

Cived CIC - Tracking Participation, Progression, and Sustainability in a Grassroots Music Venue: A Data Study of Southport Sessions (The Engine Room)

PROJECT OVERVIEW

This project will analyse participation, engagement patterns, and progression pathways within a grassroots music venue operating in Southport (The Engine Room). The aim is to understand how regular live programming, rehearsal access, and mentoring activity contribute to sustained participation and the development of musicians and early-career technical practitioners.

The project will focus on three core questions:

1. What patterns of attendance and repeat engagement emerge over time?
2. How do participants (musicians, technicians, audiences) move from initial engagement to more regular or responsible roles?
3. What operational conditions (e.g. frequency of events, access to rehearsal space, technical infrastructure) are associated with sustained activity?

Data sources are expected to include:

- Event-level records (dates, attendance numbers, ticketing data).
- Participation records (musicians, technicians, mentoring involvement).
- Rehearsal and space usage logs.
- Basic financial data (earned income per event).
- Short structured feedback from participants and audiences (if available).

The project will involve cleaning and structuring these datasets, producing descriptive statistics, and identifying patterns of repeat participation and progression. Where appropriate, simple visualisations (e.g. attendance trends, cohort tracking) will be developed.

Expected outputs include:

- A structured dataset suitable for ongoing use by the organisation.
- A short analytical report summarising participation patterns and progression routes.
- Data visualisations supporting operational decision-making (e.g. event frequency, resource allocation).
- Recommendations for improving data collection and monitoring in small-scale cultural venues.
- The project will provide practical insight into how grassroots venues can sustain participation and develop talent over time, while also supporting the organisation's ongoing evaluation and planning.

PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS



Organisation and Team

Director



Working Arrangement

Hybrid



Selection Method

Interviews will be held online
(via Teams)

SUPPORT AND TRAINING

- The student will be supervised by Dr Eric Lybeck (University of Manchester), who will provide regular guidance on project design, data handling, and analysis. Supervision will include weekly or fortnightly check-ins, depending on project phase, alongside ad hoc support where needed.
 - At project outset, the student will receive a structured induction covering the context of the venue, the purpose of the dataset, and how the data will be used in practice to inform operational decisions. Guidance will be provided on dataset structure, variable definitions, and expectations for documentation.
 - Training will focus on working with real-world datasets, including data cleaning, organisation, and producing clear descriptive outputs. The emphasis will be on translating data into usable insights for a non-academic organisation.
 - The student will also have the opportunity to engage with practitioners involved in delivery (e.g. venue management, technical staff), where appropriate, to better understand how data relates to live operations.
 - All work will be scoped to be achievable within the placement timeframe, with clear milestones and feedback points.
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APPLICATION CRITERIA

ESSENTIAL

- Basic quantitative data skills, including experience working with structured datasets (e.g. Excel, CSV files) and confidence in data cleaning and organisation. Familiarity with at least one statistical or data analysis tool (such as R, Python, SPSS, or Stata) sufficient to produce descriptive statistics and simple visualisations.
- Ability to organise and document datasets clearly, including variable definitions and consistent formatting. Attention to detail and accuracy in handling small-to-medium datasets.
- Clear written communication skills, including the ability to summarise findings in a concise, non-technical format for a non-academic audience.
- Ability to work independently on a defined task, with regular check-ins, and to manage time effectively over the course of the placement.

DESIRABLE

- Experience with data visualisation tools (e.g. ggplot, Tableau, Power BI) or producing clear charts and dashboards.
- Familiarity with basic statistical concepts such as distributions, correlations, and trend analysis.
- Experience working with longitudinal or event-based datasets (e.g. tracking change over time).
- Interest in cultural, civic, or community-based projects, including music or creative industries.
- Experience working with qualitative or mixed-methods data (e.g. survey responses, short interviews), including basic coding or categorisation.
- Confidence engaging with real-world, imperfect datasets and adapting methods pragmatically where data is incomplete.