

Case study: Delivery of Rotherham Show in a Covid-safe way



Arts and Cultural programmes and events are key for people to connect with others and get outdoors, all of which benefits people's personal wellbeing.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Rotherham Show did not take place in 2020, instead a creative recovery programme was launched to support communities to safely and confidently return to cultural activities. Rotherham Together hosted more than 60 events and experiences across seven months including a large-scale Land Art mural which was installed at Clifton Park on the dates that the show would have taken place that year.

In 2021 due to delays and changes in Government Guidance events were only given permission to return from June 2021 and Rotherham Show was the first major event in the borough to return.

Demonstrator events in neighbouring areas had led to a large spike in Covid-19 cases and while many wanted to see things start to return there was also a lot of nervousness around the potential spread of infection, particularly among audience who had been more adversely affected by the pandemic such as older people and global majority communities.

Rotherham Show was delivered from 3rd to 5th September. The event altered its usual format increasing to a 3-day event which provided a quieter, more relaxed day on the Friday for audiences who were more cautious and wanted to return to cultural life without navigating large crowds. The layout of show was altered to

remove bottle necks and open up space for people distance even at busier times. The infrastructure of the show was changed from closed marquees to open sided canopies and stages to aid ventilation. Signage was adopted across the site reminding people of the current guidance regarding Covid-19, hand sanitisers were brought in across the site and additional cleaning for high traffic areas was provided.

The show saw a packed programme of performances, events and things to do. On the Main Stage, there was a diverse programme of music and performance, while elsewhere, the Made in Rotherham Area of the show celebrated the creativity, vibrancy, resilience and diversity of our town, showcasing flavours from across the world through locally made food, art, music and performance. The programme also saw a wide range of activities for children and families, including entertainment and interactive play.

In addition to the Covid-19 mitigation measures the Vaccine Bus attended the show to try to encourage audiences who would not normally access GP services to take the vaccine.

Evaluation of both the event and the Covid-19 statistics showed that the event was managed safely with infection rates falling during the period of delivery and only three reported 'suspected' cases of Covid-19 reported from the show.

The evaluation headlines include:

- An estimated audience of 100,000 attended over the three days
- Recognition that the show is organised by the Council rose from 64% in 2019 to 80% in 2021
- For 72% of visitors Rotherham Show was their first event or cultural experience since lockdown restrictions were removed in June 2021
- The satisfaction rating rose from 96% in 2019 to 98% in 2021
- 3,000 people got their Covid-19 vaccine over the course of the three days, predominantly from audiences who not otherwise engage.
- The age range shifted with lower attendance from younger (16-24) and older audiences (55+) but all other age ranges grew
- The audience was more diverse rising from 7% to 10% Global Majority communities considering the Diversity Festival did not take place and some nervousness had been expressed by partner organisations who support these communities the increase was a positive statement of confidence from diverse communities.
- The gender balance shifted from 2019 to 2021, in 2019 75% of the audience were female which changed to 59% in 2021