sup>6</sup> Rosie Perkins, and others, ‘Arts engagement supports social connectedness in adulthood: findings from the HEartS Survey’, *BMC Public Health* 21, (2021) 1208. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-021-11233-6>

<sup>7</sup> L. McQuade and R. O’Sullivan R., *Arts and Creativity in Later Life: Implications for Health and Wellbeing in Older Adults. A Systematic Evidence Review* (Institute of Public Health, 2021) <https://publichealth.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Arts-and-creativity-full-report-final.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Soffia, Magdalena, *Cultural, arts and community engagement can benefit wellbeing, but how do our neighbourhoods influence our participation?* Briefing by What Works Centre for Wellbeing, April 2022. <https://whatworkswellbeing.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/WWW-Briefing-Neighbourhood-influence-on-culture-arts-and-community-engagement.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Lawton, Ricky N, Fujiwara, Daniel, Arber, Madeleine, Maguire, Henry, Malde, Jack., O’Donovan, Peter, Lyons, Abigail. and Atkinson, Giles. (2020). *DCMS Rapid Evidence Assessment: Culture and Heritage Valuation Studies—Technical Report*. Department for Digital Culture, Media and Sport; Fujiwara, Daniel, Kudrna, Laura, and Dolan, Paul. *Quantifying the Social Impacts of Culture and Sport* (London. DCMS, 2014a) [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/955142/REA\\_culture\\_heritage\\_value\\_Simetrica.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/955142/REA_culture_heritage_value_Simetrica.pdf); I Fujiwara, Daniel *Museums and Happiness: The Value of Participating in Museums and the Arts*. Research Report. (The Happy Museum, 2013). [https://www.artshealthresources.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/2013\\_Museums\\_and\\_happiness.pdf](https://www.artshealthresources.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/2013_Museums_and_happiness.pdf)

## Wellbeing and the UK CoC awards

As high-profile cultural mega-events, UK CoC awards are important catalysts for transforming cultural policy, driving wellbeing outcomes over time and across a wide range of stakeholders. Each UK CoC bid generates learning on how to capture the wellbeing value of events that operate within the complex economic and social dynamics of cities.

Derry/Londonderry, the UK's inaugural CoC for 2013, broadened the scope of expected impacts by including community-level identities and relations as core evaluation outcomes.

Hull UK CoC 2017 saw an increase in the volume and scope of data collection such that a broad range of social impacts could be evaluated, creating a benchmark against which changes in wellbeing outcomes could be tracked against a national picture.

While UK CoCs are important objects of study in wellbeing research, they are set within the wider social, economic, and cultural contexts of cities.

This creates specific challenges for identifying direct wellbeing impacts, which the Coventry UK CoC evaluation team sought to address.

### Coventry CoC UK 2021 – Evaluation design and priorities

The Coventry UK CoC 2021 evaluation team made important advances, both in the development of wellbeing data infrastructure and in the breadth of the evaluation techniques they adopted. The 2018 Coventry Household Survey provided the city with a rich dataset on baseline levels of wellbeing, differentiated by specific groups and populations.

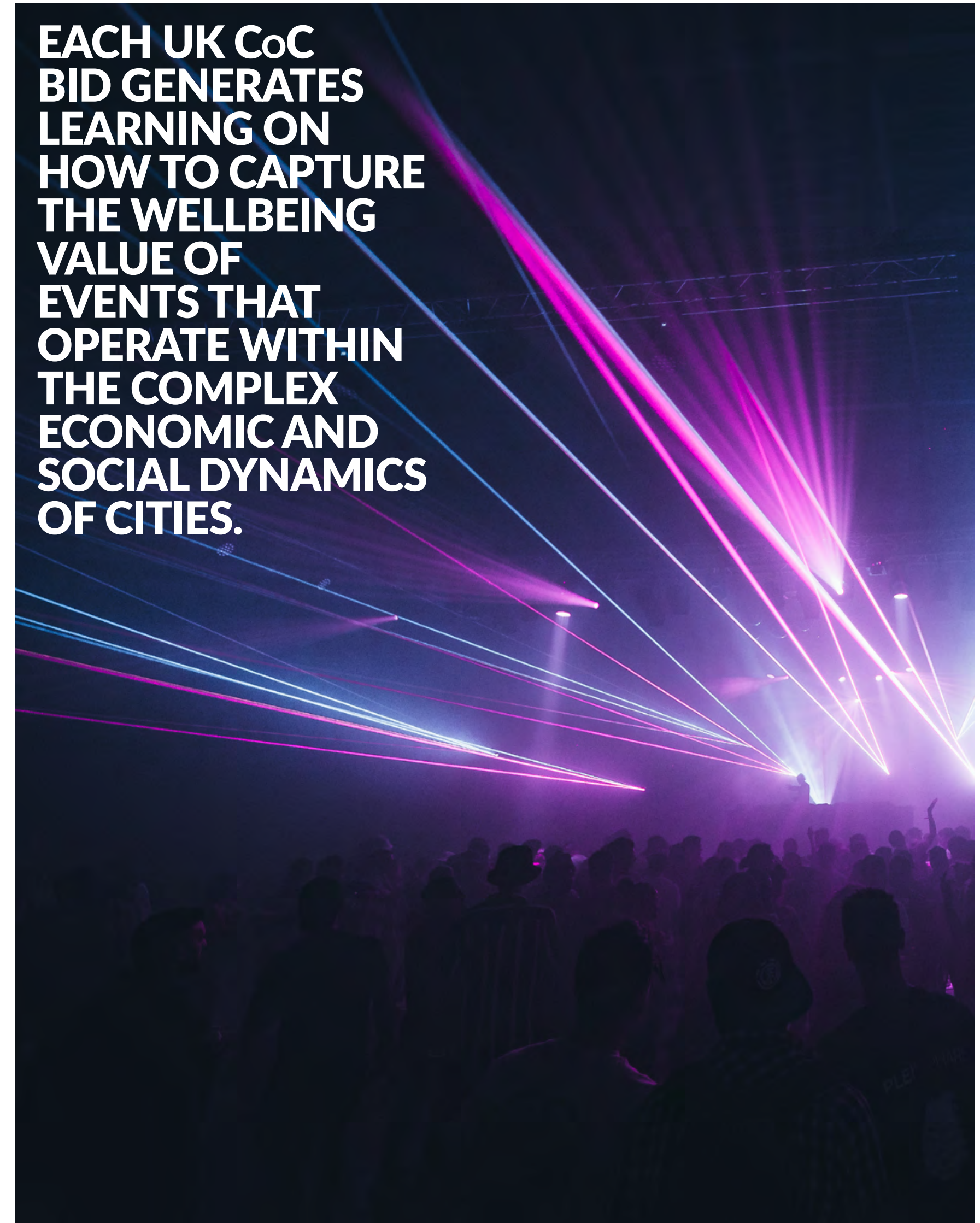
The Coventry City of Culture Trust and its partners had also tracked socio-demographic data on cultural participation at the middle super output area level.

Hence, we know that almost half of tickets issued by the Trust (43%) went to residents on lower levels of income; typically, people living in majority-minority ethnic neighbourhoods, with historically lower levels of engagement in publicly funded arts and culture.

The team asked evaluation questions about how and at what cost wellbeing impacts are generated. They combined quantitative approaches with deep intervention work that uses qualitative methods to understand the success mechanisms that underlie the Coventry co-production model.

In addition, an Economic Impact Assessment was used to capture the monetary value of wellbeing benefits that stem from volunteering opportunities, alongside the value of skills development and job creation.

**EACH UK CoC BID GENERATES LEARNING ON HOW TO CAPTURE THE WELLBEING VALUE OF EVENTS THAT OPERATE WITHIN THE COMPLEX ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DYNAMICS OF CITIES.**







**THERE ARE FINDINGS THAT COVENTRY CoC'S HYPER-LOCAL EVENTS AND CO-PRODUCTION APPROACHES PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN DRIVING CULTURAL PARTICIPATION IN LOW-ENGAGEMENT AREAS.**

## THE RAPID REVIEW: BACKGROUND

Since late 2019, the Technical Reference Group supporting the evaluation of the UK CoC 2021 year has engaged researchers, funders, and practitioners in a national conversation about how to grow place-based cultural value and impact. The What Works for Wellbeing Centre (the Centre) has been fundamental to this conversation, acting as a link to wellbeing evidence and advising on its use to interpret the Coventry UK CoC 2021 evaluation findings. In August 2022, the Centre designed a rapid review to bring together high-quality evidence on place-based arts and culture and promote greater reflection on the promising wellbeing evidence that is emerging from Coventry's UK CoC 2021 experience.

There are findings that Coventry UK CoC 2021's hyper-local events and co-production approaches played a key role in driving cultural participation in low-engagement areas. Social inequalities and co-production are therefore a key focus of this review, which looks specifically at:

- *arts and culture interventions that aim to mitigate social inequalities;*
- *evidence from participatory art practices;*
- *evaluations of European Capitals of Culture (ECOC) and UK City of Culture (CoC) awards.*

This review is conducted in collaboration with the Institute of Cultural Capital and Liverpool John Moores University, who

sifted through almost one thousand studies to find studies on the social value of place-based arts and culture interventions. They looked for evidence of effects at the individual, community, and national level in the UK and across Europe. The focus was on moderate to high quality evaluations; quantitative studies that did not use a pre-post design were excluded from the review.

## Key findings

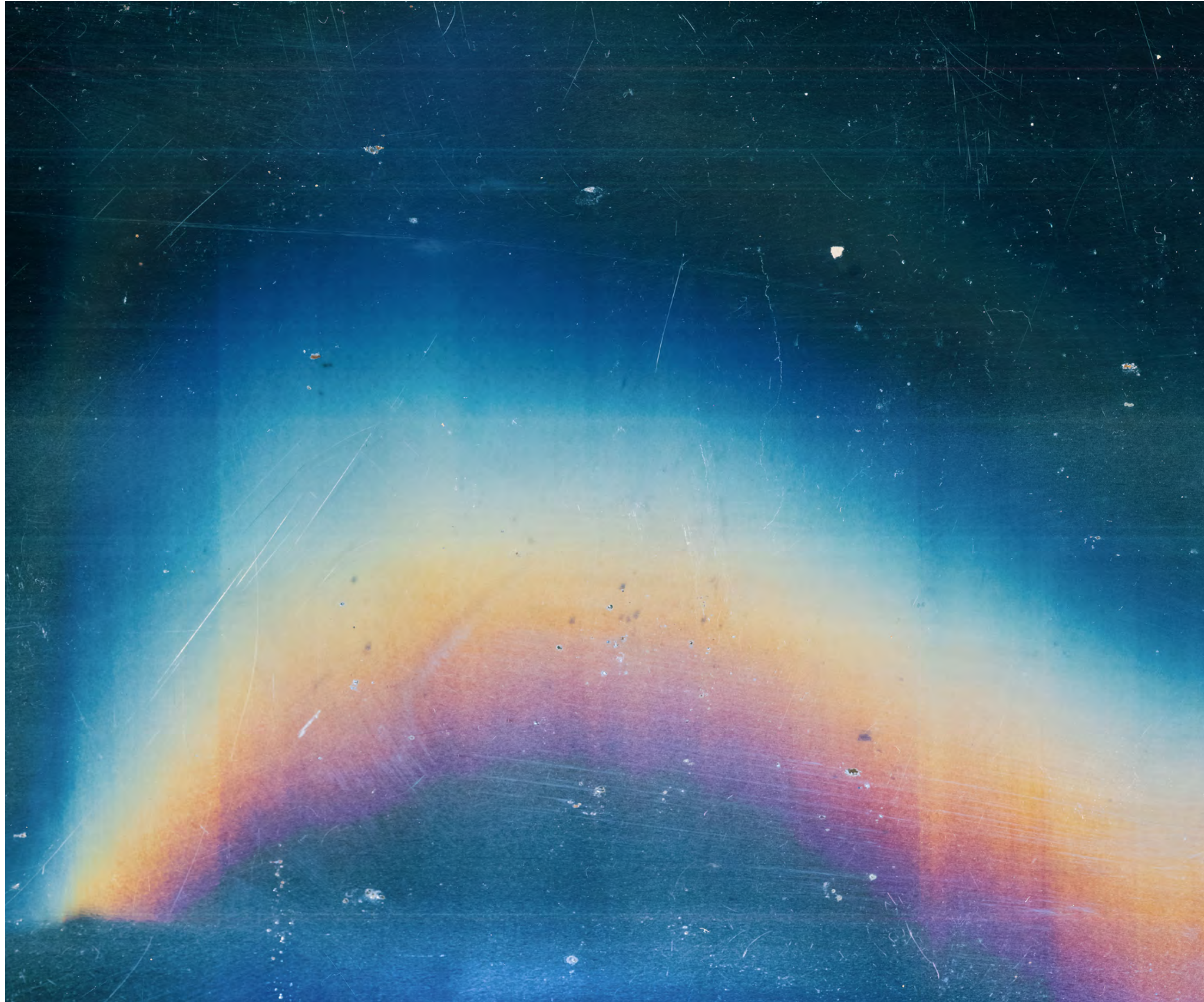
The review identified 14 evaluations of arts, culture, and heritage interventions from a range of academic fields, including socio-economic research, urban studies, public health, and music (see Appendix 1 for a full list of studies). All interventions had a place-based component and were aimed at healthy populations in the UK and Europe.

Overall, findings tell us about the scope and effectiveness of long-term community-based participatory art practices. The reviewers conducted in-depth analysis of potential mechanisms of success that enable wellbeing outcomes, specifically those included in the country's national wellbeing and social capital frameworks. As the Coventry UK CoC 2021 year draws to a close, we highlight some of the most pertinent findings.

- Over the last ten years, cultural events, community, and museums have been key themes in the evaluations of place-based arts, culture, and heritage interventions.
- The evaluated interventions were delivered largely in the UK (10 studies of 14) between 2013 and 2022.
- The set of studies included are multidisciplinary, using both quantitative and mixed-method designs to look at how and why wellbeing improves.
- In the events theme, wellbeing effects were captured for city and national residents of all ages, and on festival-goers. Data on age and gender was provided for only two cultural mega-events [5; 6].
- In the museum theme, two studies explicitly targeted groups with low wellbeing. Including older adults at risk of loneliness or social isolation, armed forces veterans, and long-term unemployed adults [9;12].
- High-quality evidence from two museum projects (the Volunteering for Wellbeing Programme) found statistically significant increases in mental wellbeing and subjective wellbeing. Three museum-based social prescribing programmes aimed at older people reported post-intervention increases in mental wellbeing, health satisfaction and happiness, and decreased loneliness [9:12].
- Subjective wellbeing and mental wellbeing were the most common outcomes reported, although results on effectiveness were mixed.
- Moderate-quality evidence on city residents following CoC events shows neutral to small short-term increases in life satisfaction. It also reveals lower life satisfaction scores in host regions compared to other regions by the end of the hosting-period, a counter-intuitive finding that we later discuss in more detail.



**FINDINGS TELL US ABOUT THE SCOPE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF LONG-TERM COMMUNITY-BASED PARTICIPATORY ART PRACTICES.**



### **Participatory nature of arts and culture interventions across social capital**

Social capital is a guiding framework for tracking our quality of life in the UK.

At the national level, progress is monitored in five areas: personal relationships, social network support, civic engagement, trust, and cooperative norms.

The review findings show impacts on key social and place-based outcomes that encompass many of the social relationships within these areas, and affect both individual and community wellbeing.

Specifically, these findings shed light on the importance of:

- Cohesion and neighbourhood-belonging outcomes in CoC events, although the results on their effectiveness are mixed (as we later discuss).
- Volunteering practices and their potential role in improving social inequalities [2; 3; 5; 8; 11; 12].
- Museum-themed interventions that target social inequalities, leading to reported increases in a sense of belonging alongside mental wellbeing [10;11].
- Shared celebration occurs during events rooted in local culture and heritage. Findings from five consecutive evaluations of a two-week long music festival in Italy suggest that this leads to higher levels of 'instantaneous' trust and social connectedness. Effects are higher for new festival-goers and tourists, and for individuals with lower levels of education [1].

## CITIES/CAPITALS OF CULTURE (E/COC): A DEEP-DIVE

All Cities/Capitals of Culture studies report the event as increasing arts and cultural participation: passive participation for the overall event; and active participation for the community-based projects. In regard to wellbeing outcomes, certain weaknesses in study design and inconsistencies in reporting make it difficult to accurately assess the contribution of cultural mega-events. Nonetheless, the rapid review identified that community cohesion, connectedness, and pride are reported as legacy outcomes in CoC evaluations and can drive cultural participation locally. For example, in the disadvantage area of Kirkdale in Liverpool, sense of community was the highest compared with other areas in the city, following higher engagement in ECoC

community-based activities in collaboration with local cultural organisations [4]; by the end of the Hull UK CoC 2017, over a third of the city residents interviewed reported feeling more connected to their local community, more confident about running activities in their community, and prouder of their contribution [2].

Residents of Maribor (ECoC 2012) who participated more actively in ECoC-related events reported higher community pride by the end of the ECoC year compared with the rest of Slovenia [6]. Finally, Riga (ECoC 2014) evidenced the importance of neighbourhood-focussed programmes to extend the social impacts of cultural events beyond the city centre, particularly through cultural heritage, social

networking, and hyper-local cultural organisations.

That being said, the understanding of subjective wellbeing outcomes and E/CoC events is mixed and based on moderate-quality evidence. A comparison of ECoC host-cities with non-host cities suggests that any positive and negative impacts on life satisfaction may be short-lived, as no differences in city-wide scores were seen two years after hosting [4]. Economic and social factors not only affect participation in E/CoCs, but they may also exert moderating effects on wellbeing outcomes. In the same cross-ECoC analysis of life satisfaction impacts on residents, higher levels of education reduced negative impacts, whereas being unemployed doubled them. Faster growing economic regions also appear to have suffered less overall from hosting [4]. Distance from events can go some way to explaining deprived communities' non-engagement in ECoC programmes.

For example, inhabitants of Liverpool's Knotty Ash area typically did not participate in the city's ECoC and were sceptical about its benefits, something that might be explained by the area's physical and cultural distance from ECoC events and the burden of travel costs [3].

Furthermore, in a low/moderate-quality study, residents who stated they were not satisfied with their quality of life following Riga's year as ECoC highlighted the absence of cultural activities in their respective neighbourhoods [8].



# HOW CHANGE HAPPENS:

## DRIVERS AND MECHANISMS OF CHANGE FOR WELLBEING AND SOCIAL INCLUSION OUTCOMES

*This review has revealed some of the mechanisms of change that successfully generate wellbeing outcomes through participatory arts and culture. We now discuss each of these in turn.*

- **Relational and creative processes in participatory art practices are key pathways to wellbeing improvements**

- *Participatory arts practices that have longer-lasting effects on sense of self-esteem, resilience and the ability to regulate emotions allow participants to articulate life experiences, and forge connections with others within the community*
- *Co-creation with youth audiences was identified as a driver of social outcomes in Maribor (ECOC 2021) and Hull (CoC 2017),*

- *Interventions aimed at children and young people with a place-based narrative and heritage components can foster community-based creative processes and improve mental wellbeing, overall mood, and self-esteem. Evidence of this comes from co-production workshops with children aged between 9 and 12 on creating and digitising the journey from home to school, and also from a one-year project working with disadvantaged youth using music to explore the history and heritage of a town in North-Western England [7; 8].*

- **Social contexts can enhance the potential for improving wellbeing. Examples of enabling social contexts include:**

- *Community-settings. Evidence from E/CoCs reinforces the importance of hyper-local and culturally-bound participatory practices in increasing participation and improving social capital in collaboration with hyper local cultural organisations [2; 4;8]*
- *Museum-based programmes which provide opportunities for the participatory practice that generates positive social interactions, develops skills, and decreases social inequalities [10].*
- *Networking, partnerships, and cross-sector collaborations that draw on existing public assets, allowing for the development of strong place-specific networks.*
- *Social interactions that are cognitively stimulating and include expert facilitation, professional empathy, and peer-support models.*



**THE SITUATION IN COVENTRY WAS COMPOUNDED BY THE CITY'S SIGNIFICANT POCKETS OF DEPRIVATION, WHERE CULTURAL PARTICIPATION CAN BE AS LOW AS 11%.**

## COVENTRY COC 2021 DEEP DIVE

*Caring City was Coventry CoC 2021's community-led cultural programme, funded by Spirit of 2012.*

It is an interesting test case for how evidence and data can be used to shape the design and delivery of a cultural offer to reach a wider audience and mitigate wellbeing inequalities.

### **Wellbeing and cultural participation in Coventry during the hosting period**

During Coventry's hosting period (May 2021 and May 2022), the exceptional circumstances of COVID-19 affected wellbeing drivers and many social and psychological domains of the UK's inhabitants. These national downward trends in personal

wellbeing outcomes were mirrored in Coventry's city-level data, where life satisfaction, sense of purpose, happiness, and anxiety all worsened significantly over the course of the UK CoC 2021 period.<sup>9</sup> The situation in Coventry was compounded by the city's significant pockets of deprivation, where cultural participation can be as low as 11%.<sup>10</sup>

During the CoC hosting period, the Coventry team tackled the issues of inequality and low cultural participation head-on. Their starting point was to identify the areas with key social challenges using data from the city's Household Survey (2018). They could thus target areas with lower participation. The Caring City strand is an example of how an embedded participatory art programme can be designed and delivered to better reach groups that may feel excluded or otherwise not participate in cultural events. Promising evidence from Coventry's interim evaluation reports suggests that participation in a range of arts and culture projects contributed to improved

mental wellbeing during the course of the hosting period. For projects lasting a number of weeks, participants reported a 2-point increase in average levels of Mental Wellbeing, measured by the Short-Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing scale (SWEMWBS).<sup>11</sup>

*Nothing about us, without us.*

**Coventry CoC 2021 Caring City programme strand.**

<sup>10</sup> LGA Research, *Personal Wellbeing in Coventry* (Local Government Association, generated on 17th October 2022). [https://lginform.local.gov.uk/reports/view/lga-research/lga-research-summary-report-personal-wellbeing-in-your-area?mod-area=E08000026&mod-group=ALLMetropolitanBoroughLainCountry\\_England&mod-type=namedComparisonGroup](https://lginform.local.gov.uk/reports/view/lga-research/lga-research-summary-report-personal-wellbeing-in-your-area?mod-area=E08000026&mod-group=ALLMetropolitanBoroughLainCountry_England&mod-type=namedComparisonGroup)

<sup>11</sup> Neelands, Jonothan, Hodgson, Hodgson, Scott, Mark Patrycja Kaszynska, and Andrew Dixon (2022) *The Warwick UK Cities of Culture Project: Towards a Research-Informed Approach*. Coventry: University of Warwick [https://warwick.ac.uk/about/cityofculture/our-research/ahrc-uk-cities-of-culture-project/warwick\\_uk\\_cities\\_of\\_culture\\_-\\_towards\\_a\\_research-informed\\_approach\\_web.pdf](https://warwick.ac.uk/about/cityofculture/our-research/ahrc-uk-cities-of-culture-project/warwick_uk_cities_of_culture_-_towards_a_research-informed_approach_web.pdf) [accessed 27 September 2022], p. 20

<sup>12</sup> Jonothan Neelands and others *Coventry UK City of Culture 2021 Performance Measurement & Evaluation – Interim Report*. Coventry: Core Monitoring and Evaluation Team <https://coventry2021.co.uk/media/uk4hnrw/uk-coc-2021-interim-report-january-2022-web.pdf> [accessed 27 September 2022].

## The Caring City Programme Logic Model

Coventry's Caring City Programme embedded a model of associate producer into certain host organisations that were already supporting residents facing key social and economic challenges:

- Grapevine (poverty and isolation)
- Central England Law Centre (poverty and homelessness)
- Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre (asylum seekers, refugees, and other migrants at risk of social exclusion)
- Positive Youth Foundation (young people, including those at risk of exploitation)

The programme followed a 12-month pilot, where producers worked with the organisations to build relationships of trust and develop a programme of activities.

Findings from the rapid review and Caring City evaluation suggest that targeted recruitment and embedding time and resources from the onset of an intervention can help facilitate access to culture and participation, fostering more sustainable participation benefits.

In the Theory of Change for the programme below (see Figure 2 on P16), participation within community settings close to where citizens live and partnership working can cut across the causal pathways that lead to wellbeing outcomes and impacts.

Evidence from the rapid review points to both these factors being key enablers of wellbeing outcomes in community-based art practices.

**THE PROGRAMME  
FOLLOWED A  
12-MONTH PILOT,  
WHERE PRODUCERS  
WORKED WITH THE  
ORGANISATIONS TO  
BUILD RELATIONSHIPS  
OF TRUST AND  
DEVELOP A  
PROGRAMME  
OF ACTIVITIES.**

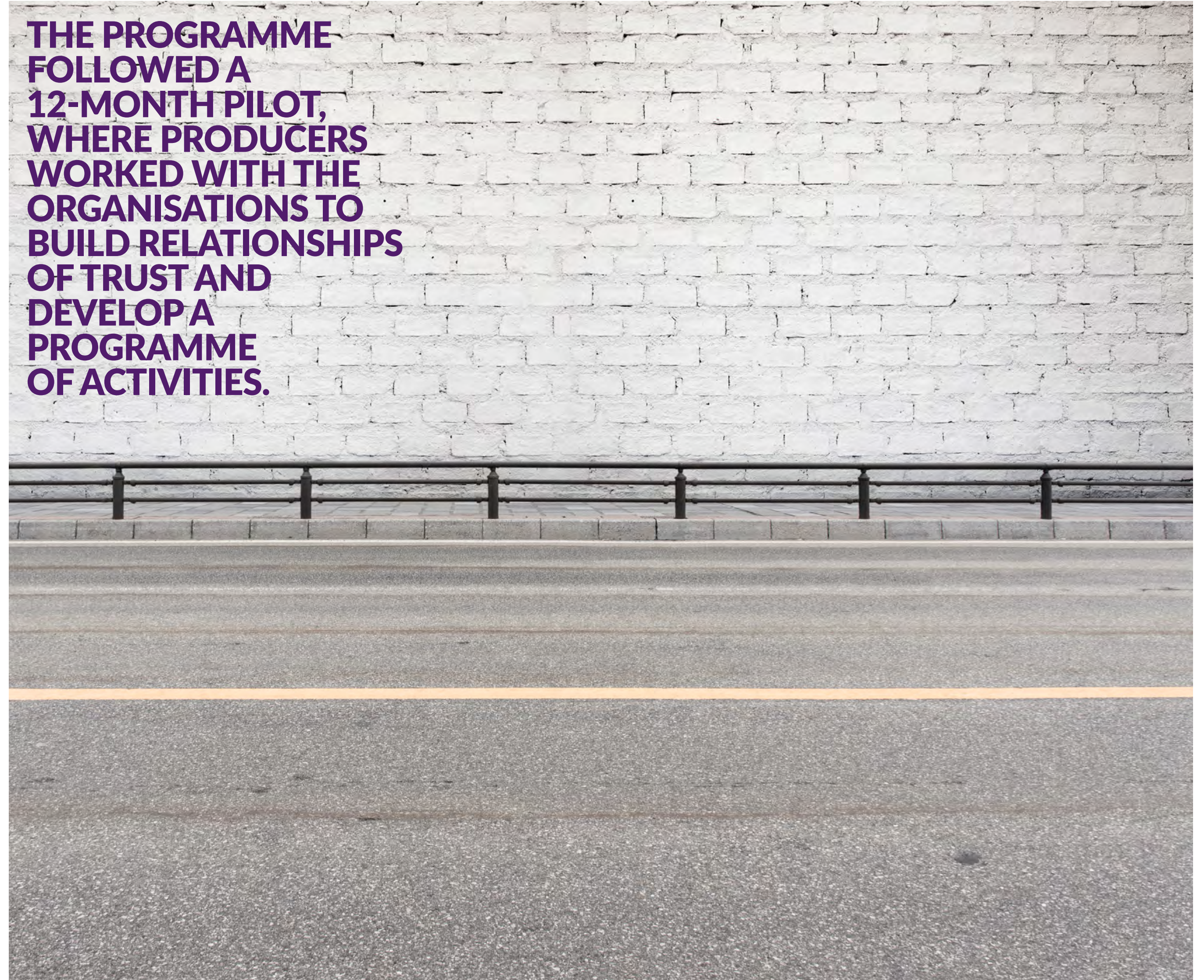


Figure 2: The Caring City Strand Logic Model.

# INVESTMENTS

- PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INVESTMENTS
- INFRASTRUCTURE
- TECHNOLOGY
- KEY PARTNERS
- COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC STAKEHOLDERS
- STAFF
- VOLUNTEERS

# ACTIVITIES

- Developing arts and cultural initiatives that further social and economic key issues
- Supporting young people and others to play an active role in governance and decision making
- Developing strong working relationships with key partners and stakeholders
- Developing initiatives targeted at specific protected groups
- Working with communities and stakeholders to develop arts and culture events for UK CoC 2021
- Employing professional artists to work with communities to co-create core elements of the programme
- Developing initiatives that have influence beyond Coventry and UK CoC 2021

# OUTPUTS

- Programmes, planning and production of events involving Coventry communities
- Outreach activities in the community
- Model of co-creation established
- Participation by under-represented groups
- Targeted representation of citizens of the city in cultural leadership and programming
- Human resource capacity development in the cultural sector in Coventry
- Distribution of 2021 events across Coventry
- Increased investment in city projects as a result of UK CoC 2021 profile
- Environmentally responsible programming
- Combined arts and health initiatives developed in the city and region
- Arts and cultural events involving physical activity and other health and wellbeing activities
- International cultural exchanges and partnerships
- Increased attraction as a destination choice
- Coventry's CoC devolved and outcome lead model shapes local, regional and national cultural policy making and funding
- Needs based model for cultural delivery and planning
- Evidence based decision making
- Use of 5G and immersive technology in cultural initiatives

# OUTCOMES

- Increase in civic pride
- Community led production and programming increases cultural participation and activism
- People's level of empowerment for contributing to their community in a creative and artistic capacity increases through participation
- Cultural leadership and programming reflects and represents the citizens of the city
- People's sense of social connectedness increases through participation
- Cultural engagement is geographically dispersed across the city
- Peoples personal wellbeing increases through participation
- Cultural sector activity makes a significant contribution to the economic, environmental, social, health and wellbeing targets for the region
- Coordinated cultural sector capacity and infrastructure is building a sustainable and resilient sector
- Coventry is recognised as a pioneering model of culture-led inclusive growth
- Cultural programming is environmentally responsible and promotes environmental awareness

# IMPACTS

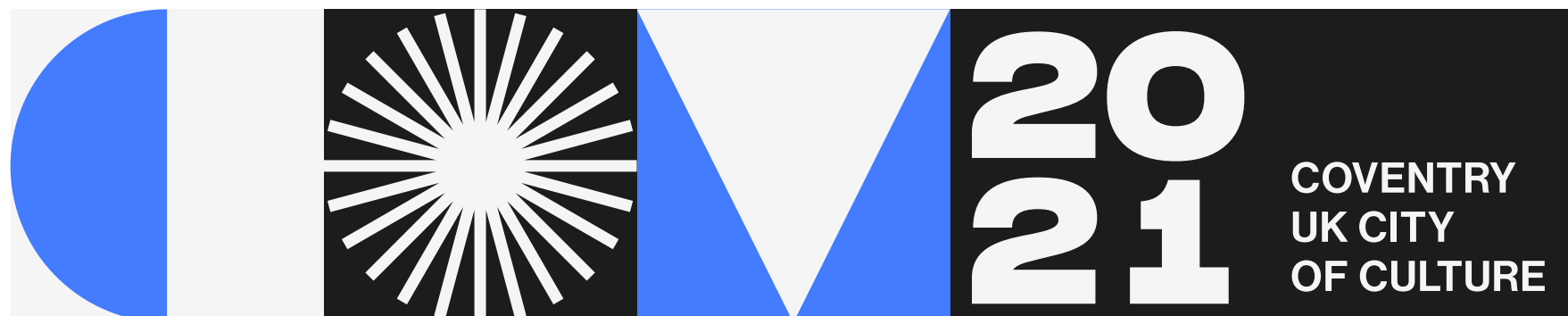
COVENTRY CITIZENS POSITIVELY INFLUENCE AND SHAPE THE CITY THEY WANT TO LIVE IN

COVENTRY'S CULTURE CONTRIBUTES TO THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY OF THE CITY AND REGION

COVENTRY IS RECOGNISED AS A FUTURE FACING PIONEERING CITY



# CARING CITY THEORY / STORY OF CHANGE





## Capturing Impact

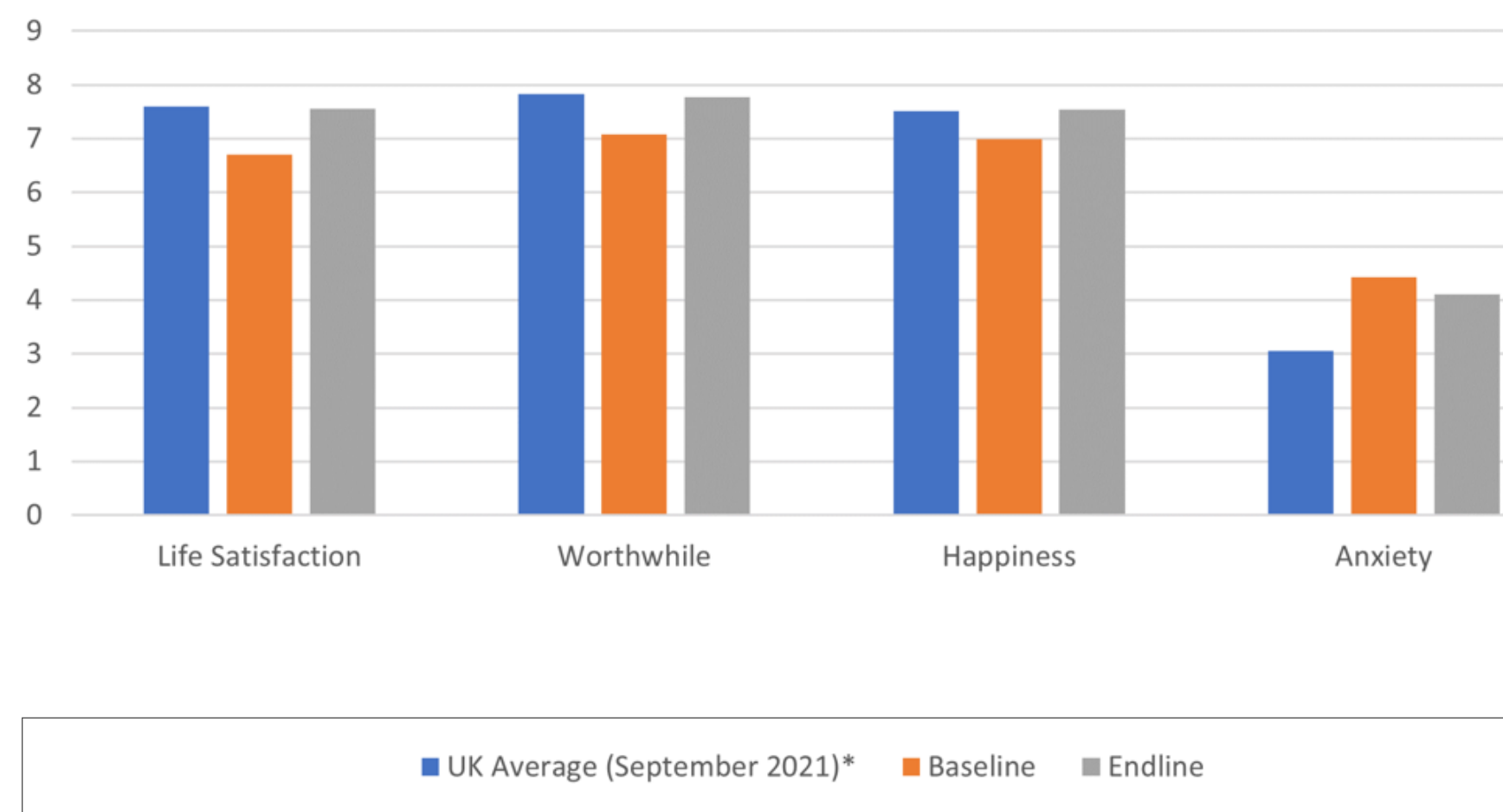
Subjective wellbeing outcomes were measured using the UK's ONS4 personal wellbeing measures. These capture three components of subjective wellbeing, potentially increasing the comparability of Coventry UK CoC 2021 outcomes with national programmes:

- 1. Life satisfaction/evaluative wellbeing** (individuals are asked to evaluate how satisfied they are with their life overall);
- 2. A sense of doing things that are worthwhile/eudaimonic wellbeing** (individuals are asked if they feel they have meaning and purpose in their life);
- 3. Happiness and anxiety/affective experience** (individuals are asked about emotions during a particular period).

Figure 3 shows the post-intervention improvements in Personal Wellbeing measured across life satisfaction, meaning and purpose, and happiness and

anxiety for programme participants surveyed between October 2020 and May 2022. Figure 3 demonstrates the overall changes to wellbeing across the complete Caring City programme. The baseline data collected between October 2020 and October 2021 shows beneficiaries, on average, reporting lower levels of wellbeing and higher levels of anxiety than the UK average at the start of project. These moved closer to national average levels by the end of the hosting period for all measures except for anxiety.<sup>13</sup> When examining specific projects the largest improvements in personal wellbeing were seen for participants who formed the steering groups of **Coventry Welcomes** and the **HOME: Arts and Homelessness Festival**, which lasted 9 and 10 months respectively. In both projects, beneficiaries formed steering groups that created and shaped the direction and content of city-wide festivals and celebrations

**Figure 3:** Changes in Personal Wellbeing measures (ONS4) Wellbeing pre- and post-intervention, Baseline surveys undertaken between October 2020 and October 2021. Endline Surveys undertaken between June 2021 and May 2022. Data from 132 beneficiaries. Source: Coventry City of Culture Trust.



showcasing seldom-heard communities, newly arrived communities, and those with lived experience of homelessness.

The wider programme evaluation used a wide range of methods to explore the benefits of the Coventry co-production model, and capture impacts on wellbeing and social capital outcomes for city residents. The use of mixed methods

generated insights into the drivers and mechanisms that affect wellbeing for different groups, including beneficiaries attending one-off events.

For that group, a post-event survey was used to capture data on enjoyment, civic pride, and social connectedness, as well the demographic data necessary for better understanding the composition of participant groups.

Qualitative data shed light on some of the factors that predict whether participants are likely to re-engage with arts and culture activities, and on potential mechanisms of change for producers, partners, and participants:

- For producers, tailored approaches that built relationships, trust, and a supportive environment for participants enabled higher participation in cultural activities.
- The use of spaces that felt safe and fostered mutual respect facilitated relationship-building with producers and other agencies involved in the programme strand.

<sup>13</sup> Estimates of Personal Wellbeing from the Annual Population Survey (APS) – September 2021 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/bulletins/personalwellbeingintheukquarterly/april2011toseptember2021>

# FUTURE TRENDS: NEXT STEPS FOR RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

## State of the Evidence


Wellbeing evidence offers many benefits to researchers, funders, and decision-makers interested in understanding the social value of cultural policy. This rapid review adds to the broader evidence on cultural participation as a key driver of subjective wellbeing and social capital, which are fundamental components of the UK's Quality of Life framework. It also sheds light on the key ingredients for successful participatory art practice and provides in-depth analysis of the social contexts that enable wellbeing outcomes and reduce social inequalities.

The review suggests that research evaluating arts, culture, and heritage interventions in the UK and Europe has increased

substantially in the last 10 years, with Community, Museums, and Events being key themes in this growing body of evidence.

High-quality studies on museum-based interventions provide evidence of improved subjective wellbeing and mental wellbeing, while festivals and volunteering practices that target wellbeing inequalities appear to generate important social capital outcomes, such as community connectedness and trust.

While the moderating effects of economic and social inequalities on cultural participation are evident across E/UK CoC evaluations, there is initial evidence on increased sense of community, belonging, and community pride during the hosting period.



**THERE IS INITIAL EVIDENCE ON INCREASED SENSE OF COMMUNITY, BELONGING, AND COMMUNITY PRIDE DURING THE HOSTING PERIOD.**



### Future directions for research and practice

Persistent wellbeing inequalities within a place can affect cultural policy impacts. More research is needed to understand how participation varies for different geographical communities and disadvantaged groups.

Cultural events should be seen as long-term projects and there must be a greater commitment to capturing the duration of effects, as well as to exploring the longer-term legacy effects of mega-events.

This requires a step change in the quality of evaluations that explore the drivers of wellbeing in place-based arts, culture, and heritage interventions more generally.

Researchers and evaluators must continue to advance methodological debate by adopting rigorous designs and appropriate techniques that generate the higher quality and multi-faceted evidence

that can usefully inform placed-based policy-making. Notably:

- The ability to isolate and attribute any changes in wellbeing to specific policies and programmes will likely require the use of controlled, longitudinal study designs.
- The use of qualitative enquiry will help capture the breadth of drivers and mechanisms that generate wellbeing impacts, and ultimately, the social value of cultural policy.
- Value for Money (VfM) assessments will require evaluators to put a range of methods in place in order to capture the full social value benefits. These should go beyond traditional Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis if the full value of wellbeing impacts is to be captured.

### Priorities for wellbeing and place-based policy-making

In UK policy, wellbeing was placed at the heart of the levelling-up and place-making processes and it continues to offer a unique lens through which the impacts of cultural policy may be tracked. At the community level, place is an important driver of subjective wellbeing and social capital outcomes, and high-quality policy evaluation can shed light on the place-based interventions that alleviate or exacerbate wellbeing inequality, shaping equity considerations in policy-making.

Future research must generate and disseminate high quality evidence on the impacts of cultural policy. It must delve into the mechanisms of change through which strong social networks may be built and well-functioning and close-knit communities sustained. The case of Bradford UK CoC 2025 will offer scope for testing the lessons learned from past UK CoCs.

*Wellbeing captures the extent to which people across the UK lead happy and fulfilling lives – the very essence of levelling up. It is affected by a variety of different facets of people’s lives, from physical and mental health to jobs, community relationships and wider factors that influence quality of life such as the environment. Consequently, although it is intrinsically linked with human capital, well-being has a bearing on all four of the UK Government’s objectives for levelling up.*

HM Government. Levelling up White Paper – Executive Summary. February 2022

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# APPENDIX 1: RAPID REVIEW STUDY SAMPLE - REFERENCES

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