

Arts Council of Northern Ireland

Engagement with the arts in Northern Ireland: Results from the General Population Survey 2022-23

Main findings

September 2023



Executive Summary

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland commissioned Social Market Research (SMR) to undertake a General Population Survey (GPS). The survey builds on previous surveys and focuses on attendance and participation in the arts, as well as public attitudes to the arts in Northern Ireland. The survey is based on a representative sample of 1015 adults using an online panel methodology. The survey was conducted in accordance with the ISO20252:2019 Standard, and fieldwork was carried between 17 May and 7 June 2023.

The main findings of the report are:

Attendance to arts activities

- 74% of respondents had attended an arts activity or event in the past 12 months [this compares to 68% in the period between March 2019 and March 2020].
- 45% had attended a live music event, 35% had attended a live play, drama, musical, pantomime or opera, and 25% had been to a Festival.
- Those more likely to have been a member of an audience or have attended an arts activity in the past year included: those in younger age groups (18-34, 87%; 35-59, 75%; 60+, 61%), those in higher social classes (ABC1, 81%; C2DE, 69%), those with dependents (80% vs. 70%); and, those with a higher level of educational attainment ('low', 66%; 'medium', 74%; 'high', 79%).

Taking part in arts activities

- 52% of respondents had taken part in in an arts-related activity in the past 12 months. Participation varies significantly by age, social class and area of residence.
- Photography was the most common arts-related activity (30%) that respondents participated in, followed by painting, drawing, printmaking or calligraphy (20%), and crafts-based activities (16%).
- Those more likely to have taken part in arts-related activities in the past year include younger respondents (18-34, 69%; 35-59, 46%; 60+, 44%), those in higher social classes (ABC1, 58%; C2DE, 47%), those with a disability (58% vs. 51%); and those with a higher level of educational attainment ('low', 37%; 'medium', 44%; 'high', 66%).

Watching, listening, or engaging with the arts online including volunteering

Significant numbers of respondents had viewed, watched or engaged in online arts activity:

- 84% had listened to music on live radio,
- 83% had watched a film using streaming services,
- 70% had watched a film at the time it was broadcast,
- 70% had listened to streamed music,
- 16% had watched a pre-recorded arts event (incl. theatre, visual arts, dance or music),
- 12% had watched a pre-recorded event connected with books, reading or writing,
- 8% had volunteered for an arts organisation or arts activity.

Getting information on the arts

- 60% use social media to get information on arts activities to attend or participate in (word of mouth, 50%: local radio, 39%: local TV stations, 39%: local newspapers, 28%: and promotions and advertising from arts organisations, 21%).

Attitudes and perceptions

There were high levels of agreement with the following statements:

- 'I want people with a disability to have more opportunities to participate in arts activities' (96%).
- 'Arts and cultural activities create jobs in Northern Ireland' (86%).
- 'Arts and cultural activities help to bring tourists to Northern Ireland' (86%).
- 'I want school children to have more opportunities to participate in arts activities' (83%).
- 'Arts and culture are open to everyone in NI regardless of differences in religion, ethnic origin or social class' (83%).
- 'The arts have a positive impact on the quality of life of my community' (72%).
- 'The arts improve my mental health' (65%).
- 'The arts and culture help me understand people around me better' (61%).

Views on artists in Northern Ireland

- 63% agreed with the statement 'I believe artists in Northern Ireland are able to develop and grow their work locally' (17% neither agreed nor disagreed, 10% disagreed and 11% answered don't know).
- 35% agreed with the statement 'I believe artists receive a fair compensation and have good working conditions' (24% neither agreed nor disagreed, 24% disagreed and 18% answered don't know).

Views on the funding of the arts in Northern Ireland

- 79% agreed with the statement 'I believe it is right that there should be public investment in arts and cultural organisations' (16% neither agreed nor disagreed and 5% disagreed).
- 73% agreed with the statement 'I support my local councils in investing on arts and culture in my area' (17% neither agreed nor disagreed and 9% disagreed).
- 70% agreed with the statement 'I believe it is right that there should be public investment in individual artists' (22% neither agreed nor disagreed and 8% disagreed).

Priorities for government investment and political support for arts and culture

- In rank order, respondents believe the top 3 priorities for government investment in Northern Ireland are: health and wellbeing; employment; and education (arts and culture ranked 7th out of 9 priorities).
- 58% would vote for a political candidate who advocated increased spending on arts and culture (9% would vote against, and 33% were undecided).

Role of arts and creativity

- 87% believe that arts and creativity play a role in good health and wellbeing and in educational attainment (employment opportunities (84%); a shared future / cohesive communities (81%); stimulating the local economy (81%); and providing a sustainable environment (56%).

Describing arts and culture and the arts contributing to the challenges faced in Northern Ireland

- When asked to list 3 words to describe the arts and culture in Northern Ireland to friends and family, the dominant themes included: interesting; fun; diverse; vibrant; creative; inclusive; and, exciting.
- When asked to list 3 words associated with the phrase “The working conditions of artists in Northern Ireland”, the most dominant themes included: don’t know; underpaid; struggle; good; hard; limited; poor; underfunded; and, difficult.
- When asked to list 3 words associated with the phrase “Public investment in the arts and culture in Northern Ireland”, the most dominant themes included: underfunded; poor; needed; money; limited; lacking; and, important.
- The areas the arts can contribute to address the challenges facing Northern Ireland most commonly included: community integration (49%); promoting good mental health and wellbeing (21%); promoting equality, inclusion and diversity through engagement (16%); and supporting arts activities in education and schools (12%).

Conclusions

The survey results show that in the past 12 months most adults in Northern Ireland had attended an arts activity or event as a member of the audience or as a visitor, with just over half having participated in arts activities in this period. The survey also shows that the contribution of the arts to society is highly valued by the general public in terms of creating jobs, bringing tourists to Northern Ireland, improving mental health and improving the general quality of life for people in Northern Ireland. Most respondents also support particular groups, such as those with disabilities and school children, having greater access to arts activities.

Across a range of indicators those more likely to attend or participate in arts-based activities or events are more likely to express positive perceptions about the arts,

support public investment for the arts, and be more likely to value the contribution of the arts to Northern Ireland society.

Although most of those surveyed support the view that artists in Northern Ireland are able to develop opportunities locally, only around a third believe that artists receive fair compensation and have good working conditions. The survey also reveals widespread public support for public funding of the arts, including investment in individual artists. Although government investment in the arts ranks lower among the general public when compared with investment in health and wellbeing, employment and education, a majority of the public believe that the arts have a role to play in these areas.

1. Introduction

In March 2023, the Arts Council of Northern Ireland (ACNI) commissioned Social Market Research (SMR) to undertake a General Population Survey (GPS) on perception and engagement with the Arts in Northern Ireland.

Since 2004, the annual GPS has been one of ACNI's key tools to gather data about how the public engages with the arts. The survey covers topics on attendance, participation and attitudes. Data are used to inform a range of business, performance measurement and research needs, facilitating analysis and synthesis by key variables such as age, gender, social class and disabilities.

Survey Focus and Content

The aim of the current survey was to build upon previous surveys and to provide up to date measures on participation in the Arts, volunteering for an arts organisation or arts activity, sources of information on the arts, and perception of the contribution of the arts on wider society. Specifically, the survey focused on:

- Attendance at arts activities or events
- Participation in the arts
- Volunteering for an arts organisation or arts activity
- Sources of information on arts activities
- The impact of the arts on society and the economy
- The contributions of artists to society
- Public funding of the arts
- Priorities for government investment in Northern Ireland
- Contribution of arts and creativity to aspects of society
- Support for political candidates who advocate increased spending on the arts and culture
- The working conditions of artists in Northern Ireland
- The arts contributing to the challenges facing Northern Ireland.

A copy of the survey questionnaire can be requested by contacting the Arts Council Strategy Development and Partnerships Team at strategy@artscouncil-ni.org .

Survey Methodology

This current survey is based on 1015 interviews with the Northern Ireland general public aged 18+. The survey was conducted using an online panel methodology with results weighted to be representative of the NI adult population. The survey has a margin of error of +/-3.1% (at most). Fieldwork was conducted between 17 May and 7 June 2023. The research was conducted in line with ISO20252:2019 of which Social Market Research (SMR) is fully accredited.

Sample Profile

Appendix 1 presents the weighted sample profile compared with known population parameters and shows that sample estimates are in line with census estimates. The 95% Confidence Intervals are also presented.

Notes on Reporting

Please note that due to rounding, row and column totals in figures may not sum to 100. Also, please note that any differences between sample subgroups (e.g., age, gender, social class etc.) alluded to in the report commentary are statistically significant to at least the 95% confidence level. The use of [-] within graphs denotes less than 1%. Prior to analysis the data have been weighted by age, sex, social class and local government district in line with NI census estimates.

2. Attendance and Participation

Attendance to arts events

Respondents were asked if, in the past 12 months, they had been to different arts activities or events as a member of the audience or as a visitor.

Figure 1 shows that respondents most commonly had been to a live music event (45%) or a live play, drama, musical, pantomime or opera (35%). Relative to other arts activities and events, respondents were less likely to have been to a live event connected with books, reading or writing (7%), a street art event (9%), a live dance event (10%) or a craft exhibition (10%). Note that comparisons have also been included with a previous ACNI survey conducted in March 2020.

Figure 1: Which, if any, of the following have you been to, either as a member of the audience or as a visitor, within the past 12 months?

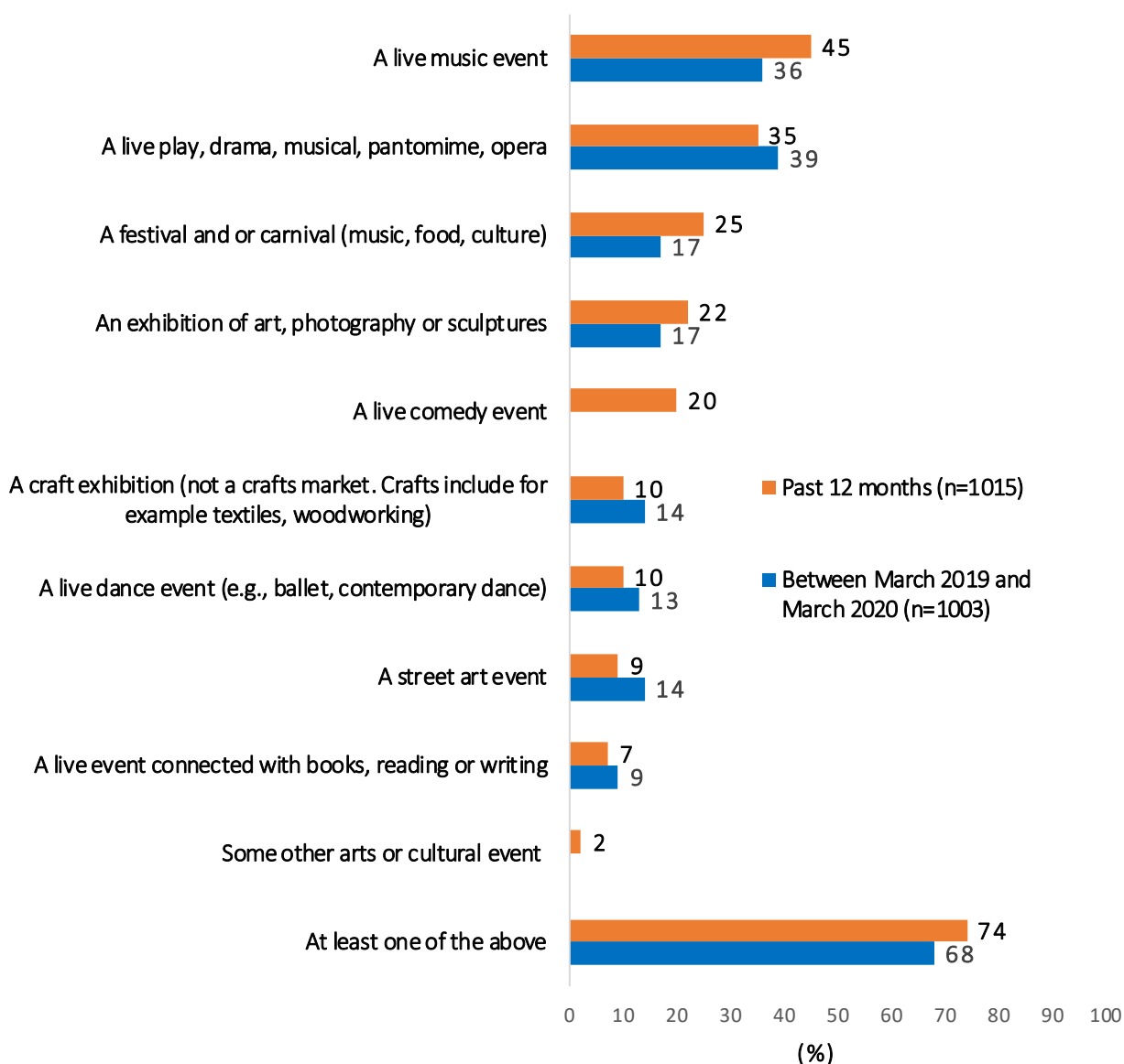


Figure 1 shows that in the past 12 months, 74% of respondents said they had been a member of an audience or a visitor to at least one of the events / activities listed, with those groups more likely to have been a member of an audience or a visitor to at least one of the events / activities listed in Figure 1 including:

- Those in younger age groups (18-34, 87%; 35-59, 75%; 60+, 61%),
- Those in higher social classes (ABC1, 81%; C2DE, 69%),
- Those with dependents (80% vs. 70%),
- Those with a higher level of educational attainment ('low', 66%; 'medium', 74%; 'high', 79%).

Participation in arts activities

Respondents were asked if they had taken part in a range of arts related activities in the past year as part of their leisure time (as a hobby and unpaid).

Figure 2 shows that 30% had taken part in photography, 20% in painting, drawing, printmaking and calligraphy, and 16% had taken part in craft-based activities. Relative to other activities, respondents were less likely to have taken part in a choreographed dance routine (3%), performed, acted or provided technical support to a theatre production (4%), or designed or programmed video games including on a smartphone (4%).

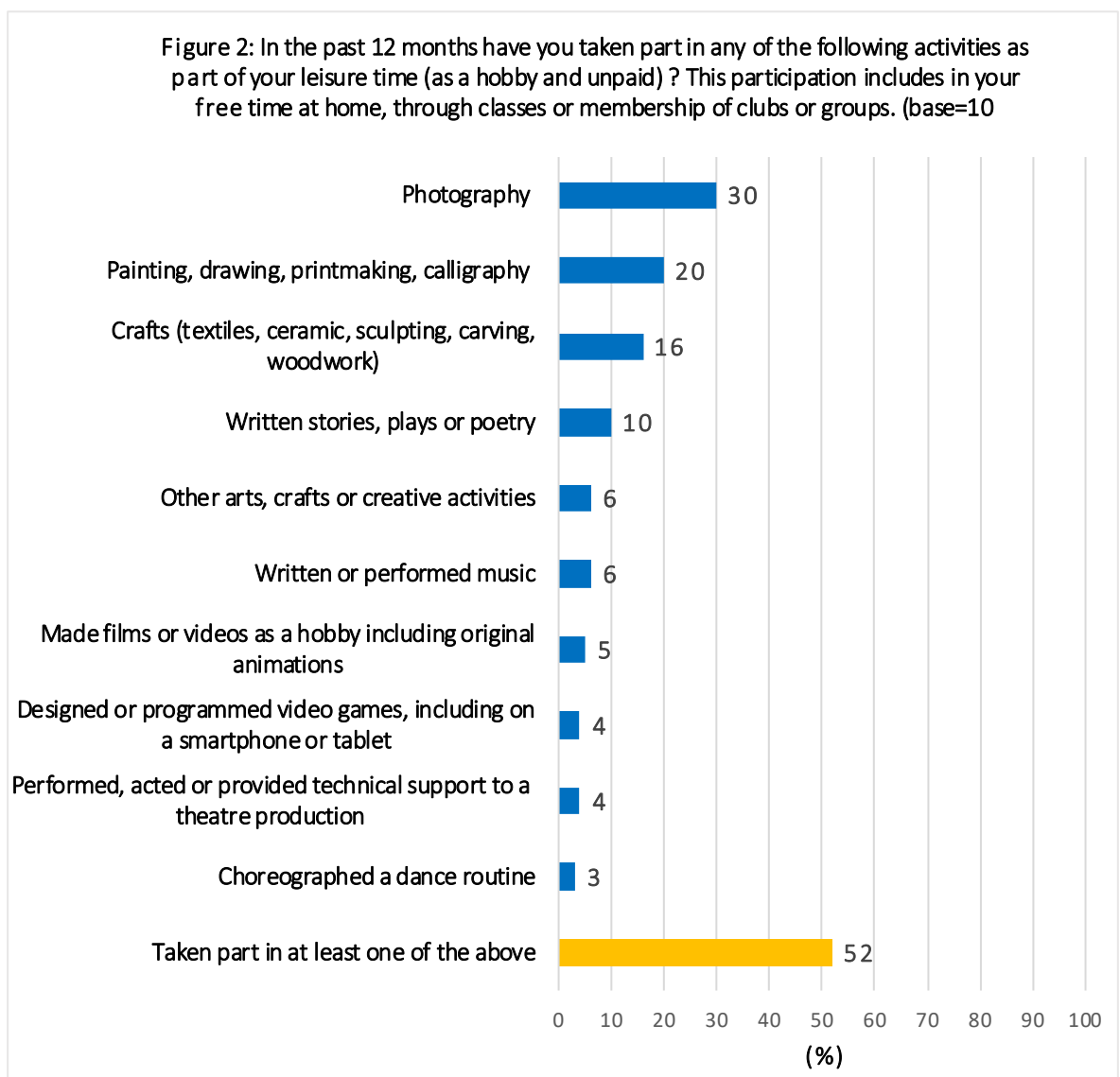


Figure 2 shows that 52% of respondents indicated taking part in at least one of the events / activities listed, with groups significantly more likely to have done so including:

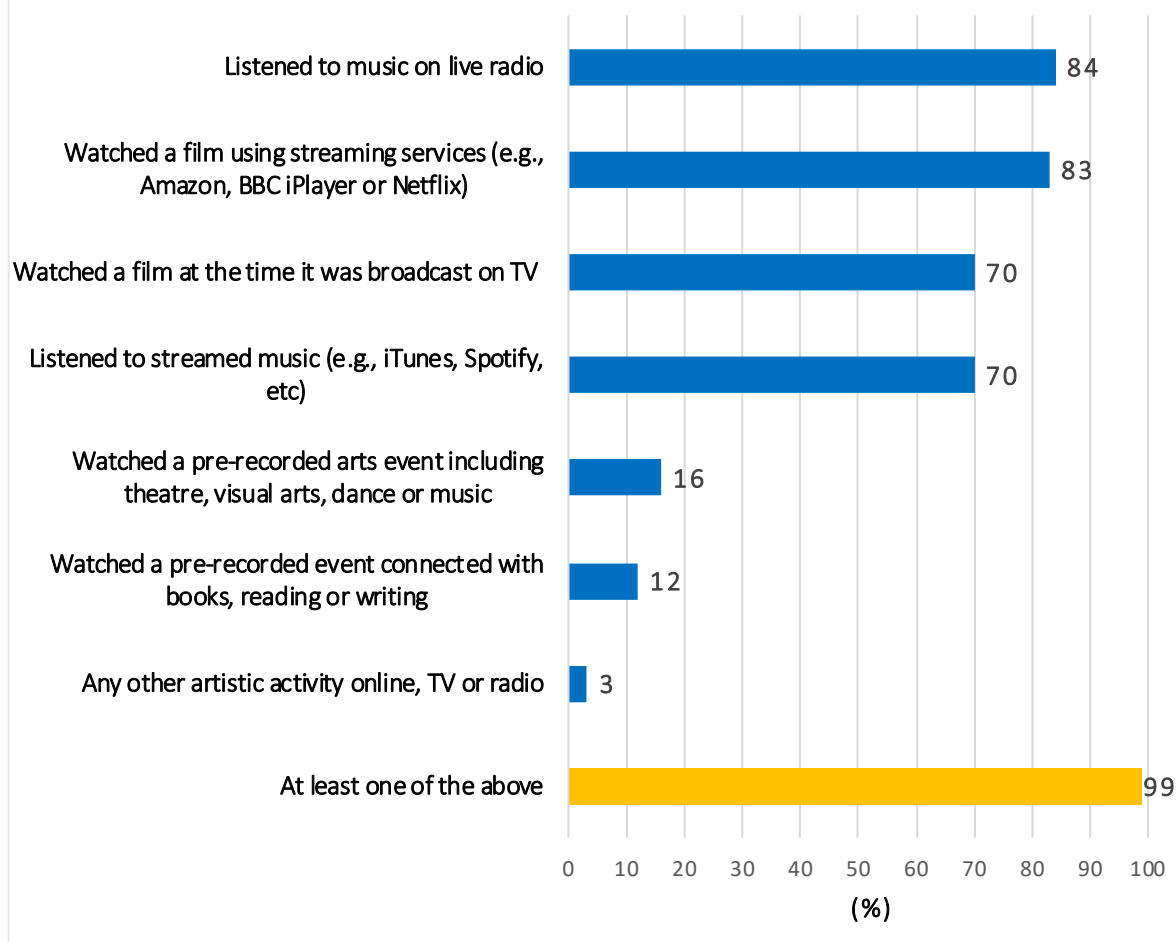
- Younger respondents (18-34, 69%: 35-59, 46%; 60+, 44%),
- Those in higher social classes (ABC1, 58%: C2DE, 47%),
- Those with a disability (58%) compared with non-disabled respondents (51%),
- Those describing their community background as 'none' (catholic, 53%: protestant, 45%: other, 45%: none, 64%),
- Those with a higher level of educational attainment ('low', 37%; 'medium', 44%; 'high', 66%),
- LGBTQ+ respondents (65%) compared with heterosexual respondents (51%).

Arts via online / digital mediums

Respondents were asked if they had viewed or watched a range of arts activities including any other artistic activity online or via TV or radio.

Figure 3 shows that respondents had most listened to music on live radio in the past 12 months (84%), 83% had watched a film using streaming services, 70% had watched a film at the time it was broadcast, and 70% had listened to streamed music (70%). Relatively fewer respondents had watched a pre-recorded event connected with books, reading or writing (12%) or watched a pre-recorded arts event including theatre, visual arts, dance or music (16%). Note that 99% of respondents had engaged in at least one of the activities listed in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Which, if any, of the following have you engaged with within the past 12 months? (base=1015)



Those **more likely to have listened to music on live radio** included:

- Those in higher social classes (ABC1, 92%: C2DE, 77%),
- Those with a higher level of educational attainment ('low', 75%; 'medium', 83%; 'high', 90%),
- Those with dependents (89%) compared with those without dependents (80%),
- Heterosexual respondents (85%) compared to LGBTQ+ respondents (75%),
- Those who have been to an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not (89% vs. 60%),
- Those participating in an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not (91% vs. 76%).

Those **more likely to have listened to streamed music (e.g., iTunes, Spotify, etc)** included:

- Younger respondents (18-34, 84%: 35-59, 73%; 60+, 53%),
- Non-disabled respondents (74%) compared to those with a disability (63%),
- Those in higher social classes (ABC1, 78%: C2DE, 64%),
- Those with a higher level of educational attainment ('low', 63%; 'medium', 67%; 'high', 77%),
- Those with dependents (77%) compared with those without dependents (66%),
- Those describing their community background as 'none' (catholic, 74%: protestant, 65%: other, 59%: none, 79%),
- Those who have been to an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not (73% vs. 56%),
- Those participating in an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not (76% vs. 64%).

Those **more likely to have watched a film at the time it was broadcast on TV** included:

- Men (79%) compared with women (62%),
- Older respondents (18-34, 59%: 35-59, 71%; 60+, 81%),
- Non-disabled respondents (74% vs. 63%),
- Those in higher social classes (ABC1, 75%: C2DE, 66%),
- Heterosexual respondents (72%) compared to LGBTQ+ respondents (52%),
- Those describing their ethnicity as 'white' (72%) compared with others (38%),
- Mostly unionist respondents (mostly unionist, 75%: mostly nationalist, 65%: apolitical, 71%).

Those **more likely to have watched a film using streaming services (e.g., Amazon, BBC iPlayer or Netflix)** included:

- Younger respondents (18-34, 92%: 35-59, 84%; 60+, 72%),
- Those with a higher level of educational attainment ('low', 75%; 'medium', 80%; 'high', 90%),
- Those with dependents (90%) compared with those without dependents (78%),
- Those who have been to an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not (85% vs. 76%),
- Those participating in an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not (86% vs. 80%).

Those **more likely to have watched a pre-recorded arts event including theatre, visual arts, dance or music** included:

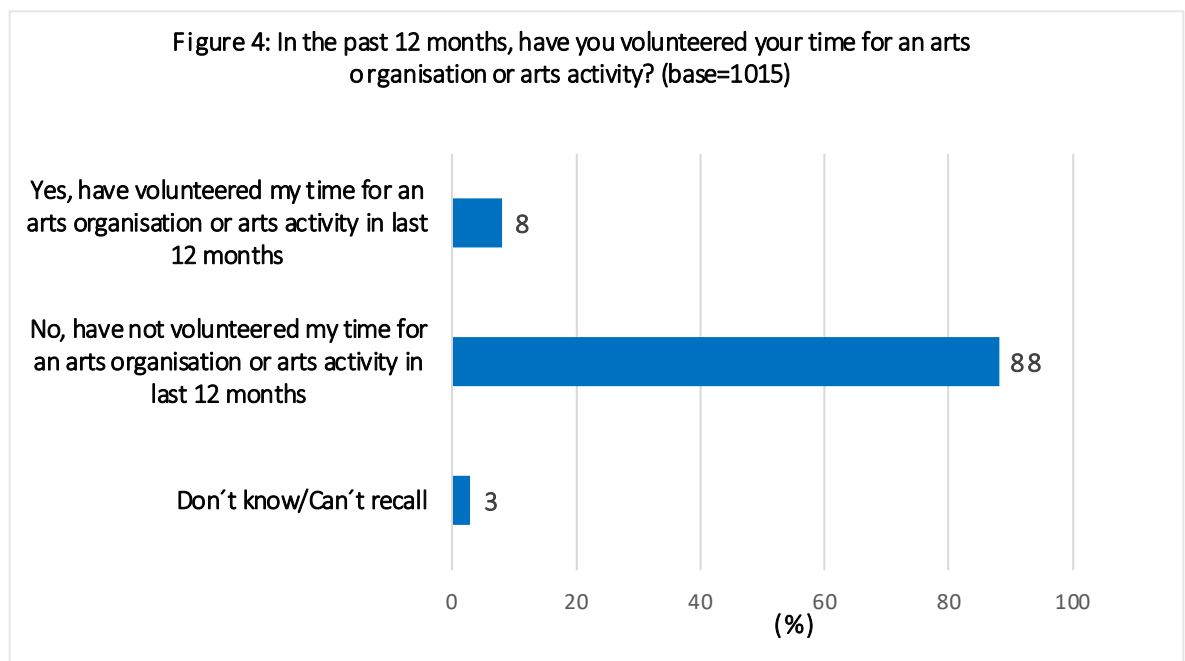
- Younger respondents (18-34, 20%: 35-59, 17%; 60+, 12%).
- Those in higher social classes (ABC1, 20%: C2DE, 13%),
- Those with a higher level of educational attainment ('low', 10%; 'medium', 13%; 'high', 22%),
- Those describing their community background as 'none' (catholic, 15%: protestant, 13%: other, 22%: none, 24%),
- Those who have been to an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not (19% vs. 3%),
- Those participating in an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not (24% vs. 8%).

Those **more likely to have watched a pre-recorded event connected with books, reading or writing** included:

- Younger respondents (18-34, 18%: 35-59, 10%; 60+, 10%),
- Those with relatively higher levels of educational attainment ('low', 8%; 'medium', 15%; 'high', 13%),
- Those without dependents (15%) compared with those with dependents (9%),
- Those describing their community background as 'other' (catholic, 9%: protestant, 14%: other, 23%: none, 12%),
- Those who have been to an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not (14% vs. 3%),
- Those participating in an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not (18% vs. 6%).

Volunteering for an arts organisation or arts activity in the past 12 months

Figure 4 shows that in the past 12 months, 8% of respondents had volunteered their time to an arts organisation or arts activity. Most had not (88%), and 3% said they didn't know or couldn't recall doing so.

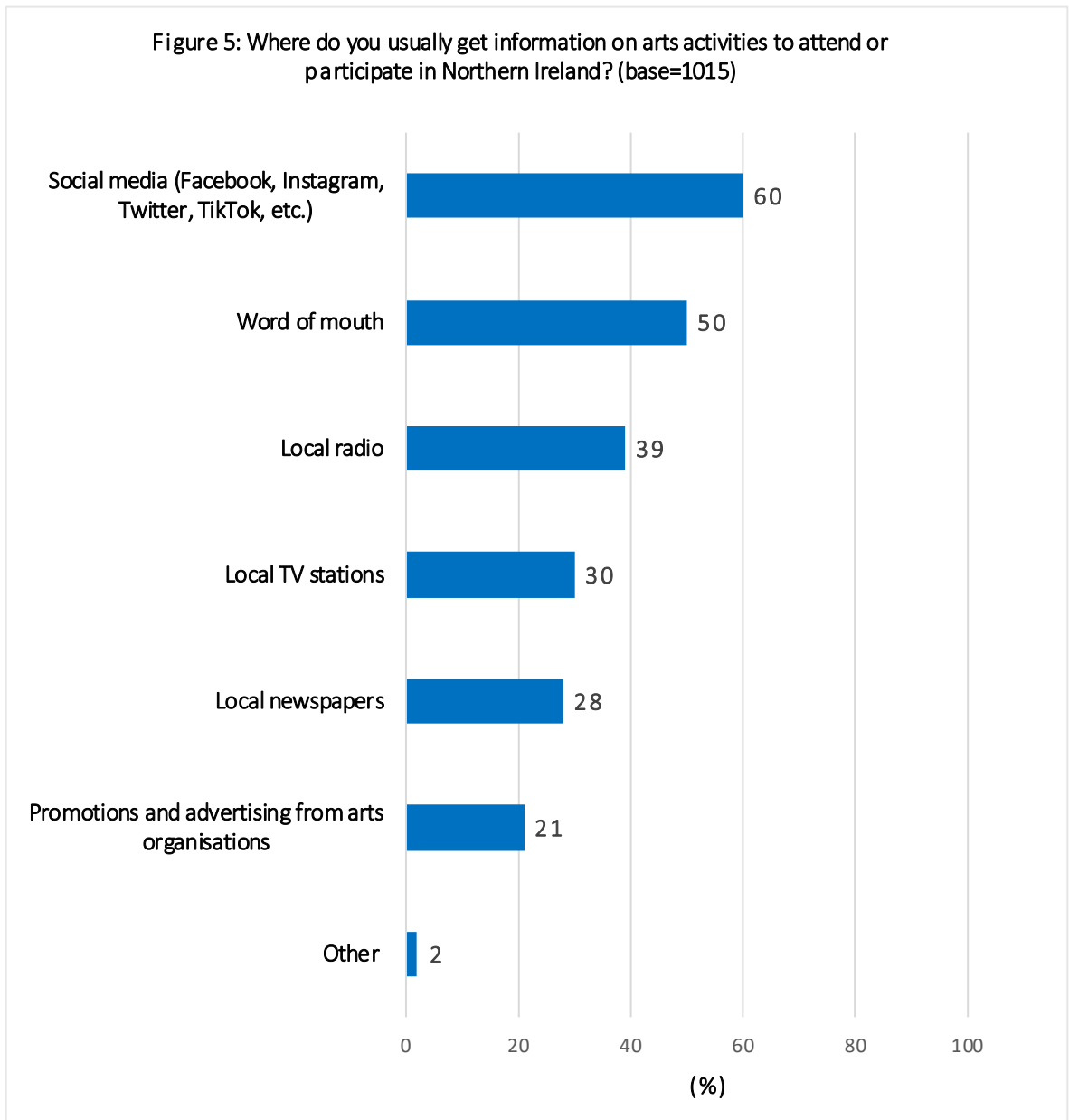


There were several differences in the likelihood of volunteered time to an arts organisation or arts activity between different respondent groups, with those significantly more likely to have volunteered including:

- Men (11%) compared with women (6%)
- Younger respondents (18-34, 17%; 35-59, 4%; 60+, 6%)
- Those with a higher level of educational attainment ('low', 5%; 'medium', 8%; 'high', 11%)
- Those describing their ethnicity as 'non- white' (20%) ['white' (8%)]
- Those describing their community background as 'other' (catholic, 11%; protestant, 4%; other, 26%; none, 7%)
- Those who have been to an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not (10% vs. 7%)
- Those participating in an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not (15% vs. 2%)

Sourcing information on arts activities to attend or participate in

Respondents were asked where they get information on arts activities to attend in Northern Ireland, with 60% sourcing information from social media, 50% via word of mouth, 39% via local radio, 30% via local TV stations, 28% via local newspapers, and 21% via promotions and advertising from arts organisations. Two percent cited other sources¹.



¹ Included: cinema website (n=1); email (n=3); local gigs / listing (n=2); don't get information / no interest (n=4); BBC radio (n=1); internet searches / online (n=3); leaflets through door (n=1); websites that promote events / activities (n=1); within university (n=1).

Those more likely to get information from **local newspapers** included:

- Men (34%) compared with women (22%),
- Those with a higher level of educational attainment (low, 22%: medium, 25%: high, 33%),
- Mostly unionist respondents (mostly unionist, 33%: mostly nationalist, 28%: apolitical, 23%),
- Those who have been to an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not (30% vs. 21%),
- Those participating in an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not (33% vs. 24%).

Those more likely to get information from **local radio** included:

- Older respondents (18-34, 33%: 35-59, 37%; 60+, 47%),
- Heterosexual respondents (40%) compared with LGBTQ+ respondents (27%),
- Protestant respondents (catholic, 39%: protestant, 45%: other, 39%: none, 31%),
- Those who have been to an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not (38% vs. 25%).

Those more likely to get information from **local TV stations** included:

- Men (37%) compared with women (24%),
- Older respondents (18-34, 21%: 35-59, 25%; 60+, 46%),
- Those with a lower level of educational attainment (low, 34%: medium, 32%: high, 27%),
- Those with no dependents (33%) compared with those with dependents (27%),
- Heterosexual respondents (32%) compared with LGBTQ+ respondents (2%).

Those more likely to get information from **promotions and advertising from arts organisations** included:

- Those with a higher level of educational attainment (low, 10%: medium, 22%: high, 27%),
- Those with no dependents (24%) compared with those with dependents (17%),
- LGBTQ+ respondents (67%) compared with heterosexual respondents (20%),
- Those describing their community background as 'other' (catholic, 21%: protestant, 15%: other, 48%: none, 24%),
- Apolitical respondents (mostly unionist, 18%: mostly nationalist, 23%: apolitical, 25%),
- Those who have been to an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not (24% vs. 10%),
- Those participating in an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not (26% vs. 17%).

Those more likely to get information from **social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, etc.)** included:

- Women (71%) compared with men (48%),
- Younger respondents (18-34, 72%; 35-59, 67%; 60+, 37%),
- Those with a higher level of educational attainment (low, 45%; medium, 61%; high, 67%),
- Those with dependents (70%) compared with those with no dependents (52%),
- Community background either Catholic or 'none' (catholic, 65%; protestant, 55%; other, 39%; none, 65%),
- Mostly nationalist respondents (mostly unionist, 55%; mostly nationalist, 65%; apolitical, 60%),
- Those who have been to an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not (74% vs. 46%),
- Those participating in an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not (74% vs. 65%).

Those more likely to get information from **word of mouth** included:

- Older respondents (18-34, 43%; 35-59, 50%; 60+, 56%),
- Those with a higher level of educational attainment (low, 52%; medium, 42%; high, 54%),
- Those describing their community background as 'none' (catholic, 45%; protestant, 50%; other, 48%; none, 58%).

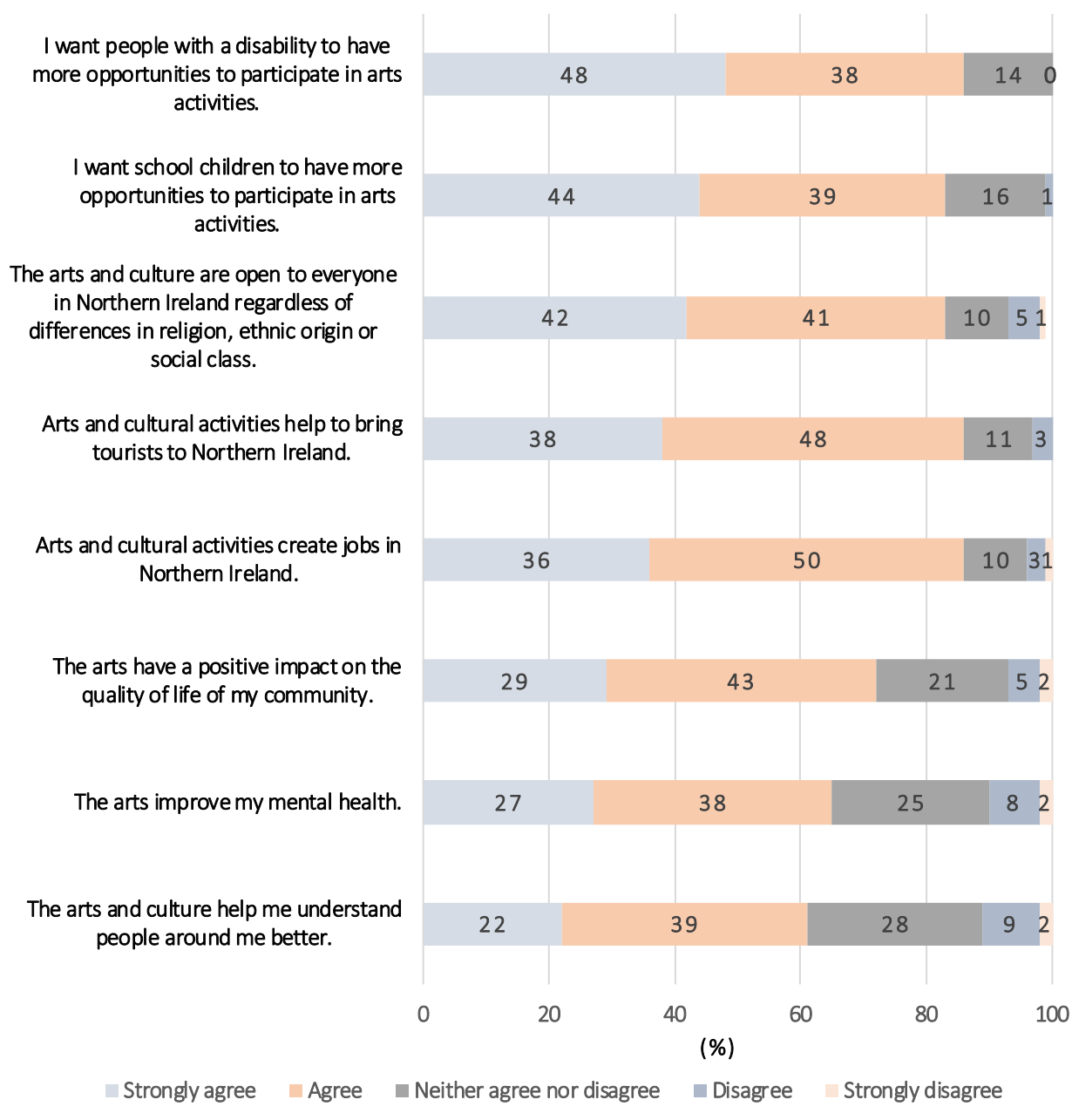
3. Perception of the impact of arts on society and the economy

Respondents were presented with several statements on the arts and asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with each.

Higher levels of agreement were recorded for the following statements: 'I want people with a disability to have more opportunities to participate in arts activities' (96%); 'Arts and cultural activities create jobs in Northern Ireland' (86%); 'Arts and cultural activities help to bring tourists to Northern Ireland' (86%); 'I want school children to have more opportunities to participate in arts activities' (83%); and, 'the arts and culture are open to everyone in Northern Ireland regardless of differences in religion, ethnic origin or social class' (83%).

Relatively lower levels of agreement were recorded for the following statements: 'The arts and culture help me understand people around me better' (61%); 'The arts improve my mental health' (65%); and, 'The arts have a positive impact on the quality of life of my community' (72%).

Figure 6: On a 5 point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree, please say to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? (n=1015)



There were several significant differences between different respondent groups (note that for the purposes of analysis mean agreement scores were computed for each statement with a higher mean score denoting a higher level of agreement with the statement).

Statement: Arts and cultural activities help to bring tourists to Northern Ireland, with significantly higher levels of agreement recorded by the following respondent groups:

- Those with a disability (4.5) compared with non-disabled respondents (4.1),
- Those with a higher level of educational attainment (low, 4.1: medium, 4.2: high, 4.3),
- Catholic respondents (catholic, 4.3: protestant, 4.1: other, 4.1: none, 4.2),
- Those who have been to an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not (4.3 vs. 3.9),
- Those participating in an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not (4.4 vs. 4.0).

Statement: Arts and cultural activities create jobs in Northern Ireland, with significantly higher levels of agreement recorded by the following respondent groups:

- Older respondents (18-34, 4.1: 35-59, 4.2; 60+, 4.3),
- Those with a disability (4.3) compared with non-disabled respondents (4.1),
- Those in higher social classes (ABC1, 4.3: C2DE, 4.1),
- Those with relatively higher levels of educational attainment (low, 4.0: medium, 4.2: high, 4.2),
- Those with dependents (4.3) compared with those with no dependents (4.1),
- Catholic respondents (catholic, 4.3: protestant, 4.2: other, 3.8: none, 4.1),
- Those who have been to an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not (4.2 vs. 3.9),
- Those participating in an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not (4.3 vs. 4.1).

Statement: The arts have a positive impact on the quality of life of my community, with significantly higher levels of agreement recorded by the following respondent groups:

- Those with a disability (4.1) compared with non-disabled respondents (3.9),
- Those with a higher level of educational attainment (low, 3.7: medium, 3.9: high, 4.1),
- Those with dependents (4.0) compared with those with no dependents (3.9),
- Those describing their community background as 'none' (catholic, 4.0: protestant, 3.0: other, 3.3: none, 4.1),
- Mostly nationalist respondents (mostly unionist, 3.9: mostly nationalist, 4.1: apolitical, 3.9),
- Those who have been to an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not (4.0 vs. 3.6),
- Those participating in an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not (4.1 vs. 3.8).

Statement: The arts improve my mental health, with significantly higher levels of agreement recorded by the following respondent groups:

- Younger respondents (18-34, 3.9: 35-59, 3.8; 60+, 3.7),
- Those with a disability (4.0) compared with non-disabled respondents (3.7),
- Those in higher social classes (ABC1, 3.9: C2DE, 3.7),
- Those with relatively higher levels of educational attainment (low, 3.6: medium, 3.7: high, 4.0),
- LGBTQ+ respondents (4.2) compared with heterosexual respondents (3.8)
- Community background catholic and 'none' (catholic, 3.9: protestant, 3.8: other, 3.2: none, 3.9),
- Mostly nationalist respondents (mostly unionist, 3.8: mostly nationalist, 3.9: apolitical, 3.7),
- Those who have been to an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not (3.9 vs. 3.5),
- Those participating in an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not (4.0 vs. 3.6).

Statement: The arts and culture help me understand people around me better, with significantly higher levels of agreement recorded by the following respondent groups:

- Younger respondents (18-34, 3.8: 35-59, 3.7; 60+, 3.6),
- Those with a disability (3.9) compared with non-disabled respondents (3.7),
- Those with a higher level of educational attainment (low, 3.5: medium, 3.7: high, 3.8),
- Catholic respondents (catholic, 3.9: protestant, 3.6: other, 3.1: none, 3.8),
- Mostly nationalist respondents (mostly unionist, 3.7: mostly nationalist, 3.9: apolitical, 3.6),
- Those with dependents (3.8) compared with those with no dependents (3.4),
- Those who have been to an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not (3.8 vs. 3.4),
- Those participating in an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not (3.9 vs. 3.5).

Statement: The arts and culture are open to everyone in Northern Ireland regardless of differences in religion, ethnic origin or social class, with significantly higher levels of agreement recorded by the following respondent groups:

- Women (4.3) compared with men (4.1),
- Older respondents (18-34, 4.1: 35-59, 4.2; 60+, 4.3),
- Those in higher social classes (ABC1, 4.3: C2DE, 4.1),
- Those with dependents (4.4) compared with those with no dependents (4.1),
- Heterosexual respondents (4.2) compare with LGBTQ+ respondents (3.9),
- Catholic respondents (catholic, 4.3: protestant, 4.2: other, 3.8: none, 4.1),
- Mostly unionist respondents (mostly unionist, 4.3: mostly nationalist, 4.2: apolitical, 4.0),

- Those who have been to an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not (4.2 vs. 3.9),
- Those participating in an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not (4.3 vs. 4.1).

Statement: I want school children to have more opportunities to participate in arts activities, with significantly higher levels of agreement recorded by the following respondent groups:

- Women (4.4) compared with men (4.1),
- Respondents aged 35+ (18-34, 4.1: 35-59, 4.3; 60+, 4.3),
- Those with a disability (4.5) compared with non-disabled respondents (4.2),
- Those in higher social classes (ABC1, 4.3: C2DE, 4.2),
- Those with relatively higher levels of educational attainment (low, 4.0: medium, 4.3: high, 4.3),
- Those with dependents (4.4) compared with those with no dependents (4.2),
- Catholic respondents (catholic, 4.4: protestant, 4.3: other, 3.9: none, 4.3),
- Mostly unionist and nationalist respondents (mostly unionist, 4.3: mostly nationalist, 4.3: apolitical, 4.1),
- Those who have been to an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not (4.3 vs. 3.9),
- Those participating in an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not (4.3 vs. 4.1).

Statement: I want people with a disability to have more opportunities to participate in arts activities, with significantly higher levels of agreement recorded by the following respondent groups:

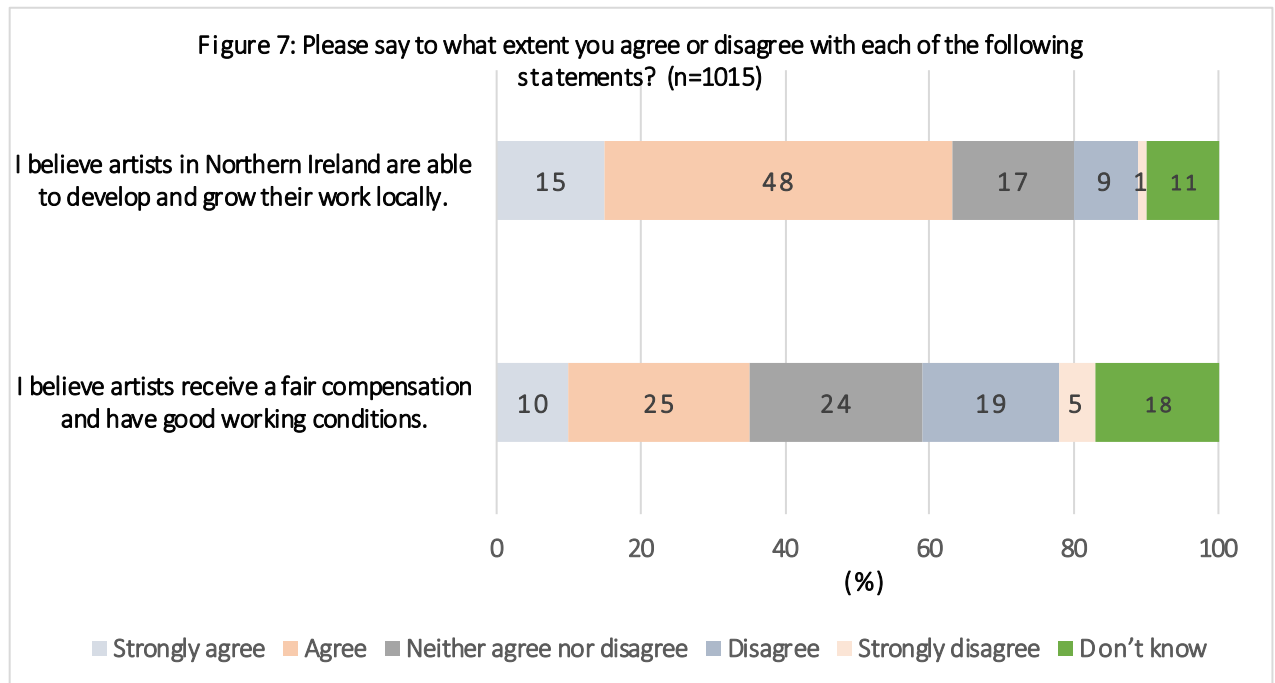
- Women (4.4) compared with men (4.2),
- Those with a disability (4.6) compared with non-disabled respondents (4.3),
- Those in higher social classes (ABC1, 4.4: C2DE, 4.3),
- Those with dependents (4.4) compared with those with no dependents (4.3),
- Catholic respondents (catholic, 4.4: protestant, 4.3: other, 3.9: none, 4.3),
- Mostly unionist and nationalist respondents (mostly unionist, 4.4: mostly nationalist, 4.4: apolitical, 4.2),
- Those who have been to an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not (4.4 vs. 4.1),
- Those participating in an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not (4.5 vs. 4.2).

Perceptions about artists in Northern Ireland

Respondents were asked about their perception of artists in Northern Ireland, and Figure 7 shows that 63% agreed with the statement 'I believe artists in Northern

Ireland are able to develop and grow their work locally’ (17% neither agreed nor disagreed, 10% disagreed and 11% answered don’t know).

In relation to the statement ‘I believe artists receive a fair compensation and have good working conditions’, 35% agreed, 24% neither agreed nor disagreed, 24% disagreed and 18% answered don’t know).



There were several significant differences between different respondent groups.

Statement: I believe artists receive a fair compensation and have good working conditions

- Men (40%) compared with women (30%) were more likely to agree, whereas women were more likely to disagree (29% vs. 19%),
- Younger respondents were more likely to agree (18-34, 44%: 35-59, 29%; 60+, 35%) whereas those aged 35-59 were more likely to disagree (18-34, 21%: 35-59, 29%; 60+, 19%),
- Those in lower social grades were more likely to agree (C2DE, 38% vs. ABC1, 31%), whereas those in higher social grades were more likely to disagree (ABC1, 27% vs. C2DE, 20%),
- Those with a higher level of educational attainment were more likely to disagree (low, 13%: medium, 21%: high, 31%),
- Those with dependents were more likely to disagree (29%) compared with those without dependents (20%).
- Protestant respondents and those describing their community background as ‘other’ were more likely to agree (catholic, 32%: protestant, 42%: other, 42%:

- none, 23%), whereas those describing the community background as 'none' were more likely to disagree (catholic, 26%: protestant, 18%: other, 6%: none, 39%),
- Mostly unionist respondents were more likely to agree (mostly unionist, 39%: mostly nationalist, 33%: apolitical, 34%), whereas mostly nationalist and apolitical respondents were more likely to disagree (mostly unionist, 19%: mostly nationalist, 27%: apolitical, 27%),
 - Those who have been to an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not were more likely to neither agree nor disagree (26% vs. 12%), whereas those who have not been to an arts activity in the past 12 months were more likely to answer don't know (28% vs. 16%),
 - Those participating in an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not were more likely to disagree (30% vs. 17%), whereas those who have not participated in an arts activity in the past 12 months were more likely to answer don't know (27% vs. 10%)

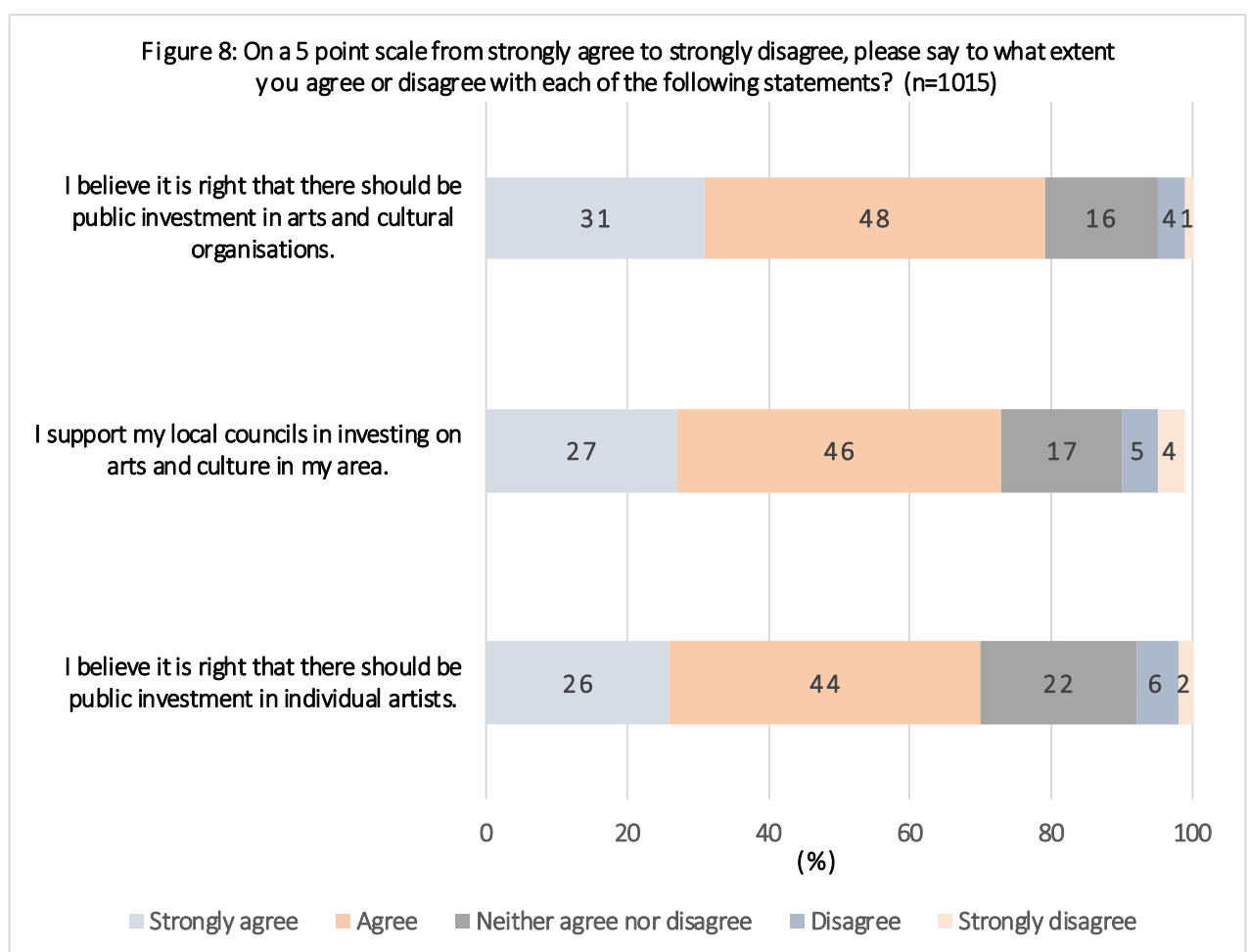
Statement: I believe artists in Northern Ireland are able to develop and grow their work locally

- Older respondents were more likely to agree (18-34, 66%: 35-59, 57%; 60+, 70%),
- Those with a lower level of educational attainment were more likely to agree (low, 69%: medium, 66%: high, 58%) whereas those with a higher level of educational attainment were more likely to disagree (low, 6%: medium, 9%: high, 13%),
- Those with dependents were more likely to agree (70%) compared with those without dependents (58%),
- Heterosexual respondents (64%) were more likely to agree compared with LGBTQ+ respondents (49%), whereas LGBTQ+ respondents were more likely to disagree (24% vs. 9%),
- Protestant respondents were more likely to agree (catholic, 61%: protestant, 68%: other, 59%: none, 58%),
- Mostly unionist respondents were more likely to agree (mostly unionist, 71%: mostly nationalist, 57%: apolitical, 56%),
- Those who have been to an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not were more likely to neither agree nor disagree (64% vs. 59%), whereas those who have not been to an arts activity in the past 12 months were more likely to answer don't know (23% vs. 8%),
- Those participating in an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not were more likely to disagree (12% vs. 7%), whereas those who have not participated in an arts activity in the past 12 months were more likely to answer don't know (17% vs. 5%).

Perception of public funding of arts and culture

Respondents were presented with several statements about public funding of the arts and culture in Northern Ireland and asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with each.

The highest level of agreement was recorded for the statement 'I believe it is right that there should be public investment in arts and cultural organisations' (79%), with most respondents also agreeing with the statements 'I support my local councils in investing on arts and culture in my area' (73%) and 'I believe it is right that there should be public investment in individual artists' (70%).



There were several significant differences between respondent groups (note that for the purposes of analysis mean agreement scores were computed for each statement with a higher mean score denoting a higher level of agreement with the statement).

Statement: I believe it is right that there should be public investment in arts and cultural organisations, with significantly higher levels of agreement recorded by the following respondent groups:

- Women (4.1) compared with men (3.9),
- Those with a disability (4.2) compared with non-disabled respondents (3.9),
- Those with a higher level of educational attainment (low, 3.8: medium, 4.0: high, 4.1),
- Catholic respondents (catholic, 4.2: protestant, 3.9: other, 3.4: none, 4.1),
- Mostly nationalist respondents (mostly unionist, 4.0: mostly nationalist, 4.2: apolitical, 3.9),
- Those who have been to an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not (4.1 vs. 3.7),
- Those participating in an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not (4.1 vs. 3.9).

Statement: I believe it is right that there should be public investment in individual artists, with significantly higher levels of agreement recorded by the following respondent groups:

- Those with a disability (4.1) compared with non-disabled respondents (3.8),
- Those in higher social classes (ABC1, 3.9: C2DE, 3.8),
- Those with relatively higher levels of educational attainment (low, 3.7: medium, 3.8: high, 3.9),
- Catholic respondents (catholic, 4.1: protestant, 3.8: other, 3.4: none, 3.8),
- Mostly nationalist respondents (mostly unionist, 3.8: mostly nationalist, 4.1: apolitical, 3.8),
- Those who have been to an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not (4.0 vs. 3.5),
- Those participating in an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not (4.0 vs. 3.8).

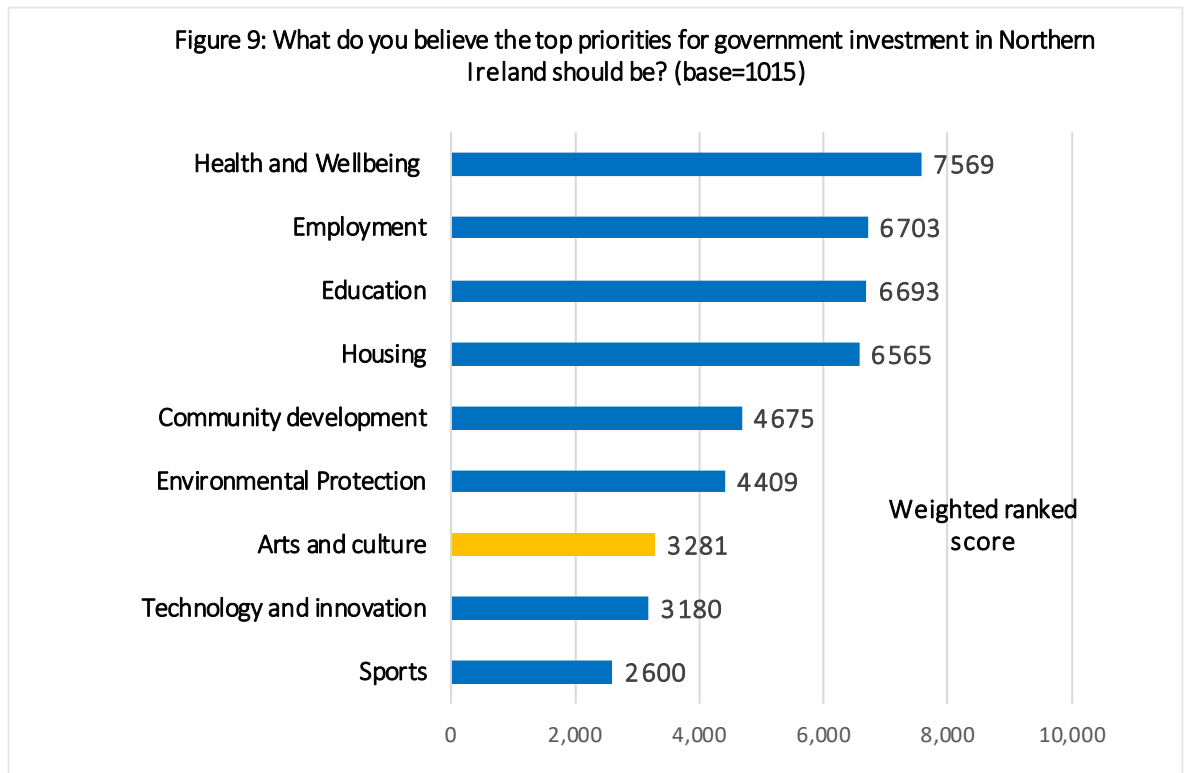
Statement: I support my local councils in investing on arts and culture in my area, with significantly higher levels of agreement recorded by the following respondent groups:

- Younger respondents (18-34, 4.0: 35-59, 3.8; 60+, 3.8),
- Those with a disability (4.0) compared with non-disabled respondents (3.8),
- Those with a higher of educational attainment (low, 3.7: medium, 3.7: high, 4.0),
- Catholic respondents (catholic, 4.0: protestant, 3.8: other, 3.1: none, 3.9),
- Mostly nationalist respondents (mostly unionist, 3.9: mostly nationalist, 4.0: apolitical, 3.7),
- Those who have been to an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not (3.9 vs. 3.6),

- Those participating in an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not (4.0 vs. 3.6).

Priorities for government investment in Northern Ireland

Respondents were asked to say what they believe the top priorities for government investment in Northern Ireland should be, with each respondent asked to rank their priorities from 1 (most important) to 9 (least important). Weighted scores were calculated by scoring the top ranked priority a 9, the second most important priority an 8, the third most important priority a 7 etc. through to the lowest priority being given a 1. Figure 9 presents the weighted ranked scores and shows that health and wellbeing was ranked the top priority for government investment in Northern Ireland (score, 7569), with sports ranked the least important priority (score, 2600). Arts and culture were ranked 7th in importance with a ranked score of 3281).

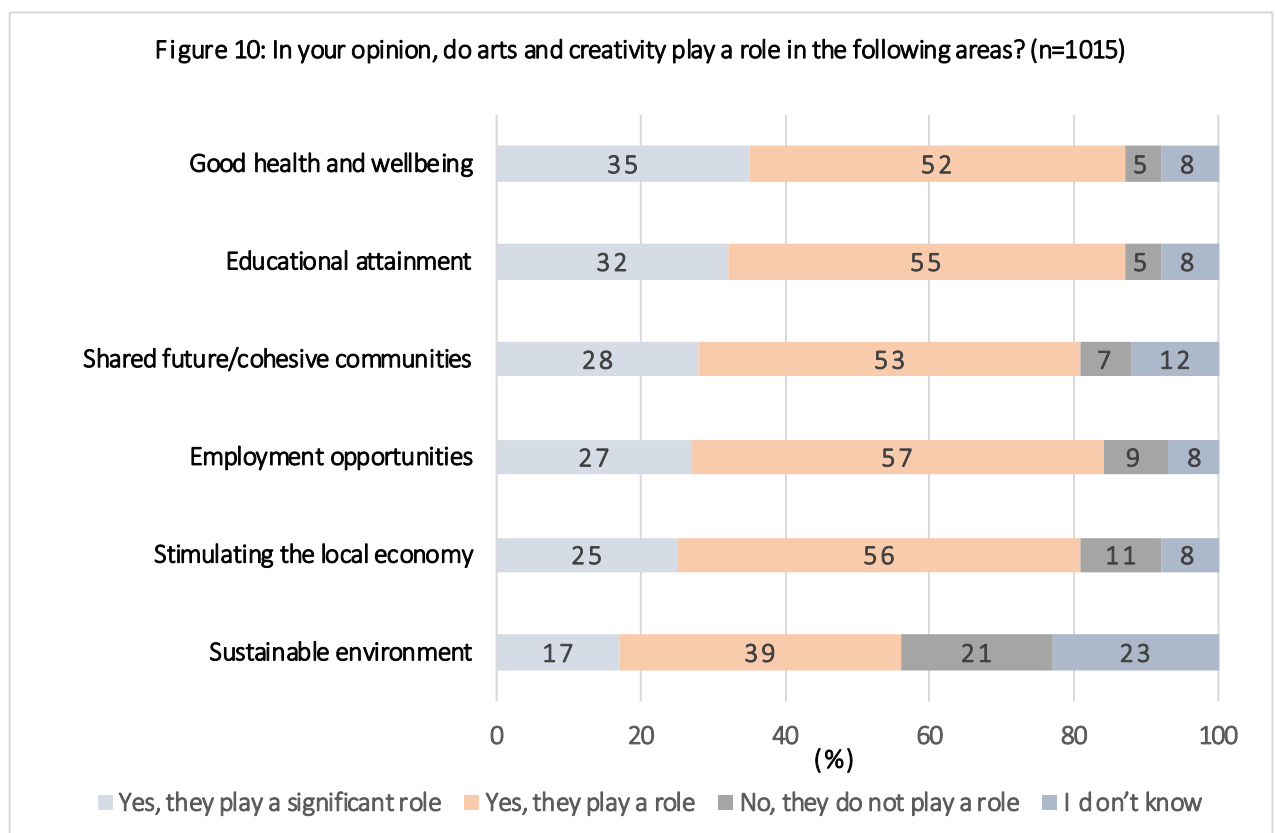


Role of arts and creativity in different areas of society

Respondents were asked if arts and creativity play a role in different areas of society.

Figure 10 shows that 87% of respondents believe that arts and creativity play a role in good health and wellbeing (significant role, 35%; a role, 52%), with the same number (87%) saying that arts and creativity plays a role in educational attainment (significant role, 32%; a role, 55%).

Most respondents also believe that arts and creativity play a role (significant or otherwise) in employment opportunities (84%); a shared future / cohesive communities (81%); stimulating the local economy (81%); and providing a sustainable environment (56%).



There were several significant differences between different respondent groups.

Arts and creativity playing a role (significant or otherwise) in good health and wellbeing?

- Older respondents were more likely to answer don't know (18-34, 6%; 35-59, 6%; 60+, 13%)
- Those in higher social grades were more likely to support this view (ABC1, 90% vs. C2DE, 84%)
- Those with relatively higher levels of educational attainment were more likely to support this view (low, 82%; medium, 88%; high, 88%)
- Those with dependents were more likely to support this view (91%) compared with those without dependents (84%)
- Those describing their community background as 'other' were less likely to support this view (catholic, 87%; protestant, 90%; other, 61%; none, 88%)
- Those who have been to an arts activity in the past 12 months were more likely to support this view compared with those who have not (91% vs. 68%)
- Those participating in an arts activity in the past 12 months were more likely to support this view compared with those who have not (93% vs. 79%)
- Arts and creativity playing a role (significant or otherwise) in educational attainment?
- Younger respondents were less likely to support this view (18-34, 82%; 35-59, 91%; 60+, 86%)
- Those with a disability were more likely to support this view (92% vs. 86%)
- Those in higher social grades were more likely to support this view (ABC1, 89% vs. C2DE, 85%)
- Those with relatively higher levels of educational attainment were more likely to support this view (low, 79%; medium, 89%; high, 91%)
- Those describing their community background as 'other' were less likely to support this view (catholic, 86%; protestant, 91%; other, 75%; none, 90%)
- Mostly unionist respondents were more likely to support this view (mostly unionist, 91%; mostly nationalist, 87%; apolitical, 87%)
- Those who have been to an arts activity in the past 12 months were more likely to support this view compared with those who have not (90% vs. 76%)
- Those participating in an arts activity in the past 12 months were more likely to support this view compared with those who have not (88% vs. 86%)

Arts and creativity playing a role (significant or otherwise) in stimulating the local economy?

- Younger respondents were less likely to support this view (18-34, 74%: 35-59, 84%; 60+, 82%)
- Non-disabled respondents were more likely to support this view (82% vs. 78%)
- Those in higher social grades were more likely to support this view (ABC1, 85% vs. C2DE, 77%)
- Those with a higher level of educational attainment were more likely to support this view (low, 71%: medium, 82%: high, 85%)
- Those describing their community background as 'other' were less likely to support this view (catholic, 84%: protestant, 83%: other, 58%: none, 80%)
- Those with dependents were more likely to support this view (88%) compared with those without dependents (77%)
- Heterosexual respondents were more likely to support this view (82%) compared with LGBTQ+ respondents (70%)
- Mostly unionist respondents were more likely to support this view (mostly unionist, 86%: mostly nationalist, 81%: apolitical, 77%)
- Those who have been to an arts activity in the past 12 months were more likely to support this view compared with those who have not (83% vs. 70%)
- Those participating in an arts activity in the past 12 months were more likely to support this view compared with those who have not (85% vs. 76%).

Arts and creativity playing a role (significant or otherwise) in employment opportunities?

- Women (86%) compared with men (81%) were more likely to support this view,
- Respondents aged 35-59 were more likely to support this view (18-34, 74%: 35-59, 89%; 60+, 84%)
- Respondents with a disability were more likely to support this view (89% vs. 82%)
- Those in higher social grades were more likely to support this view (ABC1, 87% vs. C2DE, 80%)
- Those with relatively higher levels of educational attainment were more likely to support this view (low, 79%: medium, 84%: high, 85%)
- Those with dependents were more likely to support this view (90%) compared with those without dependents (80%)
- Those describing their community background as 'other' were less likely to support this view (catholic, 83%: protestant, 88%: other, 60%: none, 86%)
- Mostly unionist respondents were more likely to support this view (mostly unionist, 89%: mostly nationalist, 82%: apolitical, 79%)
- Those who have been to an arts activity in the past 12 months were more likely to support this view compared with those who have not (85% vs. 71%)
- Those participating in an arts activity in the past 12 months were more likely to support this view compared with those who have not (85% vs. 82%).

Arts and creativity playing a role (significant or otherwise) in providing a sustainable environment?

- Women (57%) compared with men (54%) were more likely to support this view,
- Those in higher social grades were more likely to disagree with this view (ABC1, 26% vs. C2DE, 18%)
- Those with relatively higher levels of educational attainment were more likely to disagree with this view (low, 15%: medium, 20%: high, 26%)
- Those who have been to an arts activity in the past 12 months were more likely to support this view compared with those who have not (57% vs. 49%)
- Those participating in an arts activity in the past 12 months were more likely to support this view compared with those who have not (61% vs. 49%).

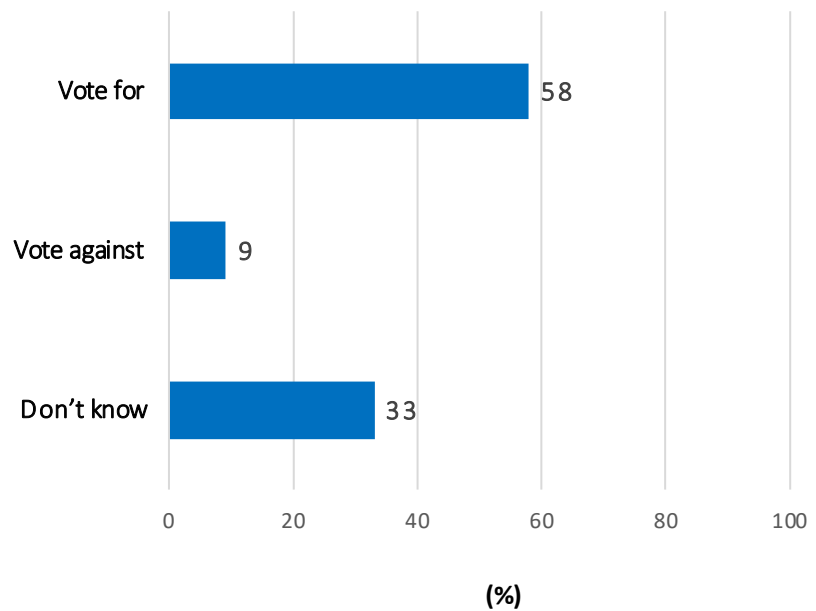
Arts and creativity playing a role (significant or otherwise) in a shared future / cohesive communities?

- Women (83%) compared with men (79%) were more likely to support this view,
- Respondents aged 35-59 were more likely to support this view (18-34, 78%: 35-59, 84%; 60+, 79%)
- Those with relatively higher levels of educational attainment were more likely to support this view (low, 71%: medium, 84%: high, 85%)
- Those with dependents were more likely to support this view (88%) compared with those without dependents (77%)
- Those describing their community background as 'other' were less likely to support this view (catholic, 83%: protestant, 80%: other, 67%: none, 86%)
- Those who have been to an arts activity in the past 12 months were more likely to support this view compared with those who have not (85% vs. 65%)
- Those participating in an arts activity in the past 12 months were more likely to support this view compared with those who have not (87% vs. 75%).

Support for a political candidate who wanted to increase spending on arts and culture

Respondents were asked, if all else being equal, would they vote for or against a political candidate who wanted to increase spending on the arts and culture in Northern Ireland, with Figure 11 showing that most (58%) would vote for a political candidate who advocated increased spending on arts and culture, 9% would vote against, and 33% were undecided.

Figure 11: All else being equal, would you vote for or against a political candidate who wanted to increase spending on the arts and culture in Northern Ireland? (base=1015)



There were several significant differences with those more likely to say they would vote for a political candidate who wanted to increase spending on the arts and culture in Northern Ireland including:

- Women (62%) compared with men (54%)
- Older respondents (18-34, 57%; 35-59, 57%; 60+, 61%)
- Those with a disability (71%) compared with non-disabled respondents (55%)
- Those with relatively higher levels of educational attainment ('low', 54%; 'medium', 59%; 'high', 59%).
- LGBTQ+ respondents (68%) compared with heterosexual respondents (58%)
- Community background catholic or 'none' (catholic, 61%; protestant, 59%; other, 45%; none, 61%)
- Those who have been to an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not (63% vs. 35%)
- Those participating in an arts activity in the past 12 months compared with those who have not (66% vs. 50%).

Describing the arts and culture in Northern Ireland to friends and family

Respondents were asked what three words they would use to describe the arts and culture in Northern Ireland to their friends and family. Figure 12 shows a word cloud based on the responses with the most dominant themes being: interesting; fun; diverse; vibrant; creative; inclusive; and, exciting.

Figure 12: Word cloud to describe the arts and culture in Northern Ireland to their friends and family.



Describing the working conditions of artists in Northern Ireland

Respondents were asked what three words come to mind when they hear the phrase: “The working conditions of artists in Northern Ireland”. Figure 13 shows a word cloud based on the responses with the most dominant themes being: don’t know; underpaid; struggle; good; hard; limited; poor; underfunded; and, difficult.

Respondents were asked what three words come to mind when they hear the phrase: “**Public investment in the arts and culture in Northern Ireland**”. Figure 14 shows a word cloud based on the responses with the most dominant themes being: underfunded; poor; needed; money; limited; lacking; and, important.

Challenges Northern Ireland faces and the areas that the arts can contribute to:

Respondents were asked about the challenges Northern Ireland faces, and to say what areas they think the arts could contribute to, with the most common including: community integration (49%); promoting good mental health and wellbeing (21%); promoting equality, inclusion and diversity through engagement (16%); and supporting arts activities in education and schools (12%).

Thinking about the challenges Northern Ireland faces, what areas do you think the arts could contribute to?	%
Bringing different communities together/community cohesion/bringing communities from different religions together	49
Promoting good mental health /well being	28
Generating more jobs/employment/improve economy	21
Promote equality, inclusion and diversity through engagement	16
Supporting arts activities in Education/schools	12
Education (non-Specific)	12
Promoting Tourism	10
Entertainment/Leisure - more cultural choice, music events and festivals	8
Promoting peace and reconciliation (healing and forgiveness)	8
Promoting good health (non-specific)	6
Funding/money - For charities/community groups/events	5
Promote positive cultural identity/promote confidence	5
Make arts more accessible in urban and rural areas (also in Belfast, Derry, Portrush, Newry, Poleglass and Twinbrook)	5
Fun/pleasure/joy	5

Provision more free activities for children	4
Provide more activities for Young People/Youth Services	4
Politics/political - be more vocal	3
Support poorer/deprived communities by keeping costs down/affordable	3
Promote creativity - arts, drama, opera	3
Promote and support community events/groups/development	3
Addressing loneliness	3
Promoting environmental issues	2
Addressing/challenging sectarianism/history of troubles	2
Provision of more activities for children and adults with special needs or disabilities	2
Address homelessness and housing issues	2
More shared public/community spaces - including community centres, museums/public parks and playgrounds	2
Promoting change/development/growth	2
Support the elderly including care homes	2
Help people (non-specific)	2
Encourage activity /interests	2
Promoting and supporting local artists/cultural events/live music	1
Addressing social issues/value awareness building	1
Promote live comedy more	1
Support hospitals/NHS	1
Promote integration (non-specific)	1
More art/painting projects/galleries	1
Sports	1
Promote and support street art/brighten up areas	1
Support theatres/venues	1
Addressing anti-social behaviour/crime	1

Promote family events/family time	1
History (non-specific)	1
Broadens people's minds	1
Outdoor events/entertainment/activities	1
Help to grow the Film Industry/Sector	1
Promote integrated education	1
More music projects	1
Provision of studio space	1
Support drug and alcohol addiction support	1
Work with councils/local authorities	1
Other	25
Don't know	27

Appendix 1

Sample Profile Compared with NI Population Profile (N I Population aged 18+) [n=1015]

	Census (%)	Sample (%)	95% Confidence Interval (+/-)
Male	48	48	47.0-49
Female	52	52	51.0-53
18-34	31	28	27.1-28.9
35-59	42	43	42.0-44.0
60+	27	29	28.1-29.9
ABC1	47	47	46.0-48.0
C2DE	53	53	52.0-54.0
Antrim and Newtownabbey	8	8	7.5-8.5
Ards and North Down	9	9	8.4-9.6
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	10	10	9.4-10.6
Belfast	18	18	17.3-18.7
Causeway Coast and Glens	8	8	7.5-8.5
Derry City and Strabane	8	8	7.5-8.5
Fermanagh and Omagh	6	6	5.5-6.5
Lisburn and Castlereagh	8	8	7.5-8.5

Mid and East Antrim	7	7	6.5-7.5
Mid Ulster	8	8	7.5-8.5
Newry, Mourne and Down	10	10	9.4-10.6

Source: Northern Ireland Census of Population (2021 Mid-Year Estimates)

Arts Council of Northern Ireland

Linen Hill House
23 Linenhall Street
Lisburn
BT28 1FJ

artscouncil-ni.org

T: +44 (28) 9262 3555

E: info@artscouncil-ni.org

Alternative formats of this publication may be available on request.
For further information, email: info@artscouncil-ni.org