Valuing Older People (VOP) – Culture Champions Scheme

Evaluation
1. Introduction

The Audience Agency was asked by the Valuing Older People (VOP) team to undertake the evaluation of the VOP Culture Champions scheme.

This report illustrates the results from the evaluation.

It introduces the scheme and the context within which it was developed. It reviews the role of the Culture Champions and their networks.

It then moves onto a review of the events that have been organised as part of the scheme and the impact these have had on the success of the scheme itself.

This evaluation will then review the scheme’s impact in terms of:

- Encouraging older people in Manchester to engage with culture
- Developing suitable provision at the cultural organisations involved in the scheme
- Offering personal development opportunities for the Culture Champions

Finally, the evaluation reviews improvements and development for the scheme suggested by the Culture Champions themselves.

1.1 Methodology

We used three key methodologies to collect perspectives from stakeholders and participants in the project.

- **Surveys.**
  We sent each Culture Champion a paper survey to fill in at home. With each paper survey we included a pre-stamped envelope for them to return the surveys free of cost. We sent all key contacts at participating cultural organisations a brief survey by email. At each Cultural Tour we asked all Culture Champions to fill in a survey at the end of the tour.

- **1-2-1 interviews**
  We conducted 1-2-1 interviews over the phone with a random sample of Culture Champions.

- **Focus group**
  The VOPCO working group commissioned Big Art People to deliver a focus group with Culture Champions. The findings from this focus group have been included in this report.
2. Context

2.1 Valuing Older People (VOP) and the VOP Cultural Offer (VOPCO) project

The Culture Champions scheme was developed as part of the Valuing Older People Cultural Offer (VOPCO) project, which was itself launched by the Valuing Older People partnership.

The Valuing Older People partnership is an initiative to improve life for older people in Manchester involving a number of different services, organisations, agencies and most importantly, older Manchester residents. It was launched in 2003 by Manchester City Council, NHS Manchester and community and voluntary organisations.

The Valuing Older People Cultural Offer (VOPCO) was set up in 2007, when the Valuing Older People team at Manchester City Council along with Arts About Manchester (now The Audience Agency) and Library Theatre worked together to extend the reach of the world-class arts and culture in the city centre to older people in Manchester.

The aim of the VOPCO project has been to connect older people with the arts and culture in Manchester through the city’s cultural providers.

The project has received funding by an independent charitable trust, the Baring Foundation, which is investing in the sector of arts and older people over a three year period since 2010.

VOPCO now works with over sixteen cultural organisations within the city.

The main working group comprises:

1. Band on the Wall
2. Bridgewater Hall
3. Chinese Arts Centre
4. Cornerhouse & The Library Theatre (GMAC)
5. The Gallery of Costume
6. The Hallé
7. Manchester Camerata
8. Manchester Metropolitan University Special Collections
9. Museum of Science & Industry
10. Manchester Museum
11. Manchester Art Gallery
12. People’s History Museum
13. Royal Exchange Theatre
14. Salford Heritage Services
15. Whitworth Art Gallery

Following research and consultation, the development of a scheme targeting ‘gatekeepers’ in local communities to act as ‘ambassadors’ for the arts and culture in the city was identified as one of the priorities for the VOPCO project.
2.2 VOP Culture Champions Scheme

The VOP Culture Champions scheme was launched in October 2011. It has quickly grown to include 80 champions throughout Manchester by September 2012.

The scheme aims to:

- Inform elderly networks and communities within Manchester about the variety of cultural events taking place in the city throughout the year.

- Encourage elderly networks and communities within Manchester to attend and try out a variety of culture events taking place in the city throughout the year.

As part of the scheme, Culture Champions regularly receive the quarterly VOP Culture Bulletin, a quarterly printed newsletter reporting news, events and developments that relate to Manchester’s cultural offer for older people.

Specific to the scheme, Culture Champions also receive regular invites and are encouraged to attend a range of events specifically organised for them:

- Cultural Tours - These events are planned to give Culture Champions an insight into upcoming programmes and opportunities at a range of cultural organisations throughout the city. They offer special or behind the scenes experiences of venues, e.g. attending an orchestra rehearsal, guided tours of exhibitions, theatre press nights.

- Culture Champions Annual Celebration - This event is specifically aimed at bringing all Culture Champions together to network, share learning and pass insightful feedback to the VOPCO working group on how to improve the offer for older people in the city.

As part of the scheme, Culture Champions also receive a range of offers such as discounted tickets and are often invited to contribute to a range of other projects at specific cultural venues, e.g. volunteering at the Chinese Arts Centre.

The role of the Culture Champions is to then share their insights, experiences and knowledge of the cultural programmes in Manchester with their friends, networks and local community and, where possible, to encourage and even support visits to the organisations involved in the project.
3. Culture Champions scheme review

3.1 Culture Champions

Culture Champions are recruited from a variety of networks and groups. From sheltered housing schemes to local neighbourhood groups, the opportunity has been widely promoted at meetings, events and through the VOP network and Culture Bulletin.

Geographical spread

The table below illustrates the breakdown of where Culture Champions were based by September 2012.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Postcode district</th>
<th>Champions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M 21</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 20</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 40</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 14</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 19</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 22</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 23</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 12</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 15</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 16</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 18</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SK 8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 13</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M 32</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SK23</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA13</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Out of the 46 postcode districts within Manchester City, over a third (17) have at least one Culture Champion based within that area.

Over half of the postcode districts where Culture Champions are based have at least 4 or more Culture Champions based in those areas. A high concentration of Culture Champions is present in the M21 postcode district - this is not surprising as this postcode tends to have the highest level of engagement with the arts and culture in the city.
Nonetheless, excluding the M21 postcode district, the spread of VOP Culture Champions in Manchester is relatively even as shown in the map in the next page. This offers an opportunity for a relatively even reach of grass root communities within the city, including some of the harder to engage areas such as North Manchester.
Motivations

The main motivations for individuals to get involved with the Culture Champions scheme are:

- Finding out more about cultural events and opportunities in Manchester
- Supporting their local networks and communities to make the most of these opportunities

Culture Champions were asked in the postal survey to pick what their main motivations for getting involved in the scheme were.

85% of Culture Champions said it was about finding out more about cultural events. Also, over half of Culture Champions said it was about doing something positive for their community and getting their networks excited about cultural events.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Base 26</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finding out more about cultural events</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The opportunity to visit more cultural events myself</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting more involved in the cultural sector in Manchester</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing something positive for my community</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting your networks excited about cultural events</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This was reflected in the results from the 1-2-1 interviews:

“Because I want to know what’s going on for older people (...). It’s about finding out what’s on and what I can do to tell people about it.” (Culture Champion)

“I have developed myself, I’ve been on tours, I’ve learned a lot - I really enjoyed ‘Class Act’, I’m talking to everyone.” (Culture Champion)

Some Culture Champions in particular stressed the importance of the social aspect of the scheme and how it supports them helping and further engaging their networks. When asked about their motivations in the 1-2-1 interviews, Culture Champions said:

“Meeting other people and helping.” (Culture Champion)

“I see myself as an information giver, it’s not for me but it’s about spreading the word.” (Culture Champion)

“I live on an estate of semi-sheltered housing; I felt I could be of use to the residents on this estate.” (Culture Champion)

“Because I think older people are not represented and don’t get as many opportunities to get involved in culture.” (Culture Champion)
These results were also reflected in the focus group. Most responses in fact were focused around meeting new people, engaging in new activities and spreading new knowledge to as many people as possible. When asked to end the sentence “I wanted to...”, champions said:

“Make new friends”

“Get information and spread it to others”

“Discovering new cultural organisations and venues”

3.2 Culture Champions’ Networks

We asked Culture Champions to give us a rough estimate of how many people made up their current networks. Here below is a breakdown of the responses we collated from the postal survey:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of people in your network</th>
<th>Base 26</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 to 5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 20</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 to 40</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 40</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These results are reflected by some of the responses we collected in the 1-2-1 interviews:

“14 people from the library, 15 from the semi-residential estate I live in, 10 from the exercise class I attend at the gym - I would therefore say about 39 people.” (Culture Champions)

“I’m part of the U3A - they have 180 members. Not all are my friends, but I would say my overall network probably includes about 150 people with friends.” (Culture Champions)

“Easily 12 people, mostly from my gym class.” (Culture Champions)

“I have 47 clients and 25 volunteers. I also have a personal email that I use for friends and professionals I have worked with in the past.” (Culture Champions)

We used the responses from the postal survey related to how many people made up their networks to estimate the overall reach of the Culture Champions. We did this by calculating the average for each category and multiplied it by the number of responses within that category - see the table below for a detailed breakdown:
### Number of people in your network

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of people in your network</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Estimated reach for champions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 to 5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 to 40</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated reach for 26 champions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>549</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The estimated reach for the 26 respondents, i.e. 549, was then proportionally related to the overall number of Culture Champions, i.e. 80. This allowed us to estimate the overall reach of Cultural Champions to about 1,689 people within Manchester.

As part of the survey, we also asked Culture Champions to define who was part of their regular networks (i.e. people they socialised with most weeks). Here below is a table detailing the breakdown of the results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who do you regularly spend time with?</th>
<th>Base 25</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other friends</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community groups</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbours</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteering colleagues</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courses mates</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place of worship</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work colleagues</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some respondents also indicated they were scheme managers working within sheltered housing.

Interestingly 68% of respondents indicated they were part of community groups and, as 56% said they regularly socialise with volunteering colleagues, we can reasonably assume about 56% of respondents are involved in some kind of volunteering activity.

Through the 1-2-1 interviews we managed to gather further details about some of the different networks Culture Champions are involved in:

- Attending the gym classes was mentioned by two champions - one champion in particular regularly organises trips with her gym class.

- Volunteering was also mentioned by three champions. One champion volunteers at her local school, one works as a volunteer at Manchester Art Gallery and another mentioned working as a volunteer at a number of events such as Manchester Day Parade.

- Champions also mentioned taking part in a variety of activity groups at their local library or local community centre. One champion in particular mentioned being part of the
University of the Third Age (U3A). Writing classes, walking groups and local choirs were also mentioned among some of the activities champions regularly take part in.

- Interestingly a few champions also mentioned being involved in advisory roles. In particular the following were mentioned: VOP Forum, Greater Manchester Elderly Resource Group and Manchester Royal Infirmary Dementia group.

- Some champions mentioned living in semi-sheltered estates or housing and said they socialise with some of the residents.

- Finally four Culture Champions indicated being part of different worship groups.

### Barriers

Within the postal survey, we asked Culture Champions to give us an insight into the barriers experienced in accessing cultural events.

Here below is a breakdown of the responses we gathered:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers</th>
<th>Base 26</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costs</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor Health</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They don’t feel confident enough</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of information about what’s on</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They don’t feel comfortable attending cultural events</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timings</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are not interested</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not surprisingly 77% of respondents said “Transport” was one of the biggest barriers. Interestingly 61% also ticked “Location” as being a key issue.

This was backed by comments from the 1-2-1 interviews:

“People who live in Wythenshawe find travelling into Manchester difficult. It is a long journey, it can be expensive, time consuming, and not comfortable after dark.”

“It’s always been transport and getting out at night, as well as not having someone to accompany them. A lot are widows.”

“Our biggest expense and problem is transport.”

50% of respondents also selected “Costs” as one of the main barriers.

“They need offers - gallery and museum are fine - if it’s for theatres they need offers. (...)Concessions are not good enough.”
46% of respondents also selected “Poor health” and “They don’t feel confident enough”. This in particular was strongly backed by some of the responses from the 1-2-1 interviews:

“Some people who may be considered vulnerable or have some form of disability have expressed concerns regarding attending events as they feel unsafe attending alone.”

“Many of my networks are now on their own and are reluctant to venture to a cultural event by themselves. However I’m sure they would be interested to join a group.”

“Older females don’t like to attend events alone. This also applies to issues of confidence and safety travelling to events alone.”

Interestingly one further comment from the 1-2-1 interviews was:

“Some people do not like to mix with people of young age due to stereotypes and past experiences.”

Very similar issues were raised in the focus group. When asked “What are the barriers to engagement for older people?” participating Culture Champions quoted:

- Lack of confidence:
  - Worries about safety
  - People may already be isolated
  - Not confident around new people/groups

- Lack of personal funds

- Lack of awareness:
  - There isn’t enough accessible offline information
  - What information is available – it is not presented particularly well, in large print and simple English
  - Need information in newspapers, libraries, word of mouth, radio, TV, posters.

- Lack of transport:
  - Inflexible buses or don’t want to take buses (especially at night)
  - Ring and Ride is generally a poor service
  - Worries about safety
  - Is the promotion of local cultural offer a potential solution?

### 3.3 Cultural tours and offers

As briefly introduced before, Culture Champions receive regular invites and are encouraged to attend a range of events specifically organised for them, such as the Cultural Tours. They also receive a range of offers such as discounted tickets and are often invited to contribute to a range of other projects at specific cultural venues, e.g. volunteering at the Chinese Arts Centre.

The Cultural Tours are aimed at:
- Making the champions familiar with the range of venues and cultural events in Manchester
- Offering the champions a personal experience of a venue or cultural event
- Getting the champions excited and enthusiastic about the range of venues and cultural events in Manchester

Here below is an overview of the cultural tours that have taken place by September 2012:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Organisations</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Attending champions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 Jun 11</td>
<td>Royal Exchange Theatre, Museum of Science and Industry and Manchester Museum.</td>
<td>Tour of the Royal Exchange and MOSI with a contribution from Manchester Museum around the theme of “Cotton”.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 Nov 11</td>
<td>Bridgewater Hall and Hallé</td>
<td>Tour of the Bridgewater Hall building and rehearsal of the Hallé.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Dec 11</td>
<td>People’s History Museum and Salford Museum and Art Gallery</td>
<td>Tour of People’s History Museum and performance of “Baddies”. A member of staff from Salford Museum &amp; Art Gallery presented handling boxes from their collection.</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 Jan 12</td>
<td>Manchester Art Gallery</td>
<td>Celebration event based around the Mary Greg handling collection.</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Feb 12</td>
<td>Manchester Art Gallery and Chinese Arts Centre</td>
<td>‘Highlight tour’ of Manchester Art Gallery to discover some of the key pieces in their gallery collection. Guided tour of the Chinese Arts Centre followed by two practical workshops: Chinese mask-making and shadow photography.</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8, 10, 15, 22 Mar 12</td>
<td>People’s History Museum (PHM) and Library Theatre</td>
<td>Working-class lives course “Class Act”: • Matinee performance of the Library Theatre’s The Daughter in Law • WEA tutor-led sessions about class, gender, social history etc • PHM Living History drama presentation and guided tour</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Mar 12</td>
<td>Manchester Camerata</td>
<td>Manchester Camerata in rehearsal and informal talk with Head of Learning and Participation about the history of the orchestra.</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Mar 12</td>
<td>Manchester Museum</td>
<td>An opportunity to go behind the scenes of the fossils, live animals or Egypt exhibitions as well as a tour of the museum.</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following Cultural Tours, when asked what they enjoyed the most out of the tour, 48% of Culture Champions said “The artwork or performance”. Here below is a detailed breakdown of the results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What did you enjoy most about today?</th>
<th>Base 27</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The artwork or performance</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The workshop</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The insight into the organisation</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The space</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everything</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The opportunity to socialise</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These are some of the most representative responses collected through the Culture Tour survey:

“The whole experience of learning more about the building and insight into the “backroom” and the orchestra in rehearsals.” (Culture Champion)

“Just having my eyes opened to what’s out there! And spurring my interest.” (Culture Champion)

“The chance to take a quick look around - I will come back with friends and family and over 60’s group. A wonderful morning - thank you!” (Culture Champion)

“I would tell them how much there is to see and do” (Culture Champion)

“By telling them of my experience today and tell them to try it.” (Culture Champion)

“By telling them what a wonderful experience we had.” (Culture Champion)

Here below is also an extensive but not inclusive list of offers Cultural Champions have received:

- Free tickets to “All the Way Home” - Library Theatre (Lowry), 30/09/2011
- Invite to “Ageing Artfully” conference - Manchester Town Hall, 19th October
- Free tickets to “Wind in the Willows”- Library Theatre (Lowry) 23rd December
- Private View to “Picturing Politics” - PHM, 28th November
• Private View to “Mirth in the Mill” - PHM, 19th January
• “Daughter in Law” - Library Theatre, 24th February
• Discounts for the “Debussy preludes” - Bridgewater Hall, 15th April
• Community Membership scheme - Bridgewater Hall
• Dance event at Manchester Art Gallery - 6 September
• Invite to Private View of “Ghosts: disappearing histories” - PHM, 11 August
4 Impact

4.1 Engaging networks with cultural events

As mentioned above, we estimate the 80 Culture Champions have the potential to reach about 1,689 people in Manchester.

Following a Cultural Tour over half of the participating cultural organisations (4) reported they were aware of some kind of follow up engagement from Cultural Champions and their networks:

“A number of cultural champions have attended community evenings, or education outcomes. One of the cultural champions arranged a visit for a group she was involved in, and another was involved in an adult focus group for the Truth About Youth programme.” (Royal Exchange)

“I am aware that one visitor arranged a follow up tour with her U3A group. Several visitors have attended other events including free lunchtime concerts, and performances for which we have been able to offer discounts to Culture Champions.” (Bridgewater Hall)

“We are aware of two people from the group who attended anything here at the centre post their initial visit, but we did have a number of Culture Champions who were interested in volunteering here at the centre with us which is something we are trying to arrange in some way.” (Chinese Art Centre)

“Yes, 2 individuals have participated in our making conversations programme and 3 people are interested in having a Mary Greg session for their group.” (Manchester Art Gallery)

Culture Champions themselves reported anecdotally who out of their networks followed up their recommendations:

“I know my U3A group has done two or three visits to the Bridgewater Hall.” (Culture Champion)

“I took a group of five to the Debussy concert - we got an offer from at the Bridgewater Hall. Also the library group I attend I know have been to events following my recommendations. Manchester Museum came out and so we went to visit the Egyptian exhibition” (Culture Champion)

“I know the Dementia group I work with have been in contact with Manchester Museum.” (Culture Champion)

“My group went back independently to the People’s History Museum.” (Culture Champion)

“I know the Burnage and Chorlton neighbourhoods groups got in touch with Manchester Art Gallery regarding Mary Greg.”(Culture Champion)

From the estimated reach of the Culture Champions, the direct feedback from the champions themselves and feedback from the participating cultural organisations, we can assess that the
scheme is having a positive impact in terms of increasing the Culture Champions’ networks engagement with culture in Manchester.

Nonetheless, it might be worth exploring some more definite targets and methods to monitor the impact of the Culture Champions’ work.

In the focus group in particular Culture Champions suggested two tools as the most practical and workable:

- Quarterly monitoring form by email/mail
- Request data from Culture Champions via text

4.2 Impact on participating cultural organisations’ provision

In terms of impact on participating cultural organisations, most of the cultural organisations (5) who responded to the email survey identified a specific change and impact on their practices:

“We have decided to add three matinee performances (November, December and January). These are specifically designed to encourage those who would like to hear the Hallé at The Bridgewater Hall but do not want to come in an evening. This was something that many of the Champions have mentioned as an issue(...) In the Autumn I will be running a new initiative that will involve groups of Manchester based elderly people accessing the Hallé at our new rehearsal/education centre in Ancoats - St Peter’s.” (Hallé)

“I have done some work to develop a collection of objects that can be used for outreach sessions to different groups (including older people).” (Museum of Science and Industry)

“It has made me think more about maintaining contact with Salford-based older people’s forums, and organising activity through them, and also it has developed my working relationship with staff and former staff at PHM, and also with the VOP team - so in this way is has been great.” (Salford Heritage Services)

“We are developing a community membership scheme to give away unsold tickets to certain performances to community audiences, inspired in part by the success of offers shared with Cultural Champions.” (Bridgewater Hall)

“It really helped inform and develop our offer for VOP, i.e., Mary Greg, Making Conversations, Art Bites.” (Manchester Art Gallery)

One of the most common benefits all organisations who responded to the email survey stressed was the opportunity to work collaboratively on projects with other cultural organisations.

“It was great to work in partnership with other cultural venues to deliver an informal and relaxed collaborative event.” (Royal Exchange)

“It was a good mean of working in partnership with different cultural organisations in the city.” (MOSI)
“That sharing element and letting people know what’s going on outside of Manchester is really valuable.” (SMAG)

“I have really appreciated our VOP work being part of something wider.” (Manchester Art Gallery)

4.3 Personal impact on Culture Champions

In our postal survey to Culture Champions, we asked them how taking part in the scheme affected their personal lives. The table below details the breakdown of the results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taking part in the scheme has made me feel...</th>
<th>Base</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More confident</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happier</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More in the know/informed</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better connected/part of the community</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More valued</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More active</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More inspired</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall the project can be said to have had a positive impact on the personal lives of Culture Champions. In particular:

- 81% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the scheme had made them feel more confident.
  
  “The scheme has grown my confidence.” (From 1-2-1 interview with Culture Champion)

- 83% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the scheme had made them feel more connected.

  “I’ve learned a lot and I’ve made new friends - there’s a kind of camaraderie. It's been a very positive experience.” (From 1-2-1 interview with Culture Champion)

- 93% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the scheme had made them feel more informed.

- 90% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the scheme had made them feel more inspired.
“I never would have gone to see a pianist concert - it opened my eyes. I’ve also been to Capitol theatre - I never knew it was there before. The scheme has opened my eyes so when things come out now I think it might be interesting.” (From 1-2-1 interview with Culture Champion)

“I certainly never knew about the Chinese Arts Centre. I’ve never been a lover of classical music, but now I look at the Bridgewater Hall programme.” (From 1-2-1 interview with Culture Champion)

“It’s something you wouldn’t normally do. It encourages you to take part.” (From 1-2-1 interview with Culture Champion)

“It has reignited my interest - I now think more about things to do with our group (...) - it has added value to our scheme.” (From 1-2-1 interview with Culture Champion)

Finally a Culture Champion commented:
“I have enjoyed all that happened through the scheme and always tried to pass it on. I would like to say to it’s very well run and people are very friendly.” (From 1-2-1 interview with Culture Champion)
5 Improvements and developments

5.1 Improvements

We asked Culture Champions for suggestions on how we can support them to develop the engagement of their networks with the cultural opportunities in the city. Below is a breakdown of the results from the postal survey:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What can we do</th>
<th>Base</th>
<th>Not useful at all</th>
<th>Limited use</th>
<th>OK</th>
<th>Useful</th>
<th>Very useful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leaflets to distribute</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of offers and discounts</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aware of provision to aid access</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information by email</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most of these results were also reflected in comments from the 1-2-1 interviews.

Making people aware of offers and discounts was thought to be useful or very useful by 84% of respondents.

“Older people like concession prices. There may be a group of 6 but concession applies for 10 or more. So that puts them off.” (From 1-2-1 interview with Culture Champion)

“Free events are always a big bonus as many of my networks are on a budget.” (From 1-2-1 interview with Culture Champion)

77% of respondents said they’d find being provided with leaflets useful or very useful.

“I would like leaflets to show people. I think that encourages them to try things.” (From 1-2-1 interview with Culture Champion)

“Give the leaflets to the Culture Champions to pass them around to libraries, doctors etc.” (From 1-2-1 interview with Culture Champion)

These results were also reflected in the responses from a question on the Cultural Tour survey - see the table below for a breakdown of the results.
Here 54% of respondents suggested the VOP team could send Culture Champions leaflets to distribute in their local communities.

“Providing flyers and most importantly PHOTOS if possible.” (Culture Champion comment from Culture Tours survey)

“Information, leaflets or something to explain who we are and where to get in touch so we can leave leaflets at places. People don’t know about it - leaflets would be a great. I would feel comfortable distributing leaflets - I would definitely deliver them.” (Culture Champion comment from Culture Tours survey)

Another issue that was brought up both in the surveys, 1-2-1 interviews and focus group was the importance of giving Culture Champions early notice of events or other opportunities:

“Personal contact by me is most important. Therefore early information is most important.” (1-2-1 interview with Culture Champion)

“Keep us informed and give us good notice, if I take 6 people, they are not on email, so I need to write a letter - they are not easy to engage. We need plenty of notice - about 3 or 4 weeks notice. I couldn’t respond to something for next weekend because I won’t see it as I work part-time.” (1-2-1 interview with Culture Champion)

“More notice of events would be helpful. Not all older people have time on their hands. They tend to book things in advance and plan.” (Culture Champion comment from Culture Tours survey)

“I feel I do not get told about the events early enough. I do need time to plan these events so ideally I would like at least 3 weeks notice.” (Culture Champion comment from Culture Tours survey)

“Our Ecumenical Lunch Group meets once a month, so we need early information. Earlier information would help.” (Culture Champion comment from Culture Champions survey)
“It would be helpful if publicity for events etc. at museums and galleries could be available well beforehand, so that group bookings could be explored.” (Culture Champion comment from Culture Champions survey)

“Give more notice before events take place to allow more time for spreading amongst networks” (Focus group)

The importance of having a local offer was also raised:

“Taster sessions in local venues similar to the Mary Greg exhibition.” (Culture Champion comment from Culture Champions survey)

“More local events” (Culture Champion comment from Culture Tours survey)

Culture Champions also suggested VOP could run an event where all participating organisations could give an overview of their upcoming programmes:

“All the scheme partners having a one day event (like the forum) with stalls so we could make people more aware what's happening in cultural Manchester.” (1-2-1 interview with Culture Champion)

“Meeting with different organisations giving an overview of their season coming up.”
(1-2-1 interview with Culture Champion)

“The VOP network as a market” (Focus group)

Culture Champions also suggested more grass root promotion would be helpful:

“Notice board in Age Concern shops and centres.” (Culture Champion comment from Culture Champions survey)

“More publicity about the scheme in local press.” (Culture Champion comment from Culture Champions survey)

“Put your leaflets at the library and community centres, schools, housing association.” (Culture Champion comment from Culture Champions survey)

Finally a Culture Champions commented:

“Write to us by post—we don't all have email and we don't want it. Do not impose emails please.”

5.2 Developments

Some of the ideas that were put forward on 121 interviews were:
• Having a volunteer to coordinate the VOP Culture Champions.

• Organisations taking in turn to lead the VOP Culture Champion scheme, similar to the festival organiser group.

• Working in partnerships with other organisations, i.e. Age Concern and submitting joint funding bids.

• Charging participating organisations to contribute towards the costs of running the project.
6 Conclusions

The current Culture Champions scheme offers a good opportunity for a relatively even reach of local communities of older people in Manchester and has proved to increase the engagement of these networks with the cultural opportunities available within the city.

Possible developments suggested by Culture Champions to enhance the project and minimise the barriers their networks experience in accessing the arts and culture within the city were:

- Develop a grass root promotion and provide Culture Champions with leaflets to distribute
- Develop a more local offer of arts and cultural activities and events
- Raise the awareness of discounts, offers as well as provision to aid access.
- Long notice periods for Culture Champions to effectively spread information through their networks.

To better monitor the increase the networks engagement with arts and culture, it’d be also advisable to develop a regular monitoring system to record the champions work in spreading information within their local communities.

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