



LANCASHIRE ENCOUNTER

Discover a world of culture & creativity on your doorstep

Preston City Council **Lancashire Encounter Evaluation**

October **2015**





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1. DEMAND

Quantity of visitors

“ Our experience..... was extremely positive. We gathered large crowds for each performance and received really great audience feedback and reception. ”

It was estimated by partners that around 20,000 visitors attended Lancashire Encounter over the 3 days of the event, with artists' feedback on the number of visitors and audience sizes also supporting significant and sufficient numbers.

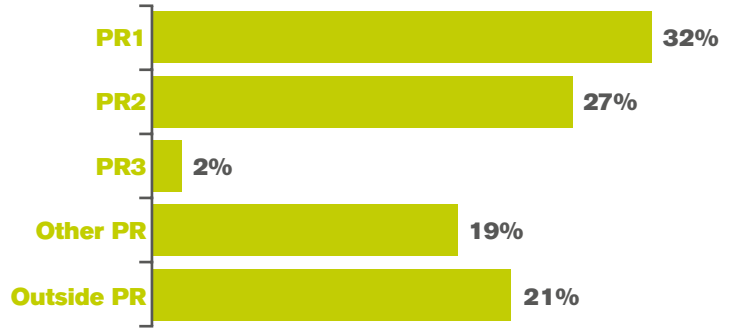
Footfall data however does not appear to directly support this feedback, with a slight year-on-year drop, although the areas adjacent to the festival demonstrate a relatively comparable figure.

The results of a month long Preston Bus campaign providing free bus travel on a Sunday however indicates a 23% increase on Sunday 27th September.

Attracting visitors from outside of Preston

“ It highlighted the potential for such an event to become the showcase for talent in Lancashire and as such draw a Lancashire wide audience to Preston. ”

Home postcode of visitor



In total, two fifths of visitors (40%) live outside of PR1, PR2 and PR3, and had come into the city to the event.

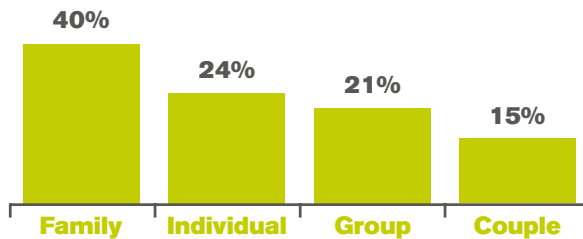
Attracting a diverse audience

“ A real variety and mixture of stuff going on and people, better than The Guild in that respect. It seemed to be everyone mixed up together, young and old, different nationalities. ”

The quantitative and qualitative findings support the ability of Lancashire Encounter to attract a range of ages, cultures and ethnicities. In fact, a feeling of inclusion is one of the strengths of the event identified by visitors.

Just over three quarters of visitors (76%) attended Lancashire Encounter with someone else. The most prominent group was families, comprising 40% of visitors.

Visitor group



2. INFRASTRUCTURE

Marketing

“A highly successfully event with clear potential for future growth and development.”

As Lancashire Encounter was a pilot event, the marketing included branding and press and partner briefings, as well as creating and executing a campaign plan that fitted within the limited budget available.

The partner, artist and press packs that were developed as a part of this were a successful endeavor that provided brand details, guidelines, copy and milestones as applicable.

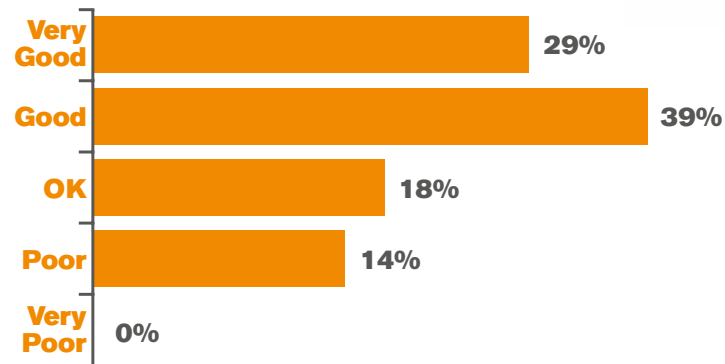
“The branding was excellent, and online social media promotion was good, but would have liked to of seen a little more visual offline promotion outside the city centre.”

Illustrating the impact of both traditional and modern forms of communication amongst visitors, both word of mouth (35%) and social media (31%) were the two key sources of awareness of Lancashire Encounter.

The short lead-in time, the fact that it was the first time the event was being held and the budget restrictions were identified by partners as creating a limit on the possible extent of marketing activity.

It was felt however that the partners had “pulled together” and had contributed to a significant marketing activity with the available resources.

Artists’ rating of the marketing of Lancashire Encounter



Communication

“It’s chicken and egg, you needed to run the event first but you also need to market it... Once it’s a regular event it will be easier, it’s at the start as people don’t know what to expect.”

The development of a new event leads to the need for the development of both new communication channels and communication messages. The evaluation feedback does highlight a significant success in the development of effective communication within a short timescale.

As would be expected with a new venture, improvements for going forwards were noted. The areas identified can be addressed both by direct action and through the natural development of communication processes as they develop.

Partnership

“ Working with the Festival Team to co-commission new work by Lancashire artists. We can do so much more when we all collaborate. ”

Partnership working was seen to work very effectively. Lancashire Encounter was provided as an illustration of organisations effectively “pulling together”.

This established a strong foundation and significant resource on which to develop and exploit the partnership capabilities and motivation to support the event's evolution and growth.

The level of engagement from arts organisations in the region, especially considering the short lead-in time, was referenced by partners. The collaboration, in bringing together an ambitious event, was also noted, as well as the positive elements of partnership.

Commissioning

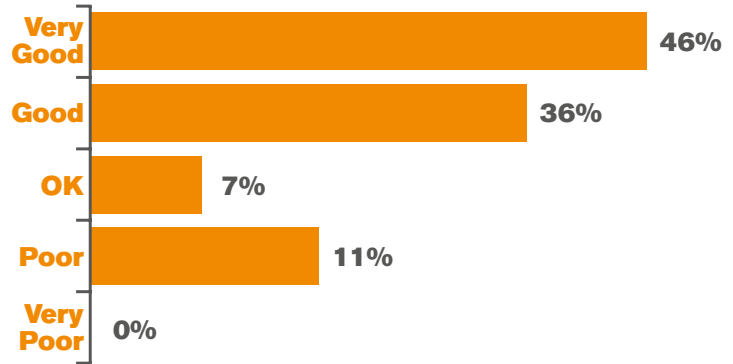
“ It's been a pleasure from start to finish. Queries have been dealt with promptly and issues sorted out easily. ”

Artists were invited to submit a commissioning bid for one of a number of commissions from £200 to £2000 with the aim of securing a range of activities and works of any scale from single one off performances and interventions to more ambitious proposals.

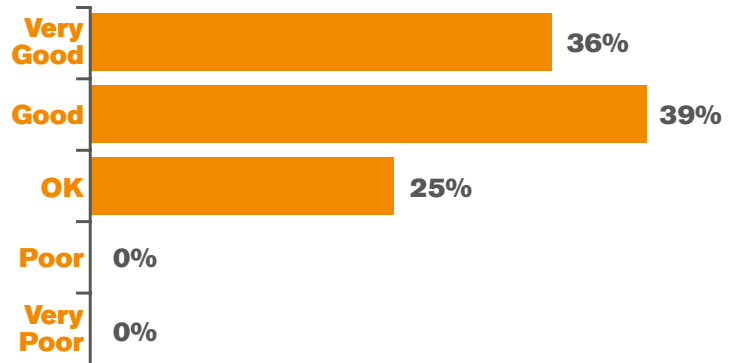
In addition, there was one commission to the value of £5000 with the aim of the end product being high quality, open to large audiences, challenging and innovative.

Artists' rating of the interaction and commissioning process

Interaction with the festival team:



The commissioning process:



Funding

“ More financial support from other business partners.”

There is a range of opportunities to provide a combined funding resource for Lancashire Encounter. It was seen that neither the public sector nor Arts Council on their own should have the responsibility for funding the event.

It was felt that funding needs to move away from local authority to involve commercial funding. A combination of Arts Council and other funders matched by Cultural Board partners and local/regional sponsors was a suggestion.

Once an event establishes itself and generates credibility it can start to generate momentum for further support. Businesses benefit from the economic impact of such an event, and it is then in their interest to encourage visitors, creating a self-perpetuating cycle.

Organisation

“ The staff who organised the festival were lovely and friendly and although seemed a little unorganised at times, we understood that this was a pilot and so it wouldn't be completely smooth.”

Whilst it was strongly noted that the event had been well organised within a limited timeframe, there were improvements which could be considered:

- **Layout**
- **Artist positioning**
- **Noise**
- **Perhaps too many events/activities**
- **Better programming/signposting**
- **Lack of support staff at event**
- **Early “packing up”**
- **Stretched resources.**

3. SUPPLY

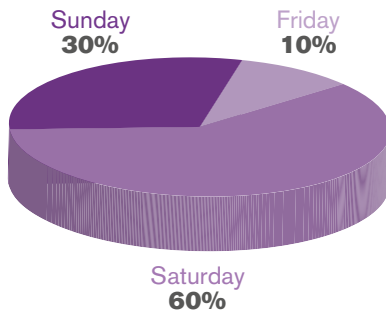
Appeal of the 3 days

“ People engaged with our activity, very, very busy on Saturday, it was great to see a mixture of participatory art activities and audience focused. ”

Illustrating the appeal of the days, Saturday was significantly the most popular day of attendance, with 82% of visitors attending; nearly double the proportion of visitors who attended on the Sunday (42%).

Illustrating the appeal of attendance on more than one day of Lancashire Encounter, visitors attended an average of 1.4 days.

Profile of visitor days



Three fifths of all visitor days were on the Saturday. Whilst Friday was not the key focus of the event, the lack

of visitors on that day was raised in the evaluation; being felt that attendance did not accurately represent the event's overall popularity.

It was noted however, that the Friday was a working day and schools were in session which would have had a direct impact on attendance. In addition, the Friday programme was not a full day, being scheduled around the lunchtime period between 11am and 3pm.

The atmosphere

“ There was a great festive feeling in the air, people seemed very happy to be there, and it was great to see people dancing and joining in by the main stage. ”

The atmosphere of Lancashire Encounter was raised throughout the evaluation as being a significant strength. The event provided a safe and welcoming environment, supporting inclusivity and diversity.

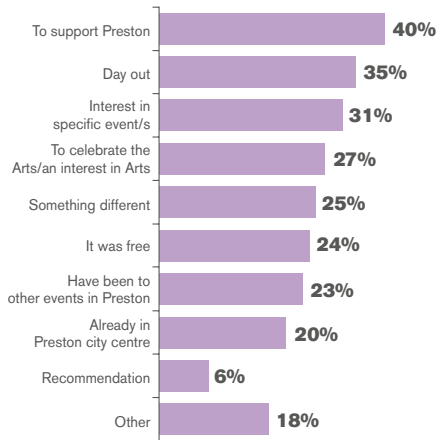
The attraction

“ Just wanted to say congratulations on putting a fantastic weekend of culture and music to suit every taste, what a brilliant weekend and did you order the weather as well? Well done to all involved and thank you x. (Prestonian). ”

The wide range of reasons for visitors being encouraged to attend Lancashire Encounter illustrates an event which supports a diversity of needs.

These range from; pride in the city, to a day out, to events of specific interest, celebrating the arts, that it was something different, the fact that it was free and that other events in Preston had been attended.

Reasons for visiting Lancashire Encounter



Quality and innovation of art and culture

“If it continues to present a mix of regional work by artists and organisations combined with others from outside the region it has the ability to provide a focus for the region in the cultural calendar.”

One of the key aims of Lancashire Encounter is to encourage and foster innovative and high quality art and culture.

The range of creativity on offer was noted by partners, and it was seen as a good opportunity to showcase talent; it raised awareness of art and culture

to a wider audience. Its value is also in the ability to make new work happen, cross-promoting events to Preston and wider audiences.

It was felt there is significant demand for artists, and that Preston is successful in attracting and retaining artists – the result of a conscious effort in developing a cultural focus in Preston.

The regional partnership strength and support for the event offer illustrates the potential for Preston to be the cultural hub for Lancashire, to draw people in from the North West and further afield.

Audience participation

“I had some fantastic interactions and responses from audience members from a diverse range of the community.”

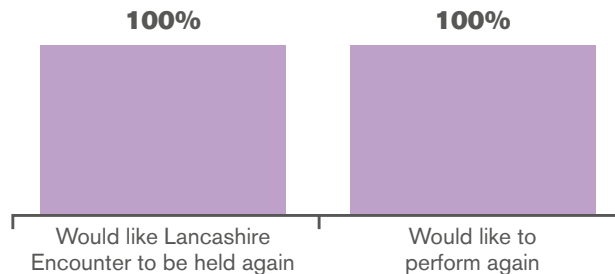
Artists rated both audience engagement and number of visitors positively. The overall mean rating provided for audience engagement was 4.3 out of 5.0, and for the number of visitors at the event/ attraction it was 4.1 out of 5.0.

Support for the future of Lancashire Encounter

“I thought it was one of the best events that Preston has provided, very inclusive, lot's going on, very focused on the arts.”

A sufficient demand from artists to perform at Lancashire Encounter is necessary to provide a substantial and quality event.

Demand for Lancashire encounter in 2016



4. SATISFACTION

Visitor enjoyment

“The vibrant colour, entertainment, the event catered for all ages and cultures, well organised.”

Visitors were asked what they had enjoyed about the event. The two main responses were “everything” and “the atmosphere”.

With regard to the event, references were made to; variety, inclusiveness, family, community, vibrancy and organisation.

With regard to the activities, references were made to; music, specific events, specific artists, general events, specific venues, stalls, dance, entertainment, general art/artists and food.

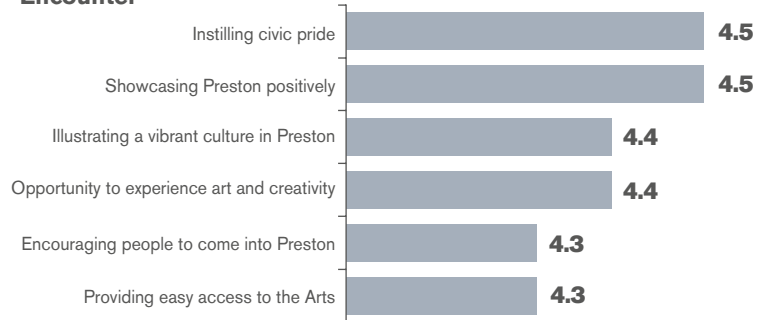


Satisfaction

“The friendliness of the people around and the fact we should be proud of our city as a whole.”

There is a high level of satisfaction for all elements, which cover; civic pride, showcasing Preston, illustrating a vibrant culture, access and experience of the arts and encouraging people into the city.

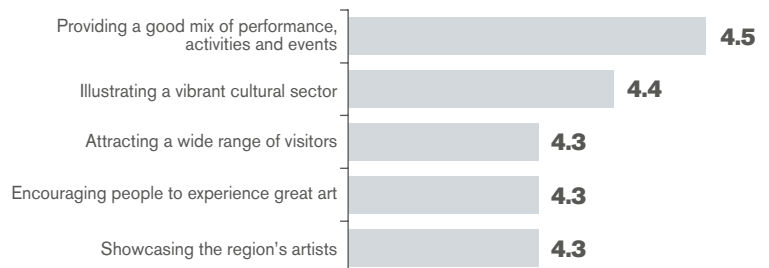
Mean ratings provided by visitors for elements of Lancashire Encounter



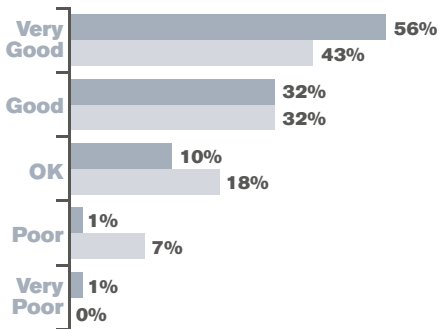
“I felt the event was very well planned and set out. An excellent range of cultural experiences that provided the public with new experiences.”

Over three quarters of artists provided a rating of good or very good for each element, with all but one artist doing so for providing a good mix of performance, activities and events.

Mean ratings provided by artists for elements of Lancashire Encounter



Visitors' and artists' rating of their overall experience of Lancashire Encounter



■ Visitors ■ Artists



Summary

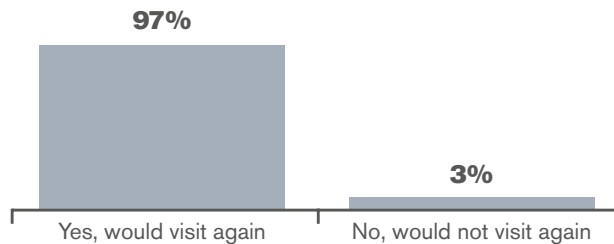
Encouragingly, virtually all visitors (97%) would visit Lancashire Encounter again, with just 3% stating they would not. Enjoyment and bringing people together are the main reasons provided.

Future developments and demand

“Variety and quirkiness. It's free! It's colourful! It was nice having things repeated at different times so you could pack a lot in with a bit of planning.”

Providing a range of developments to take Lancashire Encounter forwards, just over two fifths of visitors (41%) would like to see something else at the event.

Whether visitors would visit Lancashire Encounter again



In 2008, a Cultural Strategy for Preston was published which focused on the run up to, and delivery of, the 2012 Preston Guild. Post 2012 the Cultural Framework was established by the city's strategic partners and independent sector to provide a context for the development of arts and culture in the city to 2018.

Preston Guild 2012 attracted 4.8 million visits and participants to activities over the year, with the whole city coming together to celebrate Preston's unique cultural heritage.

Bridging the gap between the delivery of the Cultural Framework's goals and The Guild celebrations, which are held only every 20 years, is a key aim of Preston's Cultural Framework Board.

A pilot event, "Lancashire Encounter" was therefore designed to test key areas and ideas to meet this aim and to build a robust case to form the basis for an Arts Council England Application for 2016.

Run over 3 days from Friday 25th to Sunday 27th September 2015, the event comprised a wide range of activities:

Friday

- Daytime UCLan talks and presentations
- Evening official launch event for an invited audience.

Saturday & Sunday

Over the same weekend existing annual events took place integrated into the festival; Preston Pride on the Saturday and Run Preston and the Community Celebration Day on the Sunday.

The Lancashire Encounter programme wrapped around these annual events and included:

- Birley Studios and The Harris programme and offer
- Arts, vintage and charity stall market places
- Local makers element of BoB North
- Artist commissions
- Lancashire art organisation presentations.

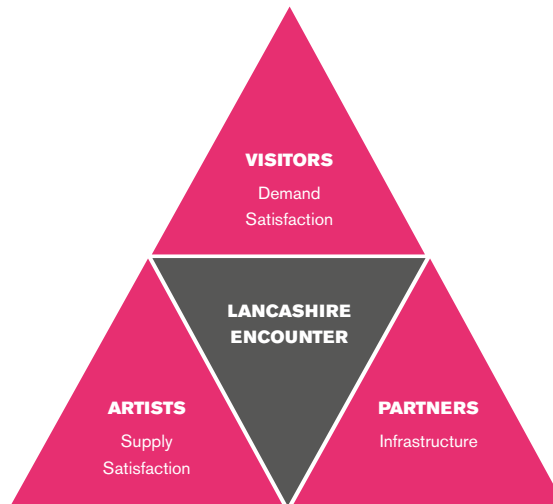
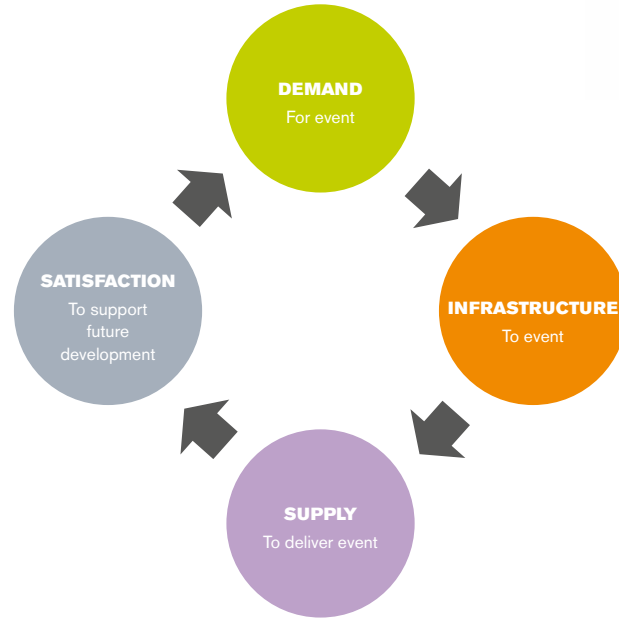
The case to form the basis of the Arts Council England Application for 2016 requires not only the delivery of a comprehensive, effective and impactful event, but also the provision of effective partnerships, delivery processes and marketing for its development and delivery.

Delivery

Preston City Council took the lead on organising and delivery of the festival with a small two person team, supported by colleagues from Communications and Visitor Services over a period of two months. A small Curatorial Team made up from Framework Board Partners (In Certain Places and Marketing Lancashire) shaped the original vision and was joined by Preston Creative Partnership to select the commissions.

This evaluation was conducted to inform relevant components of the case for the Arts Council; demand, infrastructure, supply and satisfaction. The scope of the evaluation activity enabled the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, focusing on the three main audience groups (visitors, artists and partners) necessary to support the four relevant process elements.

Diagram 1: **The 4 key process elements and 3 main audience groups of Lancashire encounter**



Visitors

The evaluation with visitors focused on both quantitative and qualitative research. The quantitative research was conducted online and also face-to-face by volunteers and staff attending Lancashire Encounter. The sample size was limited by the resources available to collect responses. The achieved sample base of 133 questionnaires however (90 hardcopy and 43 online) provides a standard error of +/-8.5 with a 50% response and a confidence level of 95% (based on visitor estimated numbers of 20,000 people). Qualitative information was generated from evaluation conducted by artists with their audiences and ad hoc feedback provided by visitors to the organisers.

Artists

The evaluation with artists focused on both quantitative and qualitative research. An online quantitative survey was distributed to the 28 artists with a response rate of 100%. The data has been presented graphically, with percentages and mean ratings where appropriate, for illustration, but the fact that these are based on a low sample base must be considered within the interpretation. The qualitative research involved individual interviews and ad-hoc feedback from artists.

Partners

This was based on qualitative research with organisations involved in the planning and management of Lancashire Encounter, such as UCLan, Preston City Council and Lancashire County Council. In total, 10 respondents contributed to this element of the evaluation which comprised telephone, face-to-face and online interviews.

Secondary information

The evaluation was supported by available secondary information, which included; footfall data, the Artists' Commission Call Out, marketing statistics and artist profile information.

1. DEMAND

1.1 Quantity of visitors

“Our experience..... was extremely positive. We gathered large crowds for each performance and received really great audience feedback and reception.
(Artist)”

It was estimated by the partners that around 20,000 visitors attended Lancashire Encounter over the 3 days of the event. The qualitative findings from partners who had attended the event and the artists both strongly support significant and sufficient visitor numbers:

- “It seemed to attract a lot of people, particularly younger ones.” (Partner)
- “Two hours after it finished on the Sunday, there were still people hanging around and I’ve never seen that before (Preston being busy on a Sunday night).” (Partner)
- “250 on the first day, 400 people on the second day.” (Artist)
- “I had a very good turnout for our productions and afternoon workshops, both various ages and cultures.” (Artist)
- “It was good to meet and work with such a large number of people (audience).” (Artist)
- “It was really good to meet and make some music with such a large number of people...It was a good opportunity to raise our profile and perform...to a large audience...” (Artist)
- “We had 126 people who were actively involved..... We were packed out most of the time on the Saturday and had a bit more breathing space on the Sunday. We had a great experience working with visitors as they loved getting involved...” (Artist)

Footfall data however does not appear to directly support the feedback from partners and artists. Year on year footfall data by BID illustrates a 0.75% drop in city centre footfall comparing 27.09.14 and 26.09.15. Whilst in total this represents a negative footfall in comparison, the areas adjacent to the festival between “Miller Arcade” to “Pond” demonstrate a relatively comparable figure.

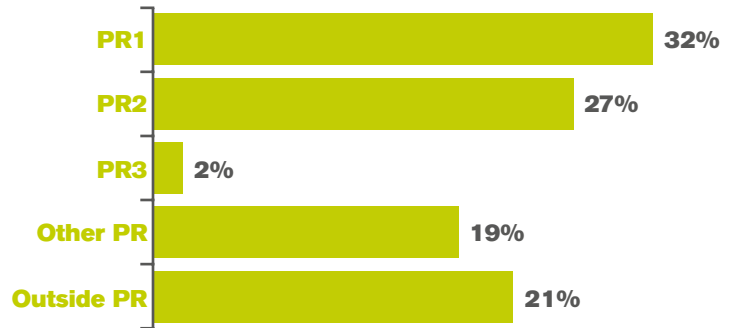
The results of a month long campaign with Preston Bus in September however reported that, whilst passenger numbers for most of the month were slightly down, there was an exception of Sunday 27th September which was up by 23%.

1.2 Attracting visitors from outside of Preston

“It highlighted the potential for such an event to become the showcase for talent in Lancashire and as such draw a Lancashire wide audience to Preston.
(Partner)”

Postcode data from visitors provides an illustration of the sphere of influence of Lancashire Encounter and its ability to attract people into the city who live outside of Preston (defined as those outside of the postcodes of PR1, PR2 and PR3). In total, two fifths of visitors (40%) live outside of PR1, PR2 and PR3, and had come into the city to the event.

Chart 1.2: **Home postcode of visitor**



Source = Visitor survey. Sample base = 124, all visitors who provided the first part of their post code, single response

The postcodes covered were; BB(1,7), FY(1,2,3,4,7), L39, LA(1,2,4), Liverpool, M(14,20,26), PR(1,2,3,4,5,6,7,25,26), WA(4,5) and WNB.

Further supporting the appeal of Lancashire Encounter to audiences from a wide geography is the feedback from artists. 79% of the 28 artists rated the event as good or very good in attracting a wide range of visitors.

The qualitative findings also support the geographical draw for both visitors and artists, with partners seeing this strength as one of the values of the event:

- “Tweets showed that people came in from outside of Preston.”
(Partner)
- “It is a really good opportunity to meet artists and performers from all over the country.” (Artist)
- “We captured visitors’ feedback to our workshops and asked for their postcodes. We had people from all over Preston and parts of Lancashire and Greater Manchester and international (Israel).” (Artist)
- It was hard to work out how many people came for this event and whether it attracted many out of town visitors. There was a fun run on the Sunday and the community events attracted a range of local support. (Artist)

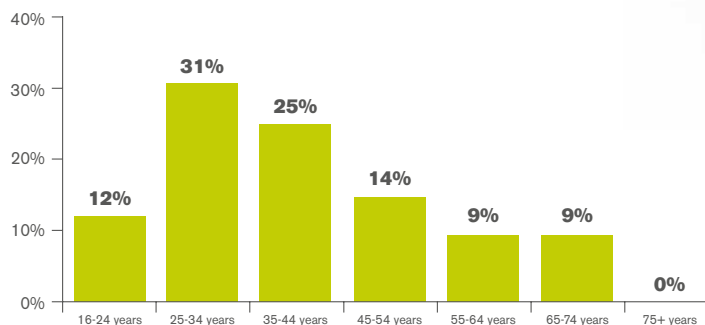
1.3 Attracting a diverse audience

“A real variety and mixture of stuff going on and people, better than The Guild in that respect. It seemed to be everyone mixed up together, young and old, different nationalities.
(Partner)”

The quantitative and qualitative findings support the ability of Lancashire Encounter to attract a range of ages, cultures and ethnicities. In fact, a feeling of inclusion is one of the strengths of the event identified by visitors.

The age of visitors illustrates an event which attracted the young through to the elderly. This is supported by the qualitative feedback highlighting the wide range of ages of visitors.

Chart 1.3a: Age of adult visitors

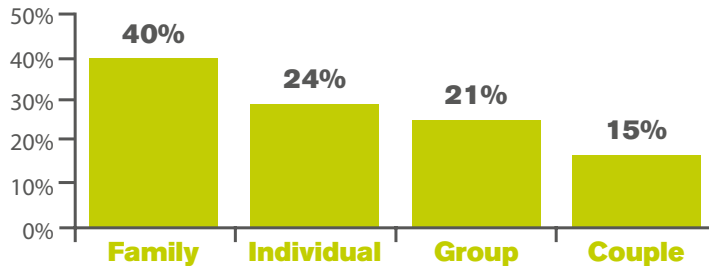


Source = Visitor survey. Sample base = 127, all visitors who provided a response, single response

- “A good mix of people, people wouldn’t normally see.” (Partner)
- “Very multicultural.” (Partner)
- “Comments from people over the weekend were positive and it was very clear they were enjoying themselves. Good mix of ages and ethnicity.” (Artist)
- “I feel like there were lots of mixed art form activities which attracted a diverse audience.” (Artist)
- “Our activities were accessible to all and included everybody whether male, female, child, young or senior.” (Artist)
- I felt the event was very well planned and set out. An excellent range of cultural experiences that provided the public with new experiences.
(Artist)

Just over three quarters of visitors (76%) attended Lancashire Encounter with someone else. The most prominent visitor group was families, comprising 40% of visitors.

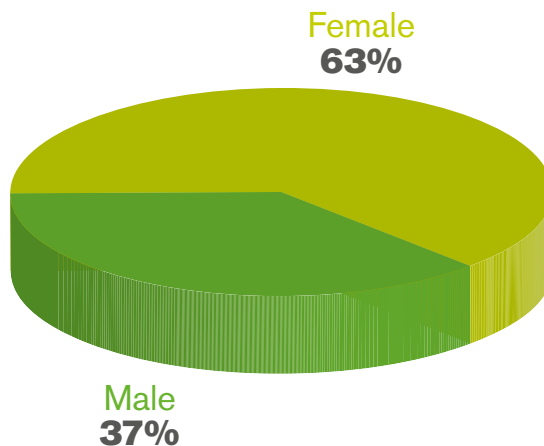
Chart 1.3b: **Profile of visitor group**



Source = Visitor survey. Sample base = 123, all visitors who provided a response, single response

63% of visitors surveyed were female and 37% were male.

Chart 1.3c: **Gender of visitor**



Source = Visitor survey. Sample base = 125, all visitors who provided a response, single response

- “People had the chance to experience different cultural art that they would normally not view, which enables more cultural awareness.” (Artist)

- “The workshop had very enthusiastic participation from the audience from different cultural backgrounds.” (Artist)

- “The workshops were very well received by the children and families with young children.” (Artist)

- “The equality and diversity.” (Visitor)

- “General atmosphere and diversity.” (Visitor)

2. INFRASTRUCUTRE

2.1 Marketing activity

“A highly successfully event with clear potential for future growth and development.”
(Partner)

As Lancashire Encounter was a pilot event, the marketing included branding and press and partner briefings, as well as creating and executing a campaign plan that fitted within the limited budget available. The partner, artist and press packs that were developed as a part of this were a successful endeavor that provided brand details, guidelines, copy and milestones as applicable.

Location based branding:

- 6 A0 “teaser” correxes, with the branding and dates clearly displayed, as well as the website and social media accounts, were displayed within the Flag Market on a daily basis.
- 2 double sided mesh banners were erected approximately 6 weeks prior to the event – one hung above Lancaster Road, the other over Birley Street.
- Additional correx boards were used to brand the entrance to each “site” for the event.
- 10 branded feather flags were distributed across the event site throughout the weekend.
- “Discover more Lancashire Encounter this way” signs were placed at various locations around the event site throughout the weekend to direct visitors to other locations.

Media based marketing:

- A double page ad was placed in Lancashire Telegraph early September.
- Multiple articles were published by Lancashire Evening Post between July 20th and September 30th regarding Lancashire Encounter (and the People’s Canopy).
- That’s Lancashire TV broadcasted a “teaser” interview with Councillor Afrin and People’s Canopy footage, as well as a post-event segment. Elements of this were also aired on BBC North West Tonight.
- Radio Lancashire aired a recorded interview multiple times leading up to and over the weekend of Lancashire Encounter.

Facebook:

- **Preston Guild City** - The Lancashire Encounter promotion was primarily hosted via the Preston Guild City Facebook Page. In addition to regularly scheduled posts, 12 paid ads (of varying amounts), as well as paid event promotion, were published on Facebook, primarily targeting males and females between the ages of 22 – 60 living within 25 miles of Preston.
- The Preston City Council Facebook account supported this campaign with the occasional shared post.
- In total there was a 96% engagement rate over the promotion period, 521 new likes and reach across the promotion period of 387,159.
- Occasional ads specifically targeted Lancaster, Burnley, Blackpool, Chorley and Blackburn audiences. The analytics for the two most successful ads are as follows:

**Total reach 19.8k****949** post clicks**440** link clicks**62** new page likes**Total reach 17.6k****585** post clicks**244** link clicks**58** new page likes**TWITTER: @guildcityevents #LancsEncounter**

- The various events were promoted primarily by the @guildcityevents twitter account, with support from the Preston City Council and Preston Guild City (business) twitter accounts where applicable; the number of followers increased by 408 during this time period.
- #LancsEncounter was utilised by partners, artists, media and the general public leading up to, during, and post event.

E-Newsletter:

- The analytics for the two E-newsletters that were distributed over the course of the Lancashire Encounter build up demonstrate an open rate of 28.1% (approximately 2,297 unique opens) and 24.3% (approximately 1,982 unique opens) indicating a successful open rate.
- Partner's E-newsletters were utilised including; Marketing Lancashire, Creative Lancashire, Business Improvement District, Guild Hall and Lancashire County Council Arts Bulletin.

Feedback received by the Communications Team:

- Predominantly, the feedback to the communications team was positive, with the only negative feedback received via social media being a comment regarding perceived lack of advertising.
- *"... May I congratulate everyone concerned at Preston Guild City for a fabulous event held over the last 2 days. It was fantastic to see so much going on in Preston. The diversity of the events and the talented entertainers were top notch."*
- *"Smiles all round for #LancsEncounter - loved it. #prestonhour @guildcityevents @blogpreston."*
- *"It was a terrific weekend. My favourite bit was Ludus youth dancers on Sunday at teatime, by the Cenotaph. They were just brilliant."*

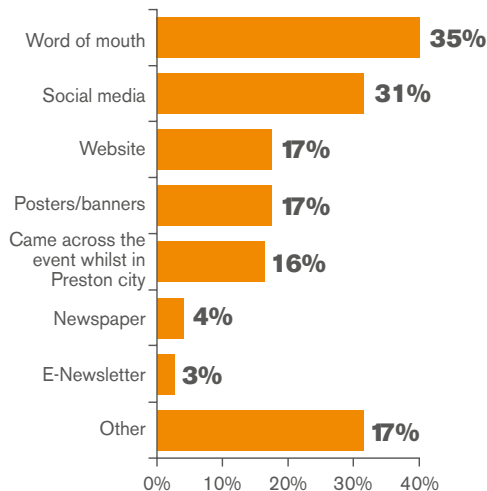
Future developments identified by the Communications Team:

- Despite the limited amount of time and money, the footfall and public response indicate that Lancashire Encounter and its promotion were a success. Given a larger budget and staff time, far more could be achieved. The channels used are now well-established and far-reaching; the communications team have demonstrated a capability of working with on and offline marketing tools, platforms and methods.
- To support future Lancashire Encounter, the following implementations are recommended:
 - Increased marketing budget (financial and resource based).
 - Earlier release of dates and programme teaser (if not details) would help secure a wider audience.
 - Earlier print run of the programme to distribute ahead of the event.
 - Additional print marketing could be placed in strategic locations to engage people who do not naturally encounter the Flag Market during their working day. This could include the shopping centres, train and bus stations, and other key locations.

2.2 Marketing impact

“The branding was excellent, and online social media promotion was good, but would have liked to of seen a little more visual offline promotion outside the city centre.”
(Artist)

Chart 2.2a: **Source of awareness of Lancashire Encounter**



Source = Visitor survey. Sample base = 127, all visitors who provided a response, multiple response.

Websites accessed include; Preston Pride, Preston City Council, Preston Guild City. Social media includes; Preston Pride Twitter, Facebook, What's On Lancashire, Blog Preston, Preston related Twitter accounts and Guild City Facebook.

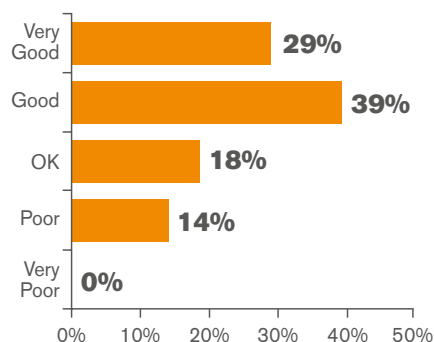
Illustrating the impact of both traditional and modern forms of communication amongst visitors, both word of mouth (35%) and social media (31%) were the two key sources of awareness of Lancashire Encounter.

The short lead-in time, the fact that it was the first time the event was being held and the budget restrictions were identified by partners as creating a limit on the possible extent of marketing activity. It was felt however that the partners had “pulled together” and had contributed to a significant marketing activity with the available resources.

- “It was on the radio, regional television. There were banners across the street. Sometimes you will have to accept that there will be people who for one reason or another just don't hear about it.” (Partner)
- “I had people say to me, I hadn't realised that was happening.” (Partner)
- “It's always a struggle to get the message out that something is happening, there needs to be appropriate routes to get people to know about it.” (Partner)
- “Marketing needs to be directed towards enticing people to the city centre as a venue and as such needs to be all year round. This would give people confidence to attend.” (Partner)
- “More of the same and build on that with commercial and local business.” (Partner)

Artists were asked for their views on the marketing of Lancashire Encounter, with 68% rating this as good or very good and 14% rating it as poor or very poor. The mean rating on a scale of 1-5, where 1 = very poor and 5 = very good, is **3.8**.

Chart 2.2b: **Artists' rating of the marketing of Lancashire Encounter**



Source = Artist survey. Sample base = 28 all artists, single response, ratings provided on a scale of 1-5, where 1 = very poor and 5 = very good

The overall positive rating for the marketing of Lancashire Encounter was supported in the qualitative feedback. Recognising the short lead-in time and limited marketing resources however, artists did identify areas for future improvement. Some comments also refer to errors or missing information in the programme.

- “I only say poor because it seemed as though only people who were involved with the event knew about it. Even artist friends based in the North West hadn’t heard about it.” (Artist)
- “It seemed that the marketing promotion was more internet focused, which does miss a part of the community.” (Artist)
- “Marketing - the programme was colourful, vibrant and well designed. It was easy to follow, however some work was programmed into the wrong space.” (Artist)
- “Social media and marketing had certainly worked with some participants arriving with good prior knowledge.” (Artist)
- “We thought the marketing brochure was great but the festival needed more visibility and signposting across the town as I think if you were at the station end of town you wouldn’t have known it was happening.” (Artist)
- “Very useful to be issued with logo etc. early on in process to help with promotion.” (Artist)

2.3 Communication

“

It's chicken and egg, you needed to run the event first but you also need to market it... Once it's a regular event it will be easier, it's at the start as people don't know what to expect.
(Partner)

”

The development of a new event leads to the need for the development of both new communication channels and communication messages. The evaluation feedback does highlight a significant success in the development of effective communication within a short timescale.

As would be expected with a new venture, some areas for improvement were identified. These areas can be addressed, both by direct action, and through the natural development of communication processes over time.

- “Working with Lancashire County Council around marketing of the event using links and electronic means (positive).” (Partner)
- “Communication by email was excellent and the festival team ... were really helpful. Information was clear. The only issue I had was I couldn't get hold of the brochures until very close to the event. The A Boards and Banners in the city centre were great but perhaps could have expanded a touch to make it clear that it was a festival of creativity to get involved in. Social media was good and built interest during the lead-in time to the event.” (Artist)
- “I think this festival needs to be used as a learning exercise - I think it is a great thing for Preston to have and was one of the most diverse arts events I have been to in the region so the team should be commended on that but there needs to be thought put into the timing of the day to avoid the event not finishing with a bang and just dribbling to the end.” (Artist)
- “I would say there needs to be better communication between event organisers and the sounds technical that are running the PA on stage.” (Artist)
- “The lack of presence of the festival team on the day was disappointing as it seemed that people we were working with were techies who had been hired in and had no connection with the festival or what the reasons for doing it was.” (Artist)
- “We met... for our artist briefing, which did not happen, we were then told we couldn't get into our space until, which we were not informed about. Later we found out by.... staff we could have got in at, this shows that there was lack of communication between the festival and venues.” (Artist)
- “We needed more information about the siting and conditions on the day, better stewarding and communications were OK but could improve.” (Artist)

2.4 Partnership

“ Working with the Festival Team to co-commission new work by Lancashire artists. We can do so much more when we all collaborate. (Artist) ”

Partnership working was seen to work very effectively. Lancashire Encounter was provided as an illustration of organisations effectively “pulling together”.

This established an already strong foundation providing a significant resource on which to develop and exploit the partnership capabilities and motivation to support the event’s evolution and growth.

- “Everyone wants to take the journey together.” (Partner)
- “Reinforced existing partnerships and what they can achieve.” (Partner)

The level of engagement from the arts organisations in the region, especially considering the short lead-in time, was referenced by the partners. The collaboration, in bringing together an ambitious event, was also noted by artists as well as the positive elements of partnership.

The partnership between the organisers and artists is key in developing Lancashire Encounter, and this is seen to be strong. Artists were asked to rate the interaction with the festival team and the commissioning process to assess how this element of the process had worked.

- “Positive input from the Preston Team to ideas and developing projects.” (Artist)
- “I was impressed by the level of engagement from arts organisations in the region and Preston considering the short lead up time. The Arts Market was well supported. Involving other annual events in the festival worked well, Pride and Preston Run.” (Partner)

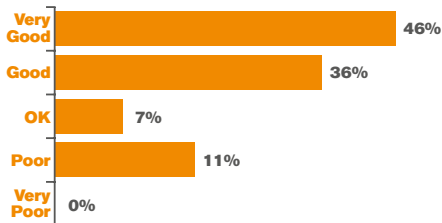
The development of future partnerships extended to funding arrangements and the potential for the event to provide a conduit between students and the cultural industry.

2.5 Commissioning

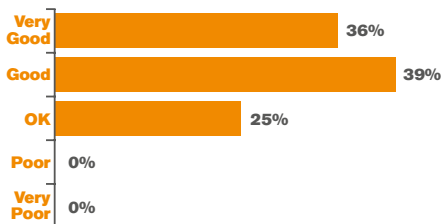
“It’s been a pleasure from start to finish. Queries have been dealt with promptly and issues sorted out easily.
(Artist)”

Chart 2.5: **Artists’ rating of the interaction and commissioning process**

Interaction with the festival team:



The commissioning process:



Source = Artist survey. Sample base = 28, all artists, single response for each element

75% of artists rated the commissioning process as either good or very good, with 0% rating this as poor or very poor. The overall mean rating was positive at 4.1.

82% of artists rated interaction with the festival team as good or very good with 11% rating this as poor or very poor. The overall mean rating was positive at 4.2.

Artists were invited to submit a commissioning bid for one of a number of commissions from £200 to £2000 with the aim of securing a range of activities and works of any scale from single one off performances and interventions to more ambitious proposals.

In addition there was one commission to the value of £5000 with the aim of the end product being high quality, open to large audiences, challenging and innovative.

- “...We were told NPO organisations would not be funded, then later told that money had been allocated....perhaps more clarity earlier on would have been good, however we were able to successfully pull together a vibrant programme of activity.” (Artist)
- “Great support and advice in helping to ensure we had a cultural perspective into the event. The input was made up from all local artists who have set up their own small companies.” (Artist)
- “If the event will run again similar to this year I would say it’s important to make sure that any new performers/workshop leaders/stall holders know exactly what the event is.” (Artist)
- “Interaction - When we were able to find someone from the festival team interaction was positive and they were helpful, however we felt that the team was not very visible. Luckily there were no emergencies and we did not have to seek security out, however this also felt sparse in some of the locations.” (Artist)
- “It was great to meet you and be involved in such a fabulous event! Thanks for such a warm welcome and all your help. It really has been a brilliant weekend which everyone enjoyed. Everything looked really beautiful, especially under the canopies.” (Artist)
- “Just wanted to say we all really enjoyed our time in Preston on Saturday, thanks very much for all your help on the day! (Artist)

2.6 Funding

“ More financial support from other business partners. (Partner) ”

There is a range of opportunities to provide a combined funding resource for Lancashire Encounter. It was seen that neither public sector nor Arts Council on their own should have the responsibility for funding the event.

External partners had a lot of “buy in”, but it was unsure to what extent this would involve funding contribution. Financial support from a wider range of partners was raised.

It was felt that the funding needed to move away from local authority funding to involve commercial funding. A combination of Arts Council and other funders, matched by Cultural Board partners and local/regional sponsors, was a suggestion.

- “Arts Council engagement. Preston Cultural Framework board partners making increased contribution (physical and financial). Preston Cultural Partnership being encouraged by this year to take part next.” (Partner)
- “Need to move away from local authority funding to commercial funding on basis worth their while.” (Partner)
- “Arts Council and other funders matched by Cultural Board partners and local/regional sponsors.” (Partner)

Once an event establishes itself and generates credibility it can start to generate momentum for further support.

Businesses benefit from the economic impact of the event, and it is then in their interest to encourage visitors, creating a self-perpetuating cycle.

The development of relationships with businesses takes time and resources, but their integration with Lancashire Encounter would be to the dual benefit of both the event and business.

- “Businesses benefit from economic impact for them, and it doesn’t have to be large amounts, a couple of hundred pounds for umbrellas... It needs a focus for generating funding, build conduits and build relationships, make businesses feel integrated with the process.” (Partner)
- “Specific events could be sponsored, company sponsorship, but be careful that it doesn’t just become a PR event.” (Partner)

A further consideration is the introduction of paid-for events and crowd funding.

- “Perhaps look at crowd funding and the beginning of paid entrance for some events – business partners.” (Partner)
- “It is a very large scale event! I think it was really good and would hope it will continue – but I am aware that the cost of running the event must be quite high and I hope funding can be secured.” (Artist)

The economic benefit of the event was appreciated by partners, but is at this stage, difficult to quantify. Visitors were asked how much money they thought their group spent whilst at the event, with an average of nearly £30 being reported. As with any data, the size of the sample needs to be taken into account, however, this does provide an illustration of the spend amongst those visitors surveyed.

Table 2.6: **Spend whilst at Lancashire Encounter**

	Number of visitors	Total spend £	Average spend £
Travel and parking	117	361	3.09
Food and drink	117	1188	10.15
Retail	114	1743	15.29
TOTAL	117	4448(*)	28.50

(*) Retail recalculated to 117 based on average spend of 114 therefore column does not sum.

2.7 Organisation

“The staff who organised the festival were lovely and friendly and although seemed a little unorganised at times, we understood that this was a pilot and so it wouldn't be completely smooth.”
(Artist)

“Excellent all round. The fact that the experience was so enjoyable and successful was made possible by the infrastructure and support from all of you for the event.”
(Artist)

Whilst it was strongly noted that the event had been well organised within a limited timeframe, there were improvements which could be implemented. As with communication, these include both areas which will be addressed as part of the natural development and evolution of the event, as well as areas where direct action can have an impact.

- “On site the PCC team were excellent, providing the needs of the event and responding quickly and really positively wherever snags occurred.” (Artist)
- “Very helpful people during our participation. Very well organised.” (Artist)
- We had a fantastic day and look forward to working with you again. I'll look forward to next year's events.” (Artist)
- “A longer lead-in time would have allowed more planning and discussion and may have led to developing further opportunities.” (Artist)
- “Would have liked more lead-in time as ours was a new piece but I know that was the nature of this festival this year.” (Artist)
- “The third party stage hire team were brilliant on the day and they helped us set up in the space, and came back to check on us. However, I did have to explain what I had required as they did not know.” (Artist)

There were comments regarding the layout of the event. Whilst it was seen to make good use of the city centre space, it was also felt that better use could have been made with the space in some areas of the event. Certain areas, such as the Post Office and Harris Museum, were thought not to attract so many numbers, with this being down to location rather than the events.

There was also suggestion that more use could be made of existing venues as part of the offer.

- “The Fish Market, it just didn’t feel very welcoming, you didn’t know what was coming next (if you didn’t have a programme) you were just walking round. Maybe it was just a bit big; maybe it wasn’t set up quite right. The idea of it was right. Having the second stage...but the atmosphere just didn’t draw you in.” (Partner)
- “Whilst the festival was attended well, due to the layout of the canopies (along a narrow corridor) and proximity to two large stage areas with massive sound systems, it was difficult to find a location where larger crowds could gather. We could have performed in the two larger areas, however due to sound bleed from other activities; it would have meant that no one would have been able to hear our music.” (Artist)
- “The People’s Canopy provided focus and structure for disparate events.” (Partner)
- We had a wonderful experience and our work was received very well. The only thing that dampened the experience was the lack of prime performance locations and programming so that our work could be seen in its intended way. (Artist)
- “The way so many events were crowded into such a small area meant inevitable competition for audiences and participants. The audiences warmed to the event, and it had an ‘arts fairground’ feel to it, but there was a lot of noise spill and volume from some of the bigger PA systems was excessive.” (Artist)

The good weather, whilst being an attraction in itself meant perhaps that visitors were more likely to be outside rather than visiting inside events and activities.

- “The diversity, the weather helped, The Post Office and The Harris if it had rained...” (Partner)

Whilst the wide range and variety of events and activities were well received, there was some question about whether there may have been too many activities; that so much was going on, visitors were passing by and moving on to the next attraction to make sure nothing was missed rather than becoming engaged in specific events. One example was the net in the Post Office, which visitors may have thought would take too long.

- “There were some very creative people in the Post Office building; I’m not sure whether many people went in.” (Partner)
- “There was the net, it looked very intriguing, I asked about it but I thought it was going to take too long, so I didn’t actually go in.” (Partner)
- “The only complaint I heard was that there was far too much to see.” (Partner)

A further consideration made by a number of artists was the physical placement of some events. Examples were provided where loud events and activities had taken place next to events dependent on a quiet atmosphere or the ability to engage with an audience; this had impacted on performances.

It was also felt that grouping similar themes together may enhance visitors' experience.

- “We felt that the spaces were all too close together so it was all very noisy and some performers had to move from their allocated spot in order to be heard which meant anyone coming to see that show from the brochure wouldn't have been able to find it.” (Artist)
- “The space that we were allocated underneath the big canopy was a lovely space but was much more suitable for visual performances or a variety act and not a play which our piece was. When our group saw the space, they had to find a place to rehearse in order to rework it to suit a very noisy environment where the public were going to be drop in audiences.” (Artist)
- “We found that there was a bit of an issue with noise from the different acts (and the big PA system which I think may have been The Pride event?) interfering with each other on the Saturday. The noise levels were much better on Sunday. I appreciate it is difficult, but if the performance times of acts that are close together (and/or are noisy) could be staggered so as not to clash then that would have been ideal.” (Artist)
- “Noise was a problem for me. The amount of contrasting loud noise very close to my stall was uncomfortable after a few hours and actually made me feel a little ill! The main thing with this was that there was very different noise happening at the same time. I would have liked there to have been a 'quieter area' for events/attractions that were quiet. For example, it was hard for me to talk to and engage with the public because it was so noisy and I could barely hear what they were saying!” (Artist)
- “There was loads of stuff going on all weekend and a really good feel about the place but noise was a bit of a problem. It really wasn't the environment for a workshop of any kind so I ended up just doing more performances and letting people have a go with a puppet if they were interested and I got a decent crowd for all shows over the 2 days.”
- “Performances were quite diverse and from a range of sectors and disciplines. How they are programmed raises a few questions. i.e. marrying High Art next to popular culture is difficult - possibly the programme could categorise in future events.” (Artist)

An apparent physical lack of support staff at the event was also mentioned.

- We felt that although the audiences seemed to have a great time at the festival there was some issues with the organisation of the event and staff presence as a contracted artist. Firstly, when our group arrived they searched around to sign in but eventually spotted some of the festival team who just said 'oh we just needed to see you were here' and didn't actually do anything formal.” (Artist)
- “We were under the old Fish Market and there was no one in charge apart from the techies when we arrived. They had been given very little information by the organisers and the running order only showed us appearing once when we were on twice. They were excellent with what they did but supplying them with better information would have been good especially as we had all been asked to complete a technical request form. They had seen none of these.” (Artist)
- “We had a poor experience at Lancashire Encounter, as all technical arrangements were completely abandoned by the festival. Nobody from the festival was present on the day of our arrival, and I had to ask a third party for help, to get in contact with the festival. Help did come, however, it was too late ...” (Artist)

Further comments related to the fact that the event seemed to “pack up” earlier than timetabled, meaning that events and activities towards the end of the day felt somewhat despondent.

- “The event seemed to pack up earlier than scheduled - I noticed at 4:15pm that a lot of the stalls had already packed up. When we did our last performance at ... there were hardly any audience around and to our dismay, event organisers began to pack up around us - stacking chairs, moving tables and putting equipment away. This was very upsetting and disheartening for the young people involved and our staff were quite shocked by this lack of respect for these young performers.” (Artist)
- “Other attendees were packing up around 3.30pm onwards and so our ... slot and for the performers following us it felt like we were after the event. We felt we would have achieved more if we had been able to recruit and rehearse on the day as per our original request and the main stage area would have given the project higher visibility.” (Artist)

In addition, the number and fast pace of events raised the question of whether there was a better way of keeping people informed of the time and place of each activity:

- “Perhaps too much going on for all people to engage – looking at things rather than in-depth.” (Partner)
- “The community aspect of it was really good, but a lot of people walking around it, not really engaging with it, a lot of people were but then people having a quick look and moving on. Perhaps a bit too much.” (Partner)
- “The canopy was so big; we could not find the dance/theatre events. (or maybe we could not find them because they were cancelled - so you could also use a display board to list cancellations or changes) perhaps the outside of the canopy could show the locations of performances because we had to keep wandering up and down searching for things. The programme, I am sorry to say was useless for finding events. We missed several shows as we could not find them under the canopy and no one knew what the walkway was. There was a map at back of the programme but it needed to be numbered with corresponding events so we knew where they were. I could not understand what the point of the map was as it was printed. Hope this helps. We would love to come back but it was disappointing to miss performances simply because we could not find them and there were no obvious staff members to help.” (Visitor)

Again, influenced by the short lead-in time, it was felt by some that resources were over-stretched, and that perhaps more work with volunteers, especially young people, could help with resourcing elements of the event.

It was also raised that the physical resources to support the event shouldn't be under estimated, for example the time to erect the canopies and the need to consider their long-term use.

- “Resources were over stretched.” (Partner)

One comment related to the event being run on the same weekend as a home game by Preston North End Football Team, with concern over this dissuading people from coming into the city because of traffic difficulties.

- “A good number of comments on Face Book and Twitter that on the Saturday there was a North End Game on and they didn't want to come in because of the traffic.” (Partner)

3. SUPPLY

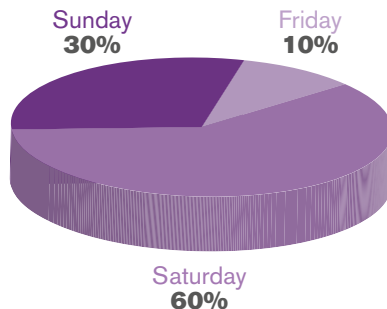
3.1 Appeal of the 3 days

“People engaged with our activity, very, very busy on Saturday, it was great to see a mixture of participatory art activities and audience focused. (Artist)”

The main focus of Lancashire Encounter was to be the events held over the two main days of Saturday and Sunday, and this is reflected in the attendance data from both visitors and artists.

Illustrating the appeal of attendance on more than one day of Lancashire Encounter, visitors attended an average of 1.4 days. Three fifths of all visitor days were on the Saturday.

Chart 3.1: **Profile of visitor days**



Sample base = 178 visitor days, all visitor days visited (130 visitors), single response

Whilst Friday was not the key focus of the event, the lack of visitors on that day was raised in the evaluation. It was felt that the Friday attendance did not accurately represent the overall event, and that it may have given attendees on that day a false impression of its actual popularity.

It was noted however, that the Friday was a working day and schools were in session which would have had a direct impact on attendance. In addition, the Friday programme was not full day, being scheduled around the lunchtime period between 11am and 3pm and showcased UCLan's students and staff.

More substance was needed for the Friday, such as a “big name” to launch the event. Further suggestions were to launch the event on the Saturday or to have more structure to the Friday, providing a clearer steer on the message it was trying to project.

- “Friday night, there were not many there and it didn't look like it had the buy in that it did...a shame as attendance was there from local businesses and the Arts Council... better to have the launch on Saturday or do things differently on the Friday.” (Partner)
- “The Friday night in the Fish Market was a bit quiet. I think it needs a big name act to kick off the festival.” (Partner)
- “Launch session – much more structure and clearer steer of what messages trying to get across.” (Partner)

3.2 The atmosphere

The atmosphere of Lancashire Encounter was raised throughout the evaluation as being a significant strength. The event provided a safe and welcoming environment, supporting inclusivity and diversity. In fact the atmosphere was one of the main strengths identified by visitors as illustrated in the Diagram in Section 4.1.

- “There was an atmosphere, it was said it felt like The Guild.” (Partner)
- “A warm atmosphere, it felt very safe, there were so many different people there.” (Partner)
- “Fun and great atmosphere.” (Visitor)
- “General atmosphere of the festival - based on the town centre made it feel live, part of all the different communities.” (Visitor)
- “Friendly atmosphere.” (Visitor)
- “Atmosphere is great! Inclusive, families, variety of stalls.” (Visitor)
- “Atmosphere! Making Preston more open, inclusive, multicultural.” (Visitor)

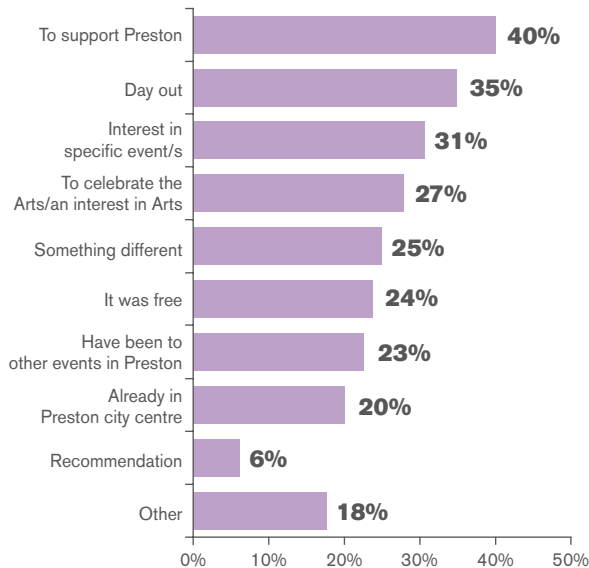
3.3 The attraction

The wide range of reasons for visitors being encouraged to attend Lancashire Encounter illustrates an event which supports a diversity of needs.

These range from; pride in the city, to a day out, to events of specific interest, celebrating the arts, that it was something different, the fact that it was free and that other events in Preston had been attended.

Interestingly, just 20% of visitors stated already being in Preston as a reason for attending. This indicates that a significant proportion of visitors had made a conscious decision to attend Lancashire Encounter.

Chart 3.3: **Reasons for visiting Lancashire Encounter**



Source = Visitor survey. Sample base = 130, all visitors who provided a response, multiple response. The two main other reasons are – to support Pride (11 visitors) and work (5 visitors)

3.4 Quality and innovation of art and culture

“ If it continues to present a mix of regional work by artists and organisations combined with others from outside the region it has the ability to provide a focus for the region in the cultural calendar.
(Partner) ”

One of the key aims of Lancashire Encounter is to encourage and foster innovative and high quality art and culture. The range of creativity on offer was noted by partners, and it was seen as a good opportunity to showcase talent; it raised awareness of art and culture to a wider audience. Its value is in the ability to make new work happen, cross-promoting events to Preston and wider audiences.

It was felt there is significant demand for artists, and that Preston is successful in attracting and retaining artists – the result of a conscious effort that has been made in developing a cultural focus in Preston. Preston does have the potential to be the cultural hub for Lancashire, to draw people in from the North West and further afield.

- “Raised awareness of art and culture to a wider audience.” (Partner)
- “It gives Preston people more access to them.” (Partner)
- “There’s a huge variety of cultural events in Preston all year round.” (Partner)
- “We put a lot into arts and culture; it’s not always money, its commitment.” (Partner)

The quality of the acts is key in developing the event; there needs to be a balance between quantity and quality. There also needs to be an element of variation for each year to encourage repeat visits.

- “You need to do things differently and set a high bar...need to encourage people to come back.” (Partner)
- “...Needs quality, innovation, different, to foster new talent.” (Partner)
- “Better to do 20 really well than 40 not so well.” (Partner)
- “Mainstream accessible culture needs to feature heavily.” (Partner)
- “Even after reading all the material supplied this year I was not aware that there would be such a lot of activity going on simultaneously.” (Artist)
- “Possibly clearer artistic policy, and state the aims and ambitions clearly.” (Artist)
- “Ability to make new work happen and to collaborate.” (Artist)

Lancashire Encounter was also noted as providing a mechanism for increasing the background temperature of activity; Lancashire Encounter was seen to be a hot spot, with The Guild creating a hotter spot. Being only every 20 years however, The Guild provides a roller coaster ride with the drop off after the event being significant after the lead-up time for a few years beforehand.

Lancashire Encounter is seen as a way of raising the background temperature, then making it easier to raise the temperature for The Guild.

- "...Also need to do things (events) around Lancashire Encounter but it will have real potential to raise background temperature to support The Guild." (Partner)

27 separate groups (1 group had 2 artists) were engaged with Lancashire Encounter; these are detailed in Table 3.4. Over half of the artists (15) were from outside of Preston, with 3 of the artists being from outside of the North West region.

Table 3.4: **Artists engaged in Lancashire Encounter and their location**

Artist	Location
Angle Club North (Chris Gillingham)	Preston
Art Full (Bernie Velvick)	Preston
Bordello Theatre (Graham Easterlow)	Preston
Burnley Youth Theatre (Karen Barnes)	Burnley
Charlotte Berry (Tin Cat People)	Bury
DNA (Adam Bennett)	Thornton
GS Consultancy (Gulab Singh)	Preston
Hawk Dance Theatre (Josh Hawkins)	Lake District
Horse and Bamboo (Esther Ferry-Kennington)	Rossendale
ICD (Jason Hird)	Leeds
Jacqueline Harris & Marjan Wouda	Isle of Arran
Kim Graham (Gold Thread Bobbins)	Preston
LICA: People Pavilion (Laurence Payot)	Lancaster
Light Up Lancaster x2 (Adam Gregory and Steve McWade)	Lancaster
Ludus	Lancaster
Martin Hamblen	Preston
Matthew Birchall (ESP)	Preston
More Music Morecambe (Rick Middleton)	Morecambe
Mufti does games	Bristol
Preston Burlesque Society (Steve Griffin)	Preston
Preston Caribbean Carnival	Preston
Preston Musical Comedy Society (Mark Howard)	Preston
Rough Magic Theatre (Charlotte Knowles)	Lancaster
Salsa Northwest (Phil Kali)	Preston
Sarah Green	Kirkham
Tracey Eastham	Blackpool

It was mentioned that a clearer artistic policy would support the process, with aims and ambitions clearly stated.

The event provided the potential to showcase talent, raising awareness to a wide audience.

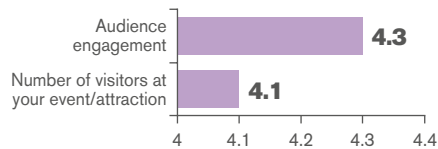
- “As to the range of visitors and encouraging people to experience great art - I can only speak from my personal impressions. I only experienced a very small number of the other acts that were on offer - what I saw was very high quality and showcased a variety of cultures. The acts seemed to appeal to a wide range of ethnic groups and we met at least one audience member who was from Bristol as well as many local people.” (Artist)
- “I thought the range and diversity of artists showcasing work was fantastic. There was a wide selection of art forms and something for all audiences to enjoy.” (Artist)
- “The mix of activities was excellent and each one complimented each other as audiences grew during the w/e. Gold-Thread-Bobbins had a very wide mix of active participants as well as people stopping to watch. The mix of activity definitely encouraged people to get involved. The canopies worked brilliantly to showcase the activities and made the whole event really special. Everyone worked together really well to make sure visitors had a great experience.” (Artist)
- “The wonderful co-operative festive atmosphere, being able to talk to fellow artists. The amazing difference the red canopies made. The wise use of open spaces, the old Post Office, the flag market and adjoining streets. The fact that all age groups were catered for. Being able to talk to advice agencies and have the opportunity to find advice leaflets. The performance artists amongst the event attendees. The fact that the whole event was so well stewarded. Easy access for the disabled.” (Visitor)
- “The exciting range of activities and workshops available.” (Visitor)
- “Meeting new local arts associations as I have a personal interest in arts, seeing 2 shows which were both really good (in Birley Studios and the ghost box in the old Post Office), the beautiful canopies (a shame they couldn't stay longer than the event), the 'lifeboat', the Chinese Orchestra and the gold thread bobbins screen printing. I also liked the combination of the festival and the Pride as well as the run which I participated in. It gave the whole event a very diverse attendance and lively atmosphere.” (Visitor)

3.5 Audience participation

“ I had some fantastic interactions and responses from audience members from a diverse range of the community. (Artist) ”

Artists rated both audience engagement and number of visitors positively. The overall mean rating provided for audience engagement on a scale of 1-5 was 4.3, and for the number of visitors at the event/ attraction it was 4.1.

Chart 3.5: **Mean ratings of audience participation**



Source = Artist survey. Sample base = 28, all artists, single response for each element. Ratings provided on a scale of 1-5, where 1 = very poor and 5 = very good

89% of artists provided a rating of good or very good for audience engagement, with just 4% rating this as poor or very poor.

75% of artists rated the number of visitors at their event/attraction as good or very good, with just 4% rating this as very poor.

The qualitative research supporting the audience volume and engagement includes:

“It worked very well, there were a couple of mime artists, they just suddenly appeared...then within seconds they had a huge audience encircling them.” (Partner)

“We were really pleased with the numbers that participated. Thoroughfare/ Post Office corridor also provided walk up audiences similar to that of other major festivals.” (Artist)

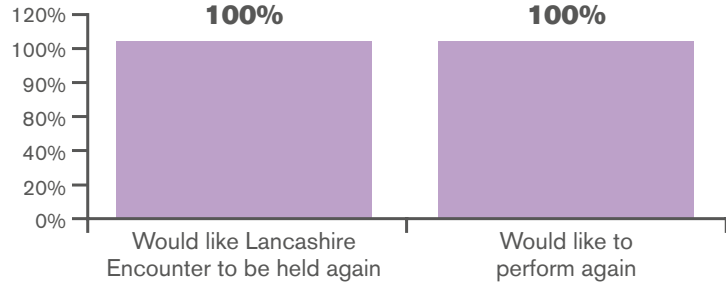
3.6 Support for the future of Lancashire Encounter

“ I thought it was one of the best events that Preston has provided, very inclusive, lots going on, very focused on the arts. (Artist) ”

There needs to be sufficient demand from artists to perform at Lancashire Encounter in order to provide a substantial and quality event.

All artists (100%) would like to see Lancashire Encounter to be held again next year, and all artists (100%) would like to perform at Lancashire Encounter again.

Chart 3.6: **Demand for Lancashire encounter in 2016**



Source = Artist survey. Sample base = 28, all artists, single response to each question

- “This was a great event to be involved in. We look forward to our next venture with you in the hope that it will have an even bigger impact on the public with even more mega fun.” (Artist)
- “The opportunity is there to develop this event as an annual coming together and celebration of the arts in Lancashire. There is a need for events like this as indicated by the number of attendees at this and other events e.g. Guild 2012.” (Artist)

4. SATISFACTION

4.1 Visitor enjoyment

“The vibrant colour, entertainment, the event catered for all ages and cultures, well organised.
(Visitor)”

Whilst the range of quantifiable statistics used in the evaluation of events, such as visitor numbers, participation rates, duration of visit and spend, are key indicators, there is also the need to consider more qualitative elements of impact.

Visitor enjoyment, whilst more difficult to quantify, is key to ensuring the success of any event. It is not only a measure of success at the time of the event, but will significantly influence its future demand, recommendation, reputation and overall future viability.

Visitors were asked what they had enjoyed about the event. The two main responses were “everything” and “the atmosphere”.

With regard to the activities, references were made to; music, specific events, specific artists, general events, specific venues, stalls, dance, entertainment, general art/artists and food.

With regard to the event, references were made to; variety, inclusiveness, family, community, vibrancy and organisation.

Diagram 4.1: **What visitors liked about Lancashire Encounter**



The positive comments reflect visitors' enjoyment.

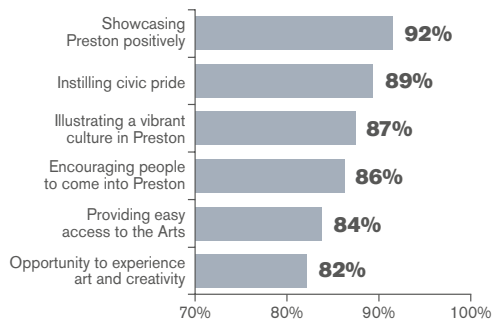
- “Eating, drinking whilst listening to live music, general atmosphere.”
- “Everything great, great atmosphere, music and art.”
- “Fantastic family day out.”
- “Live events, display, citizenship.”
- “Meeting people, the variety of stalls, music.”
- “The atmosphere was great and the kids were great, we enjoyed all the day.”

4.2 Visitor satisfaction

“The friendliness of the people around and the fact we should be proud of our city as a whole.
(Visitor)”

Visitors were asked to rate 6 elements of Lancashire Encounter on a scale of 1-5, where 1 = very poor and 5 = very good. Chart 4.2a illustrates the high level of satisfaction, with over four fifths of visitors rating each element as good or very good.

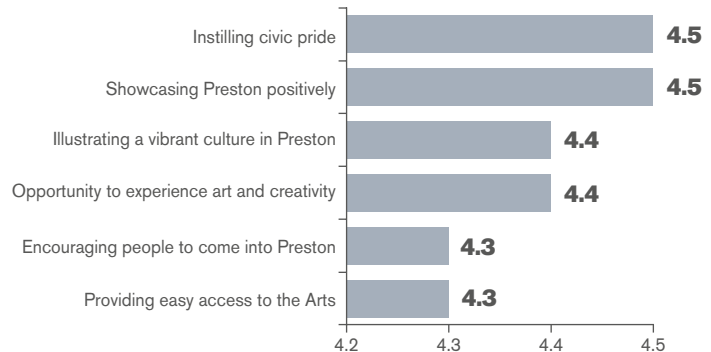
Chart 4.2a: **Proportion of visitors rating each element of Lancashire Encounter as good or very good**



Source = Visitor survey. Sample bases = 123-129, all visitors who could provide a rating, single response for each category. Ratings on a scale of 1-5, where 1 = very poor and 5 = very good

The high level of satisfaction for all elements, which cover; civic pride, showcasing Preston, illustrating a vibrant culture, access and experience of the arts and encouraging people into the city was further identified.

Chart 4.2b: **Mean ratings provided for elements of Lancashire Encounter**



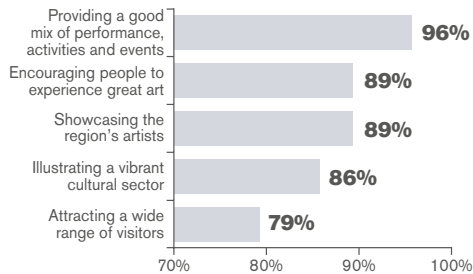
Sample bases = 123-129, all visitors who could provide a rating, single response for each category. Mean ratings on a scale of 1-5, where 1 = very poor and 5 = very good

Chart 4.2b illustrates the mean ratings provided by visitors for each element of the event. All elements are positive and are rated as above “good”. In addition, the limited range of 0.2 between the lowest and highest mean rating illustrates a consistency in performance across the elements.

4.3 Artist satisfaction

“ I felt the event was very well planned and set out. An excellent range of cultural experiences that provided the public with new experiences. (Artist) ”

Chart 4.3a: **Proportion of artists rating each element as good or very good**



Source = Artist survey. Sample base = 27-28, all artists who could provide a response, single response for each element

Artists were asked to rate a similar range of elements of Lancashire Encounter on a scale of 1-5, where 1 = very poor and 5 = very good. As for visitors, each of these elements was rated positively, with Chart 4.3a illustrating the proportion of artists rating each element as good or very good.

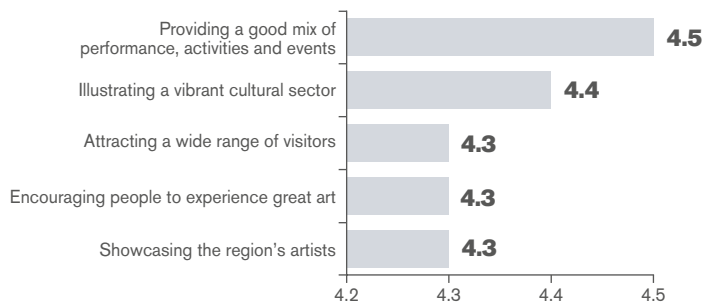
Over three quarters of artists provided a rating of good or very good for each element, with all but one artist doing so for providing a good mix of performance, activities and events.

A range of comments provided by artists supporting their views are as follows:

- “I thought it was one of the best events that Preston has provided, very inclusive, lots going on, very focused on the arts.” (Artist)
- “There was a great buzz, I saw many 'old mates' but lots of new faces too. The Community event on Sunday was of a very high standard.” (Artist)
- “A lack of painting, sculpture and video art, possibly combine it with something similar to the Bury Art Fair or Manchester Contemporary.” (Artist)
- “It was hard to work out how many people came for this event and whether it attracted many out of town visitors. There was a fun run on the Sunday and the community events attracted a range of local support.” (Artist)
- “I felt there was a little too many stalls selling produce, and not quite enough 'free to experience' arts events. I also felt that visual art was a little under-represented.” (Artist)

None of the 5 elements were rated as either poor or very poor with chart 4.3b illustrating the mean ratings, with a narrow range from 4.3 to 4.5.

Chart 4.3b: **Mean rating provided by artists for each element regarding Lancashire Encounter**



Source = Artist survey. Sample base = 27-28, all artists who could provide a response, single response for each element. Mean ratings on a scale of 1-5, where 1 = very poor and 5 = very good

4.4 Overall experience

“ Fantastic! An insight into other cultures and a great way to socialise and include the whole community, friendly welcoming atmosphere, glad to be part of it.
(Visitor) ”

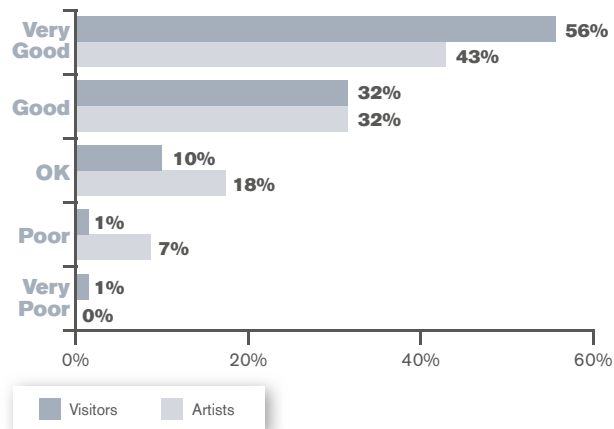
“ It has the ability to become a real celebration of Lancashire Arts, a coming together and showcasing of all the great work going on.
(Artist) ”

The mean rating provided for visitors' overall experience of Lancashire Encounter was positive at 4.4, with 88% of visitors providing a rating of good or very good. Just 2% of visitors provided a rating of poor or very poor.

The mean rating provided by artists for overall experience was also positive at 4.1. 75% of artists provided their experience as good or very good, with 7% providing their experience as poor or very poor.

56% of visitors rated their experience as very good compared to 43% of artists, however this difference is not statistically significant based on the size of samples for analysis.

Chart 4.4: **Visitors' and artists' rating of their overall experience of Lancashire Encounter**



Source= Visitor survey. Sample base = 128, all visitors who could provide a rating. Source = Artist survey, sample base = 28 all artists, single response, mean ratings provided on a scale of 1-5, where 1 = very poor and 5 = very good

Lancashire Encounter, whilst being a new event in its first year and delivered within a short timeframe and with limited resource, has generated a significant positive impact amongst the three main audience groups of visitors, artists and partners across the four key process elements of demand, infrastructure, supply and satisfaction.

Its evident success provides a strong foundation on which to develop an event which clearly generates significant, positive and wide-ranging impact. An unquestionable demand from all three audience groups for Lancashire Encounter to be held next year fully supports the high levels of satisfaction. As with any event, and certainly one in its first year, areas for development have been identified, and these will contribute to an even stronger service offering in going forward.

Partnership support is strong, confident and visionary. It is built on a collective aspiration for a strong cultural hub in Preston, providing a focus for engagement for the region's people and a springboard for development and accessibility of culture and the arts. Recognition of the commitment, extent of work, the diversity of activity and the areas for focus to achieve the vision for Lancashire Encounter, to develop and support its growth, impact and success is acknowledged.

Additional funding would support this vision, with additional partner contributions and business integration being possible avenues suggested. Being of such a high quality, it is seen that additional resources will be required to surpass the achievements of 2015.

The effectiveness of the marketing was considerable, within a short time span and limited resource, in promoting a new event; providing a strong foundation on which to develop, especially with a longer lead-in time for future events.

Artists' contribution was of a high quality, innovative and engaging, with all artists keen to participate in future events. Visitor participation was enthusiastic, inclusive and enjoyable.

In benefitting Preston, it was strongly felt that the event showcased Preston positively, it instilled civic pride and encouraged people into the city. In benefitting accessibility to the arts, it was strongly felt that the event illustrated a vibrant culture in Preston, it provided easy access to the arts and the opportunity to experience art and creativity.

