

Setting the scene



Dr Florence Darling

Gateshead Health Determinants Research Collaboration



The Centre for Translational
Research in Public Health

Research Lead (Children & Young People)
for the Health Determinants Research Collaboration
(HDRC) at Gateshead Council

Postdoctoral Research Associate at Durham University
from 2024-2025 working on the SPHR funded HAF-
DEFINE study

Completed my ESRC-funded PhD in Sociology at
Newcastle University exploring young people's
experiences of arts-based projects in secondary schools
in 2023

Background in participatory arts with children, young
people and families





Creative Research – What do we mean?

Creative research approaches can be defined as using the process of "doing or making through activity" which can prompt different ways of engaging people and communities to share knowledge (Marshall et al 2023).

Creativity "describes the process through which people apply their knowledge, skill and intuition to imagine, conceive, express or make something that wasn't there before" (Arts Council England, 2020)

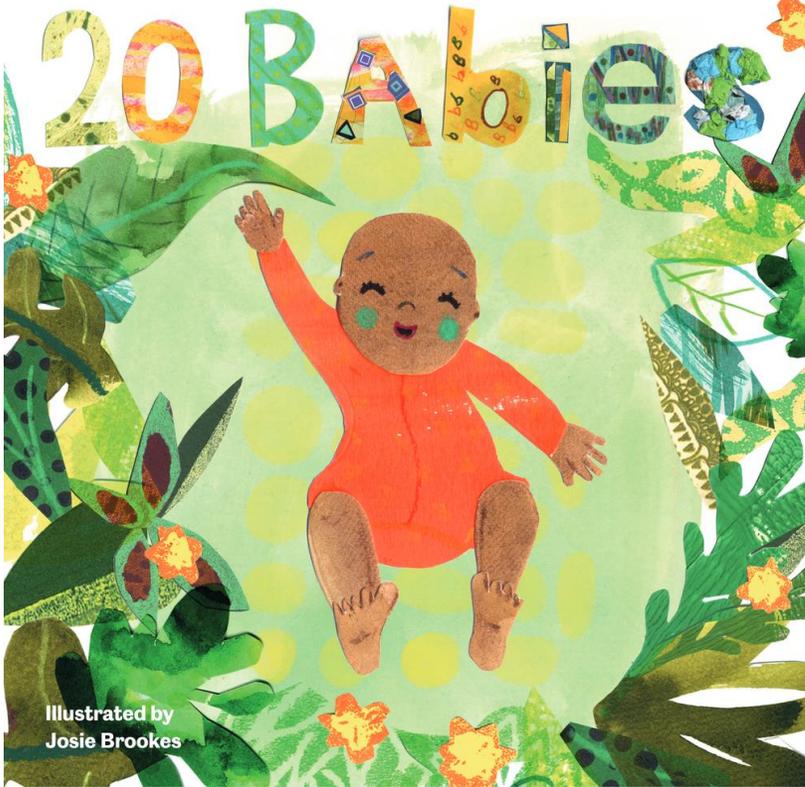
Arts practice is not inherently creative and creativity is not necessarily arts-related e.g. walking, lego play

Creative approaches consider new ways of engaging people and communities to share knowledge – whether through prioritisation, recruitment, data collection, analysis, dissemination or translating research into practice.

Marshall, F., Langley, J., Booth, A., Evans, C., Morling, J. R., & Such, E. (2023) 'The contributions of creative approaches towards knowledge mobilisation in public health interventions: a scoping review', *Centre for Evidence Based Healthcare, School of Health Sciences, University of Nottingham*. Scoping review Sept – Dec 2024. Available at: https://figshare.com/articles/journal_contribution/The_contributions_of_creative_approaches_towards_knowledge_mobilisation_in_public_health_interventions_a_scoping_review_/27135822?file=49508910.



The Centre for Translational
Research in Public Health



20 Babies

Funded by Tommye Tippee and Newcastle University

Weekly artist workshops with twenty babies, born during the Covid-19 lockdown, and their caregivers, combined with public play spaces and events

Participants, artists, producers and researcher all had lived experience

Story book co-produced with illustrator Josie Brookes

Kelly (2025) 'Lockdown babies: Exploring the maternal geographies and care spaces of birthing and mothering during Covid-19 in Gateshead and Newcastle, UK', *Gender, Place & Culture*.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2024.2434618>

HAF-DEFINE

Developing a best practice framework for the Holiday Activities and Food Programme

Involved University of Bristol, PHRESH and Fuse and was funded by SPHR

Of the 2.1 million children receiving benefits-related free school meals in England, only 20% make use of funded holiday clubs

Durham University led Work package 2 using creative methods to explore why so many eligible families do not attend HAF clubs

The research team were trained in 'creative facilitation' by Mary Robson from the Institute of Medical Humanities at Durham University

Facilitated 7 workshops with 59 participants (22 adults and 37 children aged 7-11) in schools, community centres, alternative provision and temporary accommodation in the North East, South West and Midlands

Used mapping and games to understand the school holiday experiences of families living on low-incomes



Why creativity matters in public health research and why now?

Creative approaches can help researchers to frame public health challenges in new ways and explore systems, relationships and lived experience

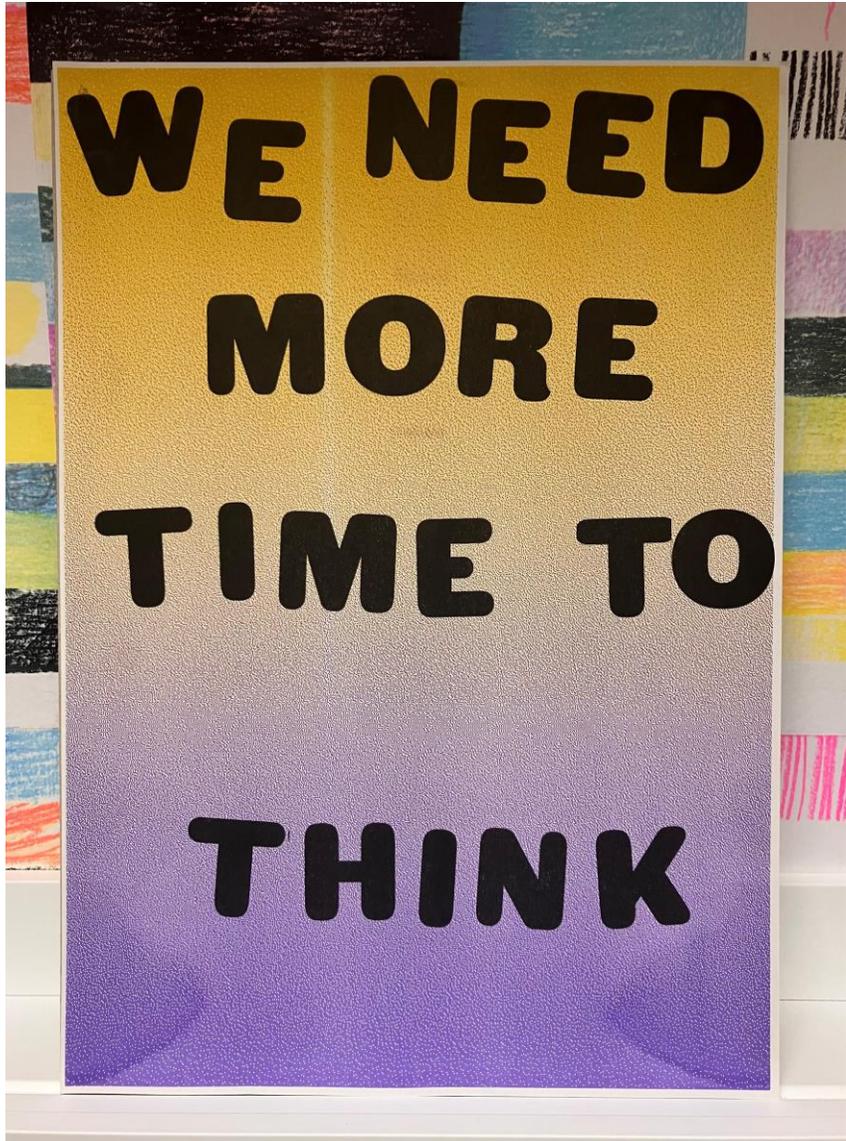
Arts-based and participatory approaches can give participants more control over the information they share and how they represent themselves

Creative approaches are particularly relevant for public engagement and community involvement and co-produced research as they can disrupt power dynamics. They can allow different voices to be heard and value different forms of knowledge (Langley et.al 2022).

Creative approaches can help to communicate findings in compelling and accessible ways, reaching new audiences. The use of metaphor and stories can be a powerful way to motivate action.

The NIHR have funded a scoping review around creative methods and SPHR are also supporting a Creative Approaches to Public Health Research series in 2025.

Creative Research Community of Practice



A Community of Practice is a network of people who share common interests and goals, creating a space for knowledge exchange, learning, and mutual support (adapted from NHS England, 2019).

A Community of Practice is where people learn together by doing, reflecting and sharing in a supportive environment

Our Creative Research Community of Practice could take a number of different forms – presentations, workshops, shared resources - BUT this is up to the group...

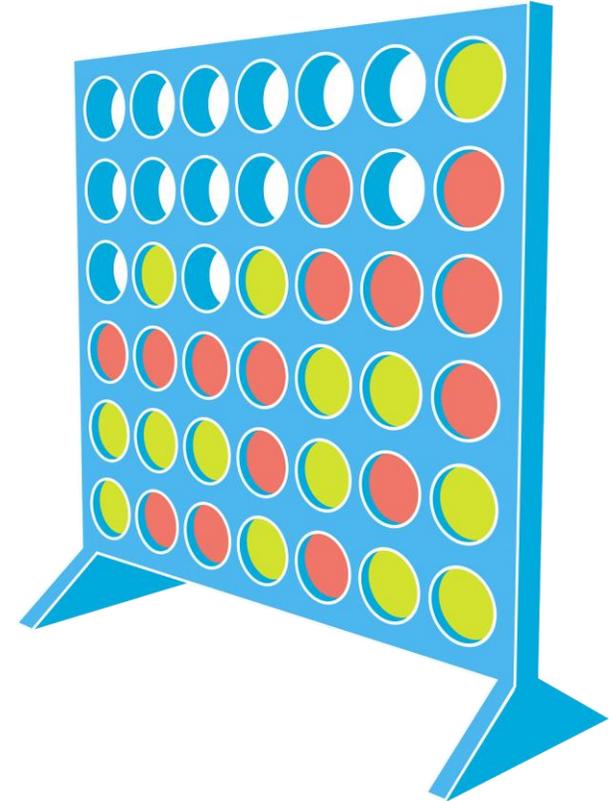
Video showing how Fuse is creatively communicating research



Connect

Who's in the room?

- Introduce yourself to a person on your table who you have not already met.
- When the "gong" sounds, please introduce yourself to another person.

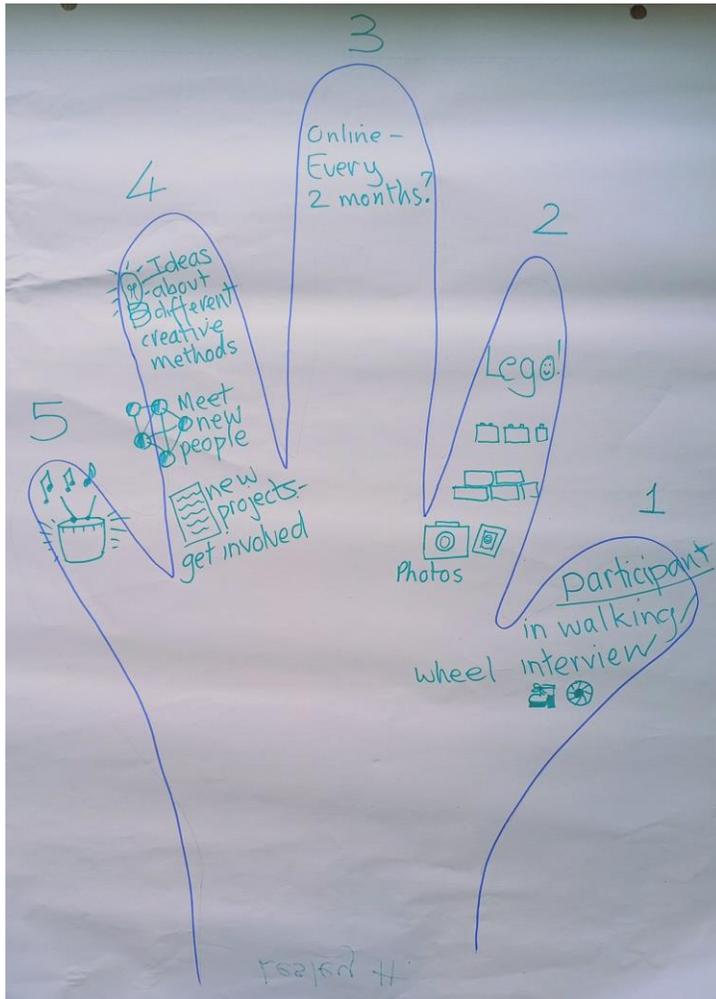


Show of hands – Step 1



- **Thumb:** A creative activity or approach you have used in your “work” (however you want to define work or creative!)
- **1st finger:** A creative activity/approach/method you want to know more about.
- **2nd finger:** How often would we like to meet, and how would you like to meet (virtual/in-person/mixed)?
- **3rd Finger:** What do you want out of the Community of Practice?
- **Little/pinkie finger:** One fun fact about you!

Show of hands – Step 2



- Take turns to share your responses with the people on your table.
- Identify connections and similarities – make links!

Show of hands – Step 3



- Please put your name and contact details on the BACK if you would like to connect.
- Please stick your hands on the paper.
- We will collect the “hands” and display them during the break, so you can continue discussions with others in the room.