

**BIRMINGHAM
FESTIVAL 23**

 Birmingham
City Council | **BE BOLD
BE BIRMINGHAM**

Birmingham Festival 23

28 July - 6 August 2023

Centenary Square

The official one-year anniversary festival of the
Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games



EVALUATION SUMMARY

Full report is available [here](#).

OVERVIEW

153
projects and
performances

Across
9 nights and
10 days

Made by more than
800+ performers,
artists and creatives

From
185 organisations

Including
40 new works

14 projects re-displayed work
from Birmingham 2022 Festival

2 Artistic
Associates

5 Twilight Takeover
Partners

**BIRMINGHAM
FESTIVAL 23**

 Birmingham
City Council

**BE BOLD
BE BIRMINGHAM**



Photo: We Built This City – Birmingham Irish Association and Ceol Creatives



123,500
footfall with
85% from
Birmingham and
the West Midlands

46,521
engaged audiences
with 3 hour median dwell time
on average per audience member, per day

AUDIENCES

BIRMINGHAM
FESTIVAL 23

 Birmingham City Council | **BE BOLD
BE BIRMINGHAM**

Photo: Audiences at Sampad takeover



People attended
the festival for
2.2 days
on average

34.6%
of audiences
said that they had
never attended
a free, outdoor
arts event before

AUDIENCES

**BIRMINGHAM
FESTIVAL 23**

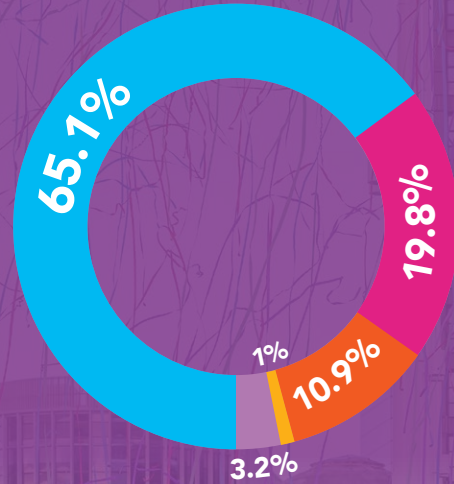
 Birmingham
City Council

**BE BOLD
BE BIRMINGHAM**

Photo: Audiences at Sampad takeover

AUDIENCES

52%
of audiences
came from areas
of high social
deprivation*



- Birmingham
- Wider West Midlands
- Elsewhere in England
- Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland
- Outside the UK

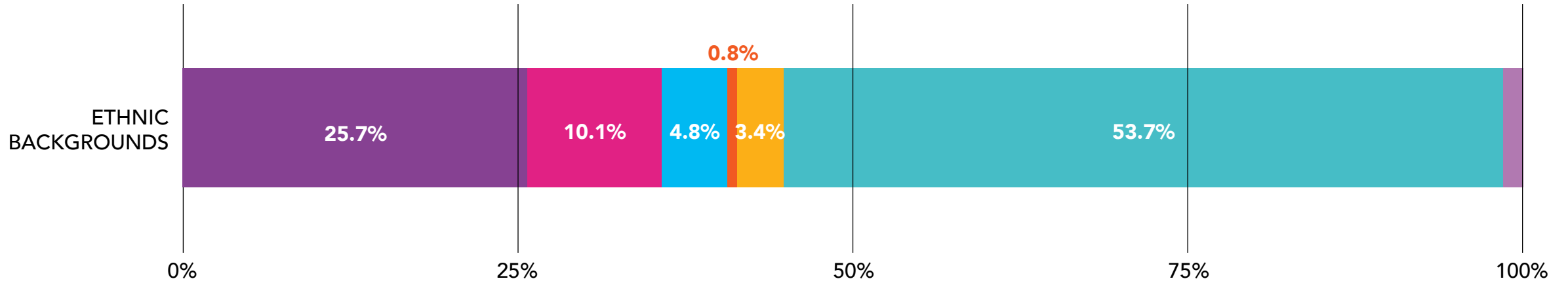
Interactive map showing geographical spread is available [here](#).

**BIRMINGHAM
FESTIVAL 23**

Birmingham City Council | BE BOLD BE BIRMINGHAM

*Areas rated 1 - 3 on the Indices of Multiple Deprivation, came from the 30% most deprived wards in England

AUDIENCES



- Asian or Asian British Backgrounds
- Black or Black British Backgrounds
- Mixed Heritage Backgrounds
- Middle Eastern or Arab Backgrounds
- All Other Backgrounds
- White Backgrounds
- Prefer not to say



VOLUNTEERS

74

Volunteers

from United By 2022's
'Commonwealth Collective'

worked over
1,300 hours

**BIRMINGHAM
FESTIVAL 23**

 Birmingham City Council | **BE BOLD
BE BIRMINGHAM**

“

...this is a really intangible thing, isn't it? It's a feeling. It's not a funding thing or it's not an economic return on investment, it's an emotion. One of the things that spectators told us was that the volunteers were one of the main ingredients in making them feel that buzz.”

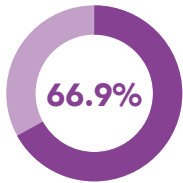
United by 2022

Photo: Birmingham Festival 23 Volunteers

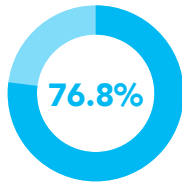
IMPACT ON AUDIENCES

% of audiences who agreed with the following about Festival 23

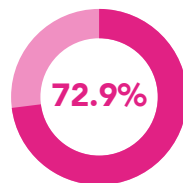
Distinctiveness:
It was different from things I've experienced before



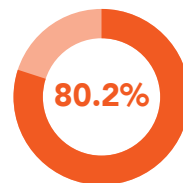
Connection:
It helped me feel connected to people in the community



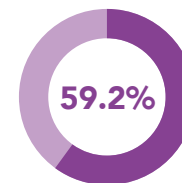
Heritage:
It made me feel connected to a shared history/culture



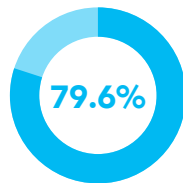
Pride in place:
It made me feel proud of my local area



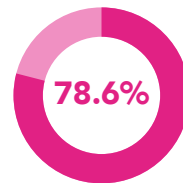
Insight:
It helped me gain new insight or knowledge



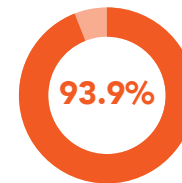
Content:
It reflected a broad and inclusive range of voices



Wellbeing:
It had a positive impact on my physical health and mental wellbeing



Atmosphere:
It was friendly and inclusive



BIRMINGHAM
FESTIVAL 23





**BIRMINGHAM
FESTIVAL 23**

 Birmingham City Council | **BE BOLD
BE BIRMINGHAM**

Photo: Public Trust – Fierce and Paul Ramirez Jonas

OUTCOMES

Evaluation captured impact in the following outcome areas:

Audience

Wellbeing
Perceptions
Value

Culture Sector

Ownership
Contribution
Leadership
Models

Business and Tourism Stakeholders

Economy



OUTCOME: WELLBEING

definition.

'Audiences feel increased wellbeing as a result of their engagement'

78.6%
of audiences agreed the festival impacted positively on their physical and mental wellbeing

10.5%
of audiences who attended the festival said they engaged with participatory movement and fitness sessions, and 'have-a-go' sporting activities



OUTCOME: PERCEPTIONS

definition.

'Improved visitor/resident perceptions of the city and its residents/ each other in people engaged'

194 pieces of press coverage

83.9% of residents agreed Festival 23 made them feel proud of their local area

79.2% of visitors agreed Festival 23 improved their perception of Birmingham



Photo: What If – Girl Grind UK, Eloquent Dance Company & Vocal Nova Academy

OUTCOME: VALUE

definition.

'Audiences see the value of ongoing, free, outdoor arts and culture offer'

91.9%
of audiences rated the Festival 'Good' or 'Excellent'

96%
of audiences agreed public spaces such as Centenary Square should be used more frequently for public cultural events

**BIRMINGHAM
FESTIVAL 23**

 Birmingham City Council | **BE BOLD
BE BIRMINGHAM**



Photo: Solara – Critical Mass Dance Collective

OUTCOME: VALUE

58 Net Promoter Score

74.3%
of first time audiences
would attend a free outdoor
arts event **again** in the future

**BIRMINGHAM
FESTIVAL 23**

 Birmingham City Council | **BE BOLD
BE BIRMINGHAM**



More information on
Net Promoter Score
can be found [here](#).

Photo: Grimeboy – Birmingham Rep



**BIRMINGHAM
FESTIVAL 23**

 Birmingham City Council | **BE BOLD
BE BIRMINGHAM**

Photo: Nomad: A Tent for Reflection – Soul City Arts

OUTCOME: OWNERSHIP

definition.

'Audiences feel the space is accessible, diverse and welcoming, allowing them to feel comfortable and that it's 'for them''

94%

of audiences agreed Festival 23 had a **friendly and inclusive** atmosphere

79.6%

of audiences agreed Festival 23's content reflected a broad and **inclusive range of voices**

BIRMINGHAM
FESTIVAL 23

 Birmingham City Council | **BE BOLD
BE BIRMINGHAM**



Photo: Ginny Lemon's Schools Out Disco Party

OUTCOME: OWNERSHIP

Audiences were more likely to agree that the content reflected a broad and inclusive range of voices, if they identified as:

- **Asian/Asian British**
- **Black/Black British**
- **Mixed Heritage** backgrounds
- **Disabled, neurodiverse** or living with a **long term health condition**
- **LGBTQIA+**

**BIRMINGHAM
FESTIVAL 23**

 Birmingham City Council | **BE BOLD
BE BIRMINGHAM**

This sentiment also applies to audiences **born overseas**, or who mainly speak a **language other than English**.



Photo: You're Out of This World – LYNNEBEC

OUTCOME: CONTRIBUTION

definition.

'Presenting artists and organisations feel increased ownership of the sector as a result of their work for the festival'

658
people were paid
to deliver projects

9 in 10
delivery staff agreed
they felt **more**
valued by the
sector



OUTCOME: CONTRIBUTION

185
organisations

153 projects
and performances

512 paid performers,
artists or creatives

301 volunteer
performers, artists
or creatives

**BIRMINGHAM
FESTIVAL 23**

 Birmingham
City Council | **BE BOLD
BE BIRMINGHAM**



Photo: Apache Indian – Sampad takeover

OUTCOME: LEADERSHIP

definition.

'Artistic Associates and Twilight Takeover partners gain experience and learning from delivering the festival leaving them better equipped to do so again'

BIRMINGHAM
FESTIVAL 23

Birmingham
City Council

BE BOLD
BE BIRMINGHAM



Photo: Parade - The Giant Wheel – Autin Dance Theatre

LEADERSHIP

2 ARTISTIC ASSOCIATES

definition.
'Festival supports a broader notion of artistic leadership'

Two Artistic Associates were identified and closely worked with the Creative Director and within the wider programming function of the Festival.



ELIZABETH 'ZEDDIE' LAWAL



It enabled me to definitely communicate the value of culture [more broadly] than the arts and culture sector, and to go a bit wider which is really incredible. It was a real galvanising moment. I think for lots of different individuals who don't necessarily get together and talk about Birmingham, as a flagship city for cultural events, which is great."



MUKHTAR DAR



It was about how the whole sector comes together. It was about making sure people were not competing but collaborating and that everybody felt that they had a stake in the whole process of the programme."

LEADERSHIP

5 TWILIGHT TAKEOVERS

Established and newly-formed arts organisations across Birmingham brought performances especially created or adapted for the Festival, with powerful narratives and party vibes meshing to create one-of-a-kind experiences for audiences.



WE BUILT THIS CITY



GRIMEBOY



WHAT IF



LANGUAGES BETWEEN STRANGERS



2093



TWILIGHT TAKEOVERS

WE BUILT THIS CITY

Presented by Birmingham Irish Association and Ceol Creatives.

'A grand lineup of Irish musicians and performers take to the stage embodying the spirit of Irish culture; from performing rousing renditions of traditional tunes, to looking to the future and what it means to be Irish in today's Birmingham.'

“

It is refreshing to see so many acts sourced from within Birmingham and not national or international acts flown in, though that being said, I am not AGAINST this happening - it's just this is often the easiest way to sell tickets. I really think your programming has been excellent, and I recognised many of the acts, as well as being introduced to some new ones. I truly feel privileged to be a part of it and I'm so happy to have played a part."

Ceol Creatives



TWILIGHT TAKEOVERS

GRIMEBOY

Presented by Birmingham Rep.

'Another chance to see a concert version of this huge hit last year by writer Casey Bailey, recreated especially for the Festival.'

“

I think the difference is people pay to come and see that show. Whereas outside it's free and because it's quite condensed, a lot of people don't necessarily get the full context of everything. So I think that was a challenge, but an opportunity because actually, people saw that and said 'I would love to come and see the show' because it was sort of a snippet of it. So they'd love to see it. There was talk about whether or not we'd be able to bring it back. So actually with the interest, it's great."

Birmingham Rep

BIRMINGHAM
FESTIVAL 23

♥ Birmingham City Council | BE BOLD
BE BIRMINGHAM



TWILIGHT TAKEOVERS

WHAT IF

Presented by Girl Grind UK, Eloquent Dance Company and Vocal Nova Academy.

'An untold street musical, explores the journey of three main characters: Petta-gay, who took a gallant leap to travel on the HMT Empire Windrush ship and later arrived in Birmingham, Jada who has a life-changing decision to make, and Blessing who needs to dig deep and take a leap of faith despite the naysayers.'

“

I have these ideas. So, what is the way that we honour where it came from, as in, it all started at Birmingham Festival 23. What does that look like if this goes on tour around the UK or what does it look like if it's Street to Stage six-part series that goes on BBC iplayer because that's where I see it going."

Girl Grind UK

**BIRMINGHAM
FESTIVAL 23**

♥ Birmingham City Council | BE BOLD BE BIRMINGHAM



TWILIGHT TAKEOVERS

LANGUAGES BETWEEN STRANGERS

Presented by Amerah Saleh.

'Three captivating stories that explore the meaning of home. These characters face numerous challenges along the way, but they discover hope and strength in each other's company.'

“

For me, first of all, I've never directed anything, so that's part of the opportunity element. So for me it was a new way of working. I'm usually the artist and I really didn't want to be on purpose. I didn't even want to go up at the end. I just want to be kind of supporting the development of it, but now it's allowed me to think differently and the whole process of sustainability of the show.”

Amerah Saleh

BIRMINGHAM
FESTIVAL 23

♥ Birmingham City Council | BE BOLD BE BIRMINGHAM



TWILIGHT TAKEOVERS

2093

Presented by 93:00 Collective.

'In a post-apocalyptic 2093, Birmingham has fallen into disarray after a catastrophic event, "The Blackout". In an effort to reclaim their voices, the city's resilient communities use music, fashion, and dance to promote unity and express their aspirations for a better world.'

“

It was just our first project of this scale as a company... So it was really important to put across the vision that we had... The main highlight for me was that this project didn't have a moment where it was just like someone takes the spotlight for too long. Everyone equally had their opportunity to shine and deliver, be it artistically or be it on a production, everyone had their time to shine and build this project.”

93:00 Collective



BIRMINGHAM
FESTIVAL 23

♥ Birmingham City Council | BE BOLD BE BIRMINGHAM

OUTCOME: MODELS

definition.

'Working models of festival delivery are tested, recorded and evaluated to understand potential structures for 'signature' festival'

The Festival successfully met the objective of offering an anniversary festival of high-quality cultural experiences with multiple live and digital artforms, sport, participatory activity and curated outdoor dwell-space.



Features of the Game's legacy have survived the year on, and they've got a future beyond the [Commonwealth] Games. I think that tied in really nicely to some of the Festival's objectives which were to look back and reminisce, be proud, celebrate a year on but also look forward."

United by 2022





**BIRMINGHAM
FESTIVAL 23**

 Birmingham City Council | **BE BOLD
BE BIRMINGHAM**

Photo: Opening Event – One City, A Thousand Memories

OUTCOME: ECONOMY

definition.
'Local economy benefit[ing] from the festival taking place'

£422,391
Local audience spend

£21.40 average
daily spend by residents

£210,616
visitor spend

£23.79 average
daily spend by visitors

**BIRMINGHAM
FESTIVAL 23**

 Birmingham City Council | **BE BOLD
BE BIRMINGHAM**

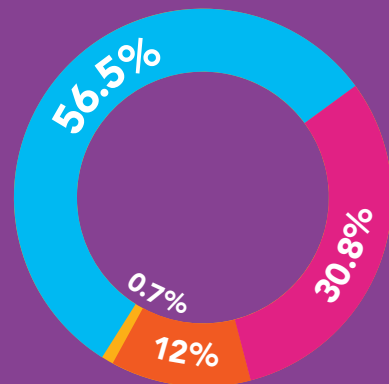


Photo: Opening Event – One City, A Thousand Memories

OUTCOME: ECONOMY

87.3%
Festival 23 spend
to West Midlands
organisations
& artists

£1.78m
spent on organisations
based in Birmingham
and the West Midlands*



- Birmingham
- Wider West Midlands
- Beyond the region
- Data not available



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Better communicate the overarching Festival narrative to creatives involved
 - Continue to lead the way and build on ensuring future Festivals remain accessible to all and are sustainable
 - Review and revise marketing approaches
 - Build on existing Governance structures for continuity
 - Work to ensure diversity of backstage matches the diversity onstage
- For arts and cultural activities across the region, continue to utilise the 'Volunteer Collective' - United By 2022's Games volunteer legacy database
 - Take the time to design and plan the next Birmingham Festival, consider making it city wide, and ensure adequate time for partners and artists to engage
 - Explore options of where to house the CIC/Festival moving forwards
 - Continue to build on working with partners from in and around the city



The events were a roaring success and made me feel really proud. I am generally in support of anything that makes Birmingham look good, and, I especially enjoy the fact that you were not content enough with one festival but wanted to continue that legacy, and, as far as I'm concerned from what I have seen, the second festival was equally as exciting, especially from an arts point of view. Huge, huge, huge well done."

Ceol Creatives



COMMISSIONED BY



PRINCIPAL PARTNERS



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



PRESENTING PARTNER



VOLUNTEER PARTNER



FESTIVAL CHAMPIONS



TRAVEL PARTNERS



BIRMINGHAM FESTIVAL 23



BE BOLD
BE BIRMINGHAM

THANK YOU

Our thanks to the many photographers who captured Birmingham Festival 23.
The images in this report were taken by Lensi Photography, Irina Mackie,
Verity Milligan, Katja Ogrin, Jas Sansi and Paul Stringer.
Design by Tom Stevens © Birmingham Festival 23

.fry.