

# London Decompression 2024 – Participant comments

## Tell us about your volunteering experience?

Generally good but I think earlier recruitment would be helpful.

co-lead Fluffer, loved it!



Danny was great as a strike lead and made all the difference, it makes the job so much easier when you have clear instructions.

Enjoyed being part of creating something amazing

Helped create a magical space with a diverse group of people

I enjoyed the volunteering. Could have done with a chill space for volunteers to hang out away from the party though

I felt a bit estranged, tbh the facilities to do my task were inadequate and I felt I was in the way of others doing their tasks. I have discussed this with my lead, who was excellent btw, and they will take it up with the Org. tbh my mindset was not the best, and if it hadn't been for friends looking after me, it could have been worse

I helped with SLAPR for build and strike, it was very well organised and we had quite a few new helpers for both, which made things flow really well  

I love helping with build/decor for parties, turning an empty space into an inviting and exciting environment and then getting to see everyone enjoying it :)

I oversubscribed myself, so not enough time to enjoy parts like the live performances.

I think more volunteers were desperately needed! Especially during the build. Ticket sales need to move earlier, especially the second round to enable people time to secure their availability to volunteer.

I was a grater at the busiest window. It was really hard work! it was constant ticket scanning for 2h, no time for chatting with other volunteers (i had hoped to make new friends as came solo), and a relatively long shift! perhaps grating shifts at busy times should just be 1h? I was very sober and a bit tired by the end! Could graters get drinks tickets or treats? or some music so it feels more fun? I also felt a bit unprepared to answer questions on accessibility or details for performers, and the shift lead wasn't always readily present/available to take them, which made me feel bad. A clear laminated info sheet on the front desk might have been helpful. I also felt really bad for those coming in who'd waited for ages in the pouring rain and were cold - could fully covered queuing area be provided if we stay at the same venue?

I was a performer and Johanna and team were fabulous from start to finish making our dreams come true!

I was a stray heart and it was amazing!

I was part of the team that put on the Lust In Space room. It was great to share the space we created with others and see people having fun

I was performing, but I was on in a room full of people who didn't feel like they wanted to watch an act like that. I'd stayed sober, given up partying and worked hard to perform, and I didn't feel like the audience were in a place to appreciate what I had prepared. Felt like I'd put in a lot of work and it wasn't appreciated.

I was unable to join the general decor support prior to the event (timings and location) - but found a room to support and made lots of new friends as a result.

I was with Fluffing and the Haven. The new setup for their space was much better than last year, though the Haven needed more quiet space. The lack of quiet space was particularly hard for one of our "guests"

I wasn't included, the makers sessions were in East London, I'm on benefits & found the travel costs prohibitively expensive. I felt no one saw potential in my work

I'd like to be given a job before I get there. I think if people were told what they were doing, more would turn up, more responsibility etc. Also, I signed up on the website but no one got in touch with me, despite the website saying so. Leaves people feeling adrift.

It was an awesome challenge but ultimately quite exhausting!

It wasn't that clear what I was meant to do! Also as someone who doesn't eat animals I wasn't a huge fan of handling non vegan food.

Letting us know dates further in advance would be good - as I would have come to more sessions but I had other commitments already

Love the chaotic build energy

Lovely to connect with such beautiful people

Mostly making diesel heater work. No panics to fix. Pretty chill

My main issue was being cold as I was outside a lot.

Participated in room build

Some people didn't show..

Some people got into lead positions without having been on a burn even once. Thw lack of burner spirit was questionable. The experienced leads were incredible though

The communication was all a bit last minute and rushed

The meetings were way too long. It isn't necessary to hear about every team's progress - that could easily be communicated in writing. The purpose of meetings should be to connect the right people of different teams who need to collaborate on a project. The constant stream of WhatsApp messages was overwhelming and distracting and made it hard to focus on my paid work. I performed badly on a very important project that needed a lot of attention, which is terrible for my career and I now have to live with that. I also lost a lot of potential income because Decom took up way more of my time than expected.

We had a great time and our team had new people join who want to do it again. Very exciting!

You get so much more from volunteering. Life long friendships made. This year, in particular, it felt like there was some solid oversight from the Ubers and Event Leads which made me feel supported.

# What did you think of the venue?

A cool venue with a good layout but a bit hard to navigate, a lot of cold places if you're dressed like a harlot and really, really corporate.

A labyrinth! But I liked it.

All good

Amazing space

Awesome place. Better than fire!! Chaotic, but perhaps that is not a bad thing, especially when burners are involved

Bad experience with some toilet attendants. Location - very difficult to leave after the event due to traffic issue in the area right outside the venue. Speaking with the uber driver, this is a recurring issue that happens every weekend. No warm chillout area.

Better than Fire & Coronet. Large area and outdoors well suited unique experiences,

Better than last year. Not so many roadworks! Interior layout also better and plenty of covered 5\* outdoor space

Bit of a maze!

cool but I prefer when I don't have to take my coat with me every time I want to change room

Excellent venue large took some time to get used to

Expensive

Fantastic and quite a big

Fantastic to have the extra rooms, and the outdoor being more sheltered. Sound seemed a bit low in volume in some spaces.

good location 4 decom

Good venue but a bit confusing. I didn't learn my way around, only in and out of specific locations or followed other people

good, but cloakroom queues were too long

Good.. Too much music venues though..it's a burn and shouldn't turn out to be like nowhere

Gorgeous, love the Cause as a venue - so many side rooms. Loved the rooms up top above celtic chaos and all the side quests.

Great fun, bit cold outside

Great layout, the rooms were amazing. The location was a struggle to get to and from.

Great location but I found finding all the venues a tad confusing

Great location, good indoor and outdoor spaces, good variety of spaces to play with and explore!

Great location, lovely greeters, and fantastic music. It was a shame there was a sofa in the middle of the dance floor in the main room, my friend hurt her leg and I almost fell.

Great location, moon room was more than a little cramped (beds were an interesting concept but clear more dance space required)

Great venue and backdrop! Modern industrial feel to it.

great venue, very interesting spaces

Great venue. Great layout. Nice variety.

Great! I love the update this year from last year - the upstairs in the main room is awesome, and putting the material up in the outdoor space makes it a nice and cosier area that more people can use

Great! Loved the layout and the use of space.

Great! More signage would be cool..

Great, lots of space and a great range of stages. Felt there was plenty to explore. Never got too cramped.

Guys you bloody rock! Its got so much better from the 2023 one. The Cause is such a brilliant and versatile event space for Decom. What was the outside area in 2023 being mostly covered this for this year really worked! It had fun circus vibe and with the rainy weather we're always bound to get was a great move. Its so much fun to then dive through inside the buildings to discover another room then ANOTHER room, its Such an adventure. I felt the silent disco area wasn't as good however or it felt like there wasn't designated space for it, we just all danced around the staging from the previous events helds there.

I found the setting was too cold for me!!

I like the combination of inside and outside spaces, and the multi level rooms

I liked the varied space, was cool to bumble around, lots of things. I really, really disliked how heavily commodified it was. It wasn't just there was money, it was money clearly not going back into the Burn, and it was overly exploitative. The cloak room people demanded 2nd payment if anyone needed something - layers for heat or waterproofs - from their bags... The focus on extracting money was reflected in the extreme security greeting shaped the entire nights' vibe, which put a spoiler on things, it wasn't for safety, it was to ensure we bought drinks and food if we desired them. The roaming security was also not very good, is one thing to have a checkpoint, is another to send people to patrol. Was not a good landing/greeting/vibe...but will think of it as a club night rather than burn next time if coming back, so set my expectations a little differently I think. Thank you for making the thing though <3

I really loved the decor and the vibe but it was a bit chaotic and busy at times in the smaller areas

I wish there were more maps (perhaps a little leaflet?), I kept getting lost, hehe.

It was incredible having the diversity of different organizations putting things together. Part of it felt a bit chaotic and hard to find things but that actually makes me like it more as it is a bit like at a burn It's good for a burn

It's the perfect location in London to have a burn feel party. Staff is really nice. But the cloak room was a shit show. Again.

It's a great Venue but it is very bad communicated, specially at 3am.

It's a great venue. Great size, love the outdoor areas, love all the different rooms. Particularly loved the Cwtch tent and the fire to sit around.

It's a nice party, if it was closer to my home, I would come each year

It's got a good balance of indoor and outdoor. Location is out of the way but anywhere big will be. But being in the rooms is a bit stressful - because of the layout there's always a stream of people threatening to sweep you away.

It's okay, but very very cold in parts. You go from needing 3 coats to short sleeves. Makes it inconvenient to drop off stuff, pick up stuff etc.

Last year I didn't like the change of venue at all, I was missing Fire. But you guys did a great job this year! The several different rooms/tents, unique spaces, different vibes, all this put together created an amazing atmosphere, well done! Can't wait for next year!

Layout great! It was just veeeeery cold!

Layout is confusing and needs more clearer bigger signs.

Location is a bit in the middle of nowhere, but the layout was great, and better than last year

Location is difficult to get to & the event seemed amateurish

Love The Cause as a venue to explore (a little confusing at times, and didn't enjoy the one way systems to get to certain rooms). It's a little far from the station to return from as a lone female, but this is often the case with East London venues.

Love the location, layout was much better than last year.

Love this venue, especially with the new central marquee. Could cloakroom queues be undercover/in the marquee?

Loved the extra rooms and the ability to 'get lost' in the indoor spaces. Fire outside was welcome. Felt that the Arena could have been used for more workshops etc.

Much better layout than last year . Better circumnavigation between areas.

Much improved from last year, loved mooncows and the option for cosyyness

Not great, to be honest. It definitely seems like a summer venue. To move between locations was so cold (including in the corridors), it really made the experience quite unpleasant. I had to choose between freezing or carrying my coat with me, with nowhere to safely put it when dancing. Another issue was that there was nowhere to chill and socialise that was not outdoors and freezing. The chill room was very packed but even when we managed to find a (uncomfortable and squeezed) seat, the music there was so loud that I wouldn't call it a chilling space exactly because I couldn't hear what people were saying. It seemed that people who wanted to talk (or even just sit down to rest) had to be outside, cold. Sadly, despite the marvelousness of the event and fantastic people, these factors made me not enjoy it as much as I hoped and I left early because I needed to rest but couldn't find anywhere where I could comfortably do it.

Obscure layout - a bit of a palaver getting home but actually, on reflection an extra part of the adventure. Strangely - as a veteran burner - I knew very few people at the Party - but when several turned up, I had a terrific time - thank you

Outdoor space a huge improvement. Extra rooms really good too.

please turn up the outside temperature!! indoor spaces and cuddle tent were great

Super amazing! huge venue, many rooms, the only thing is that I feel the outdoors area is not that enjoyable due to the cold weather. Could it be considered to done Decom in warmer months like March/April?

Super location, the cable cars above really add to an otherworldly experience. Nice to have a good balance of indoor/outdoor space and the stretch tent was a great addition to the space.

Thank you for all the hard work to make this party happen! Sadly I didn't like the venue at all! awkward layout - it felt like there was pieces of furniture or mini podiums getting in the way of dance freedom. The music was great but the volume way too low. It was hard to find the toilets and it took forever to get to the loo due to there not being enough of them. The venue also felt confusing. Having been quite the club kid over many many years I've actually never felt as lost as I did at this particular venue. I don't know, but maybe an idea could be to offer ahead of parties taking place some kind of actual floor plan - not just to find one's way around but also to be able to make the most of all the fun things you offered. I felt I missed out on a lot not quite being able to work out what was going on where - and how to get there might sound a bit silly, but that's what it felt like. Your party when it was at Fire in Vauxhall was absolutely mind blowingly AMAZING! Such great fun! One of the best parties I've ever been to! Several dance floors with equally as many music options to dance too. Fabulous sound systems!!! Both that party and this latest party did, without a doubt, fill up with the most awesome, beautiful, fun and creative people!!! Looking forward to next year, which I'll definitely attend to, if it's not at the venue it was at this year.

The Cause is a great venue, works really well for Decom. Would be a lot more fun if it wasn't so cold..

The Cause is the PERFECT venue for Decom, and this year was the best Decom for me and the venue was a big part of that

The event space and layout were great. I live in California and most decom events I've been to are much smaller and typically don't have as much art and interactivity. I really liked how much London Decom integrated so many different aspects of an actual burn.

the outside area was honestly a bit bleak in the cold and rain... could we move decom slightly earlier in the year??

The outside of the venue has improved with the canvas structure in the middle of the courtyard.

Toilets need improving

Too many rooms!

Venue is not right. Decom should be weeks after the burn but if we must continue to have it so late, don't waste the money on a venue which is half outside. People can't dress for in and out it's just not realistic or practical. So outside is wasted money and space

Very unique and fun venue

We certainly made good use of the space, there were things everywhere. Bar staff happy to pour into burner cups was good too

## Queue

A bit too long and cold

Friendly queue someone gave out dj collector cards which was fun

I arrived early - before the rush !

I got in quickly, but scanned tickets of cold drenched people, not a great start to their day!

I got there early so no problems!

I was in for build so didn't have to queue!

I was there for build but when I was performing for the queue it didn't look too bad

More check points if possible.

Was a bit bleak. Metal fences to carrel into a bag and jacket search, followed by ID check and face imaging...was a little Children of Men, perhaps could subvert this into some sort of parody 1984 experience around the real one? The two burner welcomers with cards were trying but cold and a bit sad too I think, big hugs to them

We got there really early, so there was only a short queue.

## Security

Good friendly security team

I felt 100% comfortable and safe at this event and really appreciated that.

Just the right level of attention.

One of the security guys seemed homophobic - pulling a face as me and my boyfriend kissed

Patrols, going through bags and jackets, unpacking bags, face scans...was so hard to get them to break character and laugh! Took some tartan panties. are you ok London?! =P

seemed to be more on board! some were friendly!

the person checking my bag seemed fed up and only gave short answers

Thorough search at the entrance, but then turning a blind eye inside the venue. They did a good job!

Thought they were all really friendly which made a nice change

Unobtrusive but there if needed

Very chill and friendly

## Cloakroom

Great to add a second one to minimise waiting time

Hard to queue for coat in the rain!

huge line!! surely this is anticipated!

It was outside, the queue was very cold

Just a bit cold and took quite a long time

Long queue to begin with but improved

On the way out, even though there were only maybe 4 people in front, we waited for ages to get our stuff.

People should have changing space, queue was super slow because people at the front would start undressing and getting into costume

Possibly have more than one person on the cloakroom, it was very slow.

Pretty unhelpful to a friend who they lost the jacket of, demanded more money just for getting waterproofs or things from bags or jackets....not good at all...

Queue could be very slow and the end of the day

queue too long

Security for one's belongings should have been better - like having one's initials asked and put at the back of cloakroom tickets (so the initials would have to be provided upon checking out of the

cloakroom). Also, despite there hardly being any people in the cloakroom queue when we arrived it took 20 mins for us to check in our stuff

Sh\*t show. Queue didn't move for 20mins, so passed on the coats to inside contacts instead

The people in the cloakroom weren't too keen on letting me take my things out despite me showing the strike armband. Perhaps they could be informed about that next year, so that strike people don't have to stand in the VERY long queue to get their things when strike starts.

The queue was so long that we gave up

Very very slow staff volunteering in the cloakroom. Would be great if this could improve as I waited almost 30 minutes both on the way in and out.

We had to queue over an hour despite coming early to the event and then you have to queue again for far too long in the freezing cold to get your coat back. Worst experience ever.

Wouldn't let me get my bag back out without paying again despite the organisers explicitly promising exactly that.

## Toilets

Again, the 'sweet seller' dash keeping an eye on alternative use of toilet cubicle guy may not have been a good thing...

Aggressive attendant asking for money. Awkward. Also how are those toilets SO small?! I'm tiny and find it impossible to navigate the door and loo!!

Clean, no long lines, spaced throughout different locations

Could always do with more

Cubicles were tiny, had to pretty much stand on the toilet in order to close the door behind you!

Depending on where. Inside the building are few toilets where the queue was really long. The far away ones outside were great but without a coat, getting there is painful.

Hard to find and not enough of them

Having ushers in the toilets feels wrong for a burn event

I didn't use them late so don't know what state they got to

Outside long queue, but messy. Outside less busy, but pretty cold.

I would have preferred indoor toilets without flooding issues!

It's a bit chilly having them all outside but the capacity was great so I get it

loads of queues

Not enough female toilets in the building! People didn't realise there was a whole block outside either

Not enough mirrors

Not enough toilets and female toilets had no servicing during the evening.

not terrible queues, but they're not exactly nice and mostly in portacabins!

Not the nicest but could be worse. Why was there a toilet attendant?

Surprisingly good

The portaloos were the best maintained. The others ran out of paper and got unclean very quickly.

There were plenty but sadly mostly outside. The inside ones were very few for the volume. I found the toilet attendants to be very pushy to pay them, which I didn't appreciate especially as I told one of them that toilet paper has run out and they didn't even move to change it for the next person. One thing I expect if there are toilet attendants is that at least the toilet paper doesn't run out and it's clean, I don't need anyone to hand me the paper towel to dry my hands and it seemed that's all they do.

They were pretty dirty and overflowing even before 9pm

Toilet roll and cleanliness required

Was super impressed there was always loo roll and I only had to queue once.



# Accessibility

Anyone with mobility issues would've struggled to access spaces such as the green room, and all the dance floor spaces were overstimulating, would've been nice to have a quieter dancefloor with more chill lighting

Good for me, not so good for less abled

I don't have access needs but there were a lot of stairs

I liked that welfare had earplugs to give out :)

Lots of stairs/steps and uneven ground

Needs signage for accessible routes

Not amazing but can't do much with this venue

The steps were difficult for some of my friends

There was a good transport link close by but it was not a good location for me to get home from in the night (to Hertfordshire) so I had to leave very early.

# Food vendor (Pollito Loco)

Could do with a few more easy bite options for late night that isn't heavily fried

Good once they actually communicated with me but initially told me they just couldn't feed me

Not great but thank you for vegan options

Quite expensive, glad I had a voucher. More options would be good, there was a very long queue.

Really poor quality fast food/factory farmed meat. I had a volunteer meal. It was mostly burned, really unhealthy, not many veg\*n options. Go with a plant-based place next time? Great for LBT too.

Smelt nice! Didn't see prices. Would be best to do it in house so profits go back into the organisation not pvt.

the spicy food was cheering

Their food was inedible. Salty and overly spiced. I was starving after a day of build yet I couldn't finish the soup. Please don't use them again!

Urgh

Was very disappointed after a hard day's build to find that my food voucher only got me poor quality junk food and with a massive queue. I'm sure there must have been better options. Once I was finally served, the food was inedible.

Would be great if there were 1-2 more food vendors to pick from



## Graters (Gate and Greeters)

Amazing greeters!

Enjoyed the chat and choosing the cards

Friendly

I came in early so only saw them when I brought them food!

I like to be left alone by greeters.

I was a grater - but i felt we didn't have all the info we could. The scanning devices were also not the best, sometimes wouldn't scan and there wasn't enough of them.

Received a playing card but didn't know what to do with it.

Super friendly

The greeters were really nice!

They were low moral/sad and needed hugs

## Haven (Welfare)

Could be bigger and more inviting

Didn't know this existed.

Gave out earplugs

I found someone who needed help, took it upon myself to find welfare, there was no one there to help so I sat with the lady until she felt able to return to the party. It was actually nice to help someone when they needed it, but my concern is that if I wasn't there I'm not sure she could have got the support she needed.

lovely tea, lovely people :) could be bigger, and with lower lighting, gentle mood music, it was very bright for the crafters in the same tent

mixing badge making in didn't work

No chargers, rude person

No quiet gently lit space for anyone who actually needed haven support, mostly full of volunteers.

Teams were great though, it's just the space that was an issue

On it! Helped a friend, was wonderfully stocked

Putting the badge making station in the same area was a mistake. Every time the lights were turned down the badge makers complained but the lighting was too bright for a welfare area. I liked that people self served - I saw lots of people there supporting their friends. The space was needed but could have been bigger - ie remove other activities. Also need a corner for volunteers to have a cuppa as they need to sit down.

Really appreciated being able to just go in and get a cup of tea without someone assessing whether I 'deserve' one, as has happened in previous events.

## Rangers

Didn't see any

didn't encounter any

Didn't know who they were/if they existed

Lovely as always

No contact.

On it! Helped someone passed out outside the venue when security was ignoring them. Another flag for this security set up...

One Wheel who I met was such a brilliant guy!

# Consent

I had an enquiry beforehand and they were really helpful and clear about what they could do. They should have had a station in the main arena, not in the Haven where they were in the way making badges.

## Stray Hearts (Walk-about Welfare)

didn't encounter any

Dont know, but had a heart sticker so that was nice.

Had no idea that the people giving out hearts were part of welfare, but I guess they were doing their job semi-undercover while bringing in an element of fun. Was a nice interaction.

I only had a brief interaction with one human, and it was very nice. I think this is a good idea to help strengthen Ranger numbers at the event.

Met them, they gave me sweets. Winning.

Not sure I recognised them at the time, but a very good idea

Only met 1

they seemed a bit confused.. and tbh I didn't really need them, wasn't sure what they were for. bit of a mixed remit, maybe they haven't found their feet yet?

# Was there a theme camp room that you particularly liked?

Badger sett (4)

Boiler House

Camp costume with the love fairy

Celtic Chaos (5)

Cinema

Cwtch

Decom Room (3)

Fireplace

Lip Sync room

Lust in Space (6)

Main room (2)

Moon cows (7)

Silent disco (2)

Solar punks (2)

Ted camp (5)

TrashFence Sparkleponies (2)

All the art and the side quests are my favourite bit

Celtic Chaos was super cool design, but it was overcrowded quite often with sea of people arriving and leaving. Like waves of people coming through

DJ Sets in the Main Room

Kinky challenges

Loved the magic mirror art piece too (the interactive Goddess card type screen near main room balcony).

Lust in Space did a great job in a tricky space

Moon cows was nice decor but not a chill out room as promised. People didn't take their shoes off and it felt like a train station at times.

Mooncows, great space, cool use of trampoline and loved the space in front of the dj

Music was very well curated. All the dancefloors were good

Some of the theme camps have DJs with very questionable skills..

Trashfence music was amazing

Wasn't really clear to me what the camps were or who was doing what. I also had a really bad experience being made to feel unwelcome at Camp Crumpet a few years ago so I kind wanted to know where they were to avoid them but had no way of knowing which left me feeling a bit vulnerable everywhere.

# What would you like to see or hear that wasn't at Decom this year (and can you bring it for next year?)

A longer party

A wider variety of dance music rather than rave music. A warmer venue!!

An inside chill space that is bigger than Cwtch. One of the rooms should be a chill-ish space.

Be nice to have a play space. Also more indoor/warm areas where you can sit and chat. Felt like I was either indoors and at a rave or outdoors getting cold.

Can't really think of anything! More of the same please.

Ceilidh! (2)

Divide the arena area into separate spaces for workshops and interactive activities. More places to sit down in the warm are definitely required.

Even more interactive art and quests - I thought there was a quest thing but couldn't find it!

Fortune tellers?

Healthy, sustainable and ethical food! I can suggest some awesome vendors.

I basically thought the "theme camp/weird burner stuff" offering was much smaller than the "rave" stuff (which I also enjoy!). Considering bringing what I do at the Nevada burn (Costco Soulmates) to decom next year but concerned about time/logistics commitments, uptake, and adapting it to the setting (where there weren't really any quiet, warm spaces)

I wish it was possible to apply the decommodification principle for this event, but I understand that renting a venue of this size must be very expensive.

I wish there was more chill out and quiet and warm space. The yurt was kinda that, but too cold and not enough cozy stuff. There was a lack of opportunity to meet new people and chat, unless you're freezing outside. It would have been nice to create those more organic spaces

I would like one room of generically good house music - appreciate there's a huge range of music tastes at decom - but just some burner-y lee burridge style stuff

I'd love a Rock room! Maybe a metal/rock karaoke? I'd be open to co-hosting.

Live bands

minimal techno, disco/house (I wish i could DJ, but I sadly have no skills!)

More (and even better) art, clear separations possibly

More Big Room EDM DJs next year please

More Burning Man style music

More camps in Arena.

More chill out

More chill out warm spaces A calmer vibe for dance, eg contact improv or other partnered dancing like fusion Connection games and workshops Consent workshop

More chillout space

More fire places to warm up outside. There was not enough of them :( It was super cold outside

More good drum n bass. Thankfully I found it at 1am in solar punks.

More immersive performers

More indoor space that isn't loud

more late night performances

More silliness and camp!

More use of the arena - theme camps, workshops, comfortable seating, space to hang out.

Perhaps a bit more variance between the DJs later on in the night. Sadly, I couldn't contribute this. It is only a minor suggestion as I loved the whole night, but I also like slightly darker music, however the music fitted the art and decor very well.

Quiet room/ no music - to chill without the very loud techno etc. } - look at Amsterdam Decom or - Helsinki Decom

Return of cuddle rooms?

Safe space for neurodivergent individuals & an interactive space for those attending alone

Smuggling.

Some more chill out spaces please

Think needs 2-3 big rooms with music that aren't too difficult to navigate to/from. The navigation here is weird if you don't like the music and want to go to another room it's challenging. Or is it just me?

Try and make it less like a rave after 10pm...less rooms dedicated to music. Have some of the performances after 12pm for example. Make it more interactive too. Burners want to meet other burners. The chill out tent was constantly packed and there was nowhere other than outside to get away from the music

Was really lacking chill, cuddly spaces without loud music (the tent was great but too small, would've been nice to have one room fully devoted to that)

Would have been nice to have some cosy workshops in the Cwtch tent

Would like some music with instruments (ok if recorded): soul, rock and roll, jazz, just. Something that's not electronic?

# Do you have any ideas on how to recruit and reward volunteers for key roles?

"Sharing the load" is probably a better future for burns, than paying/compensating the few who are dumb (brave) enough to give too much. Once they are drained, they won't come back and won't share their knowledge. We are just using them, like everything we do in our current capitalistic dystopia. "Sharing the load" could take many forms: - tinier shifts, - tiny shadow shifts your first year(s) - Pushing more communication about the shifts culture - Making the shift less boring - ...  
**THE FUCKING BEST REWARD IS THE FRIENDS YOU MET AND THE THINGS YOU'VE LEARNED.** (That's only a reality when we are sharing the load.)

Access to buy tickets for the after party feels better than free tickets. The only way free tickets would feel OK is if it was free/discounted tickets to Decom and applied to all essential roles including leads, uber leads etc. Free tickets to another event doesn't feel right.

Amazing team spirit, feeling part of a community

As someone who did strike and build and received no contribution (with the exception of the welcome meal voucher) I'd LOVE to even share a cab home. BM is about volunteers and gifting, but essential and key roles - especially at the end of the night for Strike when people drop out, it could go a long way.

Ask for people with specific skills, find out about people & their experience, I found that you are too shallow & judge on appearance rather than ability. If you want to attract professional people you need to act professionally

Clearer, shorter comms earlier in the process emphasising both the fun elements and how it's a strong community value

Communications on the volunteering aspect should be part of the ticket buying process.

Create an overview of the number of people staying for strike over the years. Suggest to the community that if volunteers are not found, there will be a ticket price increase to be able to give a gift to strikers as incentive

Directed sales for next year! Plus all the swag.

Directed sales tickets for ALL last year's volunteers. This used to happen - why was it stopped?

discounted ticket prices or free for people who strike

Discounted tickets

Firmly against financial compensation even in form of taxis, too much of a slippery slope. As a theme camp, can we then pay everyone coming to a site visit, taxis home, etc? Who would 'qualify' for this? And unlike Nowhere, Decom isn't a long burn! I did stick around for strike and it was fun and rewarding, isn't that enough

Free pass to access to other Burning Man events

Free ticket to decom and for strike the afterparty as well.

Have a decomp UN event at the burn - Decom from around the world sharing ideas and recruit volunteers who come to check the camp out

I followed the debate on FB when you announced after party tickets would be given to strike volunteers. It is a difficult thing to improve without upsetting other volunteers. Everyone seems to be attracted to swag, maybe have strike specific swag (T-shirts, embroidered badges with the event and date) to help treat staying for strike as the badge of honour it is. Or maybe offer a direct access code (time limited incase people can't come back) for the following years Decom, that way you haven't given away a free ticket but you have taken a great deal of hassle out of getting a ticket for the next event. Strike humans are worth their weight in gold!

I have been a lead for many years and also during times when I was out of employment. Receiving financial incentives for key roles is really not ok as it's against the BM principles. You either do it for the joy of contributing to the community or our community fails and there is no event. Being part of this amazing community is a reward and so are the thank you parties and swags. The one reward I would consider ok for key roles where we really struggle to recruit might be a free ticket to Decom.

I think monetary compensation is the only way. Either hiring external help or paying people to take down the decor etc. Decompression happens only for 1 night and most people want to go out and enjoy themselves, drink, party. I don't think many people want to stay awake for 48hrs to help take down the decor etc.

I think people would be more likely to commit if it was clear what the roles are and what would be expected. Maybe key roles could get free or discount tickets if it was possible. I do think everyone who attends should be expected to do something, but understand that's difficult to enforce.

I think strike volunteers should be offered discounts off next year's event and tickets to the after party. Transport to the after party should be provided - maybe a coach?

I think volunteering is amazing but also appreciate that we are back in our London lives with jobs and other commitments. I am fine with paying people who do clean up style roles.

I think you already do a great job with treats, rewards, a poster and recognition, and a party

I wish I had better ideas for how to make this work. It really frustrates me that so many people come as tourists. These are great ideas.

I would extend the compensation gifts to things outside of Decom/Burning Man. There will be a wide network of people in various industries who can probably donate gifts. e.g. restaurant vouchers, cinema tickets, gig tickets, experiences etc. etc.

I would pay a small group of people to personally message attendees and ask them if they would be able to do specific jobs and talk them through what is needed and so on.

In all honesty, we're Burners, we shouldn't need to be rewarded for volunteering - it's how it all works! Maybe quote some figures of attendees vs volunteers, try and encourage non-vols to step up next year? Feel free to use/modify my comment earlier re build if helpful!

It feels like this event is a torn between burn or club night, I can't speak to it, but committing to one or the other may help? Can be a commercial club night that channels X profit into a burner arts fund perhaps...but def taking over the bars, cloakroom and food (and security ideally) so you can in house the revenue seems a good idea?

Make all the roles smaller, so while it's more roles, they're way easier to fill. Do not offer 'compensation'. People should give time as a gift. A gift given in exchange for something is not a gift, so what you suggest about after party tickets is not a 'gift', it's payment. Turning people's time into a commodity.

Make shifts shorter - max 90 mins.

Money, tickets

More merch (needn't be expensive things, but unique things that you could only get that one time) and reserved tickets (to purchase) for postcom would probably help.

perhaps make it part of the ticket buying process to sign up for a volunteer shift/responsibility? I like the idea of no payments, but strike sounds like hard work, at a difficult time of the day, in a place that takes a long time for most London based folks to get to/from. It's asking a lot for folks to do that without even a taxi home. I live in South London and my Uber was £30. For some doing an hour's strike in exchange for their Uber home would be an incentive I think.

Please please don't go down the route of paying staff. They get all the blame and responsibility and no reward is enough for that. Plus all the hassle of legal requirements. Not to mention the resentment from all the other volunteers who work just as hard. Gifts can be made available at strike but shouldn't be dependent on a role. Expenses are fine.

Put the feelers out well in advance. I am strongly of the opinion that in order to encourage good people to come back and volunteer on the next Decom/s, the workload needs to be spread more thinly. It's pretty hard to over-recruit! Something nice, yet sustainable as a memento and token of appreciation is absolutely a worthwhile gesture! :)

Strike next day instead of 5am? Feed with breakfast. Make it a strike party instead of a chore

The UK Theme Camps attached to Decom that do consistently go to Burning Man and Africa Burn could offer places in their camps for the volunteers / participants at Decom. Getting the ticket for your first time when you do it solo can be hard, confusing and overwhelming, where you lean on friends who've been before to guide you in. So volunteers getting some help from the veterans and getting to have their first time at these events with other volunteers who've worked on Decom events could be something? That is if there are camps that get placement, and therefore camp tickets. Also I think something like a volunteer parade event / catwalk during the Decom event would be so



cool, so those of us who have just turned up can see the faces of those who've organised everything and say thank you. We need to make more fuss over you all being amazing

They receive tickets (or discounts) for other Burner events or discounts at cafes/restaurants they can utilise throughout the year

Videos of current volunteers explains why they volunteer and why they enjoy it

When tickets to Decom or the after party are sold out, strike volunteers should be able to retrieve access to purchase tickets anyway. This really depends on each individual, some are very involved and half dead and still volunteer for strike, while others are lazy af, milk Decom and are vig talkers, and would only volunteer if they get bribed.

Write emails out to all previous participants but I'm sure you do this anyway!!

# Do you have any comments on what, how, and/or when information was communicated?

All was smooth and seamless

Comms team seemed to be really professional this year - great improvement on the last couple of years. Well done and keep up the good work!

Communication was generally very good, but details could have come out slightly sooner.

emails were a bit of an overload, as a first timer i didn't really understand about there being different afterparties etc. having these listed clearly would be good.

Emails were good. Good content and frequency.

Facebook group seemed well moderated thank you

Hype up performance and the line up more! Add stories from previous years with the time and place of the set. They did a really good job of reposting performers content

I asked to not receive information about third party events yet I got two invites to after parties. What was the point of this tick box if it wasn't honoured? After parties should have been on separate email so they didn't confuse Decom attendees (who might have thought the afterparty was part of Decom).

I don't use Signal often enough, lots of Comms were on there that I missed.

I have to admit there was so much information ahead of the event I stopped reading any of it

I know it's always tight to get everything confirmed and designed, so it's not easy to have information out earlier.

I think more info about volunteering is needed before ticket sales begin - times and shifts for people to sign up. I think anyone who is willing to help with five plus hours of build should be given early access to ticket sales in the following year

I wasn't aware of it until a friend of mine mentioned it, so glad they did!

It was hard to find information about where to actually go for the party itself, which made it difficult to book accommodation for me as a first time visitor :)

Let us know when the photos are released

No Facebook please.

Really excellent this year.

Receiving info on the website and by ticketing emails once I was joined up worked well for me.

The information was great! I knew exactly what to expect

the social media was quite poor

The team on Facebook were quick and helpful, it felt like there was less participation though. I wonder if people just chat on Facebook less? Or weren't expecting it?

Too much info, sometimes even repeated, hidden between lines and sentences, and lots of unnecessary talk. Could be more short and sweet

Volunteer dates need to be announced earlier. My diary books up a few months in advance. I will try to keep more of November free next year.

# What was your favourite thing about this year's event?

1am drum n bass in solar punks. Endescent.

A ramshackle charm that initially felt a bit craftsy and amateur but over the night became edgy and interesting

Aerial performances in the tent, how every room had a cool different vibe, dancing in main room at the end

Barrel fire is a classic. The thing laying down seeing the fire is great.

Being able to bring art! And the main room being able to see the stage from upstairs

Being part of the build team and seeing the space come alive

Best thing was finishing setup early enough to enjoy the event.

Bra bunting!

Building something silly and the quality of the music

Celtic Chaos room was great

Community

Costumes

cute police, the many rooms, space cows, lying on trampolines, the fire areas

Dancing with and bringing home a Ted!

dancing!!!

Decoration of the whole event

Everyone was SO lovely. I loved the variety of things you could do through the night and explore.

Everything - being my first. I especially loved the music

Freedom and self-expression

Friendliness

general atmosphere

Great community

I loved there was a dubstep dj, I don't get to hear this music often.

i loveeee all the side quests

It felt much more well organised. And vibe and community as always were great

It was welcoming and fun early on

making tiny art / dancing on shiny music

Meeting new people and seeing all the work people put in to participating.

Mooncows camp, it had a chillout space

Music

People, the vibe... everything seemed easy and flawless

People, vibe

People's costumes

Performances

Raving with friends - I liked the experience and the music

Rob compereing upside down in a hoop.

Rob on aerial hoop

sense of community

Silent disco

Silent disco and Benjamin Yellowitz

Some great sets and the overall vibe

Spirit of heavily involved people trying to find compromises and keep it sweet for everyone. Especially Johanna (Uber Lead) and Jo (art placement)

Strike was a dream!

That it was at the Cause again, the effort put into making the entire place look incredible.

The beautiful people attending - all the amazing creativity

the community feel

The creativity on show!

The decor!

The diversity of the rooms.

The few precious interactions I had with humans who were not burners (yet). I hoped I helped to communicate through my actions, the type of wonderful people we are as a community.

The fire show and the performances

The friends I went with.

The guests. Always the guests! <3

The people and the music

The people!

The people, the music and the venue

# How do you think Decom could be improved for next year?

A venue with Warner indoor spaces.

Add another chill out space

An indoor, moderately quiet chillout space. More theme camp variety

as mentioned before, please ask the london weather gods to turn up the heat a bit

Better crowd flow in the smaller spaces

Better food

Change venue. Bring forward to start Oct latest.

cloakroom queues need shortening, also possibly a changing room for people to get into their decom costume.

could last longer

Different venue DEFINITELY

Do a smaller one mid year!

Easier opportunities to contribute prior to the event and more clear communication on how to do so.

Go back to email communication rather than whatsapp groups!

Go back to no photos. The "no photo " badge idea was a good try but too many ppl just ignored the badges and worst still, ignored the immediacy principle of a burn. We shouldn't encourage burners to lose one of the principles..

Greater music variety

Have a play space.

have less sparkleponys and more volunteers

I know we're always going to use a for-profit venue but I don't appreciate being milked for my cash like some default-world nannygoat when I'm at a burn event. Everything was overpriced and set up to spin money out of us and it ruined a lot of what I like about burns.

I think one more tent outside like last year that had experiences that just run without volunteers - maybe interactive phone booths, self administered challenges, art wall etc - so you can still create later into the night. my interest tailed off as it turns into a rave.

I think you knocked it out of the park this year. Can't really fault it in any way! Maybe more group activities like the cacao tasting - maybe a cup of tea together or a mass karaoke or something. But it was a great event.

I would be thrilled if it would be this good next year

If anything, I would like to see more sex positive stuff. The venue doesn't prohibit this, the big gay Adonis parties are hosted there and there are definitely nude people there - according to my gay friends, I haven't been myself yet :) But it was a really good party and a lot of effort went into it. You did great, hats off to You all!

IMPOSSIBLE :)

It was awesome, I have no specific suggestions

It was pretty perfect.

Keep going

Keep on doing what we're doing

Keep the music, add more random adventures and camp!

Keep working on inclusivity, chill space for volunteers, less party more community

LBT needs a focus and the venue should allow us to have proper recycling, ask people to bring their own cups and have more education on the environmental impact of the event. Not having an LBT lead and not having any recycling feels wrong

Less things to pay, possibility to bring food and drinks

Live music

Longer session

Make it a Two dayer event, over the weekend or from Friday night to Sat night. Its way way too good for just one night. More staff at the bars, the queues are slow, its never bad as we get to natter to everyone there, but its verry slow. I also think that you could get financial support if you had like a patreon or something we could all donate say£1 or more every month or something so there is more money for you guys to work with. If there is something like that, I've missed it or it needs to be shouted about way more. I for one want to see Decom Thrive, if we get to have the Cause as our frequent space for the foreseeable, that certainty means we could store and re-use resources from decorations to equipment each year.

Make it vegan! Fluffing food and vendors. Be the future! :)

Maybe less screaming into the microphone from hosts of kabaret and performances? It was a bit much, and it crosses the line from performance to annoying very quickly. The hosts in the outside tent, where silent disco was held were great. Introduced the acts, kept talking and engaging with the audience during set up. Indoor hosts - often they were trying to do performance of themselves and ended up shouting into the microphone for long periods of time. We just ended up skipping the acts indoors, because of this as it was on the annoying scale at this point. 1 big point - its super cold and windy to have outside party in the November. We need more fire places to warm up. There was 1 fire bin in the outside bit, 1 Hot Mess Space and I think 1 next to the gate / tickets. It would be great, if we had 2-3 more bins inside, neat the Welfare tent. It was silly windy this year and cold to stay outside.

More chillout spaces, better music!

More comfortable seating in Arena.

More heaters and seats and bigger chill out tent

More inclusive, more greeters, more rangers, more interactive games, art etc! Cater for the lonely, the people everyone ignores, cater to be inclusive. Don't judge

More Love Potion

More music with words!

More rooms, more art, more music!

More toilets, more art, more decor - it is going to be tough to beat this year!

More warmth and chilling places indoors please! Or at least benches or something to sit on

Move some of the performances to later

Paying extra to the venue to hire it without bars, so we can bring our own drinks. I would happily pay more for this.

People who specialise in specific fields should ve more involved and not bow down to people who only talk and have great ideas but no clue how to execute them. There were points where it almost felt like dealing with a dictator who has no expertise or experience

Possibly moving the more tribal music that was in Trashfence Sparklephonies to the larger room?

Recruiting volunteers earlier, more advance planning for some areas to reduce the pressure.

Improvements to the internal structure/interiors at the venue in some rooms if possible.

Some heaters or cover outside. Also more cloakrooms.

Stay at The Cause. The Arena is a great space but it's cold. So either warm it up so it's more inviting as it had great stuff on offer but wasn't so comfortable, or can cosier spaces be created within it?

Plastic cups?!? The bar staff would use a plastic cup even though I asked for it in my own. Massive waste

Still a bit short on areas to sit and chat with friends - arena could have been used more to that effect.

Stop using ai generated art. If there's anywhere we ought to value artists and keep their work... Plus as I said, more real music ;)

Theme'd club night or burn perhaps?

There are obviously too many people who want to DJ, so DJ's should have to pay to play.

To do Decom in a warmer month

warm chill area

warmer! some more performances outdoors later? I missed them all while grating...

What I said earlier - more quiet spaces and warmth

Would be great to have music in the tent outside til 11, the DJ and vibe there was great and it was so sad to see it stop at 10. Also please can bars be open in that tent! Rather than having to queue outside in the rain for drink.

# Is there anything else you'd like to tell us?

Best decom yet!

bless u all for taking care of us and our need to be together

Can we have directed sales for all volunteers please! We had an amazing team this year and I'd like everyone to be able to come back.

Every year you make the best decom so far, many many thanks! We love you so much

Extremely well done y'all - also I have a crush on Juliette (stage manager volunteer)

From my experience you burners don't really care for people, you judge & use then throw people away

Great work!

Huge congratulations - it's hard work but you pulled it off

If possible please -change the Decom date in 20205. 2024 Glastonbury ticket sales - Nov 14 & 17th. 2023 Glastonbury ticket sales - Nov 3 & 6 Nov. That way many folks can enjoy decom, the lead up and post decom. The dates for decom and Glastonbury have clashed 2 years running. Big LOVE & Hugs! I'm still very thankful for everything you do. Decom gave me unforgettable and magical moments. Thanks yall.

Important to keep attracting the arty community that want to dress up and hand out art

It's a burn, it should also be fun. Also some people's egos should accept they have no clue and should collaborate instead

Its shiny that you're organizing it. Thank you for collecting feedbacks also

make it co-creative and less bureaucratic.

Make the things even more opened and kinky

Nah, you're good. Thanks so much for Doing The Thing, if coming will aim to add something more next time x

Nope. Keep the flag flying.....

Please don't obstruct the dance floor

Please let us know the 2025 date as early as possible!

See you next year

such a lovely event and always the highlight of my year

Summer event

Thank you! <3

Thanks so much to all the leads for the insane amount of hard work you do.

Thanks!

truly unforgettable experience

Well done Carly for keeping us all in check!

well done uber leads, leads and all volunteers!

Well done x

Well done, and thank you.

why does the age scale stop at 70+. Bloody young people!

would be great to have a greeting party for the newcomers

You guys fucking rock