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Interchange Portfolio: Work-Based Learning

Client Organisation: Writing on the Wall

Research Study to Evaluate the Write to Work Project

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Contents

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Executive Summary

Writing on the Wall (WoW) set up the Write to Work project in 2017 to provide support and guidance for unemployed writers in Liverpool. Liverpool has one of the highest rates of unemployment in the UK and so the project aims to improve both the professional and personal skills of each participant and give them a better chance of accessing employment or further education. The research study was conducted to evaluate the impact of the Write to Work participants, how the initiative is achieving its goals, and to locate any areas where WoW could further improve the project for the future.

The main topics that were identified through the research were the importance of a good working relationship between the participants and the WoW staff, the benefits of groupwork methodology, one-to-one support, improved communication, and skills gained. In summary, the research shows that the participants are very happy with the level of support they receive from the WoW staff and believe that the course has provided them with a well-rounded portfolio for their futures.

Introduction

Background of Writing on the Wall

Writing on the Wall (WoW) is a charity that hosts creative writing projects and an annual month-long literature festival for Liverpool community members. The charity first began as a week-long festival celebrating all forms of writing and has since grown to become a leading charity in Liverpool, providing year-round projects. Recognising the success of WoW's activities, the charity now receives partial funding from Liverpool City Council and Arts Council England. Beyond this, WOW works on a commission base, always working towards their next funding bid for future projects.

WoW is based in Toxteth Library in Liverpool's City Centre but holds its events in various areas all around Merseyside to ensure accessibility and inclusion for all. Liverpool still ranks in the top four most deprived local authority areas in England, with health and disability, employment, and income domains remaining the most crucial indices of deprivation (Liverpool City Council, 2015). Furthermore, the Office of National Statistics released data showing that Liverpool has been among the top 10 cities in the UK for its percentages of workless households since 2006 (ONS, 2018). To exacerbate this issue, the Department for Work and Pensions has merged numerous smaller job centres with larger ones, meaning many people now have to travel further to gain employment support (UK Government, 2019). Therefore, an organisation like WoW, who focus on social inclusion and assisting the most marginalised and excluded members of the community is vital for creating positive changes within Liverpool.

About the Write to Work project

The Write to Work project is a 10-12 week programme funded by European Social Fund and Workers Education Association. It is dedicated to supporting unemployed participants by helping them gain opportunities and skills that will assist them into employment, further education or training within the writing sector. Data collected for 2018 showed that approximately 26,000 people were unemployed in the Liverpool City Region, meaning 3.5% of Liverpool's population are unable to find paid work (NOMIS, 2018).

Write to Work is the only project of its kind in Liverpool. WoW developed this project to help prospective writers diversify their writing to stand out from the crowd and discover new pathways into paid work. The weekly sessions are led by published writers and industry professionals, each demonstrating a different writing style whilst directing the participants to various platforms they can showcase their work. The project also utilises a groupwork methodology so the participants are not only gaining skills-based knowledge but can also tackle issues of isolation, confidence, and communication. Each participant in the Write to Work project is also given the opportunity to publish their work in a group anthology which is printed and published by WoW. At the end of the project, each individual has a well-rounded portfolio of work and a wide-spanning network which they can utilise for future progression.

Research background

Interchange is a charity that gives students the opportunity to benefit from work-based learning experiences whilst in higher education. Interchange links students with local voluntary and community organisations where they can collaborate on research and evaluation projects that can contribute to the long-term development of community projects. Work-based learning experiences allow students to practice formal communication within professional environments, enhance their employment prospects, and improve their practical skills (Boud & Soloman, 2001).

Writing on the Wall has been involved with Interchange in the past and enjoyed the partnership, prompting their decision to take up the collaboration opportunity again this year. WoW recognised their need for an independent researcher to evaluate their Write to Work project in order to gain constructive feedback from its users so they could continue improving the services they provide. They also aim to gain additional funding for future Write to Work projects and so wish to use this research to highlight its uniqueness and achievements within the Liverpool community. The collaboration of work was outlined in a learning agreement (Appendix A) created and signed by Nicole Benefer (student researcher), Kirsteen Paton (research supervisor), and Emma Hulme (project link worker).

Methodology

Key Aims

I began this research study by outlining three aims that myself and WoW considered to be the most significant and meaningful conclusions from this project. Firstly, to identify what impact the Write to Work project has had on its past participants, both personally and professionally, with regards to further education, employment, confidence and communication. Secondly, the research should highlight the main aspects of the project that makes it a successful and unique initiative within Liverpool. Finally, to locate any areas where the project is not meeting its full potential and to identify any specific gaps in provision with recommended improvements for further workshops.

Ethical considerations

A key consideration from the onset of planning this research project has been ensuring all stages of data collection and analysis adheres to the ethical codes of both the University of Liverpool and WoW. In order to gain ethical approval, I had to ensure that the dignity, rights, health, safety and privacy of the Write to Work participants and staff would not be infringed or harmed (Ritchie et al., 2013). I therefore spoke in detail with my link worker at WoW and concluded that a level of awareness and consideration would be required when drafting the questions and topics for the research to ensure nothing sensitive or upsetting would be discussed. All interviews and focus groups were held at the Toxteth Library which was known to all participants and therefore was the most accessible and comfortable setting for them (Silverman, 2016).

In addition, precautions were taken to ensure that all participants in the focus group, interviews, and online survey were fully informed at every stage of the data collection. My link worker acted as my gatekeeper throughout this study and, thus, made the initial contact to invite all Write to Work participants to take part in the study. I provided them with a comprehensive participant information sheet (PIS) (Appendix B) which detailed the purposes of the study, what their participation involved, and how their data would be anonymised, stored, and utilised (Silverman, 2016). Once they had agreed to participate, I contacted each individual to provide a consent form (Appendix C) to confirm they had read and understood all the information provided. Furthermore, both the PIS and Consent forms detail what procedures were in place should any of the research participants feel uncomfortable or wish to withdraw their contribution at any point. All research participants were given multiple options for withdrawal, including informing myself during the process of data collection or various contact details to inform us at a later date.

To safeguard all research participants' privacy, I did not document any identifying personal data on the audio recordings, nor was it written in any field notes, transcripts or analysis reports. All online questionnaires were completed anonymously, and pseudonyms were used for any direct quotes used in this final report. Furthermore, all raw data collected, including

survey results and interview recordings, were stored on the University of Liverpool central server which was only accessible by myself and my academic supervisor.

Research methods

It was decided that mixed methods, including interviews, focus groups, and online surveys, would be used to collect the primary data. A deductive approach was adopted when designing the research methods in order to create a relevant empirical study (Bryman, 2016). Using the project aims that have been mentioned previously, I created four areas of interest that influenced who and what would be studied. Those four categories included what professional skills and personal skills were gained, how the project was unique, and were there any possible improvements for the future.

In order to meet aims it was important to get a variety of responses from participants and staff. It was decided that one focus group of 5-7 current participants of the Write to Work project would be included. To gain the most up-to-date and relevant data, non-probability, purposive sampling was used to select the focus group participants to guarantee the sample would be relevant to the research aims (Bryman, 2016). My criteria for this was participants who were over the age of 18 and had taken part in the two most recent Write to Work projects held. Two semi-structured interviews were also conducted with a member of staff at WoW and an industry professional who has been involved with WoW for over 3 years. Interviewing the staff members provided a different perspective on the project compared with the service users and a semi-structured interview allowed leeway for a more in-depth view of what the interviewee believed to be important (Bryman, 2016). An additional interview was added through opportunistic sampling as the participant was a member of staff at WoW who had also been involved in the Write to Work project prior to her employment with the team. Therefore, they were able to provide additional, relevant data to the study that had not been anticipated originally. All data collection was done at Toxteth Library as the location was familiar to all the participants having worked or attended sessions there before and, therefore, was easily accessible and a comfortable setting for them (Silverman, 2016).

Being a student researcher, I was limited by time and other university commitments. Hence, only a restricted number of interviews and focus groups could be conducted. A survey is a beneficial data collection technique as it can be sent to a wide sample size, is not restricted geographically, and is more convenient for research participants to complete in their own time (Sue & Ritter, 2012). Therefore, the inclusion of surveys into my data collection provided a practical solution to previously mentioned restrictions. An online survey was developed for all Write to Work past participants, of which 20 people responded. The questionnaire was comprised of three sections. The first asked basic demographic questions to confirm that it had reached a wide sample between all the past Write to Work projects (Bryman, 2016). The second section asked open ended questions regarding the participants experience during and after the project. In the final section, the participants were asked to respond to 10 selected statements by indicating their agreement on a five-point Likert Scale, from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The online survey was available to participants through an email sent by WoW and were given 21 days to respond. All survey responses were anonymous and completed voluntarily.

As mentioned above, the four categories outlined by the project aims heavily influenced the development of the questions and topics that would be included in each research method. In addition, I attended some Write to Work sessions with the most recent group to observe how the sessions are run and how the participants engage with the work, the workshop leader, and with each other, as these proved to be the three key areas that the most impact the participants' experience. As a result, I prepared individualised lists of questions for each interview and focus group as flexible prompts during data collection (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015).

Data analysis methods

After data collection, two layers of coding were performed for each interview and focus group transcript. I began with deductive coding using the four categories identified from the project aims mentioned above. This meant the occurrence of each category could be identified both within and across each transcript when analysing (Silverman, 2006). A second round of coding was then conducted using an inductive approach. In doing so, additional patterns emerged from the data, such as communication and groupwork, which were able to be analysed further and informed some of the recommendations made later in this report.

The survey was analysed in two parts. The open-ended questions were transcribed and coded alongside the interview and focus group transcripts to find further correlations. A frequency analysis was conducted for the quantitative data collected from the Likert Scale questions to produce percentages of agreement or disagreement for each statement.

Once all data had been collected and transcribed from the three interviews, focus group, and online surveys, I was able to begin analysis. As described in the methodology section of this report, I conducted two layers of analysis, deductive and inductive coding. The deductive coding process used the four themes that had been highlighted from the key aims, i.e. professional and personal skills, uniqueness of the project, and possible improvements, as a codebook to find all relevant data about these topics. The inductive coding process was then conducted that highlighted patterns emerging from the data, which was then grouped and placed into five themes for discussion. These five themes included, communication, groupwork, importance of WoW staff, scheduling, and accessibility.

After analysis, it was noted that there were no significant differences found between the responses of the most recent project participants and the older project participants. Therefore, all focus group and survey data were amalgamated and analysed solely on the individuals' experiences of the overall Write to Work scheme, any demographic data surrounding the timing of their participation was disregarded.

The importance of the inclusive and supportive environment created by WoW staff and tutors

Many of the past project participants highlighted how the staff and tutors were key in creating the safe and supportive environment that allowed them to improve not just their writing skills but their social skills.

"I found the WoW staff to be truly a pleasure to work with and they were all so encouraging, and I felt comfortable going to them if I were struggling in any of the sessions"

- *Survey, participant 11*

"The WOW staff were extremely encouraging and supportive. They were open, caring and invested in the progress of each member of the group"

- *Survey, participant 23*

"We're part of the WoW family now"

- *Focus Group, participant 3*

"if you had an off day, it was noticed. Which is good, like the staff are actually aware and get to know you. That was so good, especially when there like a room full of people, you could just be a name to them."

- *Focus group, participant 2*

"we all got on so well in our group. I kind of really still feel emotional about our group because we were really good for each other"

- *Focus group, participant 4*

As with any learning experience, most participants had questions or concerns that arose throughout the project regarding the tasks set or the publication of their work. As expressed

in the quotes above, participants who did experience any issues felt comfortable approaching the WoW staff and tutors and believed them to be helpful, informative, and reassuring. Research participants also expressed their appreciation for the friendships that developed between the WoW staff, tutors, and project participants. Many stated that the WoW team were very welcoming and took the time to get to know each participant. The welcoming environment created by the WoW staff and tutors also encouraged the friendly and supportive relationship between the project participants. One participant expressed her delight at the connection her group had and felt emotional when reflecting on the positive influence they had on each other.

"I felt I was given enough support from the WoW team"

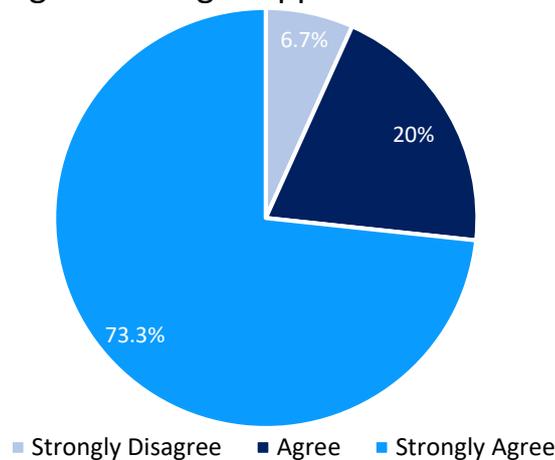■ Strongly Disagree   ■ Agree   ■ Strongly Agree

Figure 1

In addition, as figure 1 demonstrates above, the survey results revealed 93.3% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that that they were given enough support of the WoW team. Similarly, 80% of survey participants agreed that the were able to voice any questions or concerns they had to the WoW staff.

Significance of the WoW staff and tutors as industry professionals

The research participants also recognised that all staff from WoW invest a lot of time and attention into each project the charity hosts. The WoW team and tutors are able to offer specialist advice on a host of topics within the creative sector as they all have a background in writing or publishing themselves. It has been noted that the inclusion of industry professionals in education is important for arming students with both the practical and professional knowledge needed for the workplace (Gentelli, 2015; Ashton, 2008). In addition, as practising professionals, they are aware of the struggles facing new writers and can cater the project around providing a support system through such struggles.

"There are a lot of creative people and writers in Liverpool, but that doesn't necessarily mean that they have the opportunity for creative jobs…there are few jobs in Liverpool at entry level or otherwise…The sessions cover quite basic professionalism, but they really do just need the confidence boost in those areas…So the staff and teachers at Writing on the Wall are there for that support system, a huge part of what they do is being that for them"

"I was excited to meet people who were doing it for real, not just taught blankly"

- *Focus group, participant 2*

As quoted above, the tutors felt like their knowledge of the writing industry in Liverpool meant they recognised how important courses like this are for the project participants. The job market for writers is challenging and, thus, the professional advice they can pass on is invaluable for the writers looking to begin their careers. In addition, a project participant expressed their enthusiasm that the sessions were taught by professionals who were passionate about what they were teaching and shared a common interest with the participants who wanted to pursue the same career as them.

Use of Groupwork methodology in sessions

All Write to Work sessions are done using group work methodology. The research showed that all focus group and survey participants acknowledged the practical benefits of this methodology, including networking, confidence boosts, friendship bonds, and peer motivation. Several studies have explored how a cooperative learning approach has improved skills like problem solving, time management, and negotiation skills (Healy, Doran & McCutcheon, 2018). The focus group participants also stated that they came to realise how important the group feedback was and recognised that once they had built up a level of trust within the group, sharing became easier and had more impact.

"As the course progressed, I gained the confidence to participate more"

- *Survey, participant 15*

"getting used to presenting work and not being embarrassed about any mistakes that might be there…especially in a group of other writers"

- *Focus group, participant 5*

"I realised how important working within a community, like where everyone is doing the same thing and pushing each other on"

- *Focus group, participant 1*

In addition, 86% of survey respondents indicated they enjoyed the groupwork and suggested the gaining feedback from the entire group had more impact than individual feedback. While most focus group and survey participant did agree on the positive impacts of groupwork, a few found some aspects of it challenging for less confident or outgoing students which could have negatively impacted their learning. It has been suggested that group work can exacerbate academic inequality and create dysfunctional interpersonal relationships leading to group fragmentation (Healy, Doran & McCutcheon, 2018).

"it just felt like everyone was more experienced than me, and the way everyone else was describing things, like they were more well-read…I'm just going to say, it just made me feel a bit bad about my own writing because I didn't feel like I was at that same level"

- *Focus Group, participant 1*

"Group work can bring up ideas that I might not have encountered before, and you get to know the other group members. However, there were times when people took over and could have been reigned in."

- *Survey, participant 22*

"There were times when a select group of people would take a conversation off-topic and distract the workshop leaders… there were a few complaints about important topics being lost in conversation"

- *Survey, participant 26*

As expressed in the data above, some participants had fewer positive feelings towards the groupwork structure as they found that some participants were disruptive, introduced off-topic discussions, or simply have a more outgoing personality that overshadowed others. In addition, some felt that they were not confident enough to share their writing with other members of the group for fear of it being inferior and felt it hindered their progress at the start. A possible solution to this could be the introduction of one-on-one sessions. It was discussed by the focus group participants that one-on-one sessions could be provided at some point throughout the project so those who were struggling to express themselves in front of the group would get a chance to do so then.

"I also think that one-to-one tutorials would be very useful. There are always shy people in the group, always people who prefer not to talk…so when you speak to someone one-to-one you can open up a bit more, maybe talk about the problems you've faced"

-Interview 1

"I think one-on-one would have helped. I mean I approached one of the tutors myself, but I think if I'd been feeling less confident, as some people are, I wouldn't have been able to do that"

-Focus Group, participant 4

When discussed further, many focus group and interview participants agreed that a one-to-one session would have been preferred after the end of the Write to Work sessions but before the launch of the anthology. This way, each participant would be able to voice any questions they had about any of the taught sessions, whilst also gaining further advice and feedback about the work they wished to submit for publishing.

"one of the things as well, when It finished, I felt really sad, so it would be nice to keep in touch and so a one-on-one might be nice, like a debrief maybe"

- *Focus group, participant 4*

"I do understand that their time is super limited. But then, maybe even a skype or something…just as an extra planned tutorial…I do think that one-to-one tutorials would be very useful"

-Interview 1

Communication between staff, tutors, and project participants

As noted previously, many participants said they had a good working relationship with the WoW staff and tutors. A key theme that arose during analysis was the level of communication between the participants and staff.

"*An amazing thing that they want to stay in contact with you"*

- *Focus group, participant 3*

"They were also open about the possibility of getting into contact with them if anyone had further questions, although this was an opportunity I didn't take advantage of, having the option there (for now and in the future) is beneficial to anyone"

- *Survey, participant 25*

All project participants said they were encouraged by both WoW staff and tutors to email should they have any additional questions they wished to discuss, with a number of the participants explaining how they had taken up the offer and gained some extremely helpful feedback. In this way, WoW staff tutors further reinforce how the project participants are supported throughout their Write to Work journey and beyond. Research has shown that there is significant correlation between teacher-student communication and a students' engagement with the course overall. Teachers who are perceived to communicate in a more positive and attentive way will cause the student to see these teachers as more effective and, in turn, have a better attitude toward the tutor and the course in general (Anderson, Norton & Nussbaum, 1981; Roorda et al., 2011). Therefore, the successful communication between the staff and participants aided the overall success of the Write to Work project.

There was a consensus amongst the focus group participants that the network of professionals they are introduced to throughout the project would be valuable not just during the sessions but for future writing endeavours. Focus group participants said that not all communication with tutors was reciprocated, leaving them slightly discouraged.

"we had been told already that people in the industry wouldn't always reply, but since [they] had actually told us to do it and then didn't respond. It kind of made you feel a bit rubbish"

- *Focus group, participant 3*

"yeah [they] didn't respond to any of us actually, that was quite disheartening"

- *Focus group, participant 2*

"I sent my edit onto [them] and never heard anything, I actually followed up a week later too, just like to have a little feedback for the future"

- *Focus group, participant 5*

It was understood by all participants that the industry professionals have busy schedules and it is not unusual for emails to go unanswered. Nonetheless, they all expressed disappointment that their work had been overlooked. In addition, several participants felt unsure about those pieces of writing since they had not received any feedback and therefore removed it from their portfolio when submitting their work to publish. It was therefore suggested that there should be a level of continuity throughout the course that would secure the working partnership and future collaboration of work. Focus group participants were eager to introduce a policy on timely responses to communication, for example, both tutors and project participants agree to meet deadlines and respond to communication within a set time frame. This would help formalise communication and ensure commitment to the project from both sides.

The value of professional writing skills

One of the interviewees expressed how unique the project is for being such an intensive, far reaching course. The participants learn about a new style of writing every week such as poetry, arts criticism, and copywriting. As discussed by Dunn (2014), encouraging students to read a variety of texts and explore writing in different forms will help to engage the students. A more encompassing curriculum will increase the chances of students accessing topics they find stimulating and interesting. As the tutors explained, some participants are more interested in certain topics covered sessions than others, but there will always be skills learnt in each workshop that can be transferred to other writing forms or professions.

"There were some that, before we started, that I thought oh I don't think that one is really for me. But they still found a way to draw you in and you still found out some other information that could be useful for whatever you're doing, or how it can relate back to something you were doing. I felt like, on paper you might have changed some topics, but in reality, the tutors' experiences come into it too and, like meeting professionals from each industry is useful, even if it's not something you choose to go into."

- *Focus group, participant 3*

"I really enjoyed having to use my brain and writing skills on subjects I wouldn't looked at normally…and I surprised myself with how enjoyable it was"

-Survey, participant 22

"the fact they managed to get such a variety of people in from different industry areas is so useful and gives you a wide perspective of the industry"

- *Survey, participant 16*

Davies and Birbili (2010) discussed how both metacognitive and conceptual understanding about writing is crucial in enabling students to transfer and adapt foundation literacy skills to

the workplace. Similarly, Brockman (2013) also explored how introducing skilled writing techniques to any profession can help enhance written communication. Therefore, any form of writing skill gained in the sessions will serve to enhance each participants' writing ability and, in turn, boost their employability. Furthermore, the challenge of trying a new form of writing every week also forces the participants to move out of their comfort zone and try something new, as they may be asked to do in the workplace. The tasks set in each session mimic real-world situations where they would be given a task, word count, and deadline in which to complete it. Other basic but necessary skills, such as emailing, note taking, and structures are also covered that not only improve their writing portfolio but enhance skills required for the workplace.

"responding to a brief, that's exactly what I have to do with professional editors…it sounds straightforward…but there are wrong ways to do that"

- *Interview 1*

"People don't see the importance of skills based training in the creative arts, learning how to tackle anything is a skill so we wanted to get that across to these participants, that there are ways of learning these skills, learning how to tackle a brief set by an employer is a skill like any other"

- *Interview 2*

"we learnt a lot about the communication you can have. Like before, we didn't know how to approach them or knowing when to be professional or when it's okay to be more casual…It's not a specific skill, but it's a skill for working"

- *Focus group, participant 3*

Staff at WoW also recognised the changing job market for prospective writers, with digital platforms, like the gaming industry, offering new career pathways that are not always realised. The Head of the Employment and Social Policy team at the National Institute of Economic and Social Research described how the digital economy has transformed the labour market and has introduced new opportunities for the unemployed but also has its challenges (House of Lords, 2018). This new form of employment requires skills like software knowledge, online communication, and remote working, that may be unknown to many participants. Therefore, having a range of tutors working on the project who can advise and demonstrate these skills will help the participants adapt to the developing job market today.

As the results show, all participants agree that the varying topics covered throughout the project are very beneficial and the topics covered are diverse enough to suit the majority. Survey respondents were asked if they could identify any topics that had not been covered in the project and 85% said no. The opposing 15% identified topics like building an online presence or website, bid writing, fiction writing, and cover letters as being possible subjects that could be included in the future.

The value of personal skills

Another main objective that this project aims to achieve is to provide the participants with soft skills, such as confidence, goal-setting, and resilience, that will assist their journey into employment. All research respondents agreed that this was an area they were lacking in when beginning the course.

"the thing holding most participants back is confidence"

- *Interview 1*

"one of my issues is that I suffer from anxiety quite a lot…and think that stopped me from doing anything professional"

- *Focus group, participant 4*

A 2014 survey found that 1 in 6 people over the age of 16 had experienced some form of mental health problem, such as depression or anxiety (UK Parliament, 2018). Public Health England also released data from a GP Patient survey which revealed that in 2017/18, Cheshire and Merseyside had the highest percentage of patients with long-term mental health problems in the UK, approximately 10.9% (Public Health England, 2018). This value has increased by 4.5% since the previous year 2016/17 suggesting the issue significantly worsening (Public Health England, 2018). It is also widely recognised today that stable employment is good for mental health and wellbeing (Centre for Mental Health, 2013).

Therefore, an initiative like the Write to Work project is unique in tackling both the mental health of its participants as well as aiding their efforts into employment. Providing a safe environment where participants engage in activities like groupwork, presenting written work, critical feedback, timed tasks, and public speaking all contribute to improving the confidence levels, resilience, concentration, interpersonal and communication skills of each participant.

"you're not magically cured of anxiety…its like you learn how to cope with it"

- *Focus group, participant 3*

"it's hard to have that kind of faith in yourself. But being on the course has shifted that"

- *Focus group, participant 2*

"Helps take out the fear"

- *Interview 1*

"it's a huge mental shift when you go, okay I'm going to allow myself to start treating this seriously. I think it's an invaluable resource"

- *Focus group, participant 4*

"The workshops have improved my confidence"

Neutral   Agree   Strongly Agree
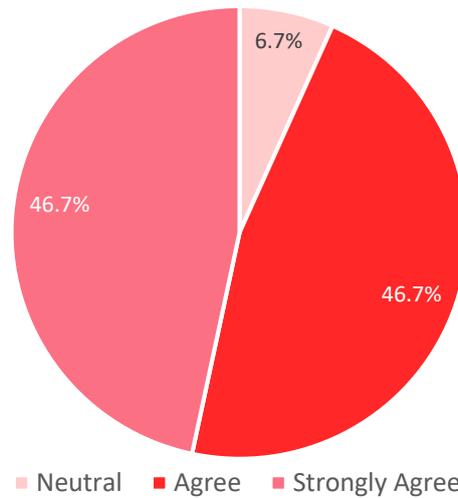
As demonstrated in Figure 2, the survey results showed that 93% of respondents agreed the course improved their confidence levels and identified other personal skills, such as determination, persistence, optimism, and self-motivation, as attributes they have gained or improved since beginning this project.

The importance of the project schedule

As mentioned previously, the Write to Work project is run over 10-12 weeks and concluded with a book launch event for the publication of the anthology. Many respondents noted how they were saddened when the sessions concluded as they enjoyed their experience so much and wished the sessions ran longer. It was also discussed how the project is very intensive and time consuming for the participants and, thus, the end of the project can be quite deflating. It was mentioned however, that the book launch helped reduce this deflation as it was seen as one final deadline to work towards, helping them maintain momentum and enthusiasm for a longer period.

"I think having the launch later, intentionally, brings you back in again. When you haven't got the sessions anymore, you don't have the homework to be doing, it's quite deflating. But when you finish you do get given the deadline for the launch, so you still have something to do, to work towards… So, having that later sort of bring you back in, lets you down a bit easier knowing it's still to come"

-    *Focus group, participant 3*

"motivation wise, it was good for me. It kick started my year again…. It gives you an extra boost"

Focus group, participant 1

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Therefore, focus group participants suggested that a longer period of time between the ending of the sessions and the book launch would encourage the participants to continue writing and give them a final boost to produce more work. A participant also highlighted how the extra time between the sessions and the book launch gave them time to prepare for public speaking which they were apprehensive about.

"it gave me the time to get used to the idea of performing pieces on stage. I think it did that for everyone, because there were some members in the group who were pretty adamant, they weren't going to go on stage, but by the time of the launch they all got up and did it."

-Focus group, participant 5

Recommendations

As this research has found, the Write to Work project has been a great success in providing a unique platform for participants to improve their personal and professional skills. The WoW staff and tutors provide the participants with knowledgeable advice, create safe and supportive learning environments, and welcome all students into the "WoW family". These are key strengths which make the project so unique, successful, and a major asset to the Writing on the Wall portfolio. Therefore, ensuring the continuation of these provisions is vital.

The research has highlighted some areas where the project could be adjusted in order to further improve its, success. Firstly, the interviews and survey results suggest one-on-one meetings between a workshop leader and participant, after completing the project, would be beneficial. This was discussed in detail in the focus groups and the majority agreed individual meetings with a selected workshop leader would be valuable for the participants as a further opportunity to gain detailed, personal feedback on their selected work for the anthology publication.

The focus groups also revealed that the participants enjoyed the project immensely and therefore would be eager to secure the working partnerships they have obtained throughout the sessions. Correspondence between the tutors and participants after the sessions is promised but not always upheld by tutors. It is understood that the industry professionals have busy schedules, however the participants felt disheartened when communication went unanswered, especially after it was invited and encouraged. With this in mind, many research participants suggested introducing a policy on follow-up communication between the participants and workshop leaders to formalise communication and ensure commitment to the project from both parties. The policy would require that both parties must agree to meet deadlines and respond to communication within a set time. This would prevent false hope for participants and allow industry professionals sufficient time to compose a response when it is convenient for them.

Finally, many respondents discussed the intensiveness of the course and how they were upset after it ended since they had enjoyed the experience so much. They also discussed how the book launch was such a good resource to have after completing the sessions since it was one final goal to work towards. Therefore, many suggested that a longer period of time between the final session and the book launch event would allow for better reflection and decompression. The extra time would also benefit users who needed time to prepare for the public speaking aspect of the book launch.

Conclusion

This research has shown that the overall service provided by WoW through the Write to Work project is making a huge impact on its participants, not just through writing skills but confidence boosts, communication skills, motivation, trust, personal interaction, critical feedback, patience, public speaking, and self-motivation. The sessions provided a safe environment for participants to experiment with and develop their personal and professional skills without fear of judgement from the WoW staff, tutors, or fellow participants. They leave the course with a variety of tools that will ultimately, aid them finding employment whether that be in the near or far future.

The WoW team are immensely successful at what they do, and the majority of participants believed the support received from the team made a huge impact on their overall experience throughout the project. The team are qualified and have the resources and knowledge needed by the participants to aid their progress through the course and beyond if sought. The groupwork methodology allowed the participants to build up trust and friendships over time creating a community that supported each other in their work. Going forwards, the WoW team could consider adding one-to-one sessions before the book launch as an opportunity for reflection and additional feedback for each participant. However, it is acknowledged that the WoW team have limited funding and staff available which could hinder the possibility of introducing one-on-one sessions. Therefore, although the addition of these sessions would be beneficial, it is not vital for the project's success.

Finally, the main area for improvement is securing the working relationships between the participants and tutors. The participants noted feelings of dejection after communication between them and the tutors went unreciprocated after being encouraged to do so in person. Therefore, a policy on this matter should be considered to ensure there is no false hope or expectation from either party.

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Appendix A

INTERCHANGE

Interchange Portfolio: work-based learning

AGREEMENT FOR RESEARCH/WORK PROJECT

The following is the outcome of a meeting on [date] between Kirsteen Paton, Academic Supervisor, and Nicole Benefer, student at the School of Sociology, Social Policy & Criminology, University of Liverpool and Emma Hulme of Writing on the Wall, Programme Manager & Creative Enterprise Officer, Toxteth Library, Windsor Street, Liverpool, L8 1XF, Tel: 0151 7030020.

(All parties may comment on the agreement and if any section needs to be altered, a fresh agreement will be issued. Please contact academic supervisor with any comments at the School of Sociology, Social Policy & Criminology, University of Liverpool, Bedford Street South, Liverpool L69 7ZA: Tel 0151 …………, Fax 0151 794 2997).

1. **Project agreement** between Nicole Benefer and Kirsteen Paton of the School of Sociology, Social Policy & Criminology, University of Liverpool and Emma Hulme of Writing on the Wall.

2. **Duration of project**: The project will run from October 2018 to May 2019: fieldwork/activity to be completed by March 2019.

3. **About the organisation.** Writing on the Wall is a creative writing charity that delivers year-round projects and an annual literature festival, both of which focus on inspiring and educating members of the public through all forms of writing. It was established in 2000 and has worked with members from marginalised or excluded communities by helping improve their writing skills, introducing them to industry professionals, offering new platforms where they can share their work, and inspiring and supporting the careers of new and upcoming artists. The Write to Work project supports specifically unemployed participants. The 12-week project provides weekly sessions run by industry professionals who help the participants develop key writing skills to assist them in finding pathways into employment, training, or further education.

It is managed by Madeline Heneghan and Mike Morris with the assistance of six full-time paid staff and a group of up to thirty volunteers, and is funded by Arts Council England as an National Portfolio Organisation, Liverpool City Council, Esmee Fairburn, The European Social Fund and other smaller commissions.

4. **Issues identified**: Writing on the Wall has identified a need for a research study on their Write to Work project in order evaluate the services provided by the workshops and produce a report highlighting both the positive aspects of the course and recommendations for positive changes in the future. The report will be used to assist the charity in developing future community projects and aiding further applications for future funding.

5. **Proposed project**: To evaluate what impact the workshop has had on its past participants, both personally and professionally, and to highlight the main aspects of the project that make it a successful and unique initiative. The research may also locate any areas where the project is not meeting its full potential and to identify any gaps in service provision with recommended improvements for future workshops. This research will be conducted through interviews, a focus group with current participants from the project, and email questionnaires sent to past participants.

6. **Project outcome**: Nicole Benefer will produce a report to be available in draft form by Easter and in its final form in May. The report will be word-processed. Writing on the Wall will receive one copy of the report and have the right to use and copy the report as it wishes, with due acknowledgement being made to the students and to the University of Liverpool.

7. **Permission to reproduce the report**: The student and supervisor will have the right to use data from the report for academic publication, provided Writing on the Wall

is first consulted and has no objections. **Emma Hulme of Writing on the Wall has the right to use data from the report, but will not publish the full report or place it on line without the permission of Nicole Benefer and Kirsteen Paton.**

8. **Attendance**: Nicole Benefer will commit the equivalent of one day per week to the project for fieldwork/activities, analysis and writing reports.

9. **Expenses**: The payment of travel expenses from the University to Toxteth Library will be provided by Writing on the Wall. Nicole Benefer will be responsible for keeping accurate records of all fieldwork journeys.

10. **Supervision**: Kirsteen Paton will be available weekly for supervision throughout the course of the project. Emma Hulme will be available for consultation by appointment during the fieldwork, and will expect to be consulted over questionnaires and interview schedules, and to be kept informed of progress.

11. **Confidentiality**: Nicole Benefer will work to the British Sociological Association guidelines on ethics and will respect the confidentiality of all information given and abide by the confidentiality procedures of Writing on the Wall. Due attention will be given to the anonymity of informants, and the students will conduct the research in a sensitive manner.

12. **Assessment**: Nicole Benefer will submit the client report to the Department of Sociology, Social Policy & Criminology as part of the assessment for their degree, along with separate individual policy or reflective analysis and Project Strategy. Kirsteen Paton will be invited to comment on the draft report, and to offer an evaluation of the final report (though this will not affect the academic assessment).

13. **Acknowledgements**: **At any time when data from the Report is used, proper acknowledgement should be made to the student by name, to the School of Sociology, Social Policy & Criminology, University of Liverpool and to Interchange.**

14. **Health and safety arrangements**

We confirm that we will treat the student as a member of our staff and that we will:

Comply with health and safety legislation (applicable to the country hosting the placement)

Resolve health and safety issues with the student(s) promptly

We confirm that we will provide the student

With a full and clear induction to the organisation and its working practices including:

- Relevant risk assessments and health and safety arrangements
- Fire precautions and emergency evacuation arrangements
- How to report an accident, incident or unsafe condition
- First aid arrangements
- Health and safety training

We confirm that in cases of accidents and incidents involving a student or breaches of discipline by a student, we will advise and consult Claudette Graham, the Interchange Coordinator immediately.

We confirm that we will provide adequate support, guidance and all-round experience, to enable the student to achieve their intended learning outcomes as specified above.

We confirm that we will advise and consult with the academic advisor or Interchange Coordinator in cases of serious accidents, incidents or breaches of discipline by the student.

We confirm that we will provide the Claudette Graham with feedback about the progress of the project.

15. Should the link worker in the organisation change for whatever reason, Emma Hulme will notify Interchange and provide contact details of the new link worker so a new learning agreement can be drawn up.

SIGNED

(Link worker)

SIGNED _____

(Student)

SIGNED _____

(Academic Supervisor)

DATE_____

*A copy of this agreement **must be given** to the Interchange Office ERB room 1.20*

Appendix B

University of Liverpool

Participant Information Sheet

For Service User Focus Group

Research study to evaluate the Write to Work project

Version 1: 17th November 2018

You are being invited to participate in a research study. Before you decide whether to participate, please read through this information sheet. It is important for you to understand what the research will involve and what the resulting data will be used for. Please feel free to ask any further questions or discuss anything that you do not understand with us or anyone of your choosing. We would like to stress that you do not have to accept this invitation and should only agree to take part if you want to.

Thank you for reading.

What is the purpose of this study?

The main aim of this study is to evaluate the Write to Work project and find out what impact the project has had, both professionally and personally, on its past and current participants. The research will also locate any areas where the project is not meeting its full potential and to identify any gaps in service provision, in order to produce recommended improvements for future workshops.

Why have I been chosen to take part?

You have been chosen to take part in this study as you have participated or are currently participating in the Write to Work project. Approximately 90 other people, who have also been involved with the Write to Work project, have been chosen to take part in this study.

Do I have to take part?

You are under no obligation to take part in this study and should only agree to take part if you want to. You can withdraw at any point during the focus group session and can withdraw your contribution up until the data is anonymised during analysis.

What will happen if I take part?

For this research study, you will be taking part in a focus group alongside 6-8 other people who have been identified as current participants of the Write to Work project. The session will be moderated by Nicole Benefer, the student researcher conducting this study. As the moderator, Nicole Benefer will introduce topics for discussion throughout the session for yourself and the other participants to respond to. At no point during the session will you be singled out to answer a question. The session is purely discussion based and therefore you can contribute as much or little as you wish to.

This will be a one-time focus group and should take approximately 1-2 hours. It will be audio recorded on a secure device to make it easier to transcribe and analyse. The data collected in the focus group will be analysed by Nicole Benefer and be used as evidence when evaluating the Write to Work project in the final report. Additionally, where appropriate, direct quotes from this session may also be used as reference. All data collected from the focus group will be anonymised and stored in password protected files in a secure section of the University of Liverpool server. Furthermore, any data or quotes used or referenced in the final report will be done so anonymously.

How will my data be used?

The University processes personal data as part of its research and teaching activities in accordance with the lawful basis of 'public task', and in accordance with the University's purpose of "advancing education, learning and research for the public benefit".
Under UK data protection legislation, the University acts as the Data Controller for personal data collected as part of the University's research. Nicole Benefer, under the supervision of Kirsteen Paton, acts as the Data Processor for this study, and any queries relating to the handling of your personal data can be sent to Nicole Benefer at hsnbenef@liverpool.ac.uk or Kirsteen Paton at kpaton@liverpool.ac.uk.

Further information on how your data will be used can be found in the table below.

How will my data be collected?	The focus group will be audio recorded on a secure device and transcribed by the researcher at a later date.
How will my data be stored?	All audio recordings will immediately be transferred to the University's central server which is password protected. All written transcription and data analysis will also be stored on the secure central server.
How long will my data be stored for?	Data will be stored for no longer than 5 years
What measures are in place to protect the security and confidentiality of my data?	All data will be stored on a secure, password protected central server. Furthermore, no raw data will be made public or shared between anyone other than Nicole Benefer and her academic supervisor Kirsteen Paton.

Will my data be anonymised?	Yes. There will be no identifying personal data documented on the audio recording of the session, nor will it be written on any transcripts, field notes or resulting reports. All participants will be given pseudonyms should they be quoted.
How will my data be used?	The audio recording of the focus group will be transcribed and then analysed by Nicole Benefer. The results of which will be made into a 6,000 word evaluation report of the Write to Work project.
Who will have access to my data?	The evaluation report will be used for academic assessment and so will be read by university academics to be graded. A copy of the report will also be given to Writing on the Wall (WOW) who then are able to make the report public on any of their platforms.
Will my data be archived for use in other research projects in the future?	The analysed data will be available to WOW, who are able to reuse the data in any further documentation where appropriate, for example funding applications or progress reports.
How will my data be destroyed?	All data will be stored on the University of Liverpool's central server. Nicole Benefer's access to this will expire after graduation in June 2019 and, thus, the data will naturally be destroyed. Should Nicole continue with postgraduate studies at the university, access to this central server will instead expire after 4 years.

Are there any risks in taking part?

There have been no risks identified for anyone taking part in this focus group. All topics for discussion will focus on your experience taking part in the Write to Work project and therefore no sensitive issues should arise during the session. However, if any subjects do arise which you are uncomfortable with, you are advised to let the researcher know immediately and/or you can remove yourself from the group discussion at any point.

Are there any benefits in taking part?

The evaluation report which will be produced based upon this research will be used to assist WOW in developing future community projects, using the recommended improvements to help improve projects like Write to Work. Additionally, the report will aid WOW with any further applications for future funding, so they can continue providing these services.

What will happen to the results of the study?

The evaluation report will be used for academic assessment and so will be read by university academics to be graded. A copy of the report will also be given to Writing on the Wall

(WOW) who then are able to make the report public. Additionally, WOW can use it to develop future community projects and aid applications for funding in the future.

What will happen if I stop taking part?

You can remove yourself from the focus group at any point without giving any reason and any contribution you have had up until then can be destroyed if requested. If you complete the focus group, you can still decide to withdraw your contribution up until the point data is anonymised during analysis. Once analysis has begun, the results will be anonymised for the report and individual data cannot be identified and removed from the report.

If you wish to withdraw from the study, you can contact Nicole Benefer on hsnbenef@liverpool.ac.uk or Kirsteen Paton on kpaton@liverpool.ac.uk.

What if I am unhappy or if there is a problem?

If you feel uncomfortable or unhappy at any point during the focus group, please alert the researcher immediately and we will do everything in our power to rectify the situation. Alternatively, if you do not feel able to discuss an issue with us in person, you can contact Nicole Benefer on hsnbenef@liverpool.ac.uk or Kirsteen Paton on kpaton@liverpool.ac.uk. If an issue arises that you do not wish to share with the researcher directly, then you can contact the Research Ethics and Integrity Office on ethics@liv.ac.uk. When contacting the Research Ethics and Integrity Office, please provide details of the name and description of the study (so that it can be identified), the researcher(s) involved, and the details of the complaint you wish to make.

Who can I contact if I have further questions?

If you have any further questions please contact Nicole Benefer on hsnbenef@liverpool.ac.uk or Kirsteen Paton on kpaton@liverpool.ac.uk. Alternatively, Kirsteen Paton is available on 0151 794 2982.

Participant Information Sheet

For Service User Online Questionnaire

Research study to evaluate the Write to Work project

Version 1: 17th November 2018

You are being invited to participate in a research study. Before you decide whether to participate, please read through this information sheet. It is important for you to understand what the research will involve and what the resulting data will be used for. Please feel free to ask any further questions or discuss anything that you do not understand with us or anyone of your choosing. We would like to stress that you do not have to accept this invitation and should only agree to take part if you want to.

Thank you for reading.

What is the purpose of this study?

The main aim of this study is to evaluate the Write to Work project and find out what impact the project has had, both professionally and personally, on its past and current participants. The research will also locate any areas where the project is not meeting its full potential and to identify any gaps in service provision, in order to produce recommended improvements for future workshops.

Why have I been chosen to take part?

You have been chosen to take part in this study as you have participated or are currently participating in the Write to Work project. Approximately 90 other people, who have also been involved with the Write to Work project, have been chosen to take part in this study.

Do I have to take part?

You are under no obligation to take part in this study and should only agree to take part if you want to. You can withdraw at any point during the questionnaire and can withdraw your contribution up until the data is anonymised during analysis.. If you wish to withdraw, simply close the browser and your session will terminate. However, responses to questions you have already completed up until this point will still be used unless you contact the researcher and request for them to be destroyed. Should this situation occur, please contact Nicole Benefer (researcher) at hsnbenef@liverpool.ac.uk or Kirsteen Paton (academic

supervisor) at kpaton@liverpool.ac.uk with details of the date and approximate time of questionnaire completion.

What will happen if I take part?

For this research study, you will be taking part in an online questionnaire that should take approximately 20 minutes to complete. The questions will ask you about your experience of the Write to Work project and how it has impacted you, both personally and professionally, since. You will be asked a few demographic questions, for example your age and gender, but no personally identifying data will be collected.

The data collected from these questionnaires will be analysed and used as evidence when evaluating the Write to Work project in the final report. Additionally, where appropriate, direct quotes of your answers may also be used as reference. All data collected from this questionnaire will be anonymised and stored in password protected files in a secure section of the University of Liverpool server.

How will my data be used?

The University processes personal data as part of its research and teaching activities in accordance with the lawful basis of 'public task', and in accordance with the University's purpose of "advancing education, learning and research for the public benefit".
Under UK data protection legislation, the University acts as the Data Controller for personal data collected as part of the University's research. Nicole Benefer, under the supervision of Kirsteen Paton, acts as the Data Processor for this study, and any queries relating to the handling of your personal data can be sent to Nicole Benefer at hsnbenef@liverpool.ac.uk or Kirsteen Paton at kpaton@liverpool.ac.uk.

Further information on how your data will be used can be found in the table below.

How will my data be collected?	You will complete an online questionnaire, the answers of which will be accessible online by Nicole Benefer and Kirsteen Paton only.
How will my data be stored?	The answers to the questionnaires are saved to an online account which is password protected and so can only be accessed by Nicole Benefer and Kirsteen Paton. Once all data is collected, it will then be exported and saved to the University of Liverpool's central server which is also password protected.
How long will my data be stored for?	Data will be stored for no longer than 5 years
What measures are in place to protect the security and confidentiality of my data?	All data will be stored on a secure, password protected central server. Furthermore, no raw data will be made public or shared between anyone other than Nicole Benefer and her academic supervisor Kirsteen Paton.

Will my data be anonymised?	Yes. There will be no identifying personal data collected from the questionnaire. All participants will be given pseudonyms should their answers be quoted in the final report.
How will my data be used?	Once all data is collected, it will be exported and analysed by Nicole Benefer. The results of which will be made into a 6,000 word evaluation report of the Write to Work project.
Who will have access to my data?	The evaluation report will be used for academic assessment and so will be read by university academics to be graded. A copy of the report will also be given to Writing on the Wall (WOW) who then are able to make the report public on any of their platforms.
Will my data be archived for use in other research projects in the future?	The analysed data will be available to WOW, who are able to reuse the data in any further documentation where appropriate, for example funding applications or progress reports.
How will my data be destroyed?	All data will be stored on the University of Liverpool's central server. Nicole Benefer's access to this will expire after graduation in June 2019 and, thus, the data will naturally be destroyed. Should Nicole continue with postgraduate studies at the university, access to this central server will instead expire after 4 years.

Are there any risks in taking part?

There have been no risks identified for anyone taking part in these questionnaires. The questions will focus on your overall experience taking part in the Write to Work project and therefore no sensitive issues should arise during the session. However, if any subjects do arise which you are uncomfortable with, you are able to withdraw from the questionnaire at any point by closing the browser which will terminate your session.

Are there any benefits in taking part?

The evaluation report which will be produced based upon this research will be used to assist WOW in developing future community projects, using the recommended improvements to help improve projects like Write to Work. Additionally, the report will aid WOW with any further applications for future funding, so they can continue providing these services.

What will happen to the results of the study?

The evaluation report will be used for academic assessment and so will be read by university academics to be graded. A copy of the report will also be given to Writing on the Wall (WOW) who then are able to make the report public. Additionally, WOW can use it to develop future community projects and aid applications for funding in the future.

What will happen if I stop taking part?

You can remove yourself from the study at any point by closing the browser which ill terminate your session. Responses you have provided up until this point will still be used unless you contact the researcher, Nicole Benefer, or her academic advisor Kirsteen Paton. You can also request for your responses to be removed from the study up until the data is anonymised during analysis and you will not be required to explain why you wish to do so. Once analysis has begun, the results will have been exported, meaning it cannot be identified and removed from the report.

Should you wish to withdraw, please contact Nicole Benefer (researcher) at hsnbenef@liverpool.ac.uk or Kirsteen Paton (academic supervisor) at kpaton@liverpool.ac.uk.

What if I am unhappy or if there is a problem?

If you feel uncomfortable or unhappy at any point during the questionnaire, please contact the researcher immediately and we will do everything in our power to rectify the situation. If an issue arises that you do not wish to share with the researcher directly, then you can contact the Research Ethics and Integrity Office on ethics@liv.ac.uk. When contacting the Research Ethics and Integrity Office, please provide details of the name and description of the study (so that it can be identified), the researcher(s) involved, and the details of the complaint you wish to make.

Who can I contact if I have further questions?

If you have any further questions please contact Nicole Benefer on hsnbenef@liverpool.ac.uk or Kirsteen Paton on kpaton@liverpool.ac.uk. Alternatively, Kirsteen Paton is available on 0151 794 2982.

Participant Information Sheet

For Staff/Service Professionals Interview

Research study to evaluate the Write to Work project

Version 1: 17th November 2018

You are being invited to participate in a research study. Before you decide whether to participate, please read through this information sheet. It is important for you to understand what the research will involve and what the resulting data will be used for. Please feel free to ask any further questions or discuss anything that you do not understand with us or anyone of your choosing. We would like to stress that you do not have to accept this invitation and should only agree to take part if you want to.

Thank you for reading.

What is the purpose of this study?

The main aim of this study is to evaluate the Write to Work project and find out what impact the project has had, both professionally and personally, on its past and current participants. The research will also locate any areas where the project is not meeting its full potential and to identify any gaps in service provision, in order to produce recommended improvements for future workshops.

Why have I been chosen to take part?

You have been chosen to take part in this study as you have worked on the Write to Work project either through its organisation or leading one of the workshops. One other member of staff has also been chosen to be interviewed, as well as 90 of the projects past participants being involved either by questionnaire or focus group.

Do I have to take part?

You are under no obligation to take part in this study and should only agree to take part if you want to. You can withdraw at any point during the interview process and can withdraw your contribution up until the data is anonymised during analysis. If you wish to withdraw, please contact Nicole Benefer (researcher) at hsnbenef@liverpool.ac.uk or Kirsteen Paton (academic supervisor) at kpaton@liverpool.ac.uk.

What will happen if I take part?

For this research study, you will be taking part in a face-to-face interview with the researcher, Nicole Benefer. The questions will ask you about your experience of the Write to Work project and how you think the workshops will benefit the participants. You will be asked a few demographic questions, for example your age and gender, but no personally identifying data will be collected.

The data collected from the interview will be analysed and used as evidence when evaluating the Write to Work project in the final report. Additionally, where appropriate, direct quotes of your answers may also be used as reference. All data collected from this interview will be anonymised and stored in password protected files in a secure section of the University of Liverpool server.

How will my data be used?

The University processes personal data as part of its research and teaching activities in accordance with the lawful basis of 'public task', and in accordance with the University's purpose of "advancing education, learning and research for the public benefit".
Under UK data protection legislation, the University acts as the Data Controller for personal data collected as part of the University's research. Nicole Benefer, under the supervision of Kirsteen Paton, acts as the Data Processor for this study, and any queries relating to the handling of your personal data can be sent to Nicole Benefer at hsnbenef@liverpool.ac.uk or Kirsteen Paton at kpaton@liverpool.ac.uk.

Further information on how your data will be used can be found in the table below.

How will my data be collected?	The interview will be audio recorded on a secure device and transcribed by the researcher at a later date.
How will my data be stored?	All audio recordings will immediately be transferred to the University's central server which is password protected. All written transcription and data analysis will also be stored on the secure central server.
How long will my data be stored for?	Data will be stored for no longer than 5 years
What measures are in place to protect the security and confidentiality of my data?	All data will be stored on a secure, password protected central server. Furthermore, no raw data will be made public or shared between anyone other than Nicole Benefer and her academic supervisor Kirsteen Paton.
Will my data be anonymised?	Yes. There will be no identifying personal data documented on the audio recording of the session, nor will it be written on any transcripts, field notes or resulting reports. All participants will be given pseudonyms should they be quoted.
How will my data be used?	The interview will be transcribed and then analysed by Nicole Benefer. The results of which will be made into a

	6,000 word evaluation report of the Write to Work project.
Who will have access to my data?	The evaluation report will be used for academic assessment and so will be read by university academics to be graded. A copy of the report will also be given to Writing on the Wall (WOW) who then are able to make the report public on any of their platforms.
Will my data be archived for use in other research projects in the future?	The analysed data will be available to WOW, who are able to reuse the data in any further documentation where appropriate, for example funding applications or progress reports.
How will my data be destroyed?	All data will be stored on the University of Liverpool's central server. Nicole Benefer's access to this will expire after graduation in June 2019 and, thus, the data will naturally be destroyed. Should Nicole continue with postgraduate studies at the university, access to this central server will instead expire after 4 years.

Are there any risks in taking part?

There have been no risks identified for anyone taking part in this study. The questions will focus on your overall experience taking part in the Write to Work project and therefore no sensitive issues should arise during the session. However, if any subjects do arise which you are uncomfortable with, you are advised to let the researcher know immediately and/or you can remove yourself from the group discussion at any point.

Are there any benefits in taking part?

The evaluation report which will be produced based upon this research will be used to assist WOW in developing future community projects, using the recommended improvements to help improve projects like Write to Work. Additionally, the report will aid WOW with any further applications for future funding, so they can continue providing these services.

What will happen to the results of the study?

The evaluation report will be used for academic assessment and so will be read by university academics to be graded. A copy of the report will also be given to Writing on the Wall (WOW) who then are able to make the report public. Additionally, WOW can use it to develop future community projects and aid applications for funding in the future.

What will happen if I stop taking part?

You can withdraw from the interview at any point and any contribution you have had up until then can be destroyed if requested. If you complete the interview, you can still decide to withdraw your contribution up until the data is anonymised during analysis. Once analysis

has begun, the results will have been anonymised, meaning it cannot be identified and removed from the report.

Should you wish to withdraw, please contact Nicole Benefer (researcher) at hsnbenef@liverpool.ac.uk or Kirsteen Paton (academic supervisor) at kpaton@liverpool.ac.uk.

What if I am unhappy or if there is a problem?

If you feel uncomfortable or unhappy at any point during the focus group, please alert the researcher immediately and we will do everything in our power to rectify the situation. Alternatively, if you do not feel able to discuss an issue with us in person, you can contact Nicole Benefer on hsnbenef@liverpool.ac.uk or Kirsteen Paton on kpaton@liverpool.ac.uk. If an issue arises that you do not wish to share with the researcher directly, then you can contact the Research Ethics and Integrity Office on ethics@liv.ac.uk. When contacting the Research Ethics and Integrity Office, please provide details of the name and description of the study (so that it can be identified), the researcher(s) involved, and the details of the complaint you wish to make.

Who can I contact if I have further questions?

If you have any further questions please contact Nicole Benefer on hsnbenef@liverpool.ac.uk or Kirsteen Paton on kpaton@liverpool.ac.uk. Alternatively, Kirsteen Paton is available on 0151 794 2982.

Appendix C

University of Liverpool

Participant Consent Form: Service User Focus Group

Version 1: 18th November 2018

Research Ethics Approval Number:

Research study to evaluate the Write to Work Project

Researcher: Nicole Benefer under the supervision of Kirsteen Paton

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and have understood the information sheet dated 17th November 2018 for the above study, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that taking part in the study involves an audio recorded focus group which will be transcribed and analysed by Nicole Benefer (researcher)

3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to stop taking part and can withdraw from the study at any time without giving any reason and without my rights being affected, up until the data is anonymised. In addition, I understand that I am free to participate in the discussion as much as I feel comfortable with and will never be forced to contribute to the discussion.

4. I understand that I can ask for access to the information I provide, and I can request the destruction of that information if I wish at any time prior to the data being anonymised during analysis. I understand that once analysis has begun, I will no longer be able to request access to or withdrawal of the information I provide.

5. I understand that the information I provide will be held securely and in line with data protection requirements at the University of Liverpool until it is fully anonymised and then stored on the university's central server for a maximum of 5 years before being destroyed.

6. I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings of this focus group will be stored securely on the University of Liverpool's central server and will only be accessed by Nicole Benefer and Kirsteen Paton.

7. I agree to take part in the above study.

☐

_____   _____   _____

Participant name   Date   Signature

_____   _____   _____

Researcher   Date   Signature

Principal Investigator   **Student Investigator**

Dr Kirsteen Paton   Nicole Benefer

Senior Lecturer in Sociology   Sociology, Social Policy and Criminology

Room 1.54, ERB   School of Law and Social Justice

Sociology, Social Policy and Criminology   University of Liverpool

School of Law and Social Justice   Email: hsnbenef@liverpool.ac.uk

University of Liverpool

L69 7ZA

Telephone: +44 (0) 151 794 2982
Email: kpaton@liverpool.ac.uk

Participant Consent Form: Service user Online Questionnaire

Version 1: 18th November 2018

Research Ethics Approval Number:

Research study to evaluate the Write to Work Project

Researcher: Nicole Benefer under the supervision of Kirsteen Paton

Please tick

8. I confirm that I have read and have understood the information sheet dated 17th November 2018 for the above study. ☐

9. I understand that taking part in the study involves answering online questions about my participation with the Write to Work project. I also understand that my answers will be analysed and used to create an evaluation report by Nicole Benefer. ☐

10. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to stop taking part and can withdraw from the study at any time without giving any reason and without my rights being affected, up until the data is analysed. ☐

11. I understand that I can ask for access to the information I provide, and I can request the destruction of that information if I wish at any time prior to the data being analysed. I understand that once analysis has begun, I will no longer be able to request access to or withdrawal of the information I provide. ☐

12. I understand that the raw anonymised data collected from this questionnaire will be stored securely and in line with data protection requirements at the University of Liverpool and will only be accessed by Nicole Benefer and Kirsteen Paton. I understand that the data will be stored for a maximum of 5 years before being destroyed. ☐

13. I agree to take part in the above study. ☐

_____   _____   _____

Participant name   Date   Signature

_____   _____   _____

Researcher   Date   Signature

Principal Investigator

Dr Kirsteen Paton

Senior Lecturer in Sociology

Room 1.54, ERB

Sociology, Social Policy and Criminology

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Telephone: +44 (0) 151 794 2982
Email: kpaton@liverpool.ac.uk

Student Investigator

Nicole Benefer

Sociology, Social Policy and Criminology

School of Law and Social Justice

University of Liverpool

Email: hsnbenef@liverpool.ac.uk

Participant Consent Form: Staff/Industry professional Interview

Version 1: 18th November 2018

Research Ethics Approval Number:

Research study to evaluate the Write to Work Project

Researcher: Nicole Benefer under the supervision of Kirsteen Paton

Please initial box

14. I confirm that I have read and have understood the information sheet dated 17th November 2018 for the above study, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

15. I understand that taking part in the study involves an audio recorded interview which will be transcribed and analysed by Nicole Benefer

16. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to stop taking part and can withdraw from the study at any time without giving any reason and without my rights being affected, up until the data is anonymised. In addition, I understand that I am free to decline to answer any question I am uncomfortable with.

17. I understand that I can ask for access to the information I provide, and I can request the destruction of that information if I wish at any time prior to the data being anonymised during analysis. I understand that once analysis has begun, I will no longer be able to request access to or withdrawal of the information I provide.

18. I understand that the information I provide will be held securely and in line with data protection requirements at the University of Liverpool until it is fully anonymised and then stored on the university's central server for a maximum of 5 years before being destroyed.

19. I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings of this interview will be stored securely on the University of Liverpool's central server and will only be accessed by Nicole Benefer and Kirsteen Paton.

20. I agree to take part in the above study.

_____   _____   _____

Participant name   Date   Signature

_____   _____   _____

Researcher   Date   Signature

Principal Investigator   **Student Investigator**

Dr Kirsteen Paton   Nicole Benefer

Senior Lecturer in Sociology   Sociology, Social Policy and Criminology

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