Capabilities Evaluation Toolkit for

Culture, Heritage & Creative Health**

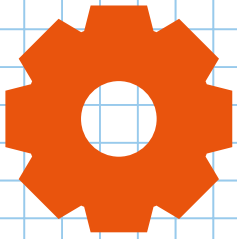
**A practical, fold out toolkit for designing, delivering and evidencing impact over time

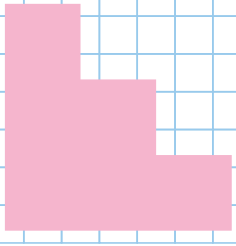
Introduction

This **Capabilities Evaluation Toolkit** is a practical, fold-out resource designed to help you deliver and evidence the impact of your activities in a clear and meaningful way.

The toolkit can be used flexibly throughout a project lifecycle. It helps you to design activity with intended outcomes in mind, capture evidence as part of everyday practices, and bring different forms of data together into credible, compelling narratives.

Use the toolkit to explore people's experiences of activities to build on what they are able to be and do across **work and learning, health and vitality, relationships and community.** Capabilities can help us to reframe evaluation as an ongoing process of learning and reflection.





1 Why This Toolkit? (Purpose & Principles)

Purpose

This toolkit helps organisations and project teams to:

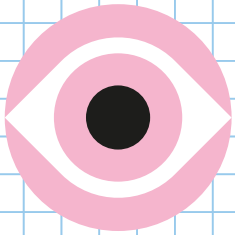
- Capture **robust, meaningful evidence of impact**
- Show **how cultural, creative and heritage activities enable capabilities**
- Combine **funder-required** evidence with **lived experience evidence**
- Build confidence for **future funding, partnerships and commissioning**
- Support **learning and reflection**, not just accountability

Who is this for?

- Cultural and Heritage Organisations
- Creative Health and Social Prescribing Providers
- Community and Voluntary Organisations delivering creative activity
- Partnership led, place based programmes
- Anyone interested in evaluating work using a **capabilities approach**

2 Start With Funders (Baseline Evidence You'll Need Anyway)

Baseline evidence is **not optional** — but it doesn't need to define your whole evaluation.



Start by identifying what evidence is already required by your funder, then design your capabilities evaluation *around it*.

Typical funder required baseline evidence

A. Monitoring & delivery data

- Attendance and engagement
- Demographics and access
- Participation patterns
- Referrals, progression or onward engagement (e.g. CRM systems, National Heritage Lottery Fund, Arts Council England, British Council, AHRC/UKRI, British Film Institute, local authority returns)

B. Wellbeing /outcomes measures for Creative Health projects
(Choose 1–2 maximum, usually aligned to funder guidance)

Common examples:

- ONS4 Personal Wellbeing
- SWEMWBS
- PAM, MYCaW
- EQ 5D
- Organisation or funder specific surveys

Often required by:

- Creative health and social prescribing funders
- Health and local authority commissioners

C. Social value framing (optional)

- WELLBYs or SROI type approaches
- Used mainly at **reporting stage**
- Should not increase participant burden

Outputs from these forms of evidence capture

- Baseline + follow up comparisons
- Quantitative data that meets funding requirements
- Credibility and accountability **already covered**

3 Why Capabilities? (What Scores Can't Show)

Capabilities help capture **how change actually happens** in:

- Relational practice
- Cultural & heritage settings
- Creative health contexts
- Place based programmes

They focus on:

- What people are **able to be and do**
- The **conditions** that enable change
- Relationships, environments and practice

Key principle

Capabilities are not extra outcomes to prove.
They are patterns of change to notice, cluster and evidence over time.



Capabilities:

- **Complement** funder required measures
- Make **relational and environmental impacts** visible
- Work across cultural, creative health and community contexts

4 Capability Domains (Your Organising Framework)

Use the capability domains as your **shared evaluation map** from the **start of your project**.
(You can rename or adapt capabilities to your context, but stick with the domain headings)

Work / Learning

Skills Development
Confidence & Progression
Creative & Informal Learning
Volunteering & Pathways

Health / Vitality

Emotional Wellbeing
Resilience & Regulation
Sense of Safety
Energy, Motivation, Vitality

Relationships

Trust & Belonging
Social Confidence
Peer Support
Staff-participant Relationships

Community

Identity & Pride in Place
Feeling Welcome in Cultural/Heritage Spaces
Participation & Ownership
Civic Connection

You **do not** have to work equally across all domains.
Choose what matters most for *this* project.



We are not just proving impact, we are understanding how cultural, heritage and creative health work enables people, places & organisations to flourish.

5 Designing Your Project with Capabilities in Mind

At project start up, use the framework as a **design tool**, not an evaluation add on.

For each activity or strand, ask:

- Which capability domains might this contribute to?
- What kinds of experiences are we intentionally creating?
- What conditions need to be in place (space, facilitation, pace)?
- Who might benefit — and how?

This shifts planning from: *"What are we delivering?"* to *"What might this enable people to be or do?"*

6 Evidence Capture (Light Touch & Ongoing)

Design evidence capture so it fits **everyday practice**.



A. Stories & Experience

- Participant quotes
- Short reflections (“Something that’s changed for me...”)
- Practitioner observations
- Partner reflections
- Lived experience commentary



B. Creative & Place Based Methods
Particularly suited to culture and heritage:

- Object based reflection
- Creative mapping (“my journey”)
- Visual diaries / photography
- Short audio reflections
- Creative outputs as evidence



C. Case Studies

- 1 Strong case study per capability domain is often enough
- Use a simple structure: Context → Activity → Capability Change → Learning
- Highly effective for funding and commissioning conversations



7 Simple Evidence System (So Nothing Gets Lost)

Four Capability Folders
Create four shared folders:

- Work / Learning
- Health / Vitality
- Relationships
- Community

Store:

- Notes
- Quotes
- Photos
- Session Reflections
- Case Study Drafts

Evidence Log (Spreadsheet or CRM)

Each entry records:

- Date / Activity
- Type of evidence
- Who was involved
- Relevant capability domains
- Brief note on emerging change

This turns **stories into structured, defensible data**.

8 Sense Making, Reporting & Learning

Build in **regular moments of reflection**.

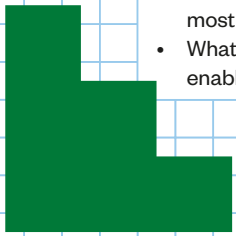
Sense making prompts
(Use in team check ins, not as forms)

Position & Progress

- What is happening on the ground?
- What feels different from earlier in the project?

Capability Development

- Which capabilities are emerging most strongly?
- What practices or environments enable this?



Place / Culture / Heritage / Creative Health Lens

- How do spaces, collections or creative practices contribute?
- What enables participation?
- What might limit it, and why?

Evidence Practicality

- What are we already capturing?
- What feels burdensome?
- What can we safely stop collecting?

When reporting

- Use baseline evidence to show what changed
- Use capability evidence to explain how and why
- Use place based and cultural language to show what you uniquely enable

Notes

Centre for Cultural Ecologies
in Art, Design and Architecture

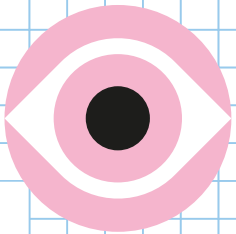
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