

Experience of culture and the arts by adults in Northern Ireland

Findings from the Continuous Household Survey 2016/17

Annual publication

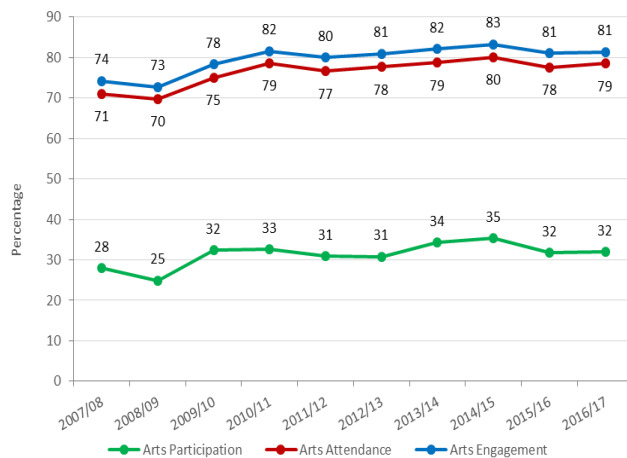
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Main stories

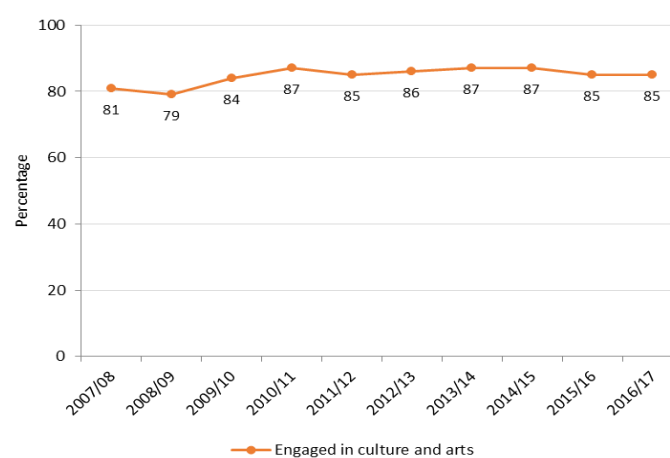
- The proportion of the adult population engaging in culture and arts each year has remained relatively consistent at around 85% since 2009/10.
- In 2016/17, just over four fifths (81%) of all adults in Northern Ireland engaged with the arts in the previous year. Women were more likely to have engaged with the arts than men, this has been the case throughout the entire trend period.
- The proportion of adults in Northern Ireland who had visited a museum or science centre at least once within the last year returned to 48% in 2016/17 following a dip to 45% in 2015/16. Usage of the public library service showed no change in 2016/17 at 25%.

Engagement with the arts Similar to the previous years' figures



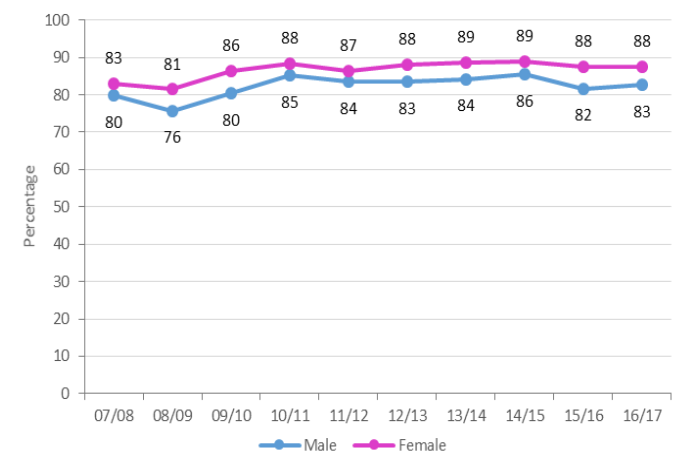
Just over 8 in every 10 adults had engaged with the arts at least once within the previous year since 2010/11. Engagement with the arts is largely driven by attendance at arts events.

Engagement in culture and arts Consistent with previous years' results



Over 8 out of every ten adults in Northern Ireland had engaged with culture and the arts at least once within the previous year, this proportion has remained relatively consistent since 2009/10.

Engagement in culture and arts Women more likely to engage in culture and arts than men



Women were more likely to have engaged in culture and the arts within the previous year (88%) than men (83%). This difference has been apparent over the entire trend period.

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Introduction

The Department for Communities (DfC) is the lead department for arts and creativity, museums, libraries and public records. This bulletin follows a headline bulletin released in May 2017 and brings together information on the experience of the arts, libraries and museums in one document for the first time. This information was previously released in separate reports which are still available for previous years on the [DfC website](#). The publication will be of interest to a wide variety of users but has particular relevance in informing cultural and arts activities as defined in the draft Programme for Government for Northern Ireland 2016-21.

Engagement in culture and arts includes:

- Engagement in the arts (includes both arts participation and arts attendance)
- Usage of the public library service
- Visits to museums and science centres
- Visits to the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland.

Continuous Household Survey

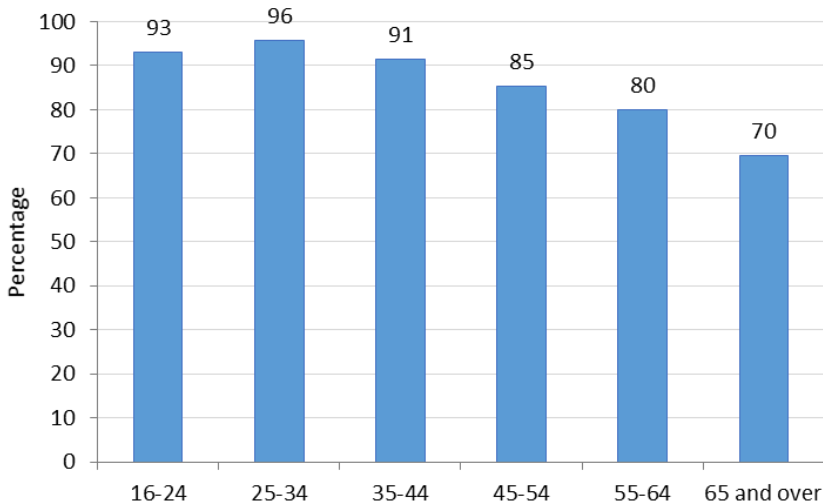
This report presents the findings from the 2016/17 Continuous Household Survey (CHS) in relation to engagement with culture and arts in Northern Ireland which are used to inform the development, monitoring and evaluation of policy. More information relating to the CHS, an annual household survey, including the methodology, definitions and interpretation of the figures can be found in the [definitions and technical notes](#) section. Data tables are available in [Excel](#) and [ODS format](#). The questions that were asked in 2016/17 CHS are available [here](#).

Engagement in culture and arts

In 2016/17, over four fifths of all adults in Northern Ireland (85%) had engaged with culture and the arts at least once within the previous year. This is similar to the proportion of adults who engaged in 2015/16.

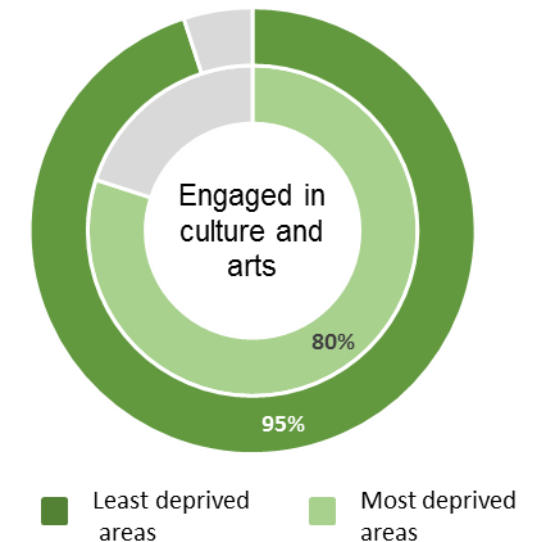
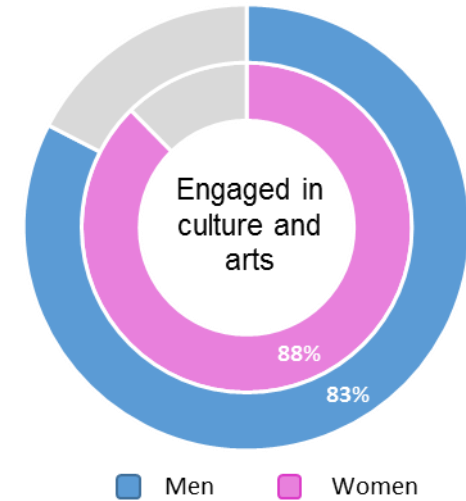
Women were more likely to have engaged with culture and arts activities within the last year than men (88% and 83% respectively). The proportions of adults who engaged with culture and the arts generally decreased as age group increased, particularly beyond the 35-44 years age group.

Engaged in culture and arts by age group



Religion did not have any bearing on engagement rates with similar proportions of adults from both the Catholic and Protestant communities engaging with culture and the arts within the last year (83% and 85% respectively).

Adults who lived in the least deprived areas were more likely to have engaged with culture and the arts within the previous year, with 95% having engaged, compared to 80% of those who live in the most deprived areas.



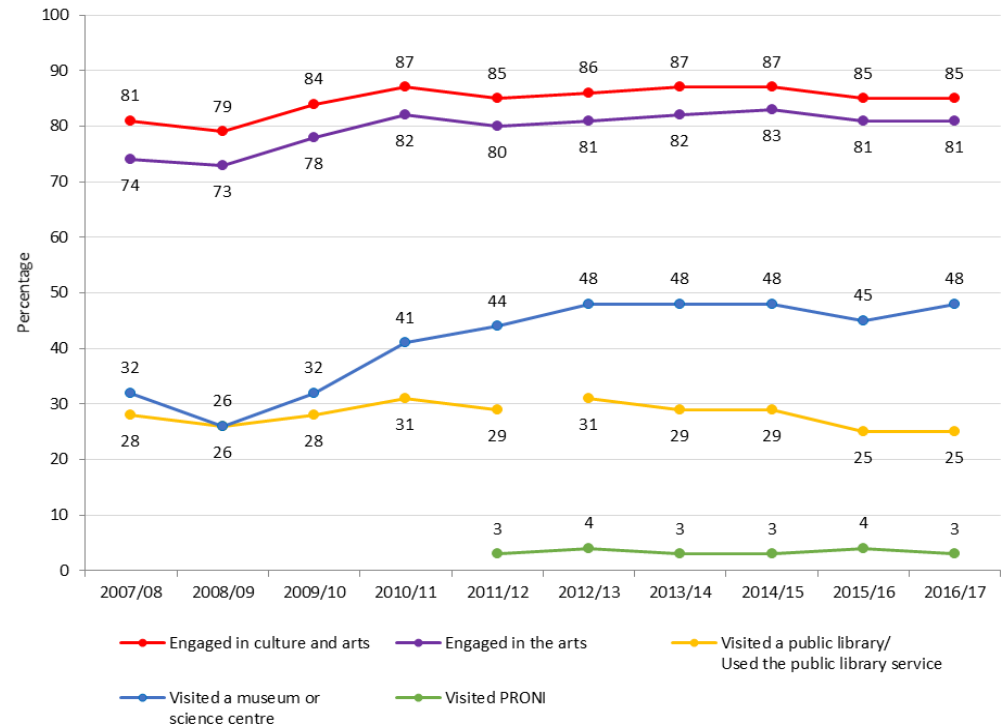
Trends

Culture and arts engagement

Over eight out of every ten adults (85%) engaged in activities associated with culture and the arts, this proportion has remained consistent over the majority of the trend period.

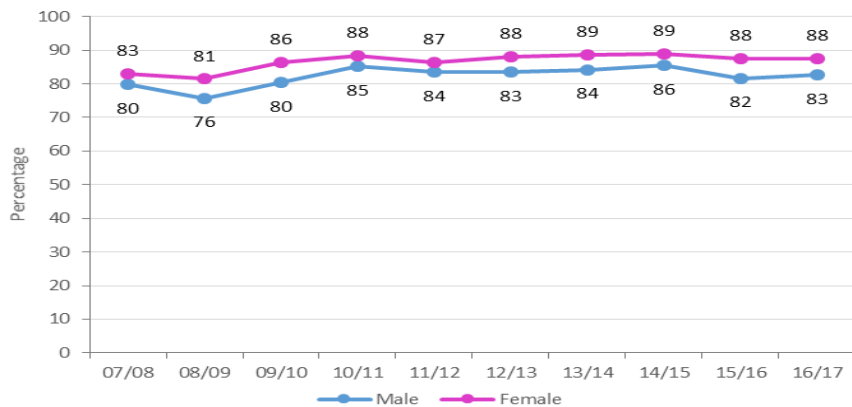
Engagement in the arts among adults within the previous year (81%) has also remained consistent over the majority of the trend period, where just over 8 in every 10 adults had engaged with the arts at least once within the previous year since 2010/11.

In 2016/17, the proportion of adults visiting a museum in the last year returned to 48%, having fallen to 45% in 2015/16. Use of the public library service in 2016/17 was consistent with the 2015/16 figure. However, the longer term trend has seen a drop in the proportions. Figures produced by Libraries NI show that whilst the proportions using the service may have declined somewhat, those who do use the service seem to be using it more.



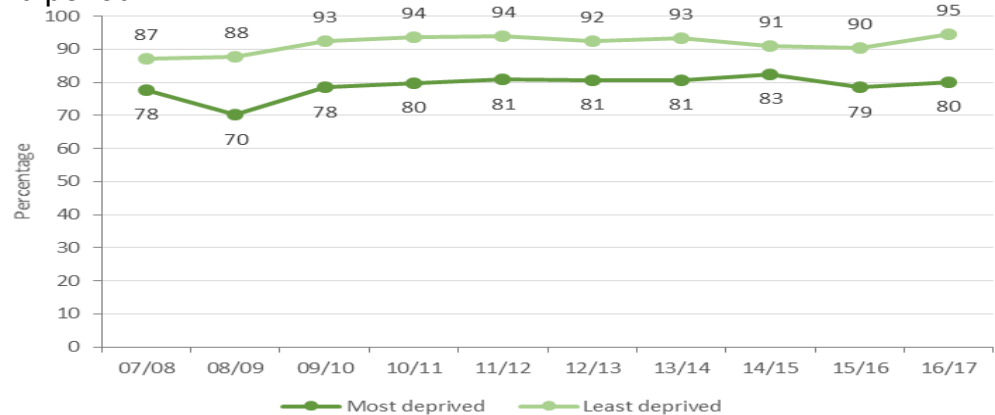
Gender

Women were more likely than men to have engaged in culture and the arts within the previous year (88% and 83% respectively). This difference has remained consistent over the entire trend period.



Deprivation

Adults who lived in the least deprived areas (95%) were more likely to have engaged in culture and the arts than those who live in the most deprived areas (80%). This difference has been apparent over the entire trend period.



Arts

Participation in arts activities

In 2016/17, nearly a third of all adults (32%) participated in an arts activity at least once within the previous year. This is similar to the proportion who had participated in 2015/16. Analysis by demographic group and by area shows no change in the participation in an arts activity in 2016/17 when compared with 2015/16.

A higher proportion of females than males participated in arts activities in 2016/17 (36% and 28% respectively). In addition, relatively more Protestant adults (34%) participated in an arts activity at least once within the previous year than those from the Catholic community (28%). Adults who lived in the least deprived areas were more likely to have participated than those who lived in the most deprived areas (39% and 24% respectively).

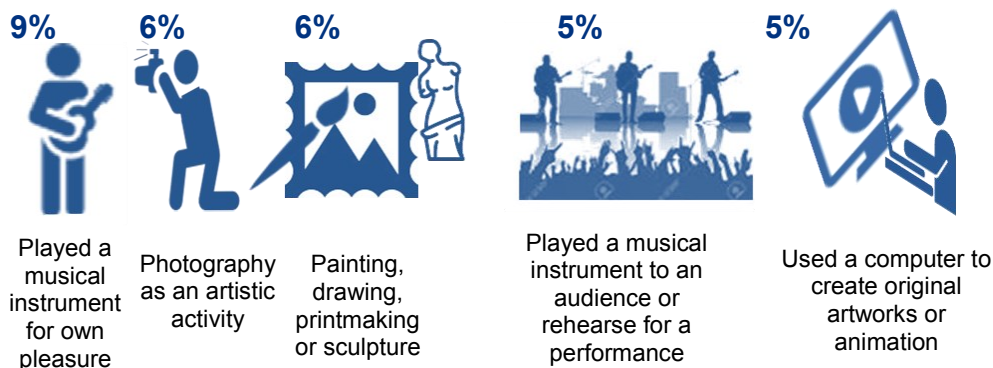
Age, marital status, disability or having dependants had no impact on the proportions of adults who had participated in arts over the last year.

Types of arts activities

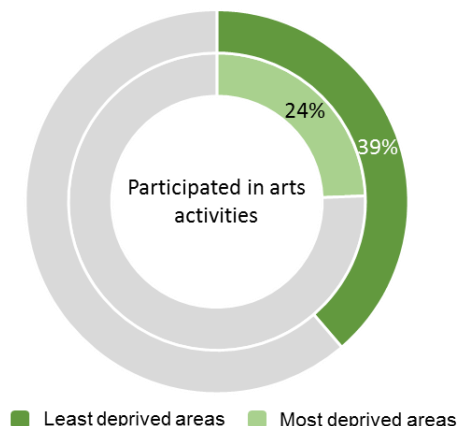
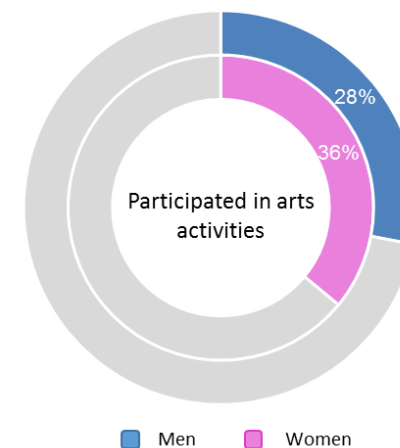
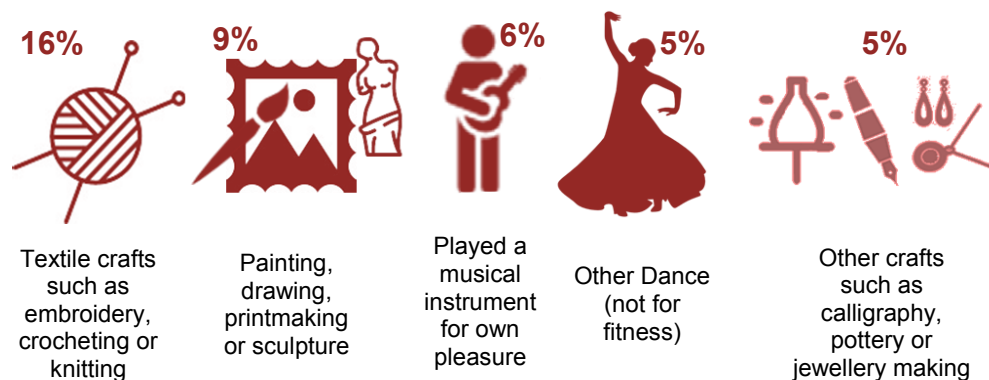
The five most popular arts activities that adults participated in within the previous year were: 'Textile crafts such as embroidery, crocheting or knitting' (8%), 'Played a musical instrument' (8%), 'Painting, drawing, printmaking or sculpture' (8%), 'Photography as an artistic activity' (5%) and 'Sang to an audience or rehearsed for a performance' (5%).

When analysed by gender the five most popular were:

Males:



Females:



Arts

Attendance at arts events

In 2016/17, just under four-fifths of all adults (79%) indicated that they had attended at least one arts event over the previous year. This is similar to the proportion in 2015/16. Since 2015/16 attendance rates have remained similar for all groups, apart from adults aged 16-24 years (decreased) and adults aged 25-34 and those who live in the least deprived areas (both increased).

Women (81%) were more likely than men (76%) to have attended the arts. There is a relationship between arts attendance and age, with attendance generally decreasing as age increases from age 35 and upwards.

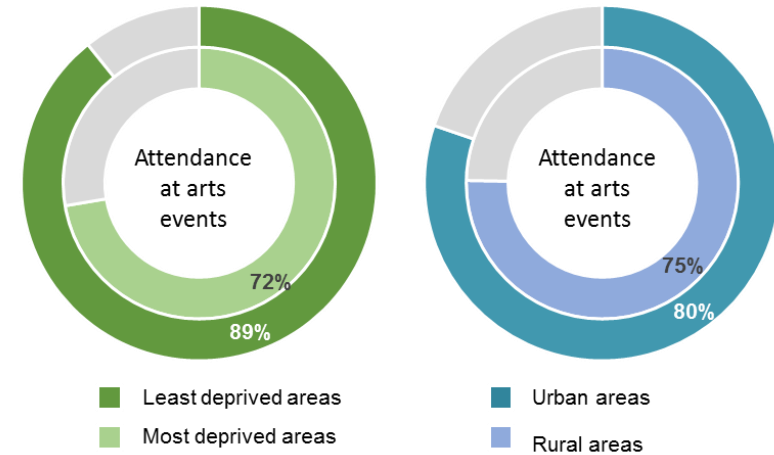
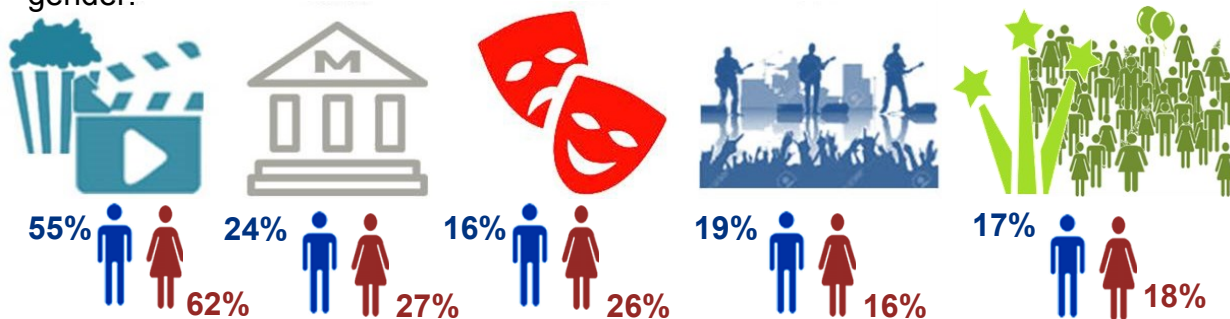
Adults with a disability were less likely to attend an arts event than those who do not have a disability (65% and 84% respectively). Whereas, a greater proportion of adults with dependants (85%) had attended an arts event than those without dependants (74%).

Concerning where people lived, adults who lived in the least deprived areas or those who live in urban areas were more likely to have attended an arts event in the previous year than those who live in the most deprived areas or in rural areas.

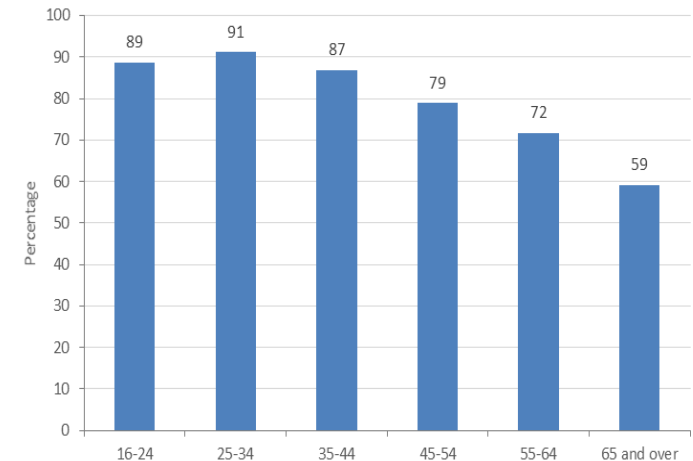
When adults who only attend a cinema are excluded from the analysis attendance at arts events reduces to 67%.

Types of arts events

The most popular arts events attended by adults over the last year were 'Film at cinema or other venue' (58%), a museum (25%), 'Play or drama' (21%), 'Rock or pop music performance' (18%) and community festivals (17%). The same five events were analysed by gender:



Attendance at arts events by age



Arts

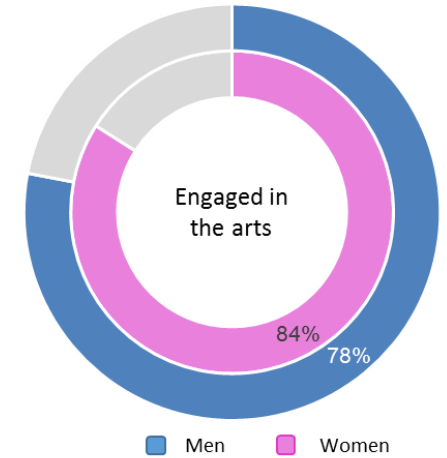
Engagement in the arts

As in 2015/16, just over four fifths (81%) of all adults in Northern Ireland engaged with the arts in the previous year in 2016/17. Compared with 2015/16, arts engagement rates have remained similar across all demographic groups.

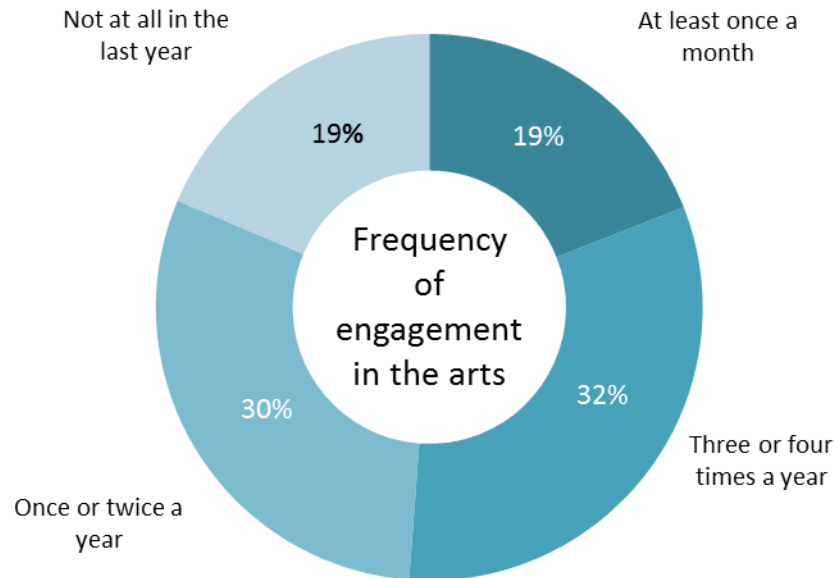
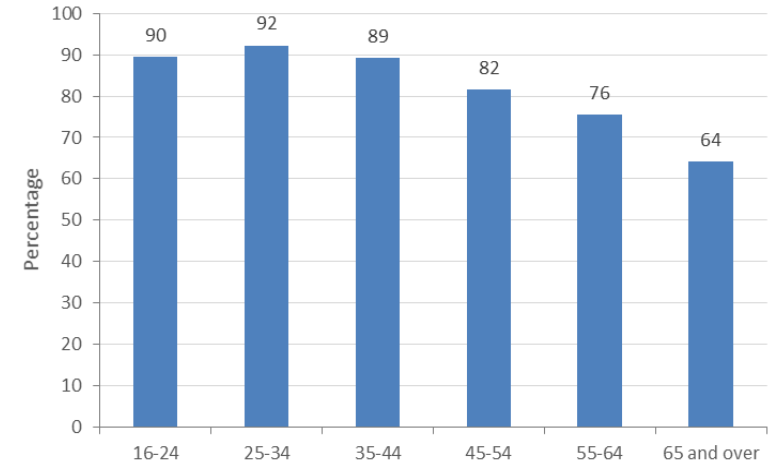
In 2016/17, 84% of all females engaged with the arts compared with 78% of males. Regarding age, engagement rates tended to decrease as age increased from age 35 onwards.

Similar proportions of Catholics (79%) and Protestants (82%) engaged with the arts. However, adults with a disability were less likely to have engaged than those without a disability (70% and 86% respectively).

Concerning where people lived, adults who lived in the least deprived areas (92%) or in urban areas (83%) were more likely to have engaged than those who lived in either the most deprived or rural areas (76% and 78% respectively).



Engagement in the arts by age



Frequency of engagement

Just under a fifth (19%) of all adults engaged with the arts at least once a month over the previous year. This is similar to the proportion who had not engaged at all.

Just under a third had engaged either three or four times a year (32%) and a further third engaged once or twice a year (30%).

Arts

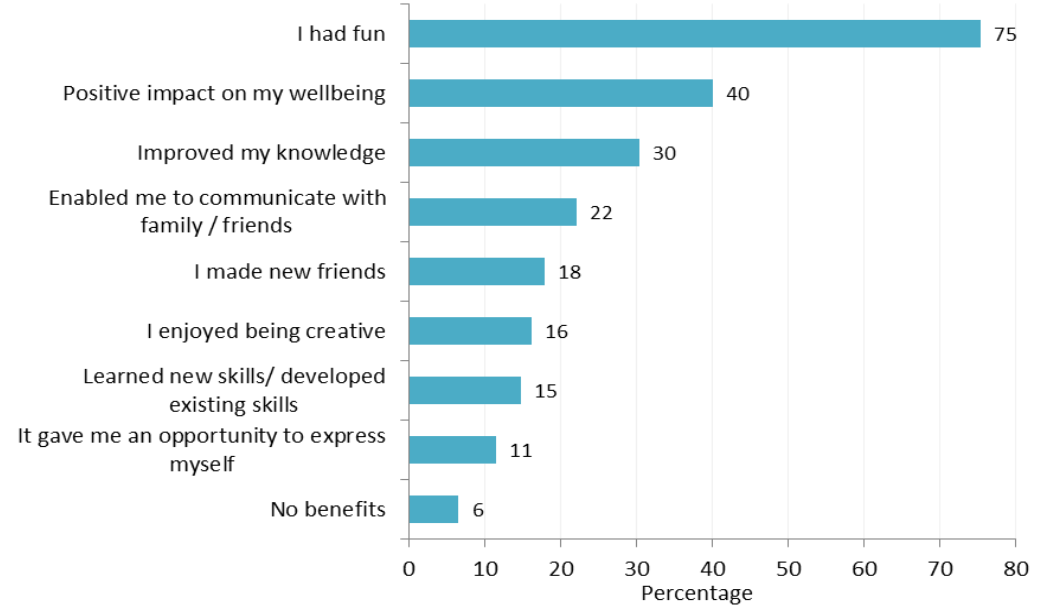
Benefits of engaging in the arts

Three quarters (75%) of all adults who had engaged in the arts cited “I had fun” as a benefit.

Four out of every ten adults who had engaged with the arts (40%) cited having a “positive impact on my wellbeing” as a benefit to engaging. Other benefits of engaging that were stated by respondents include “Improved my knowledge” (30%), “Enabled me to communicate with family/friends” (22%) and “I made new friends” (18%).

Six per cent of all adults who engaged stated that they experienced no benefits as a result of engaging with the arts in the last year.

Benefits of engaging in the arts

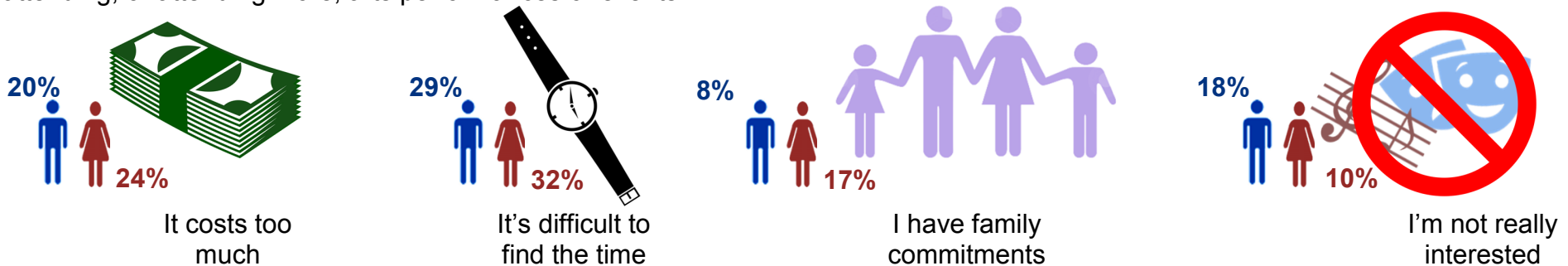


Barriers to attending arts performances or events

Just under one quarter (24%) of adults stated that nothing prevents them from attending arts performances or events or attending them more often. However, just under a third (30%) stated that they found it difficult to find the time to attend.

Other reasons cited by adults as barriers to attending, or attending more, arts performances or events include: “It costs too much” (22%), “I’m not really interested” (14%), “I have family commitments” (13%), “Events are not publicised enough” and “My health isn’t good enough” (both 12%).

When analysed by gender, males were more likely to cite that they were not interested in attending arts events. Females, however, were more likely to have stated that they find it “difficult to find the time”, that “it costs too much” and “family commitments” as reasons preventing them from attending, or attending more, arts performances or events.



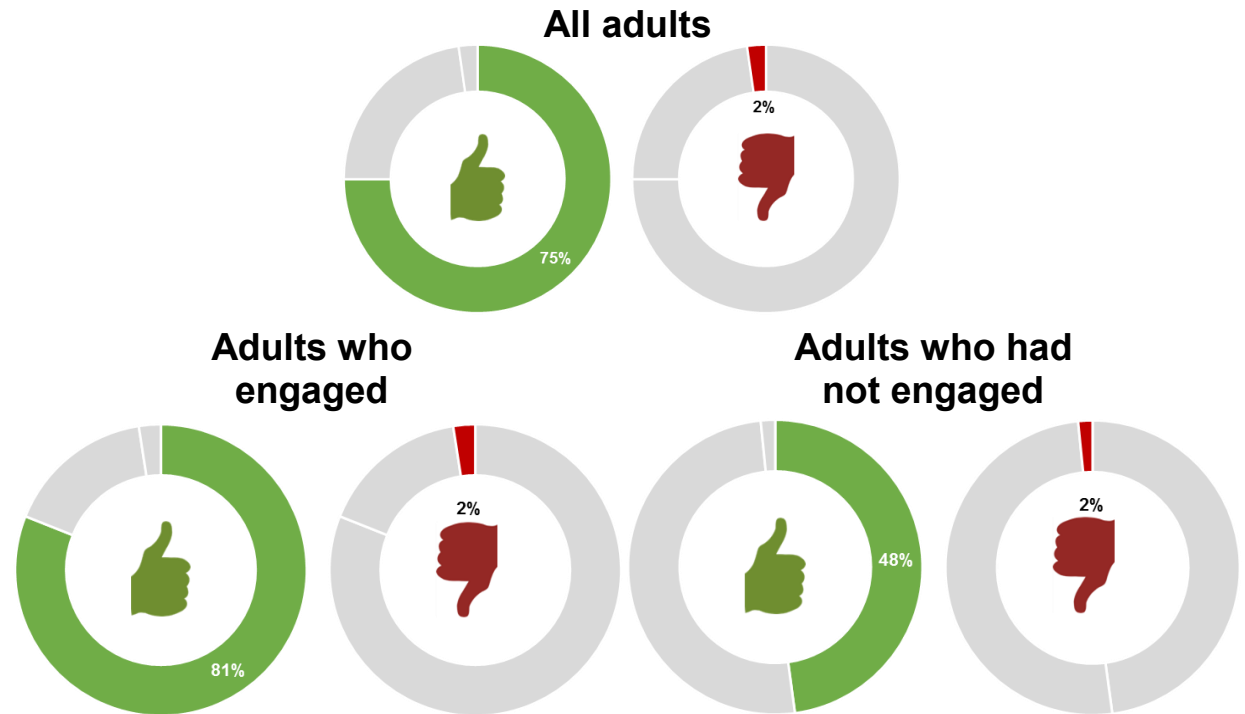
Arts

Satisfaction with arts provision

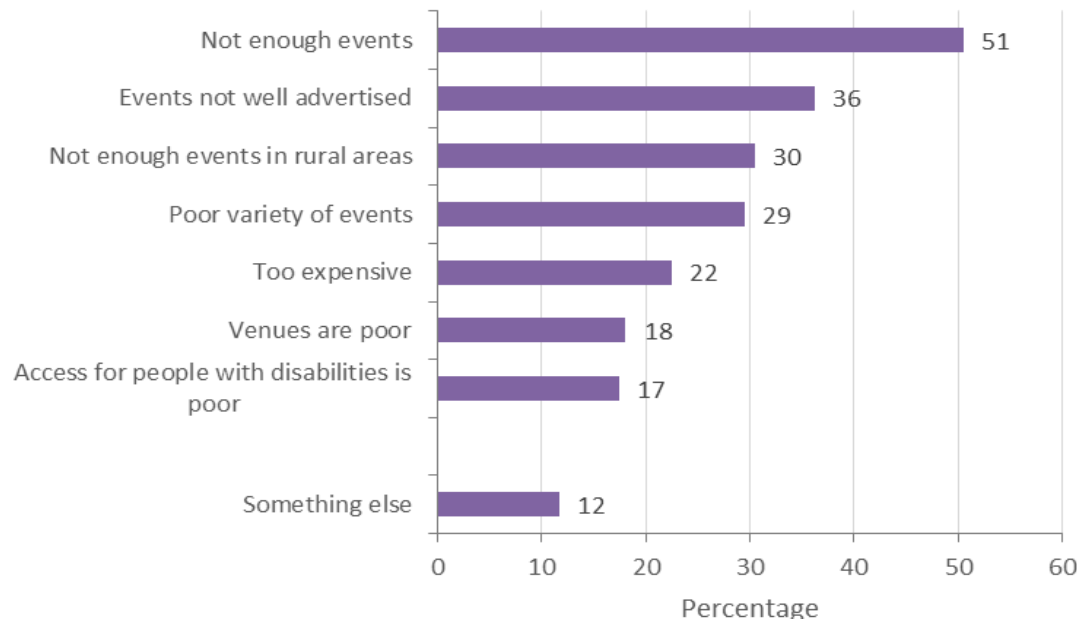
Three quarters of all adults indicated that they were satisfied with arts provision in Northern Ireland. Just over a fifth stated that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and just 2% stated that they were dissatisfied.

Adults who had not engaged were no more likely to express dissatisfaction with arts provision than those who had engaged (both 2%).

However a greater proportion of those who had engaged were satisfied than those who had not engaged with the arts in the last year (81% and 48% respectively).



Reasons dissatisfied with arts provision



Dissatisfied with arts provision

Those who had indicated that they were dissatisfied with arts provision in Northern Ireland were asked for reasons why they felt this way.

Just over half (51%) stated that there were not enough events, over a third (36%) felt that the events that were on were not well advertised and three of out every ten (30%) stated that there were not enough events in rural areas.

Other most frequently cited reasons included; "Poor variety of events"(29%), "Too expensive" (22%) and poor venues (18%), as well as poor access for people with disabilities (17%).

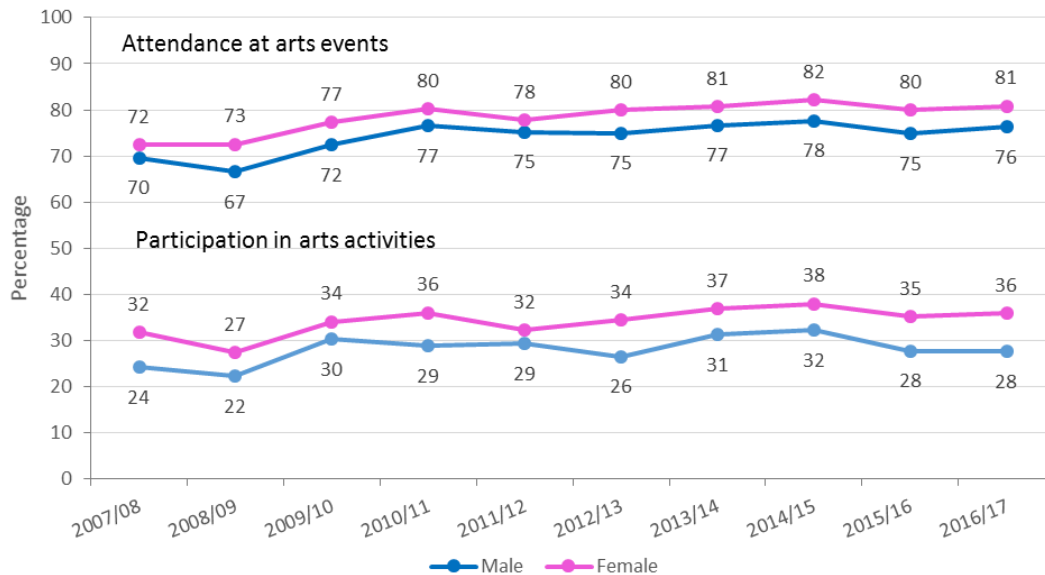
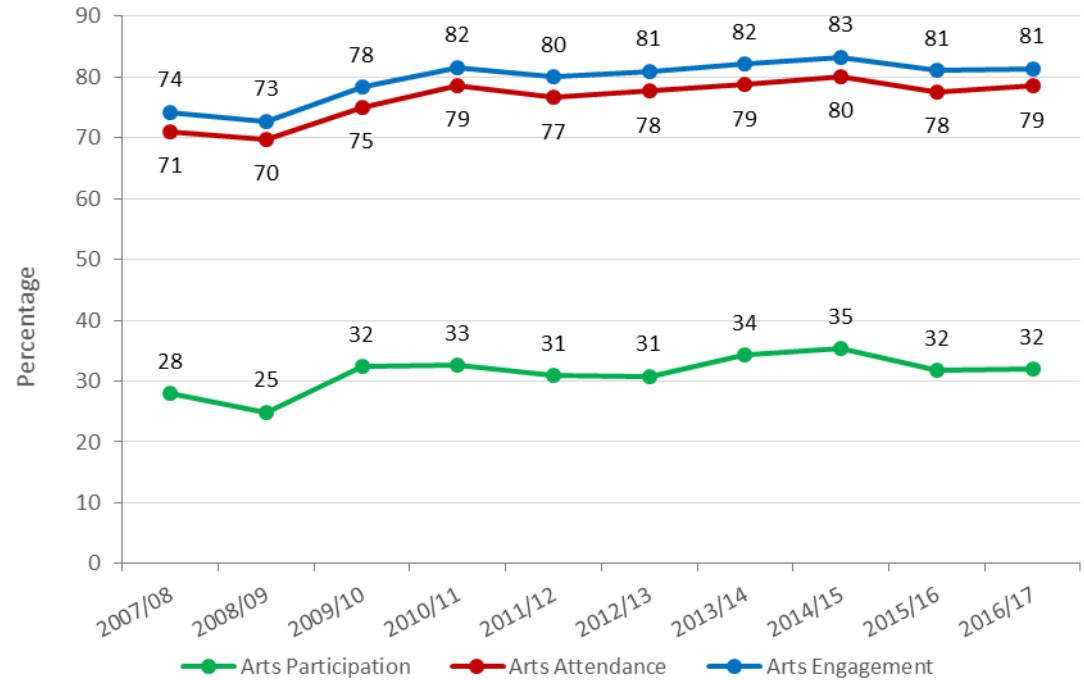
Trends

Engagement with the arts

Just over 8 in every 10 adults had engaged with the arts at least once within the previous year since 2010/11. This trend followed an increase from the rates in 2007/08 (74%) and 2008/09 (73%) to 78% in 2009/10.

Engagement with the arts is largely driven by attendance at arts events. Consistently over the trend period, only 3% of adults had participated in an arts activity without also having attended an arts event within the year.

The latest figure for engagement with the arts (81%) is similar to the previous year's figure (81%), this consistency is seen with both components of engagement with arts namely 'attendance' and 'participation'. This follows a decrease seen in 2015/16 compared with the prior year 2014/15.



Gender

Women were more likely to have engaged with the arts within the previous year (84%) than men (78%). This is a result of both their greater likelihood of having participated in an arts activity (36%) and having attended an arts event (81%) within the previous year than men (28% and 76% respectively).

This has also been the case throughout the entire trend period with a higher proportion of women engaging with the arts than men year on year.

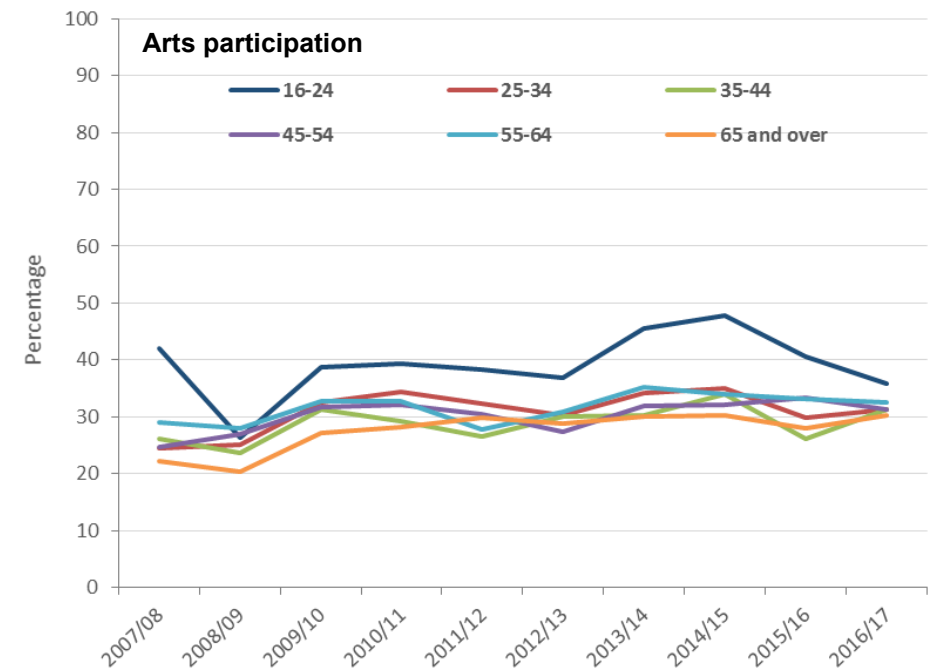
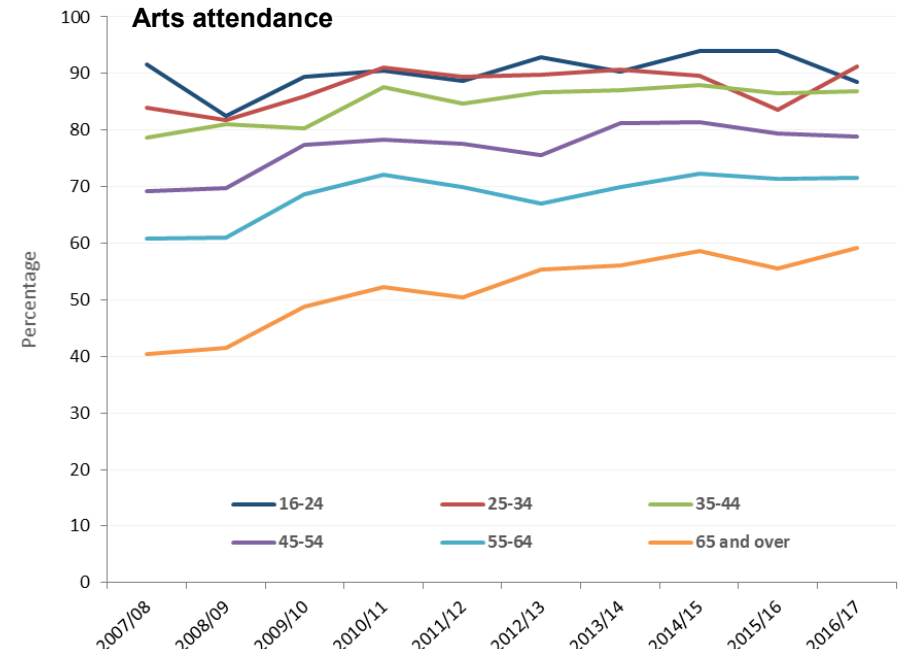
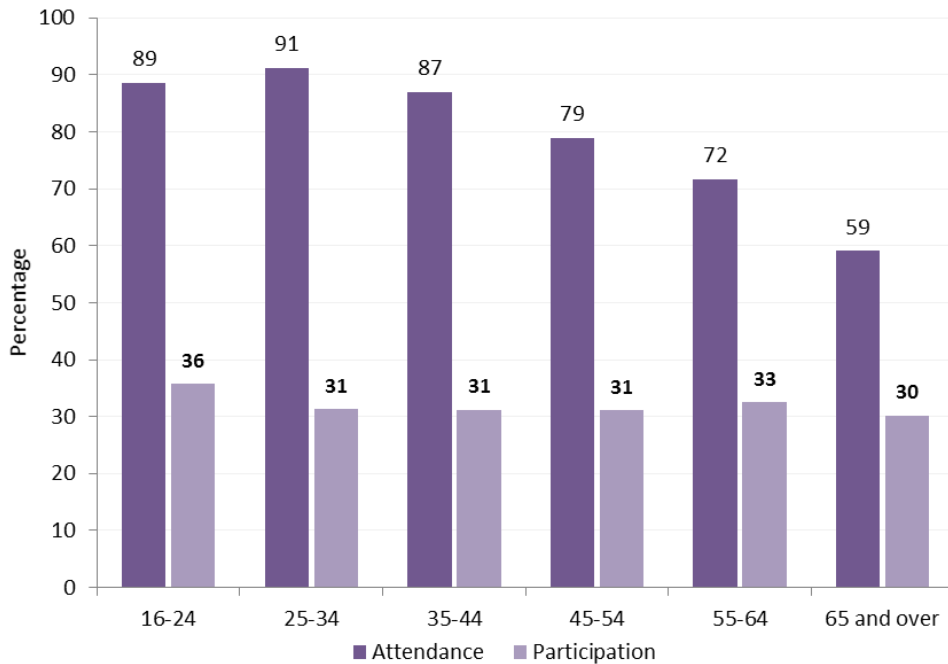
Trends

Age group

Generally speaking ‘attendance at an arts event’ decreases with age. This is especially true beyond the 35-44 age group with lower proportions from successive age groups attending an arts event within the previous year since 2007/08. Adults aged 65 years and over have consistently been the least likely to have done so.

Looking at arts participation within the previous year by age group shows that around a third of all age groups had participated in the arts at least once within the previous year. Looking at the longer term trend, those aged 16-24 years were more likely to have participated than other age groups.

Attendance and participation in the arts by age

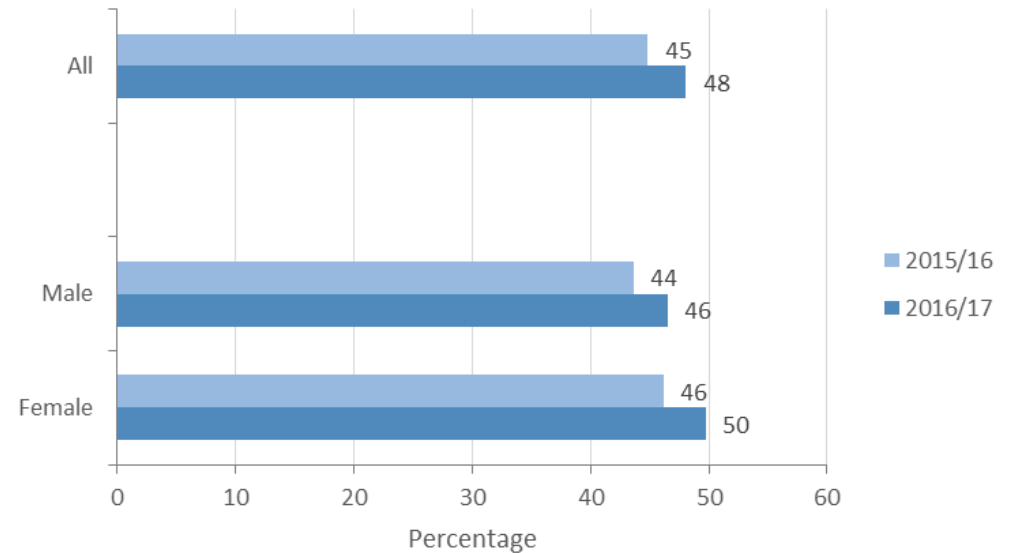


Museums and science centres

Visited a museum or science centre

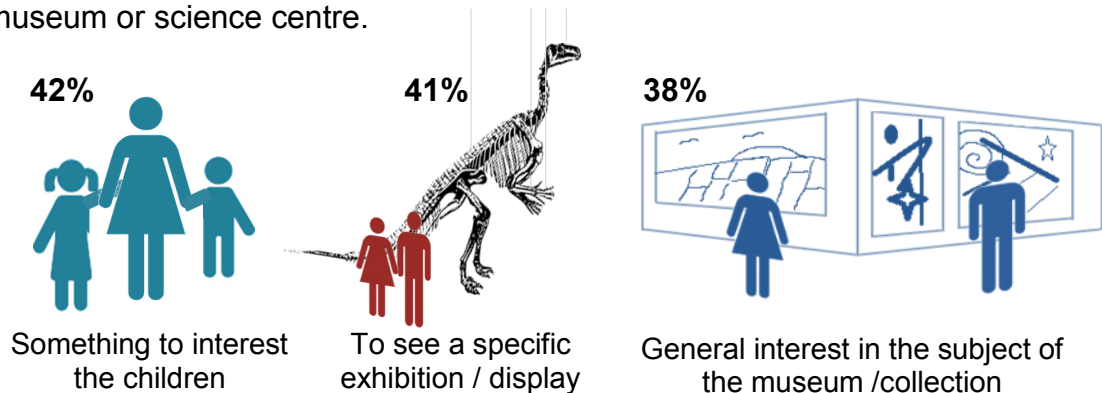
Just under a half of all adults (48%) in Northern Ireland had visited a museum or science centre at least once within the last year, an increase on the proportion who had visited in 2015/16 (45%). Similar proportions of men and women visited a museum or science centre within the last year (46% and 50% respectively) as was the case in 2015/16, although the proportion of women who visited in 2016/17 has increased.

Age and disability had an impact on the proportions of adults who visited a museum or science centre. Adults who have a disability (39%) were less likely to have visited a museum or science centre than those who do not have a disability (52%). Similarly, those aged 45 and over were less likely to have visited than those aged under 45 years (43% and 55% respectively).



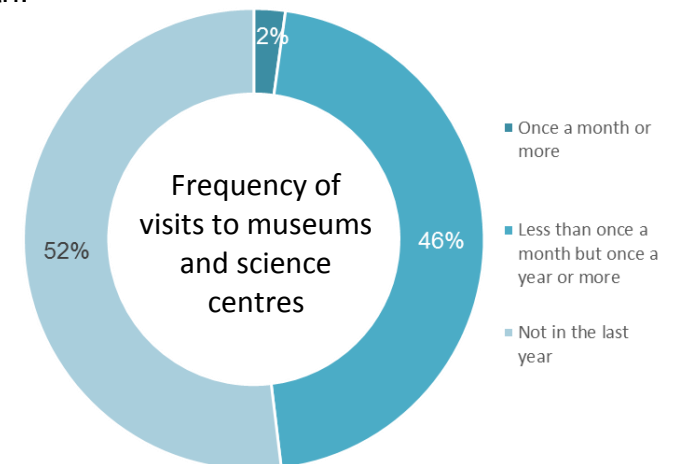
Reasons for visiting a museum or science centre

The three most frequently cited reasons adults gave for visiting a museum or science centre were 'Something to interest the children', 'To see a specific exhibition/display' and 'General interest in the subject of the museum/collection'. Since this question has been introduced to the CHS, these have been the most frequently cited reasons for visiting a museum or science centre.



Frequency of visits to museums and science centres

Nearly half of all adults had visited a museum or science centre at least once in the last year with only 2% having visited at least once a month.



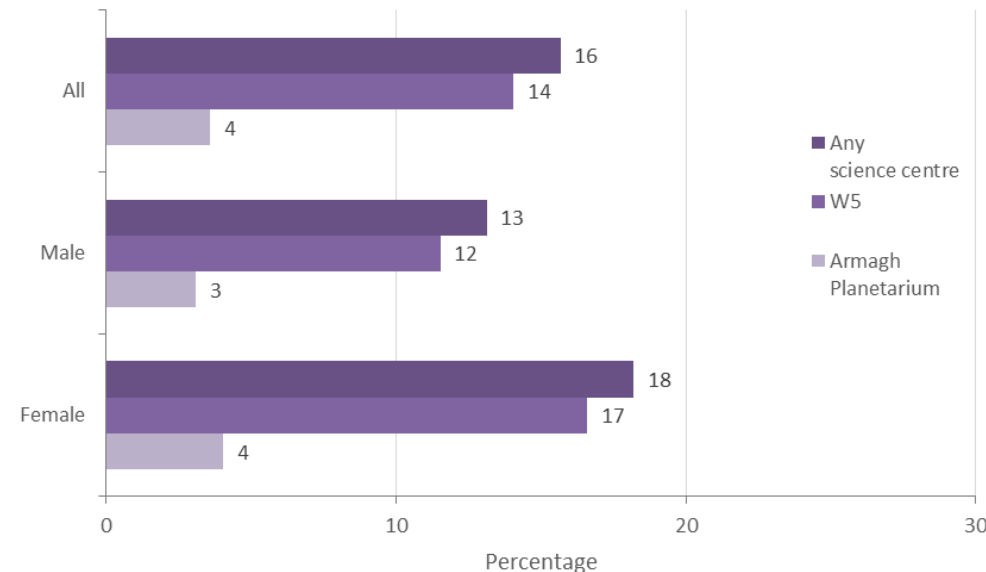
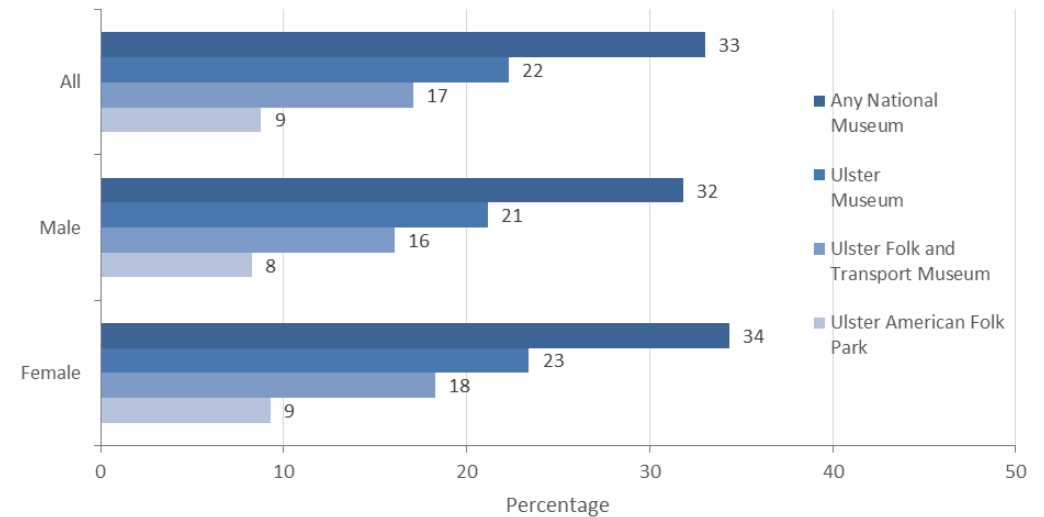
Museums and science centres

Visited a National Museums Northern Ireland museum

National Museums Northern Ireland (NMNI) has three museums across Northern Ireland. A third of all adults (33%) had been to a NMNI museum within the last year, similar to the proportion of adults who had visited a NMNI museum in 2015/16 (32%).

There was no difference in the proportion of men and women who had visited a NMNI museum in the last year (32% and 34% respectively). However, analysis by age shows that adults aged 45 and over (30%) were less likely to have visited than those aged under 45 (38%).

Adults who have a disability (25%) were less likely to have visited a National Museum than those who do not have a disability (37%). Similarly adults who live in the most deprived areas were less likely to have visited a NMNI at least once in the last year than those who live in the least deprived areas (29% and 47% respectively).



Visits to science centres

Fewer than a fifth (16%) of all adults in Northern Ireland have visited a science centre at least once within the last year, although this is a slight increase on the 13% who had visited a science centre in 2015/16.

Women were more likely to have visited a science centre than men (18% and 13% respectively), as well as adults aged under 45 (24%) compared to those aged 45 and over (9%).

Adults with a disability were less likely to have visited a science centre in the last year than those who do not have a disability (11% and 18% respectively). Likewise adults who live in the most deprived areas (14%) were less likely to have visited than those who live in the least deprived areas (21%).

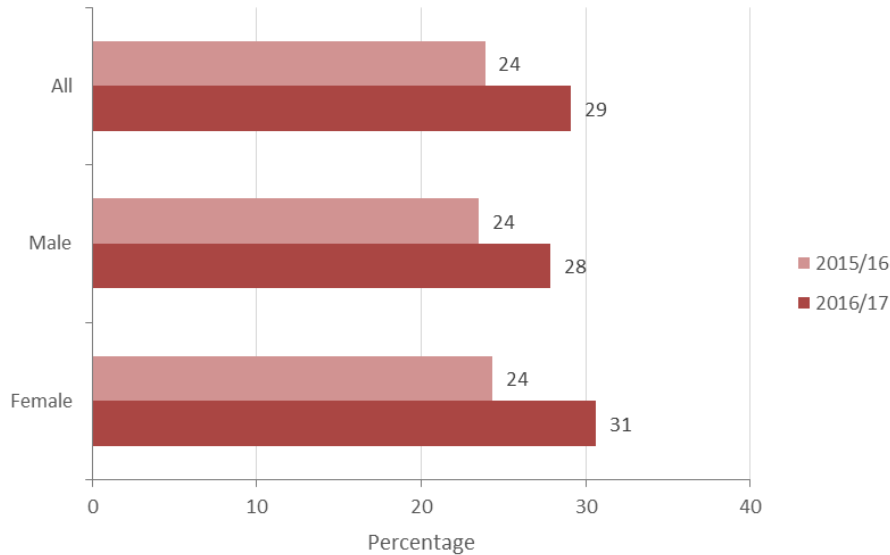
Museums and science centres

Visited a local museum

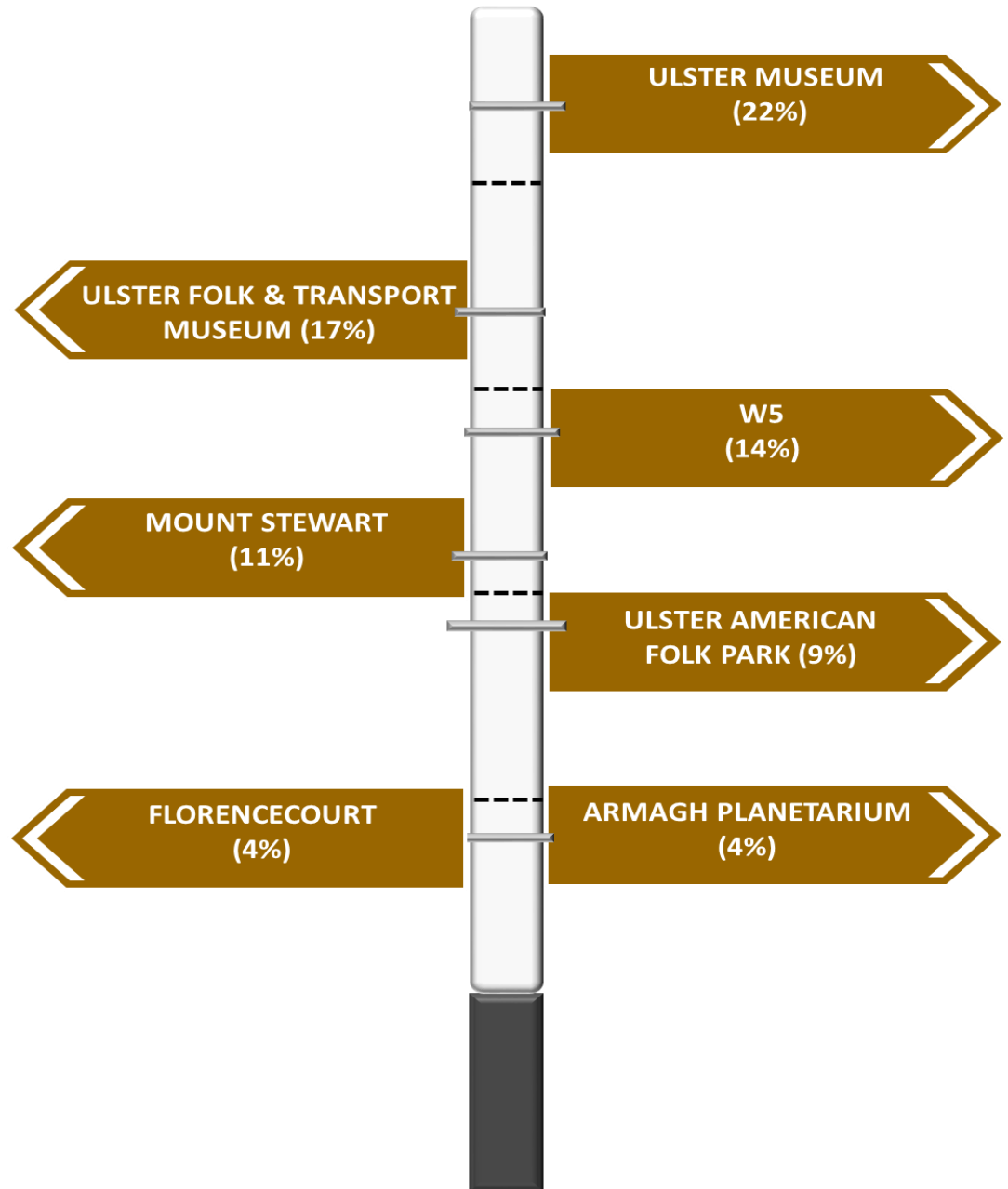
Just under three out of ten adults (29%) in Northern Ireland had visited a local museum at least once within the last year, an increase on the 24% who had visited in 2015/16.

There were no statistical differences in the proportion of men and women who had visited a local museum in the last year (28% and 31% respectively). Similarly, when looking at age, there was no difference between adults aged 45 and over and those aged under 45 (29% and 30% respectively).

Adults with a disability (24%) were less likely to have visited a local museum in the last year than those who do not have a disability (31%). Also adults who live in the most deprived areas were less likely to have visited than those who live in the least deprived areas (19% and 44% respectively).



Popular museums and science centres



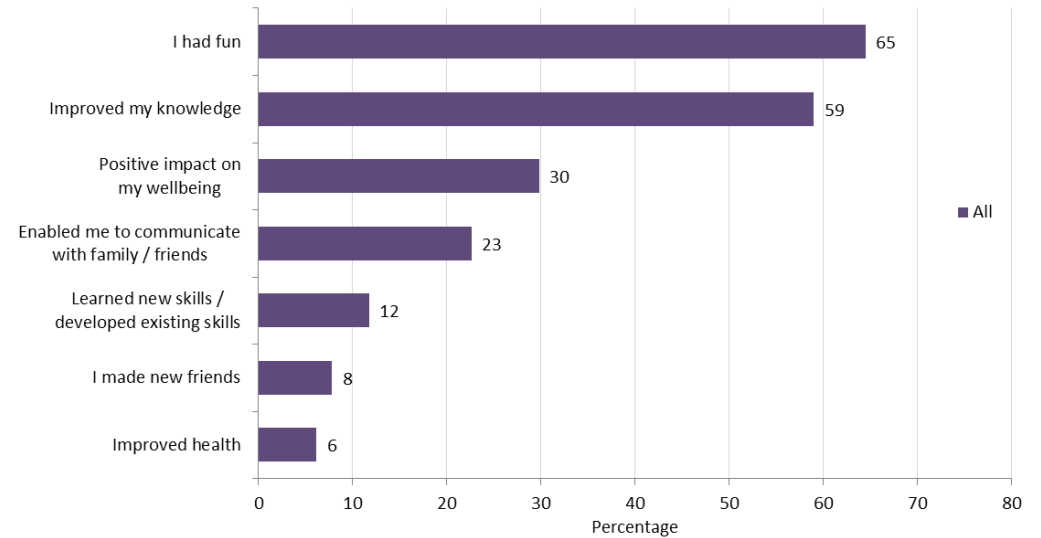
Museums and science centres

Benefits experienced from visiting a museum or science centre

Almost two-thirds of all adults (65%) who had visited a museum or science centre in the last year cited 'having fun' as a benefit. Around three-fifths said that it improved their knowledge (59%), three tenths felt that it had a positive impact on their wellbeing (30%), and just under a quarter said that it enabled them to communicate with family/friends (23%). However, 3% of adults stated that they felt no benefits having visited a museum or science centre in the last year.

Looking at the differences in gender, men were more likely to have cited 'Improved my knowledge' and 'Helped me think about a future career' than women; whereas women were more likely than men to have said that it developed their confidence.

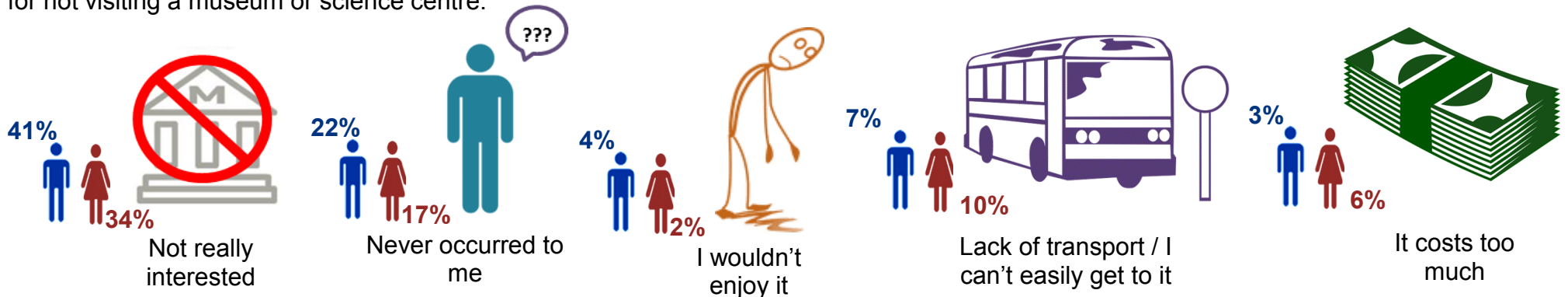
Most frequently cited benefits



Barriers to visiting a museum or science centre

Of those adults who did not visit a museum or science centre in the last year, over a third (37%) stated that they were not really interested in visiting. Over a quarter (26%) said it was difficult to find the time, while almost a fifth said it had never occurred to them (19%) and they had no need to go (18%).

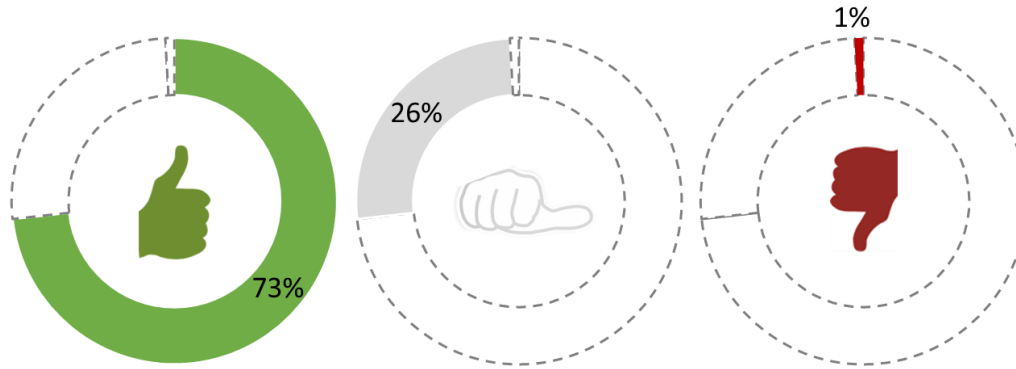
When analysed by gender; men were more likely to have stated 'Not really interested', 'Never occurred to me' and 'I wouldn't enjoy it' as reasons for not visiting. In contrast, women were more likely to give 'Lack of transport / I can't easily get to it' and 'It costs too much' as reasons for not visiting a museum or science centre.



Museums and science centres

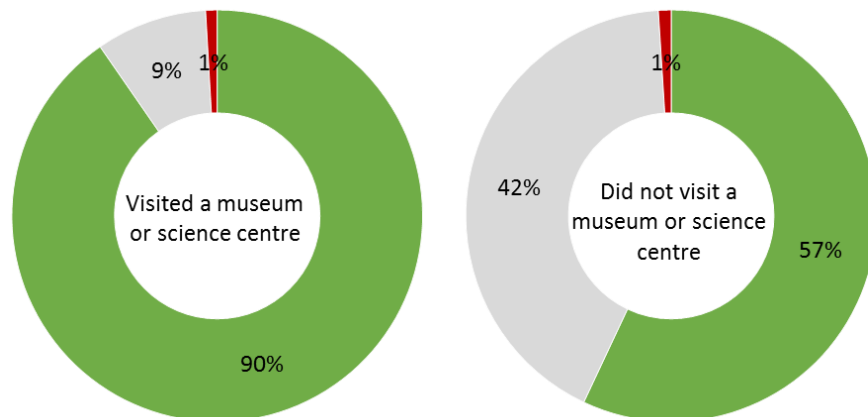
Satisfaction with museum provision

Over seven out of every ten adults (73%) were satisfied with museum provision in Northern Ireland in 2016/17, with only 1% stating that they were dissatisfied. The remainder of the adult population (26%) stated that they were 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied'.



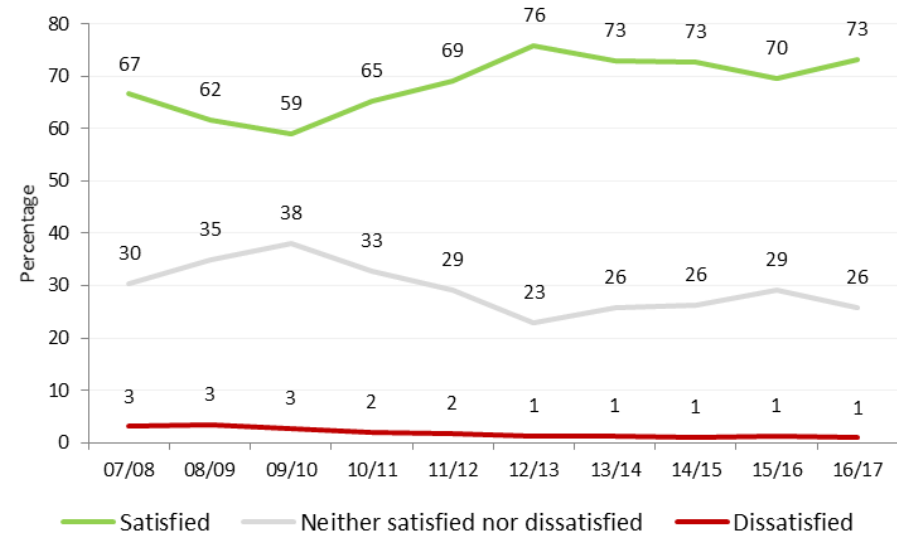
A higher proportion of adults who had visited a museum or science centre in the last year were satisfied with museum provision than those who had not visited (90% and 57% respectively).

However, only 1% of both groups stated that they were dissatisfied with museum provision.



Following a period of decline from 2007/08 to 2009/10 whilst the Ulster Museum was closed for refurbishment, satisfaction with museum provision among adults in Northern Ireland increased to a peak of 76% in 2012/13.

Since then satisfaction levels have decreased somewhat, remaining fairly constant around 73% in 2016/17. However dissatisfaction levels over the same period have decreased from 3% in 2007/08 to 1% in 2016/17.



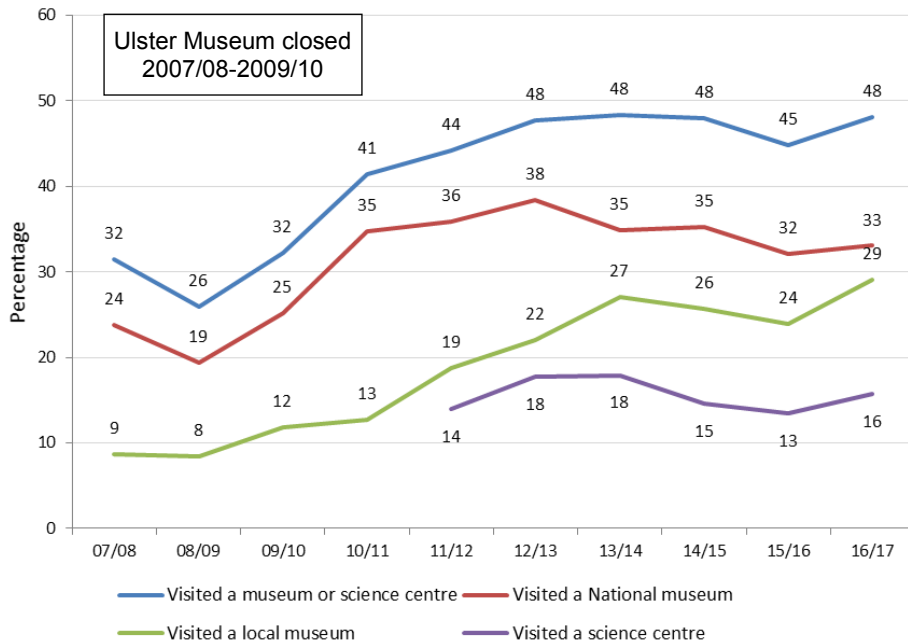
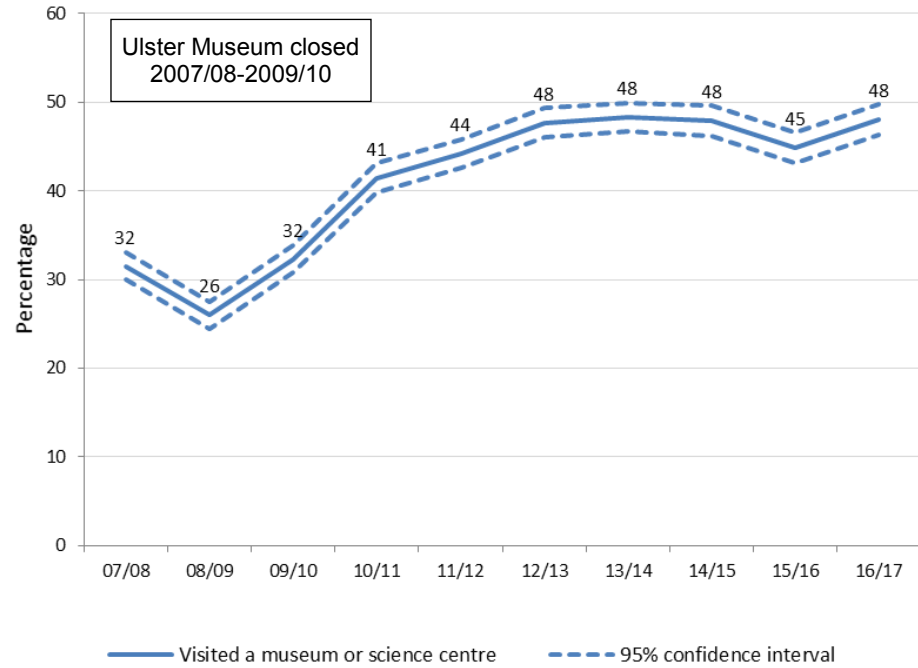
Trends

Visits to museums and science centres

Four-fifths (80%) of adults have visited a museum at some stage in their life, while just under half (48%) have visited a museum or science centre in the last year.

In 2016/17, the proportion of adults visiting a museum in the last year increased when compared to 2015/16, however was similar to previous three years figures (2012/13-2014/15) when the trend was constant at 48%.

The longer term trend was less consistent, although it is worth noting the period of time that Ulster Museum was closed for refurbishment over the years 2007/08-2009/10.



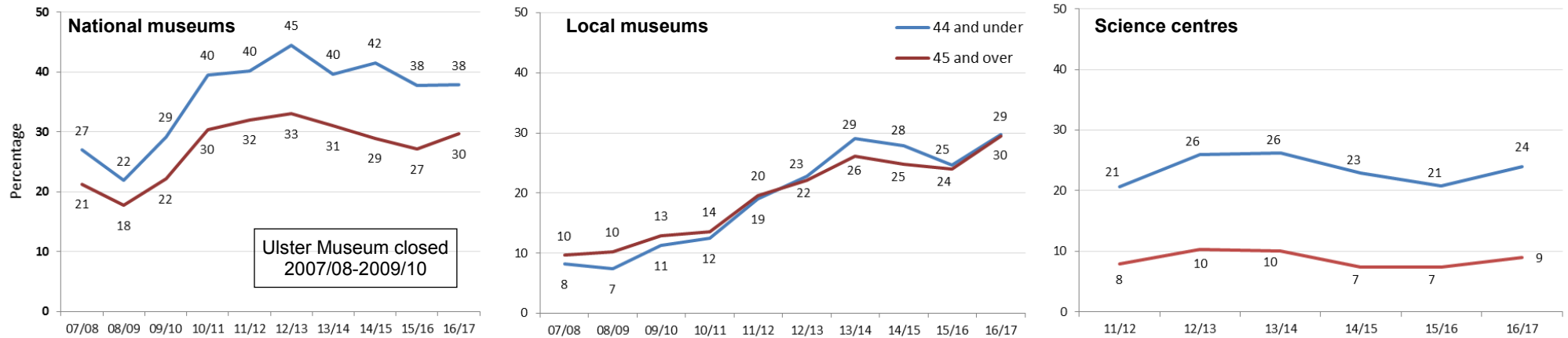
The increase in the proportion of adults attending a museum or science centre has largely been driven by an increase in the proportion of adults visiting a local museum (24% v 29%). The previous three years had seen the proportion remain steady after increasing over the longer term to a peak rate of 27% in 2013/14.

There was also an increase in the proportion of adults who had visited a science centre in the last year (13% v 16%), with the 2016/17 figure being similar to the proportion in 2014/15.

Visits to one of the three National Museums have remained consistent with 2015/16 (32% v 33%), following a period of decline in visits to National Museums from a peak of 38% in 2012/13.

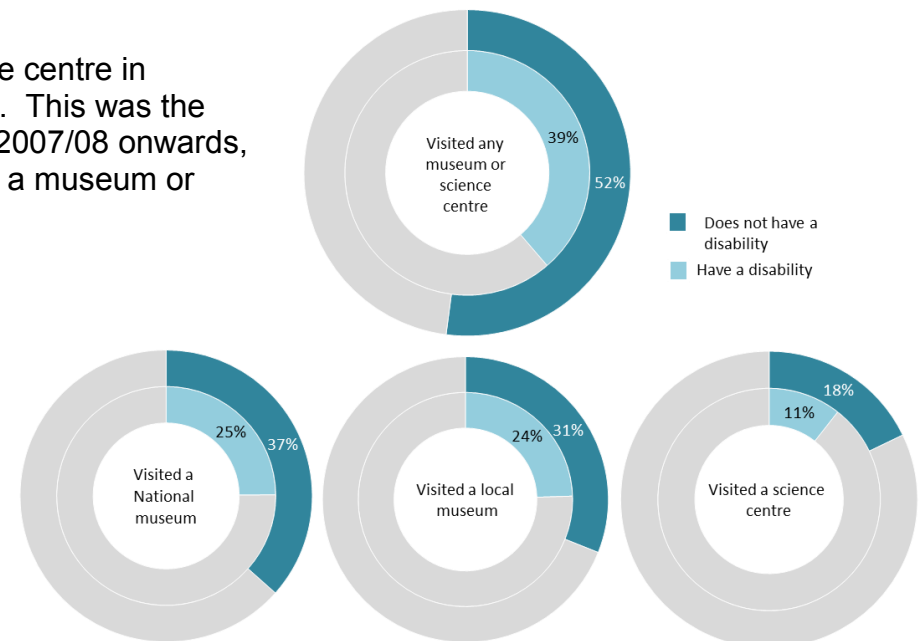
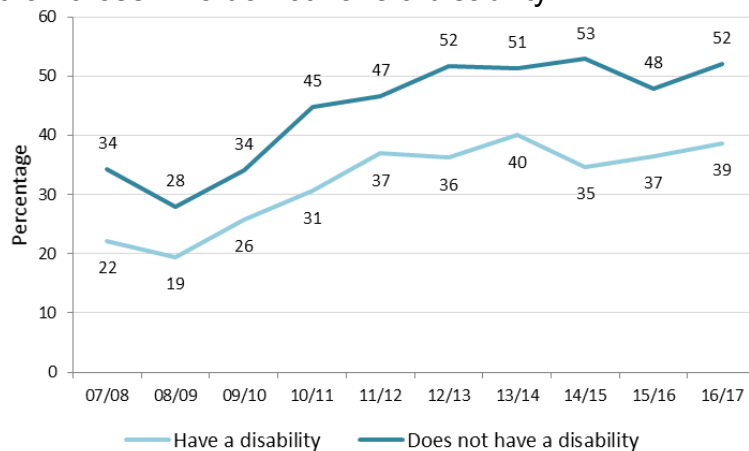
Visits to museums and science centres and age

Age is a factor in the likelihood of adults visiting a museum or science centre with younger adults more likely to visit than older adults (Aged 44 and under: 55%; Aged 45 and over: 43%). This trend has remained consistent over the longer term since figures were first available from the CHS in 2007/08. Further analysis by museum type, however has revealed that while younger adults were more likely to have visited a National museum or science centre than those aged 45 and over, there was no difference in the age groups when looking at visits to local museums (Aged 44 and under: 30%; Aged 45 and over: 29%).



Visits to museums and science centres and disability

A lower proportion of adults who have a disability visited a museum or science centre in 2016/17 than adults who do not have a disability (39% and 52% respectively). This was the case for all types of museum or science centre. The longer term trend, from 2007/08 onwards, has been consistent, with adults who have a disability being less likely to visit a museum or science centre than those who do not have a disability.



Libraries

Use of the public library service

A quarter of adults in Northern Ireland (25%) had used the public library service at least once within the previous year, the same proportion that had used the public library service in 2015/16.

Women were more likely to have used the public library service than men (30% and 20% respectively). Usage of the public library service decreased with age, with those aged 44 and under (30%) more likely to have used the service within the previous year than those aged 45 and over (21%).

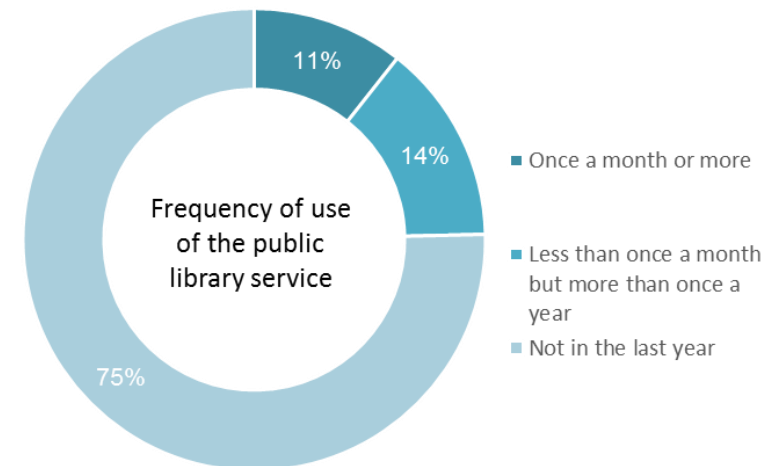
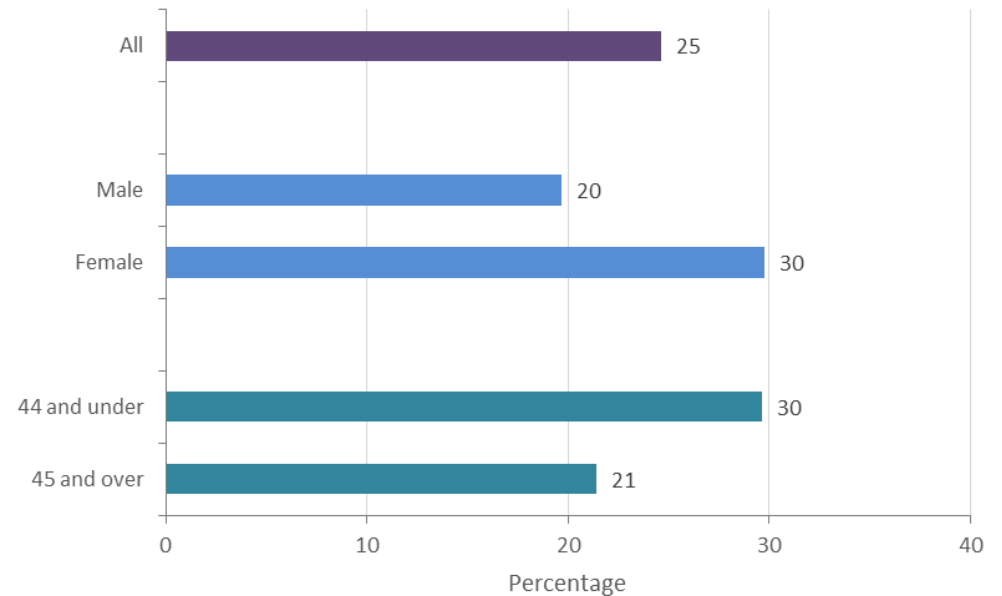
Adults who have a disability were less likely to have used the public library service than those who do not have a disability (21% and 26% respectively).

Adults who have dependants (30%) were more likely to have used the public library service compared to those who don't (21%). Similarly, those who lived in urban areas were more likely to have used the service than those who live in rural areas (27% and 20% respectively).

Frequency of use of the public library service

Just over one in every ten of the adult population (11%) used the public library service once a month or more within the last year, while three quarters (75%) of all adults in Northern Ireland had not used the public library service at all within the last year.

Recent statistics released by LibrariesNI show an increase in the number of instances of participation in the Core and Regular Activities delivered across the LibrariesNI sites. Those statistics, together with the findings presented here, suggest that whilst the proportion of the population using the Public Library Service may not have increased notably in recent years, those who *are* using the Service seem to be participating in more of the activities offered within libraries.

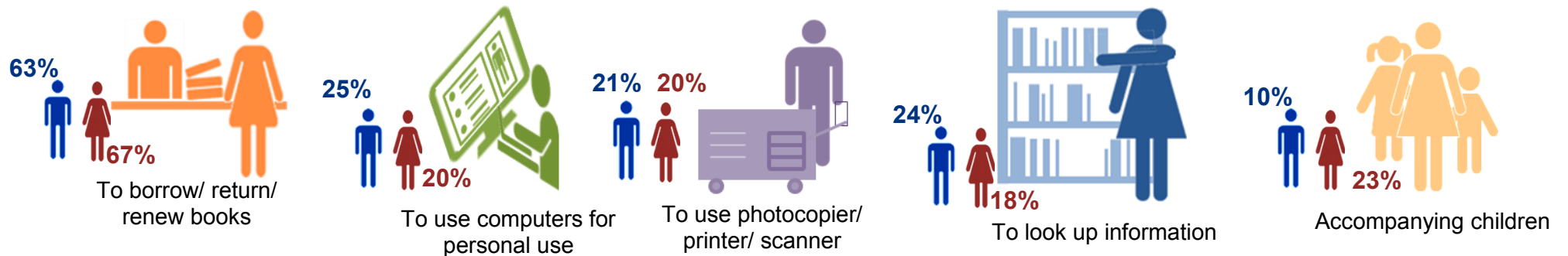


Libraries

Reasons for using the public library service

The majority of adult public library users (65%) had used the public library service for the traditional purposes of borrowing/renewing/returning books, making this the most popular reason by far. Following this, just over one fifth of public library users (22%) cited 'to use computers for personal use' as the next most popular reason for using the public library service. 'To use photocopier/ printer/ scanner' (21%), 'to look up information' (20%) and 'accompanying children' (18%) were the next most frequently cited reasons for using the public library service among public library users.

Considering reasons for using the public library service among men and women who have used a public library over the last year, women were more likely to have accompanied children (23% v 10%) than men.

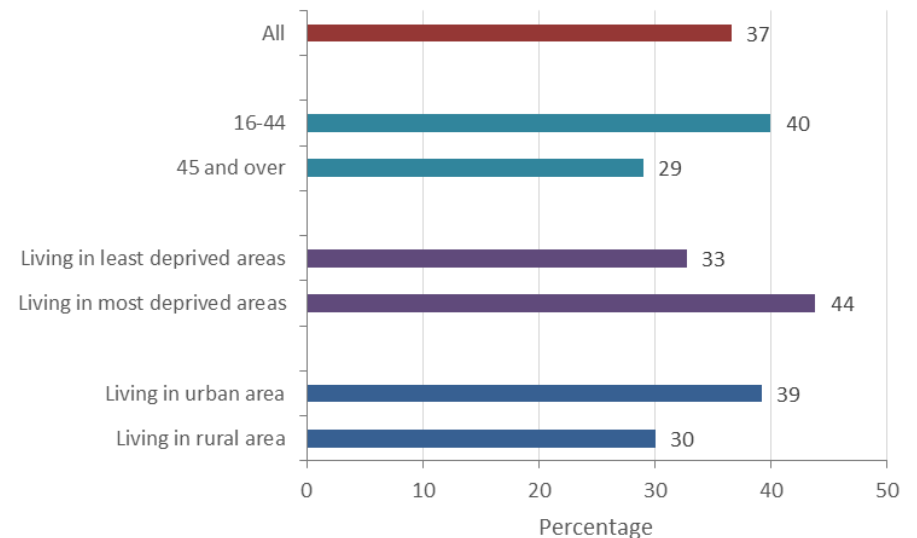


Used public library service Wi-Fi

Of those adults who used the public library service within the last year nearly four out of every ten (37%) used the free Wi-Fi.

Younger adults aged 44 and under were more likely to have used the free Wi-Fi than those aged 45 and over (40% and 29% respectively).

Where public library users lived also had an impact on the rates of those who used the free Wi-Fi at the library. Those who lived in the most deprived areas (44%) and those who lived in urban areas (39%) were more likely to have used the free Wi-Fi than those adults who lived in the least deprived or rural areas (33% and 30% respectively).

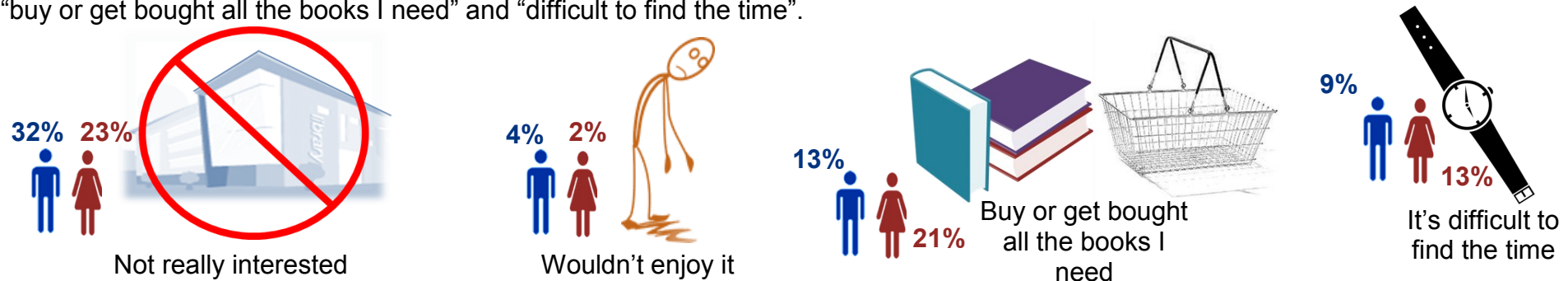


Libraries - Adults who did not use the public library service

Reasons for not using the public library service

Those who didn't use the public library service within the last year were asked for reasons why. The most frequently cited reason was they were "not really interested" (28%), closely followed by "no need to go" and "use other sources of information" (both 26%). The other most frequently cited reasons were "buy or get bought all the books I need" (17%) and "never occurred to me" (12%).

Looking at the differences in gender, men were more likely to have cited "not really interested" and "wouldn't enjoy it" as reasons for not using the public library service. However, women who had not used the public service within the last year were more likely than men to have said "buy or get bought all the books I need" and "difficult to find the time".

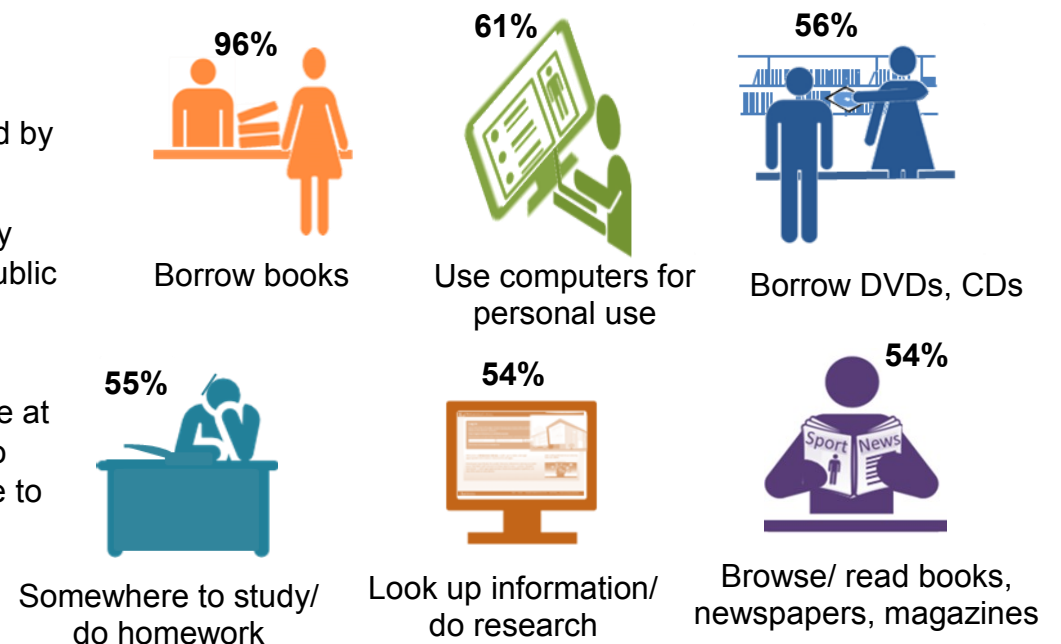


Aware of services offered by the public library service

Adults in Northern Ireland who had not used the public library service within the last year were also asked what, if any, of the services offered by the public library they were aware of.

Nearly all those who answered cited "borrow books" as the service they were aware of (96%) and three-fifths of adults who had not used the public library cited "use computers for personal use" (61%) as a service they were aware of.

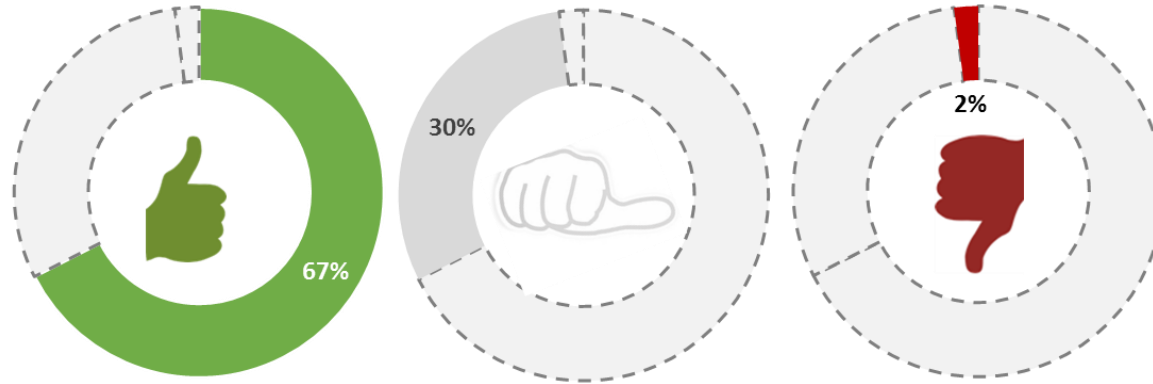
Over half of adults asked were aware of the following services available at the public library; "borrow DVDs, CDs" (56%), "somewhere to study/ do homework" (55%), "look up information/ do research" and "somewhere to browse/ read books, newspapers, magazines" (both 54%).



Libraries

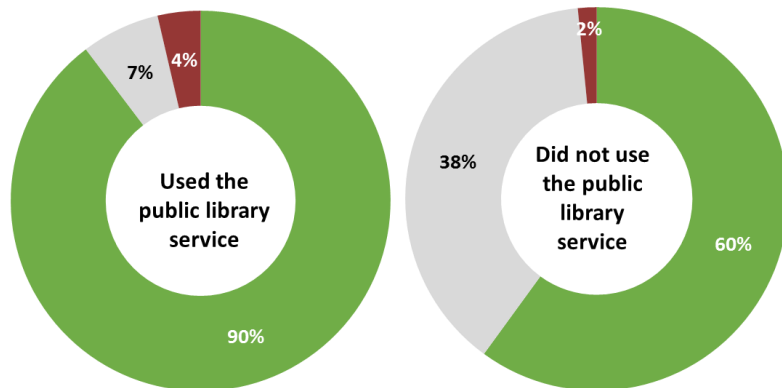
Satisfaction with public library provision

Around three out of every five of all adults (67%) were satisfied with public library provision in Northern Ireland in 2016/17. This is an increase on the proportion who were satisfied with public library provision in 2015/16 (58%). Only 2% stated that they were dissatisfied, similar to the 3% in 2015/16. The remainder of the adult population (30%) stated that they were 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' with public library provision in Northern Ireland.

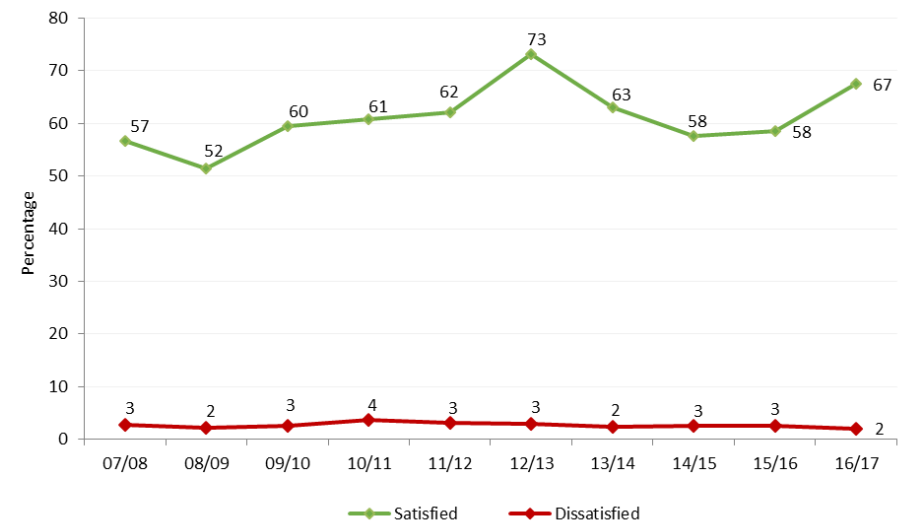


Satisfaction with public library provision was greater among adults who had used the public library service within the previous year (90%) than it was among adults who had not used the public library service within the previous year (60%).

Although dissatisfaction levels remained low across both groups, relatively more adults who had used the public library service within the last year were dissatisfied with the service than those who did not use the service.



Satisfaction with public library provision among adults in Northern Ireland has been fairly consistent throughout the trend period. The proportion of adults stating that they were dissatisfied with public library service provision has remained consistently low throughout the trend period at around 3% of adults.



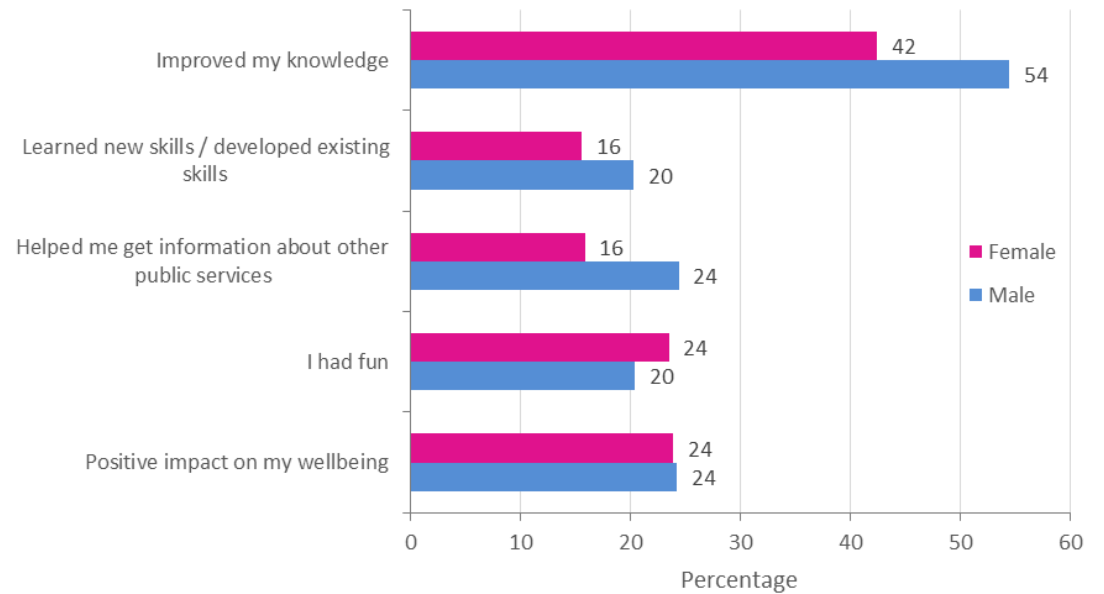
Libraries

Benefits of using the public library service

Almost half of all adults (47%) who had used the public library service in the last year cited “improved my knowledge” as a benefit.

Around one quarter said that it had a positive impact on their wellbeing (24%), just over a fifth said that they had fun (22%), and just under a fifth said that it had helped them get information about other public services (19%) and they had learned new skills or developed existing skills (18%). However, 13% of adults who used the public library service stated that they felt no benefits from using the public library service in the last year.

Looking at the differences in gender, men were more likely to have cited ‘Improved my knowledge’ and ‘Helped me get information about other public services’ than women.

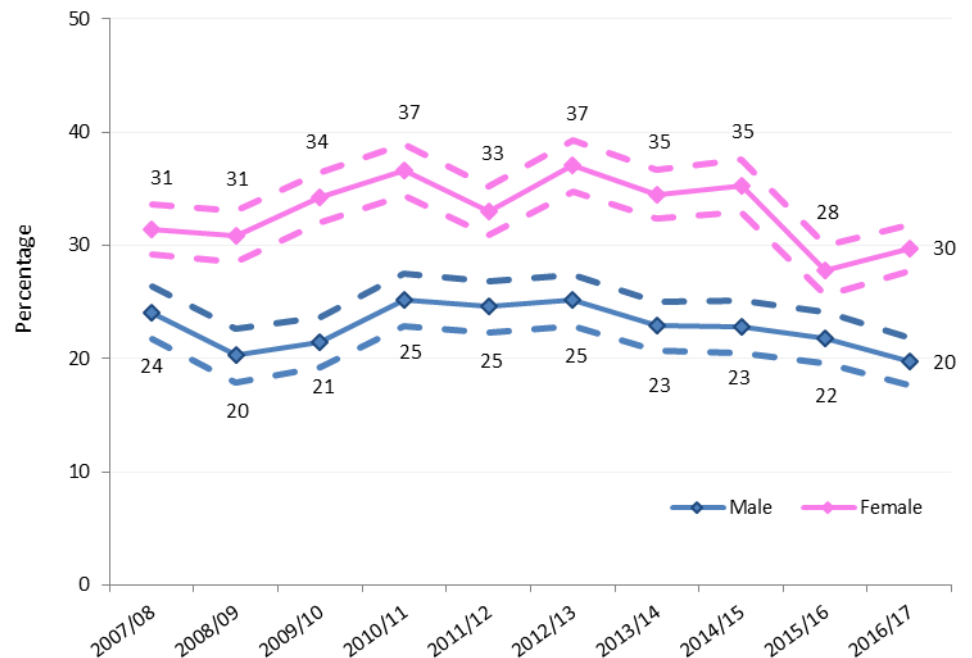


Trends

Gender and use of the public library service

Women were more likely to have used the public library service within the previous year (30%) than men (20%). Women have been more likely to have used the public library service over the entire trend period.

The 2016/17 figure and the 2015/16 figure remain lower than earlier recorded figures, whilst the latest figure for men is also one of the lowest recorded over the trend period.

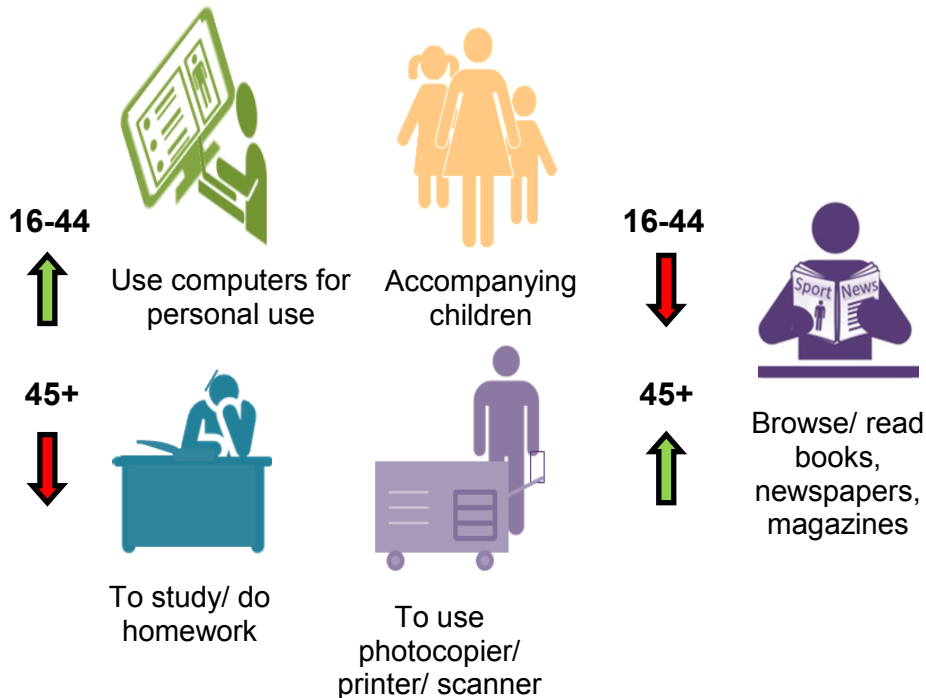
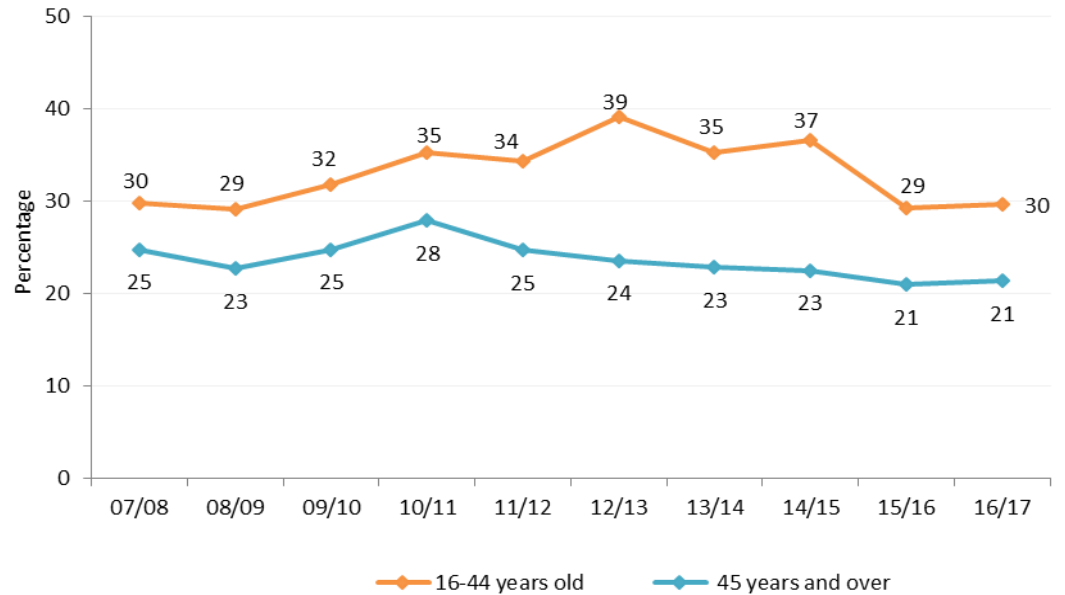


Trends

Age and use of the public library service

Considering the use of the public library service over the trend period in terms of two general age groups, a higher proportion of younger adults aged 44 and under have used the public library service each year than older adults aged 45 and over.

In 2016/17, 30% of younger adults aged 16-44 used the public library service within the previous year compared to 21% of those aged 45 years and over.



Age and reasons for using the public library service

The reasons for using the public library service in 2016/17 differed amongst older and younger public library service users.

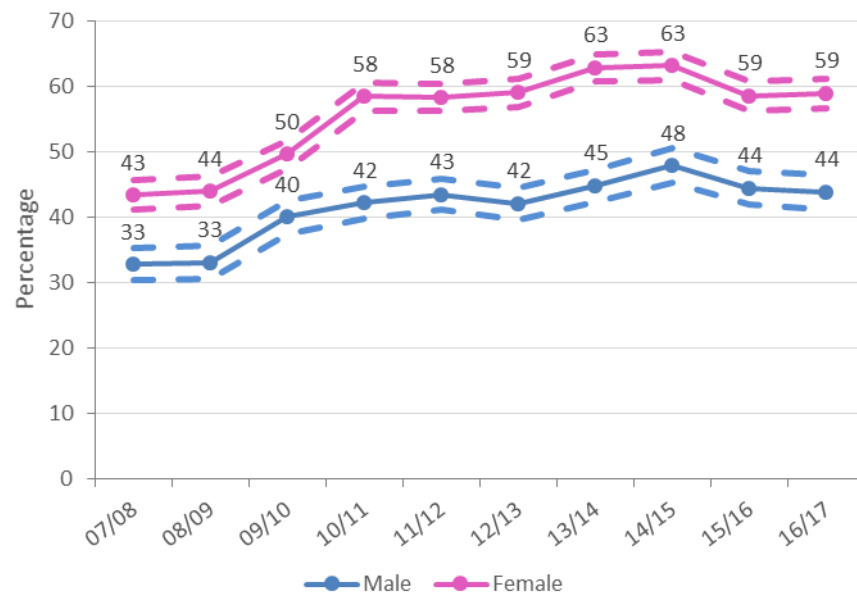
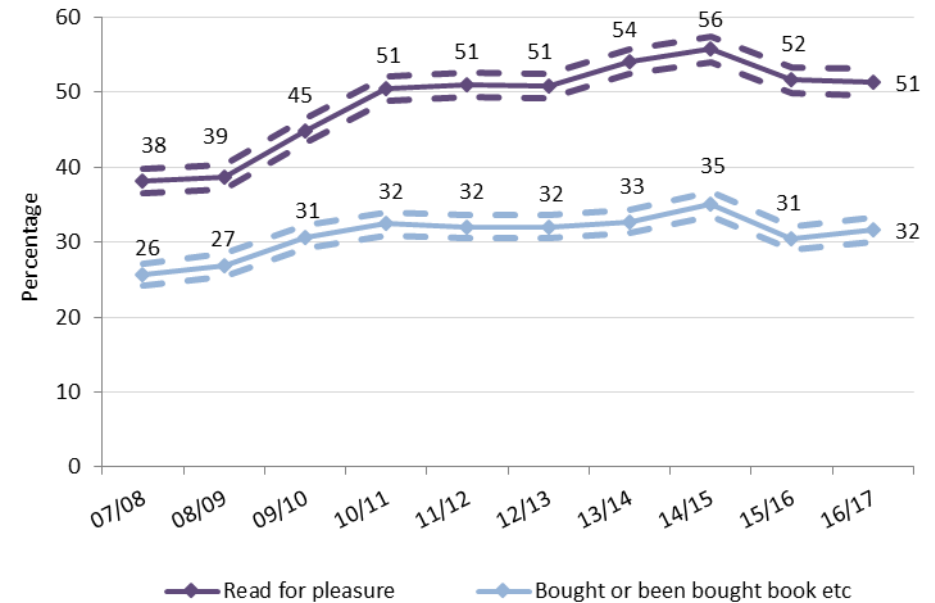
Younger adults aged 16-44 years old were more likely than those aged 45 years and over to have used the public library service for the purposes of using computers for personal use (25% v 18%), 'accompanying children' (25% v 13%), 'to use photocopier/ printer/ scanner' (25% v 15%) and 'to study/ do homework' (15% v 4%).

As for older public library service users, those aged 45 and over were more likely to use the public library service 'to browse/ read books, newspapers, magazines' (22% v 11%) than those aged 44 and under.

Read for pleasure and buying books

Other questions included in the survey provide context on the proportion of adults in Northern Ireland reading for pleasure and buying books. Figures show that more than half of all adults (51%) had read for pleasure in the last year, a similar figure to the 52% of adults who read for pleasure in 2015/16. This is a decrease on the figures from the previous two years 2013/14-2014/15, however is more consistent with the earlier trend from 2010/11-2012/13.

Just under one third of all adults in Northern Ireland (32%) had bought or been bought a novel, or book of stories, poetry or plays in the last year. As with 'reading for pleasure', this figure is similar to that recorded in 2015/16. It is consistent with the longer term trend from 2009/10, with the only anomaly being the increase in 2014/15 (35%).



Read for pleasure by gender

Women were more likely to have read for pleasure within the previous year (59%) than men (44%), these proportions are unchanged from 2015/16. This difference between the sexes is seen across the whole trend period with women more likely to read for pleasure than men.

The proportions of both men and women reading for pleasure have generally increased over the trend period reaching peaks of 48% and 63% respectively in 2014/15. Although the figures for the most recent two years have seen a decline, the trend remains mainly positive.

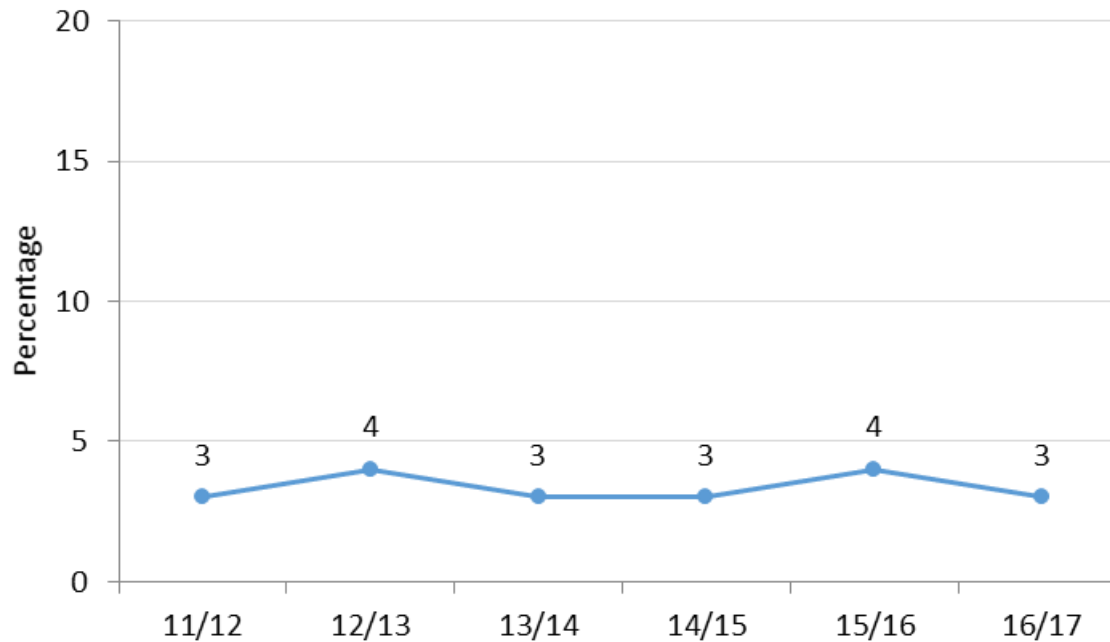
In 2016/17 a higher proportion of women had bought or been bought a novel, or book of stories, poetry or plays in the last year (38%) than men (25%). This has consistently been the case over the entire trend period.

Visits to the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI)

In 2016/17, three per cent of adults had visited PRONI within the last 12 months. This proportion has remained relatively consistent over the available trend period, 2011/12 to 2016/17.

Analysis by all demographic groups available show no differences in the proportions of adults who had visited PRONI. In addition, there are no differences in the proportions of adults who had visited PRONI when analysed by area, urban and rural and by deprivation.

Like Libraries NI, PRONI gathers information directly from their visitors. Statistics from this system are published each year on the DfC website in the [Digest of statistics for the Public Record Office](#).



Definitions and technical notes

Continuous Household Survey

The Continuous Household Survey (CHS) is a Northern Ireland wide household survey administered by Central Survey Unit, Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. The sample for this survey consists of a systematic random sample of 4,500 addresses selected from the Land and Property Service's list of private addresses. The findings reported for 2016/17 are based on 3,262 respondents, aged 16 and over, who answered the culture, arts and leisure modules of the survey.

Weighting the Continuous Household Survey

Analysis of the culture, arts and leisure modules of the CHS have been weighted for non-response. A chi square goodness-of-fit test showed that the CHS sample was not representative of the population by age and sex when compared with the Population and Migration Estimates Northern Ireland 2015 (NISRA). As a result, three separate weights were produced for age, sex and age and sex combined.

Non-response weighting sometimes increases standard errors, although the impact tends to be fairly small, i.e. the adjustment may be less or greater than 1, but will generally be reasonably close to 1. In the case of the culture, arts and leisure modules of CHS, the values of the adjustment for all three weighting systems are so close to one, it is not necessary to take account of this in the calculation of standard error and confidence intervals.

While weighting for non-response (also called post-stratification) should reduce bias, it must be acknowledged that it will not eliminate bias. The reasons individuals choose to take part in surveys are complex and depend on lots of factors specific to the individual. As a result, the non-response biases in surveys are likely to be complex. Post-stratification works on the assumption that, by aligning the survey to the population along a small number of dimensions such as age and gender, many of these complex biases will reduce. However, it would be misleading to suggest that they will be eliminated.

Engaged in culture and arts - Have done at least one of the following in the 12 months prior to the CHS:

- Engaged in the arts
- Used the public library service
- Visited a museum or science centre
- Visited PRONI

Arts engagement – Either participated in arts activities or attended arts events in the 12 months prior to the CHS.

Arts participation – Participated in at least one of the following arts activities in the 12 months prior to the CHS:

- Ballet
- Other dance (not for fitness)
- Sang to an audience or rehearsed for a performance (not karaoke)
- Played a musical instrument to an audience or rehearse for a performance
- Played a musical instrument for own pleasure
- Written music
- Rehearsed or performed in play/drama
- Rehearsed or performed in opera/opera
- Painting, drawing, printmaking or sculpture
- Photography as an artistic activity (not family or holiday snaps)
- Made films or videos as an artistic activity (not family or holiday)
- Used a computer to create original artworks or animation
- Textile crafts such as embroidery, crocheting or knitting
- Wood crafts such as wood turning, carving or furniture making
- Other crafts such as calligraphy, pottery or jewellery making
- Written any stories or plays
- Written any poetry

Arts attendance – Attended at least one of the following arts events in the 12 months prior to the CHS:

- Film at a cinema or other venue
- Exhibition or collection of art, photography or sculpture
- Craft exhibition (not a crafts market)
- Event connected with books or writing (such as poetry reading or storytelling)
- Circus
- Carnival
- An arts festival
- A community festival
- Play or drama
- Other theatre performance (such as a musical or pantomime)
- Opera/opera
- Classical music performance
- Rock or pop music performance
- Jazz performance
- Folk, or traditional or world music performance
- Other live music event
- Ballet
- An Irish dance performance
- Other dance event
- A museum

Visited a museum or science centre – Visited one of the following museums or science centres in the 12 months prior to the CHS:

- Andrew Jackson & US Rangers Centre
- Address House
- Argory
- Armagh County Museum
- Armagh Planetarium
- Armagh Public Library
- Ballycastle Museum
- Ballymoney Museum
- Barn Museum
- Carrickfergus Museum
- Castle Ward
- Coleraine Museum
- Craigavon Museum
- Down County Museum
- Downpatrick & County Down Railway Museum
- FE McWilliam Gallery and Studio
- Fermanagh County Museum
- Flame - the Gasworks Museum of Ireland
- Florencecourt
- Garvagh Museum & Heritage Centre
- Green Lane Museum
- Hezlett House
- Irish Linen Centre & Lisburn Museum
- Inniskillings Museum
- Limavady Museum, RVACC
- Mid Antrim Museum
- Milford House Museum
- Mount Stewart
- Newry & Mourne Museum
- North Down Museum
- Northern Ireland War Memorial
- Police Museum
- Railway Preservation Society of Ireland
- Royal Irish Fusiliers Museum
- Royal Ulster Rifles Museum
- Sentry Hill House
- Somme Museum
- Springhill
- Strabane Museum Service
- Tower Museum
- Ulster American Folk Park
- Ulster Folk & Transport Museum
- Ulster Museum
- W5, Odyssey Centre
- Some other museum not mentioned

Visited a National Museum – Visited one of the following museums in the 12 months prior to the CHS:

- Ulster Museum
- Ulster Folk & Transport Museum
- Ulster American Folk Park

Used the public library service – Used the public library service at least once in the 12 months prior to the CHS, e.g. visited a public library or mobile library; used the Libraries NI website; attended a library event outside a library. Public library does NOT include school, college, or university libraries. A library event outside a library is an event run by Libraries NI which has taken place in a venue other than a library.

Visited PRONI – Have been to the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland in the 12 months prior to the CHS.

Deprivation – The data have been analysed by whether respondents are living in the 20% most deprived Super Output Areas (SOAs) or in the 20% least deprived SOAs. This is estimated using the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2010 which is a weighted combination of seven domains of deprivation. Rank 1 indicates the most deprived SOA, while rank 890 denotes the least deprived SOA.

¹ [Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Report 2010](#)

Statistical significance in this report

Any statements in this report regarding differences between groups such as males and females, different age groups, religion, etc., are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. This means that we can be 95% confident that the differences between groups are actual differences and have not just arisen by chance. Both the base numbers and the sizes of the percentages have an effect on statistical significance. Therefore on occasion, a difference between two groups may be statistically significant while the same difference in percentage points between two other groups may not be statistically significant. The reason for this is because the larger the base numbers or the closer the percentages are to 0 or 100, the smaller the standard errors. This leads to increased precision of the estimates which increases the likelihood that the difference between the proportions is actually significant and did not just arise by chance.

Other notes

The following should be noted when interpreting figures and tables:

- Percentages less than 0.5% are denoted by '0' and where there are no responses, they are denoted by '-'.
- Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.
- Percentages may not add to 100% for questions where multiple responses are allowed.
- Detailed tabulations are not provided where the number of respondents is too small to allow meaningful analysis.
- The base number of responses to each question, which is shown in each table, is the unweighted count. The base may vary due to some respondents not answering certain questions.