

Blue Cabin Evaluation Framework



\\ February 2024

Introduction

Tialt has been commissioned by Blue Cabin to develop a learning and evaluation framework for the organisation. This builds on the Story of Change and evaluation practices that Blue Cabin has been using in recent years. We are not re-inventing the wheel. We want to enhance the extensive work that has already gone into how the organisation explores and demonstrates its impact, ideally making the approach more focused, communicable and fit for purpose. Our approach to this project is:

Iterative – We know that Blue Cabin are the experts in their practice. We have experience in designing evaluation frameworks and methods, but we can only get to a point of finding a workable approach by iterating the framework with the Blue Cabin team.

Creative – We want the framework, methods and tools, to be embedded in the creative practice of the organisation. We think evaluation practice should not be so separate from creative practice and will seek to make the approach feel more natural to the organisation, practitioners and, most importantly, participants.

Inclusive – At all stages we will challenge ourselves and each other to consider how the evaluation process will be ‘received’ by participants and how we can ensure that people feel in control of the data they share and what it may be used for.

This framework outlines the key evaluation questions, logic model, assumptions, methods, and responsibilities, which hopefully feels like a workable approach for the organisation moving forward.

What's new?

Tialt have refocused Blue Cabin's current 'Story of Change' to:

- Defining two clear outcomes across all projects
- Highlighting intrinsic and extrinsic impacts of projects

These developments will allow Blue Cabin to better articulate their story as a whole (through two clear outcomes), whilst not undermining the variety of impacts occurring in projects.

These developments also allow for a clear lens through which to explore and evaluate projects, guided by the 4 evaluation questions (detailed on the next slide).



Evaluation Questions



- What is the impact of the work of Blue Cabin across its programmes and as an organisation?
- How can Blue cabin learn from their work in a way that allows them to develop and improve their impact?
- How can Blue Cabin use learning from their own programmes to build on existing theory and practice?
- How can Blue Cabin share this learning and the story of Blue Cabin more broadly with their peers, funders and supporters?



Blue Cabin's Current 'Story of Change'

Existing Principles

Blue Cabin has already embedded a range of principles in its work and has established an effective story of change, based on the principle of *meaningful relationships between care experienced individuals, and the people and organisations who are part of their lives. Creativity is at the heart.* This includes:

A unique, **Trauma-Informed Approach**, across areas, such as:

- Creative programmes and interventions with Care Experienced Individuals (CEI)
- Creative life story work with CEI partnering with Local Authorities (LA)
- Supporting CEI in prisons
- Wider sector support
- Improving representation of CEI

Indicators and evidence of practice include, but are not limited, to:

- Numbers of CEI, trusted adults, LA, organisations and freelancers taking part in projects
- Increased number of CEI employed/volunteering with Blue Cabin
- Number of podcasts, learning events and information sharing opportunities

Outcomes, include but are limited to:

- Increased love of the arts
- Developing relationships
- Increased emotional literacy
- Enhancing skills
- Improving confidence
- Increased sense of belonging
- Voices and opinions of CEI informing Blue Cabin practice

Further considerations



- **There's a lot:** due to the range and scale of Blue Cabin's work, there will be lots of different outcomes for different people, far more than most arts organisations.
- **Capturing the outcomes:** with such a variety of outcomes anticipated from the projects, capturing the outcomes effectively is complex, takes a lot of time and needs different methods for each project.
- **Telling the whole story:** due to the number and variety of anticipated outcomes, it is complex for Blue Cabin to share a comprehensive but easy to understand story of the organisation and its work.
- **Indicators and evidence:** the current indicators and evidence Blue Cabin use may not be capturing the depth of outcomes across projects



Blue Cabin's Updated 'Theory of Change'

Blue Cabin works across multiple strands to achieve systems change for care experienced children and young people...



Inputs

01

Specific project funding for care experienced young people and carers from various trusts and foundations (incl. Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Segelman Trust, Sir James Knott Trust, Garfield Weston, Community Foundation Tyne and Wear and The Leathersellers Foundation, Arts Council England, National Lottery Community Fund and others).

Services sold to Local Authorities for staff training and development.

Match funding from Local Authorities for

Time and resources from core staff and freelancers, board of trustees

Activities

02

Creative Programmes and Interventions – tackling CEI barriers accessing arts (Cool Things, This is the Place, Feel Creative, others...)

Creative Life Story Work – supporting CEI exploring pre care and care experiences

Prisons – Providing creative provisions for CEIs in prisons (Creative Aid)

Sector Support – Develop and increase knowledge of best practice of working with CEI (South Tyneside DFE project, The Studio of Fostered Heroes, others...)

Representation – Increase CEI representation in Blue Cabin (employment, volunteering, others...)

Trauma Informed – Becoming a trauma informed organisation across activities

Outputs

03

Numbers of CEIs, trusted adults, LAs, organisations and freelancers taking part in creative projects, training etc.

Number of CEI employed/volunteering with Blue Cabin

Number of podcasts, learning events and information sharing

Number of creative sessions delivered

Number of freelance artists employed

Number and range of partners

Outcomes

04

Blue Cabin's main way of achieving impact is through...

Developing Relationships

Between CEIs, carers, trusted adults, families, organisations, Blue Cabin, artists, LAs, professional, funders, the sector and others...

Strengthening Relationships

Between CEIs, carers, trusted adults, families, organisations, Blue Cabin, artists, LAs, professionals, funders, the sector and others...

Impacts

05

CEIs:

Intrinsic impacts:

- Improved confidence
- Increased emotional literacy
- Increased resilience
- Increase sense of belonging
- Increase sense of pride

Extrinsic impacts:

- Being seen, heard and valued
- Developing/increasing love of the arts/creativity
- Skills development
- Accreditation
- Improved relationships
- Record of life story
- Less home/school moves
- Being recognised as artists

Artists:

Intrinsic impacts:

- Improved confidence working with CEIs
- Increased resilience (through supervision)

Extrinsic impacts:

- Skills development (trauma informed practices as well as broader artistic practice)
- Regular employment, sustaining artistic practice

Those connected to CEIs (trusted adults, families, carers, others...):

Intrinsic impacts:

- Improved confidence
- Increased resilience

Extrinsic impacts:

- Developing/increasing love of the arts/creativity – recognising value of arts
- Skills development
- Improved relationships (with CEIs as well as others...)

Organisations (Blue Cabin, LAs, arts organisations, the wider sector, others...):

Intrinsic impacts:

- BC staff and freelancers resilient and enjoy their work (through supervision and other support provided)
- Improved confidence in working with CEI

Extrinsic impacts:

- Long term LA contracts
- Enhanced networks
- Improved skills and knowledge
- BC representative of CEI views and opinions
- Retention of people within BC
- Improved ability to advocate for work as well as arts and creativity working with CEI

Unpacking the programmes, outcomes & impacts (1/2)

Strengthening Relationships – CEIs being given the opportunity to sustain their relationships with many people, as well as to themselves, through creativity (such as carers, or with families through contact time, virtual school staff and others)

For example through Creative Life Story work: carving out regular protected time with carers to share experiences in creative ways

Developing Relationships – CEIs being given the opportunity to develop their relationships with many people, as well as to themselves, through creativity (such as carers, or with families through contact time, virtual school staff and others)

For example through Cool Things: short opportunities to connect through creative fun projects, for CEIs and carers, as well as organisations with those attending Cool Things



Unpacking the programmes, outcomes & impacts (2/2)

Why Developing and Strengthening Relationships:

The huge variety of impacts in Blue Cabin's current 'Story of Change' make it difficult to share the story of Blue Cabin easily. Separating outcomes from impacts means Blue Cabin can easily identify and share outcomes (developing and sustaining relationships), which encapsulate the huge variety and depth and breadth of the impacts of Blue Cabin's work.

Why Intrinsic and Extrinsic impacts:

Blue Cabin deliver projects which create both types of impacts. Being able to highlight which project is anticipated to have which type of impact allows for better knowledge of appropriate indicators, evidence and evaluation methods to be used. It also highlights to stakeholders, funders etc. the breadth and depth of Blue Cabin's work.





Indicators and Sources of Evidence

Indicators and sources of evidence: CEIs

Outcomes	Quantitative indicators	Qualitative indicators	Sources of evidence
CEIs: • Developing Relationships • Strengthening Relationships	- Number of CEI taking part in projects - Numbers sustaining participation over time (through Cool Things, CLSW and others...) - Number of CEI volunteering/employed at Blue Cabin - Less home/school moves of CEIs	- CEIs express meaningful connections and relationships being formed - CEIs describe how they have tried new creative things and are open to doing more - CEIs describe a change in how they think about themselves and what they are capable of - CEIs express feeling heard and valued - CEIs describe willingness and motivation to engage in more creative activities	- Monitoring data collected across all projects - Qualitative information from staff delivering projects - Additional qualitative methods (explored on page 21)

Indicators and sources of evidence: Artists

Outcomes	Quantitative indicators	Qualitative indicators	Sources of evidence
Artists: • Developing Relationships • Strengthening Relationships	- Number of artists employed in projects - Number of artists regularly employed by Blue Cabin - Number of artist supervision sessions - Number of artists working together collaboratively on projects	- Artists express learning/developing new skills - Artists express confidence in working with CEIs - Artists feel secure in employment with Blue Cabin - Artists express feeling resilient and enjoying their work with Blue Cabin	- Monitoring data collected across all projects - Qualitative information from artists - Additional qualitative methods (explored on page 21)

Indicators and sources of evidence: Those connected to CEIs

Outcomes	Quantitative indicators	Qualitative indicators	Sources of evidence
Those connected to CEIs: • Developing Relationships • Strengthening Relationships	- Number of those connected to CEI taking part in projects - Numbers sustaining participation over time (through Cool Things, CLSW and others...)	- Those connected to CEIs express meaningful connections and relationships being formed - Those connected to CEIs describe how they have tried new creative things and are open to doing more - Those connected to CEIs describe willingness and motivation to engage in more creative activities	- Monitoring data collected across all projects - Qualitative information from staff delivering projects - Additional qualitative methods (explored on page 21)

Indicators and sources of evidence: Organisations

Outcomes	Quantitative indicators	Qualitative indicators	Sources of evidence
Organisations: • Developing Relationships • Strengthening Relationships	- Number of LA contracts - Length of LA contracts - Number of organisations worked with through projects - Number of podcast, report and learning materials downloaded/visited - Participants in creative curriculum within prison - Number of organisations regularly working with/seeking support from Blue Cabin - Number of support and supervision sessions delivered to BC and LA staff - Staff retention within BC	- Staff as well as LA staff and partner organisations express meaningful connections and relationships being formed - Organisations express skills development and knowledge development of working with CEIs - CEI express feeling recognised within BC strategy and organisation more broadly - Organisations express improved understanding in trauma, attachment and recovery	- Monitoring data collected across all projects - Qualitative information from staff and organisations - Additional qualitative methods (explored on page 21)



Methods

Quantitative Methods

Project and participant monitoring – We will support Blue Cabin to explore the way in which participation statistics are being stored and analysed (e.g., numbers and demographics of participants across projects and programmes). We will aim to support Blue Cabin in considering how information is stored, what information can be gathered and how to best gather evidence of Blue Cabin's work.

Internal record keeping – As with the other quantitative methods here, there may be additional evaluation material that is generated by projects and can be stored in connection with project monitoring data and the participant feedback records (e.g., produced by LA staff, referral partners, emails carers etc). We will encourage the team to take a consistent approach to how this data is stored and used, and when it may be useful for ongoing ad hoc internal evaluation. We will also support Blue Cabin in considering best ways of using this data and how it can be evaluated with ease.



Qualitative Methods (1/2)

Experience Cards (see following slides) – With Blue Cabin, tialt will develop a set of experience cards, which can be used across projects to tell the story of Blue Cabin across the range of its projects and programmes. As Blue Cabin work across a range of projects and programmes, it is difficult to share the entire story of Blue Cabin: these experience cards will help with that. They will also support CEIs, as well as others, to explore and express their experiences of Blue Cabin projects without having to rely on words, taking the pressure off of CEIs (and others) when evaluating projects and programmes. These cards will mirror the creative practices of Blue Cabin itself.

Three-question feedback form for artists – We know Blue Cabin practitioners are reflective in their practice anyway. This is about trying to find a way to regularly capture these reflections in line with the intended outcomes. It also reflects the incredible work Blue Cabin does with artists and supports the concept of Blue Cabin as an artistic development organisation. Using typeform (or a similar platform), where practitioners can either write (using phone or laptop) or upload voice notes/pictures etc. (or both). Asking them to respond to the following three questions after a session:

What have you learned (today/this week/this project) that you think will be most useful to your work?

How has this project made you feel?

What is your response to the theme of 'developing and strengthening relationships' in relation to your experience on this project?

These questions will also help Blue Cabin sense-check the new outcomes (sustaining and developing relationships) during projects and explore whether the framing of outcomes in those terms is useful and useable.

Qualitative Methods (2/2)

Updated CEI feedback postcards (see following slides) – Blue Cabin already use postcards as tools for gathering feedback on projects with CEIs, however they are not always regularly used. Tialt will develop methods of embedding postcard feedback into Blue Cabin's current practice to consider how Blue Cabin can receive more feedback

Words/numbers – Currently within Creative Aid artists and partners check in at the beginning and end of sessions with participants selecting a word, and a number from 1-10. This is allowing the project to reflect over each session on participants individual experiences and intrinsic impacts.

Updated evaluation questions – Tialt are partnering with Blue cabin on the exploration of their project *Creative Aid*, based within Deerbolt Prison supporting young CEI to explore creativity and art and to gain an Arts Award accreditation. Tialt will work with the Creative Aid team to consider what questions are being asked, when, and how to best reflect the experiences of the participants taking part in the Creative Aid project.

Action Learning sets – Tialt are partnering with Blue Cabin to explore the project *Artful Alliance*, working with organisations and virtual schools to deliver creative projects for CEIs. These open-ended reflective and care focused sessions will provide in depth qualitative data about the experiences of delivering the project. The learning from this method can be replicated as appropriate across other workstreams.

Potential creative methods: experience cards & postcards

Experience Cards:

Tialt will work with Blue Cabin to commission an artist to develop an 'evaluation game', which participants such as organisations, CEIs, carers, staff, artists and more, can play to capture their experiences of Blue Cabin's work visually.

The cards will be developed with Blue Cabin to best reflect their visual identity and trauma-informed practices with the aim that they can be used to:

- Explore development and change of experiences over time (such as through CLSW)
- Immediate experiences in short term projects, such as during Cool Things
- Be used to reflect and explore in a structured game session the work of Blue Cabin

Evaluation CEIs Postcards:

Blue Cabin already use postcards to explore the impacts of their work. Tialt will support Blue Cabin to reflect on how they are currently used, and how they can be developed within projects to ensure they are being embedded within projects and that artists, staff and practitioners are robustly trained in how to make the most of these postcards through their analysis and presentation as 'data'.





What's Different About
the Approach & What
to Expect Next

What's different & why is it useful?

By re-focussing **three key areas** in Blue Cabin's original story of change:

- **Defining two clear outcomes across all projects**
- **Highlighting intrinsic and extrinsic impacts**
- **Exploring how different levels of impact can lead to systems change**

Blue Cabin should be able to **better articulate outcomes** of projects with ease, as well as identify what methods of evaluation are needed for different projects and programmes of work. This should all also support Blue Cabin in **telling the story of the whole organisation**. The structure outlined here allows for the full 'impact narrative' to be explored and shared internally and externally

Blue Cabin will be using **bespoke evaluation methods**, co-created with the team to best capture the experiences of those taking part in projects, which will be iterative in design: this means methods will be consciously **tested and re-assessed** over a period of time so that Blue Cabin will eventually have developed evaluation methods and techniques that best gather the evidence of their practices.

The bespoke evaluation methods also form a **unique Evaluation Toolbox**, which can be picked up and easily used, not requiring new evaluation methods to be developed for each project, streamlining Blue Cabin's evaluation approach.



Potential process timeline

01

Develop qualitative tools with staff (cards, postcards, action learning)

03

Explore methods in projects (Core, Creative Aid, Artful Alliance)

05

Continue to test and trial framework throughout 2024

02

Review methods and framework with staff team

04

Work with tialt to update 2023/24 organisational impact report

