

Britainthinks

— Insight & Strategy —

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Arts Council England: The Conversation

A report by BritainThinks

britainthinks.com

BritainThinks

Foreword

Since its creation 70 years ago, the Arts Council has served as the principal agency championing, developing and investing in art and culture across England.

We invest more than £445 million of public funding every year, supporting a wide range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries. We feel it's important that this investment is distributed according to a shared sense of direction, purpose and vision with artists, arts and cultural organisations, our partners across central and local government, education, business and the charitable sector; and most importantly, with the public, who provide the money that we distribute.

Underpinning the investment, we also offer support and guidance to all those we work with and fund – skills training, financial acumen, career pathways, research and educational support. We bring together a wide range of individuals and organisations across the sector to support the creation of a cultural ecology that spans the vast geography and diversity of people and communities across England. We work to create a sense of connection locally and nationally; through dialogue and networks that share knowledge and resources along with a love for art and culture and the extraordinary benefits they have in all our lives.

This confident sense of direction and connection derives from our ten-year strategy and mission; Great Art and Culture for everyone, with its five ambitious goals. Our current strategy is the first we have produced; it evolved through consultation with all our partners, and it has formed the basis of our relationship with the sector ever since. It embraces the ambitions and values we share, orientates our investment and has been crucial to the advances we've made together. We have achieved so much with the current strategy and celebrated everything that works well, but we have also learnt the world changes in ten years; new challenges present themselves along the way and it's important to consider how we can improve, grow, develop and remain current.

That strategy runs until 2020. Looking ahead to 2030, any strategy must be relevant to its context; when the world around us changes, we need to look at what has worked well for us in the past and ask what the future will require. There will be many perspectives on this, and in thinking about our strategy for the next ten years we have, as before, embarked on a conversation and listening exercise, which is the substance of this Conversation report and findings. To complement the Conversation, we also commissioned an Evidence Review and wider body of research reviewing over 100 reports to see how arts, museums and libraries have progressed since 2010.

This work and these insights will help us shape and prioritise a draft strategic framework that we will use as part of a consultation in October across the sector, stakeholders, public and the staff. We want to create a strategy and vision for art and culture that draws upon the passions, hopes, opportunities, ambitions, concerns, knowledge and experience of our partners and the public. It is important that we use all the means on offer to help us listen to as many people and voices as possible, reflective of the rich diversity and intricate geographies across England.

I am grateful to BritainThinks for their partnership with us on this project and report, and to everyone who has fed in their views and contributed to this stage of the process. This work will help us in our consultation with staff, stakeholders, the sector and the public in October, and it will be central to the development of our new strategy, which we will be publishing next year.

I would particularly like to thank Simon Mellor, Deputy Chief Executive Arts and Culture, and Michelle Dickson, Director Strategy, for their leadership on this important piece of work. They have spoken to a wide range of individuals in an engaging way that has inspired confidence in our approach to understanding the key issues and challenges affecting the sector now and in the future.

Darren Henley

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Executive Summary

In Autumn 2019, Arts Council England will publish a new strategy for 2020-30, setting out its mission, vision and ambition for the next ten years. As part of this process, it is taking stock of its current activities and approach and asking a series of high level questions about the future, through a collaborative and open Conversation with the sector and other stakeholders, its own staff and the public.

The next ten years: The Conversation has involved a wide-reaching engagement programme consisting of workshops, ethnographic visits and surveys, underpinned by an open online Conversation platform. It has been run by BritainThinks, an independent research and strategy consultancy. Over the course of Spring 2018, we have heard from hundreds of individuals and organisations, who have generously given their time to tell us what they think the future holds for arts, museums and libraries, what the challenges and opportunities are for the sector going forward, and what this means for the Arts Council's future role. This Executive Summary sets out the key themes emerging from this Conversation.

- Arts, museums and libraries are recognised across the board among the public and the sector as having a valuable role to play, not just in terms of the immediate experiences they offer individuals, but also in terms of their wider societal benefits – to education, health and wellbeing, in celebrating diversity, bringing people together, celebrating our shared history, and improving local areas. However, the sector and the public feel that **more needs to be done to communicate their value and relevance**. Public funding of arts, museums and libraries is widely supported but, in the context of austerity, it is recognised that the sector will have to work harder to make its case.
- While the public may be engaging with the arts, they do not always associate their creative activities with the sector. Rather, they tend to define arts and culture through a fairly tight prism. This often focuses on artforms such as classical music, ballet and opera, **underplaying the potential role of the sector in people's lives**. In addition, the public often do not know what opportunities are available in their local area; over half (53%) of English adults do not feel informed about the arts opportunities available to them locally.
- The sector and the public alike think that there is a need to **promote the sector more through communications and campaigns**. This could include a targeted communications campaign (in particular, showing the idea that there is something for everyone).
- **Diversity is seen as central to the sector**. Two thirds of the sector surveyed believe that diversity presents one of the greatest opportunities for the sector over the next ten years. Yet the sector does not currently reflect society well enough – in its workforce, leadership, participants and audiences. This perception relates most strongly to the arts, rather than museums or libraries, and is felt that there is a need to go beyond the basic 'tick box' mentality. Instead, the public and sector see it as necessary to focus

on **accessing the broadest range of individuals** regardless of their gender, ethnicity, where they live and, in particular, their social background.

- Linked to this is a recognition of the **need to promote arts, museums and libraries to younger audiences**, among whom the sector is not seen to be particularly ‘cool’ or something they want to engage in with their friends. This is seen by many as a key risk for the sector’s future workforce, skills, talent and leadership. The issue is felt to be heightened by the government’s perceived current focus on STEM subjects, and a public perception that a career in the arts is not particularly secure. It is widely recognised by both the sector and the public that school is often the first point of contact children have with the sector, and that experience of arts and culture in this context can act as a ‘social leveller’.
- The local dimension is seen to be key to the debate about the future of arts, museums and libraries. The public want to see **a local arts and culture offer that is tailored to local areas**, along with public funding which is channeled towards a more diverse range of organisations, and artists that reflect the communities in which they live. They also want to see funding more equitably distributed. The rest of the country – particularly more rural areas – often feels like the ‘poor relation’ to London and there is a perception that it is necessary to better balance investment across England. The contribution London makes to tourism, generating revenue, and to boosting the artistic and cultural reputation of the country, is recognised as important.
- In talking to people about the next ten years, we have found that **digital technology is viewed as one of the most important developments for arts, museums and libraries**. Initiatives and approaches such as live streaming of events, use of virtual reality, or being able to browse collections or exhibitions online are seen as having the potential to open up the sector to more people, transcending geographic and cultural boundaries, and facilitating a greater mix of artforms and opportunities – especially among younger audiences. However, better digital experiences are wanted alongside real ‘lived’ physical experiences. In addition, it is considered to be important that physical spaces – museums, galleries, libraries – should not be at risk of becoming obsolete. As part of this, the sector (particularly the non-funded sector) believes it to be important to retain equity between arts that use digital practices, and non-digital, ‘traditional’ artforms.
- **Focusing on participation is considered to be important for the sector in the future**. The survey shows that the public, when prompted, are almost twice as likely to say that the Arts Council should focus investment to get more people involved in arts and culture as they are to say it should invest in producing the very best arts and culture and are less likely to support funding for taking risks. In comparison, excellence and risk-taking are among the top three areas (alongside participation) that the sector say should be priorities for public funding moving forwards. The public also want to see funding of arts, museums and libraries which can evidence benefit to the local community, while some of the sector who contributed via workshops or the online Conversation feel that ‘art for art’s sake’ is important to fund, and funding only that

which is perceived to have public benefit would have a detrimental impact on quality and artistic development.

- **Beyond funding, there are a range of roles the Arts Council is perceived to be well-placed to take.** These include bringing the funded and non-funded sector together: facilitating partnership working and providing support at a regional level to link grassroots and larger sector organisations. This could also include brokering relationships within and beyond the sector to bridge gaps seen in infrastructure and help support artistic development. They also see there to be a role for the Arts Council in providing leadership and guidance around responsible governance and CPD (e.g., an Arts Council 'kite mark' accreditation for best practice or good standards). We heard suggestions about how the Arts Council could extend its reach by supporting touring both into and out of London, and how National Portfolio Organisations could act as facilitators in local areas. In light of the current political and economic climate, one role that many would like to see the Arts Council play is **advocating for the sector**, and its wider contribution to the economy, on health, education, and the way it brings diverse communities together.

Background and Context

Foreword

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Overview

Arts Council England is the country's biggest single investor in art and culture, supporting individuals and organisations across England to make, create and enjoy enriching experiences throughout their lives. A substantial part of its role involves financial investment – the Arts Council distributes over £445 million of public funding to arts and cultural organisations every year.

The organisation's role goes far beyond that of a funding body. The Arts Council champions the importance of art and culture at a local and national level, develops England as a hub of artistic and cultural talent, supports initiatives on the ground, and influences sector activity, leading by example.

With such wide-ranging influence and activities, the Arts Council needs a clear and detailed strategic plan which speaks to its diverse stakeholder base. Its current strategy runs from 2010 to 2020. It sets out the organisation's current mission - 'Great art and culture for everyone' - and the five goals which set the strategic direction for this period. The five current goals are:

- Excellence is thriving and celebrated in the arts, museums and libraries
- Everyone has the opportunity to experience and be inspired by the arts, museums and libraries
- The arts, museums and libraries are resilient and environmentally sustainable
- The leadership and workforce in the arts, museums and libraries are diverse and appropriately skilled
- Every child and young person has the opportunity to experience the richness of the arts, museums and libraries

In Autumn 2019, Arts Council England will publish a new strategy for 2020-30, setting out its mission, vision and ambition for the next ten years. As part of this process, it is taking stock of its current activities and approach and asking a series of high level questions about the future, through a collaborative and open Conversation with the sector and other stakeholders, its own staff and the public.

To begin this process, the Arts Council commissioned BritainThinks, an independent insight and strategy consultancy, to lead the design and the analysis of a first stage of engagement: *The next ten years: The Conversation*.

This report provides an overview of the findings from a comprehensive programme of research which ran over the Spring of 2018. It reports on what the sector and the public think the future might hold for arts, museums and libraries, what the challenges and opportunities are for the sector going forward, and what this might mean for the Arts Council's future role. It will be used to inform the development of the draft strategic framework which will be consulted on in Autumn 2018.

Aims of the Conversation

The next ten years: The Conversation aimed to convene and connect with the widest range of individuals and organisations in order to ensure that the Arts Council's new strategy is relevant and accountable. The Conversation has been designed as a large-scale public engagement exercise that enables anyone who wants to take part to have their voice heard. This goes beyond the usual voices, hearing from those individuals and organisations with an existing relationship with the Arts Council, but also from those whom the Arts Council does not currently fund, who are by definition more removed.

It is important to note that this Conversation is one element of a broader programme of research and policy development that seeks to address key strategic challenges around public participation, value and accountability in publicly funded arts and culture between 2020 and 2030. The Arts Council holds a strong body of research on participation and public attitudes to arts, museums and libraries, which will be critical to inform its future strategy development. This body of work makes clear some of the challenges that the sector faces. This includes a recent report commissioned by ACE from Nesta¹ on future trends and their likely impact on the sector, which was used to stimulate debate during the Conversation.

This work has sought to build on the existing evidence base, to further examine not only what the public and the sector value about arts and culture, but what they see as the key issues and challenges that will affect the sector in the future, and where the opportunities and threats lie. These include the changing ways in which people engage with arts and culture, the growth of digital technology, how to better meet the needs of an increasingly diverse population, how to capture the imagination of future generations, and all against a continued backdrop of austerity and a public sector funding squeeze. The Conversation has aimed to move the debate further still, by trying to understand what all this means for the future of the sector, and for underlying principles about how and when arts, museums and libraries should be funded, and what role the Arts Council could hold beyond funding.

¹ *Experimental Culture: a horizon scan commissioned by Arts Council England*. Nesta, March 2018

The BritainThinks team would like to particularly thank Andrew Mowlah, Michelle Dickson, Pete Modral and Jenny Ngyou for their support and help throughout this project.

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Methodology

Given the wide-reaching nature of this research programme, it has been important to design an approach that would make participation as broad-reaching and accessible as possible. In order to gain both representative views as well as allowing for more detailed deliberation on the issues, we have adopted both qualitative and quantitative methods. Our approach can be summarised as follows:



1. Online Conversation platform

Key to the success of the Conversation has been ensuring that as many individuals and/or organisations as possible with an interest in arts, museums and libraries have been encouraged to take part. Central to the Conversation has been an open online platform run under the banner: *'The next ten years: The Conversation'* (hosted at www.aceConversation2018.ning.com). Self-selecting in nature, the platform has ensured the debate about the future of arts, museums and libraries in England was open to a wide range of people.

Over the course of 12 weeks, participants were invited to register and contribute to a developing range of discussions. These included:

- **Looking to the future** – identifying the opportunities and threats for the sector and the potential impact of future economic, technological and societal trends.
- **The role of the sector** - including how arts, museums and libraries are defined today, and how they will look in the future.
- **The role of funding** – specifically, what should and shouldn't be funded by the public purse, and where accountability for spending should lie.
- **The Arts Council's future strategy** - including how 'great art and culture for everyone' should be defined in practice, and accordingly how the organisation should prioritise what it funds.
- **The future role of the Arts Council** – specifically understanding what its role could and should be beyond its direct funding relationships.

The Conversation was monitored and moderated by the BritainThinks team. New activities and topics were posted regularly for participants to respond to. In addition, participants were invited to suggest additional topics through a 'call for ideas' page. The forum was open from the 18th January to 12th April 2018. Over this time, 1,445 people registered to participate, either as individuals or on behalf of organisations. This included participation by 180 Arts Council staff members.²

The online registration form asked participants to indicate how they would best describe themselves from a pre-determined list. Participants in the online Conversation platform can be accordingly categorised as follows:

Profile of online Conversation forum participants

	No. registered Conversation forum participants
Purpose of Response	
As an individual	778
On behalf of an organisation	487
As a member of ACE staff	180
Relationship with ACE	
Employed by ACE	180
Funded by ACE	416
Used to receive ACE funding	166
Applied but didn't receive ACE funding	64
Never received ACE funding	134
n/a	234
Other	267
Gender	

² NB. Figures to be reviewed once online platform closes

Man (incl. trans man)	407
Woman (incl. trans woman)	832
Non-binary	16
Prefer not to say	74
Interest in the sector	
Works in the sector	1,051
Participates in the sector	733
Other	116
Discipline	
Combined arts	301
Dance	133
Libraries	90
Literature	109
Music	227
Museums	171
Theatre	298
Visual arts	299
Not discipline specific	292
Ethnicity	
White British	993
White other	25
Gypsy or Irish traveler	3
Any other white background	114
White and Black Caribbean	6
White and Black African	4
White and Asian	7
Any other mixed background	15
Indian	7
Pakistani	4
Chinese	6
Any other Asian background	13
African	8
Caribbean	11
Any other black background	6
Arab	2
Any other ethnic group	25
Not known/prefer not to say	80
Disability	
Yes	123
No	949
Not known/prefer not to say	158

Region	
North West	143
North East	68
Yorkshire and the Humber	137
West Midlands	96
East Midlands	94
South West	186
South East	167
London	358
East of England	80

2. Deliberative workshops with public and the sector, plus supplementary ethnography

It was important to adopt an in-depth qualitative approach, using deliberative research techniques, to unpick some of the more complex issues, and to better understand the reasons for the views expressed by the public and by stakeholders. The introduction of a deliberative element ensured that participants were able to reach informed views based on information shared with them over the course of the workshops.

BritainThinks conducted 10 deliberative workshops across five locations in England between 17th January and 14th March 2018. These locations (set out in the diagram below) were selected across the five Arts Council areas, and included both high, medium and low public participation rates in arts, museums and libraries.



In each location, a three-hour evening workshop was conducted with approximately 30 members of the public.

Participants were recruited free-find³ from the local area to reflect the regional population, according to a range of demographic criteria (age, gender, socio-economic grade) and different levels of engagement with arts, museums and libraries, ensuring a range of views were reflected in the research. Those who participated less in arts, museums and libraries (younger people; disabled people; BAME people, particularly Asian people) were over-recruited to ensure their views were heard.

The public workshops were each followed by a three-hour workshop the following day with local artists and organisations working in the arts, museums and libraries sector. BritainThinks conducted a desk research exercise to identify relevant individuals and organisations to invite in each local area. Specifically, the aim was to ensure we spoke to people who are not currently funded by the Arts Council, to capture their views.

Workshops were run by experienced BritainThinks moderators, using a mixture of plenary sessions and breakout group discussions. Members of the Arts Council team were also in attendance in an observational capacity.

Given the Arts Council’s commitment to championing diversity and inclusion within the sector, additional ethnographic interviews were conducted with individuals and organisations in order to give additional insight and greater weight to those voices who may otherwise be unheard. A particular focus was given to capturing experiences of diverse communities, disabled people and younger people. BritainThinks conducted 10 ethnographic case studies with a range of individuals and audiences across the five locations. This included a mix of in home interviews with families and carers, accompanied visits to organisations in the sector, and interviews with arts organisations with strong outreach programmes. This approach allowed us to capture elements of people’s experiences, bringing a richness and depth to the Conversation. The insights generated have been reflected at the end of this report.

Approximately 30 participants attended each of the public workshops, with numbers ranging from four to 15 for the sector workshops (reflecting the open invitation nature of the latter). The following tables provide details of the individual attendance for each location, and a breakdown of the ethnographic case study visits.

Workshop participation breakdown

Locality	Date	Public participants (N)	Sector participants (N)
Newham	17 th -18 th January 2018	30	11
Luton	30 th -31 st January 2018	29	11

³ Free-finding participants is a recruitment method whereby rather than relying on lists of the general public, our recruiters went out onto the streets in towns and cities to find those ‘less researched’ participants

York	20 th -21 st February 2018	30	16
Nottingham	6 th -7 th March 2018	30	15
Taunton	13 th -14 th March 2018	30	4

Ethnographic case studies

Locality	Organisation	Date	Organisation type	Category
Newham	Ape Media	27 th February 2018	Combined arts	BAME / Children and young people
	Create, Lewisham	16 th March 2018	Literature	Carers
Luton	NGYT	30 th January 2018	Combined arts	Children and young people
	CHUMS	21 st March 2018	Combined arts	Children and young people
York	Pavilion	21 st February 2018	Visual arts	Disability / Vulnerable people
	Henshaws	21 st February 2018	Visual arts	Disability
Nottingham	Inspire Youth Arts	7 th March 2018	Combined arts	Children and young people
Taunton	Southwest Heritage Trust	13 th March 2018	Museums, heritage	Families with young children, older people
	In-home depth with disabled adult and carer	14 th March 2018	-	Disability / Carers
	In-home depth with family	14 th March 2018	-	Families with young children

Throughout this document, in relation to the qualitative elements of the research, we have reported on the views widely held, in the following way:

- Almost unanimously: virtually all hold this view
- A majority/most: more than half to around three quarters hold this view
- Some: around a quarter to half hold this view

Anomalous views have not been included within this report.

3. Online survey of the public and the sector

a. Representative sample survey of the public

It was important for the Arts Council to hear from a large and truly representative sample of the public, so as to have robust quantitative read on the views of the wider general public. The survey has permitted measurement of the public's overall opinion, and the exact strength of that opinion, as it relates to the future of arts, museums and libraries. As such, it helps to validate the findings from the qualitative stage of work. BritainThinks carried out a representative survey of 2,097 adults in England aged 16 and over, via an online omnibus, between 5th and 6th February 2018.

The public survey was designed to be representative of the adult population of England, and included young people aged 16 and over. Quotas were set according to age and gender, region and social grade, with data also weighted at the analysis stage to counteract any non-response bias, to the known profile of England, based on the latest available population statistics. A sample profile from the survey is provided in the following table.

Sample profile: Representative sample survey of the public

Profile characteristics		Unweighted profile	Weighted profile
Gender	Male	958	1,022
	Female	1,139	1,075
Age	16-17	55	63
	18-24	378	254
	25-34	287	336
	35-44	329	382
	45-54	340	349
	55-64	283	299
	65+	425	414
	Social grade	AB	588
C1		587	613
C2		365	443
DE		557	466
Region	North East	110	110
	North West	287	286
	Yorkshire & Humberside	196	215
	West Midlands	206	225
	East Midlands	177	189
	Eastern	242	228
	London	323	307
	South East	328	313
	South West	228	222
Employment type	Public	251	273
	Private	829	916

b. Survey of the sector

Further to the online Conversation platform and workshops, the sector was invited to take part in an online survey, which broadly reflected the same content as the public survey. This also included Arts Council staff. This survey was self-selecting, meaning anyone was able to take part. This means that, unlike the public survey, the stakeholder survey cannot be interpreted as representing the views of all of the sector, nor of staff. In total, 1,173 individuals participated in the survey, including 198 staff members between 8th February and 22nd March 2018. Individuals could elect to take part via an open link which was posted on social media, or via the online Conversation platform at www.aceConversation2018.ning.com.

The questionnaire asked participants to indicate how they would best describe themselves from a pre-determined list. Accordingly, the resulting sample for the sector survey is set out in the following table.

Sample profile: Survey of the sector

		Number of respondents
Total		1173
Staff		198
Sector		893
Don't know		82
Breakdown of participants:		
Response type:	Individual	582
	On behalf of an organisation	283
	Other	28
Relationship with ACE:	Currently receive ACE funding	252
	Previously received ACE funding	223
	Applied but did not receive ACE funding	24
	Never received ACE funding	134
	No relationship with ACE	131
Artform:	Combined arts	152
	Dance	30
	Libraries	22
	Literature	35
	Music	85
	Museums	86
	Theatre	121
	Visual arts	179

	Not discipline specific	155
Familiarity with ACE:	Heard of and know a lot about ACE	664
	Heard of and know a little about ACE	218
	Heard of ACE but know nothing about it	7
	Never heard of ACE	3

Workshop with the National Council

BritainThinks conducted a three-hour workshop with eight members of the National Council of the Arts Council on Wednesday 28th March. They discussed the same topics as the public and the sector, and shared their views on these.

1. Arts, museums and libraries are seen to make a valued contribution to society

The sector is much more likely to say that arts (76%), museums (55%) and libraries (51%) will be important in the future than the public (30%, 37%, and 27%, respectively), and both the sector and the public believe there will be changes to society in the next ten years that might affect the way that arts, museums and libraries work. The sector sees there to be an opportunity presented by these changes; that the wider sector **can work more effectively together, no matter the artform.**

Arts, museums and libraries are **valued by the public** – both in terms of what they offer to individuals, and for their perceived wider societal benefits. With the exception of library use, which is declining, the extent to which the public are participating in arts, museums and galleries remains steady.⁴ At the same time, other ways of participating, such as digital, are growing in popularity.⁵ Nevertheless, the public does not always associate the creative activities they do with the term ‘arts’. They tend to **define the arts through a fairly tight prism**, immediately associating the arts with forms such as classical music, ballet and opera – and they do not generally see these as ‘for them’.

The sector expressed that there is not always a clear thread linking the breadth of the sector and that, if this could be found, it could lead to **greater partnership working.**

1.1 The wide offering of the sector is celebrated, but there are concerns that what it comprises is not understood by the public

1.1.1 ‘The arts’ is a nebulous term used to describe a vast range of activities

Across the Conversation, the funded and non-funded sector have **no single, clear definition of what the arts are.** This is also a strong finding from the public, who tend to initially think of forms such as classical music, ballet and opera, and these do not tend to be the activities they are engaging in.

⁴ Engagement with arts in 2016/2017 was 77.4%, up from 76.3% in 2005/06, engagement with a museum or gallery in 16/17 was 52.3%, up from 42.3% in 05/06. However, engagement with a public library service in 16/17 was 34.0% down from 48.2% in 05/06. *DCMS, Taking Part, 2016/17.*

⁵ In 2016/17, 31.8% of adults had digitally participated in culture in the 12 months prior to interview. *DCMS, Taking Part, 2016/17.*

Many from the funded and non-funded sector note that it is **difficult to find a catch-all term** that captures the diverse range of activities that are contained within the arts.⁶ Some, who are more familiar with the work of the Arts Council, perceive the Arts Council's definition of the arts to be at odds with what the public are engaging in.

"[The] snag...is that when you ask people – especially children and young people – what they understand arts and culture to mean, it bears little resemblance to the ACE definition."

Sector, online Conversation

"Well, we don't know much about all the arts do we!"

Public, workshop, Newham

1.1.2. Adding museums and libraries to the Arts Council's remit is perceived to further complicate communication about what the sector is and does

Since libraries and museums were added in 2013, the remit of the Arts Council becomes **harder to unite** for many of the funded and non-funded sector. In light of this, some of the funded and non-funded sector discuss **whether reframing the sector may make it more accessible** to the public.

In addition to the arts being a difficult term to understand, museums and libraries are **physical buildings, not types of activities or genres** such as those contained within the arts. The remit of arts, museums and libraries is therefore seen to be a challenge to unite under one umbrella, among the public, and also among the funded and non-funded sector.

Some members of the public and the sector query whether reframing the Arts Council's remit as 'culture' may bring forth benefits to the sector: Firstly, 'culture' **feels more inclusive** for the diverse range of organisations operating within the sector. This could help facilitate cross-sector working between arts, museums and libraries, which is often felt to be disparate, particularly among the non-funded sector.

"I hope there will be a bringing together of crossover activities whether sports/ arts/ leisure/ museum/ library/ community/ professional/ contemporary/ historic in different spaces to bring people from different communities or identities into contact with each other. The activity/genre separation with different labels e.g. leisure centres, theatres, arts centres, libraries, museums, cinemas keeps people apart from each other and stops them finding out about other things."

⁶ Please note, that where 'some/many/majority' is used throughout this report, this refers to qualitative findings

Sector, online Conversation

The majority of the **public who attended workshops tended to respond well to the term 'culture'**. In contrast, their initial association with the arts usually relates to forms which they do not perceive as 'for them', such as classical music, ballet and opera. 'Culture' is perceived to be more approachable and inclusive as a term, containing a broader range of activities that the public are interested in, consider to be accessible, and which speak better to a diverse range of audiences.

Some of the sector build on this, suggesting that framing what the sector offers as 'culture' could help more diverse organisations and individuals feel at home within it.

"...the problem of ACE being responsible for the "Arts" - a loose concept, and "Museums and Libraries" - physical institutions. Regarding culture... the institutions "Archives, Museums and Libraries" are implicitly included in the definition as they are the repositories of cultural artefacts. My suggestion is that the ACE should focus on the concept of culture rather than those institutions that house the artefacts. This provides for a more cohesive vision. If we add "culture and museums" then we are basically back to square one: an ambiguous vision."

Sector, online Conversation

1.1.3. However, the public do participate in arts, museums and libraries, even if they do not categorise it as participating

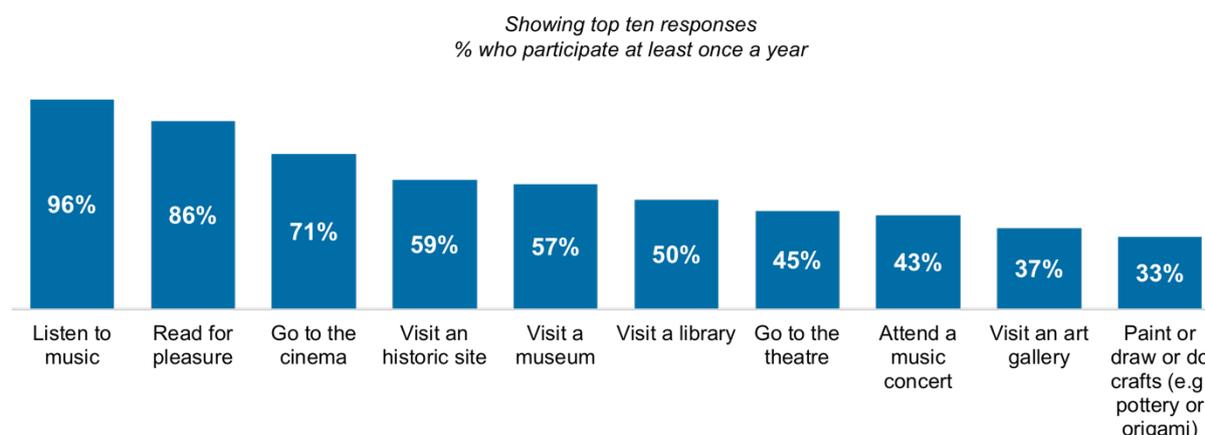
Taking Part shows that while library use may be declining, the extent to which the public are participating in and visiting arts, museums and galleries remains steady.⁷ At the same time, the way in which people are engaging, such as via digital, continue to grow in popularity.⁸ Thus, the issue is less that the public are not engaging with the arts; rather they often do not categorise what they are doing as participating in the arts.

Activities such as reading for pleasure and listening to music are often undertaken in informal settings and individually, rather than as a group activity. Critically, these activities usually are low cost and cost is the biggest perceived barrier to participation in arts, museums and libraries (33% say this).

⁷ Engagement with arts in 2016/2017 was 77.4%, up from 76.3% in 2005/06, engagement with a museum or gallery in 16/17 was 52.3%, up from 42.3% in 05/06. However, engagement with a public library service in 16/17 was 34.0% down from 48.2% in 05/06. *DCMS, Taking Part, 2016/17.*

⁸ In 2016/17, 31.8% of adults had digitally participated in culture in the 12 months prior to interview. *DCMS, Taking Part, 2016/17.*

Figure 1: Public: Participation in arts, museums and libraries⁹

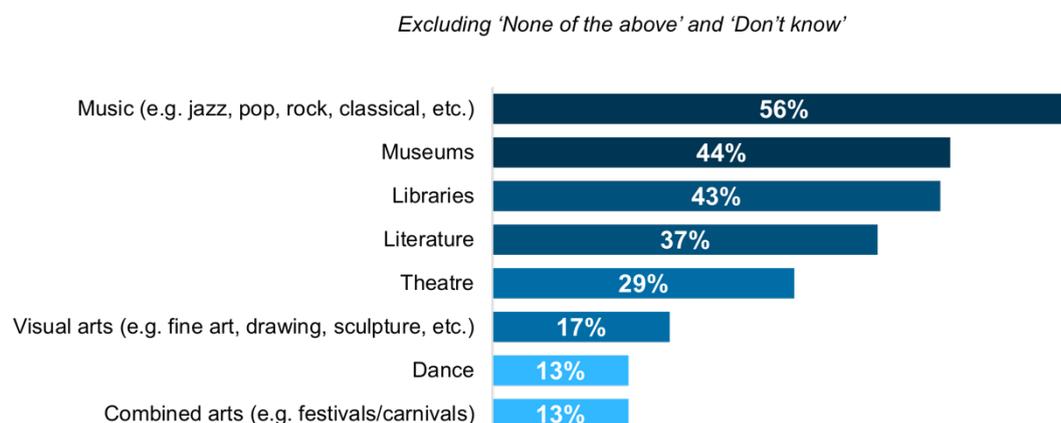


Of the artforms tested, the public are most likely to say that in addition to museums and libraries, music and literature have contributed most to their quality of life, indicating that they get **the most value from the areas that they are less likely to define as ‘the arts’**.

"A lot of people are engaging with art, but they don't think it's art."

Non-funded sector, workshop, Luton

Figure 2: Public: Arts, museums and libraries that have contributed most to quality of life¹⁰



The sector is much more likely than the public to say that arts, museums and libraries will be important in the next ten years. Ensuring that **arts, museums and libraries remain relevant**

⁹ Q1. How often, if at all, do you do each of the following? Base: All English adults (n=2097).

¹⁰ Q8. Which of the following forms of arts, museums and libraries, if any, do you think have contributed most to your quality of life? Base: All English adults (n=2097).

is likely to be a challenge in the future. This is potentially a result of the public’s narrow definition of ‘the arts’; if the breadth of the sector can be communicated, the sector may seem more relevant to the public.

"Banksy fascinates me, but that’s just Banksy, not the arts."

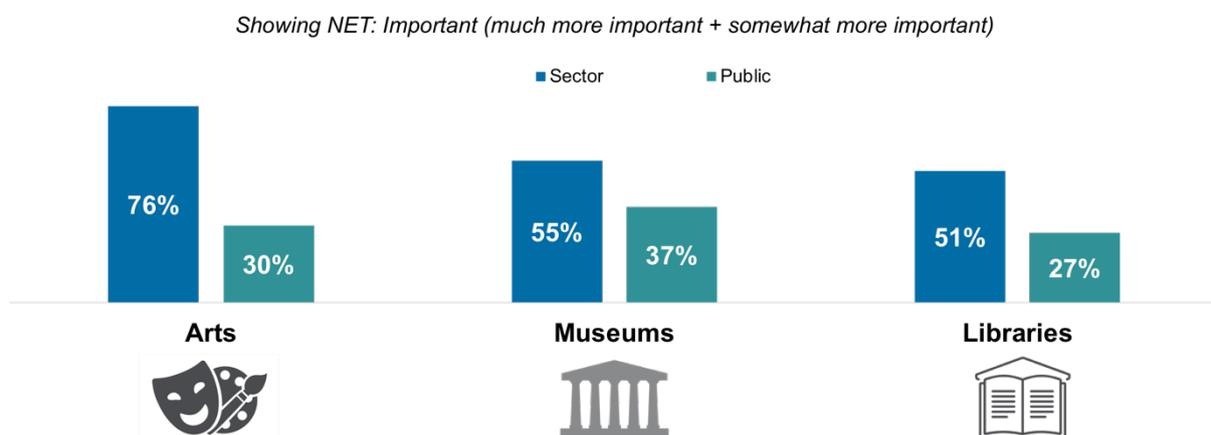
Public, workshop, Newham

The majority of the sector recognises the importance of arts, museums and libraries over the next ten years, though this varies from three in four saying the arts will be important (76%) to just over half for museums (55%) and libraries (51%).

However, the public are **much less likely to see the future importance of arts, museums and libraries**. Around three in ten think arts and libraries will become more important (30% and 27% respectively); with slightly more saying the same for museums (37%). However, only around one in ten actively say that arts and museums will become less important (13% and 12%, respectively).

Two in five members of the public say that libraries will become less important (39%), highlighting the challenge that libraries may face in the coming years – which is covered in more detail in later chapters of this report.

Figure 3: Sector and Public: Perceived importance of arts, museums and libraries in the next ten years¹¹



¹¹ Q12/Q4. Thinking about the next ten years, do you think the following will become more or less important to society...? Base: All English adults (n=2097); All sector participants (n=1173).

1.1.4. Future changes, particularly the rise of digital, are expected to have an impact on the way in which the sector works

The public and the funded and non-funded sector expect the next ten years to bring a range of changes to how we live our lives, which in turn may drive changes to the way the sector works. These include, but are not limited to:

- Increases in digital technology, and what this means for how participants interact with the sector;
- Changing interests and behaviours of the population (such as more time spent online), which may present challenges relating to the relevance of the sector;
- An increasing focus on STEM subjects in schools, meaning more needs to be done to ensure engagement in arts amongst young people;
- A more diverse society, which the sector will need to reflect (in terms of the diversity of artforms available) and represent (in terms of the diversity of people working in the sector itself); and
- Ongoing austerity (and the potential financial impact of Brexit), meaning the sector needs to do more, with less money – or else find alternative or supplementary sources of funding.

Some of the funded and non-funded sector sees there to be an opportunity presented by these changes; that the wider sector **can work more effectively together, no matter the artform**. As a result, the lines drawn between different artforms and the perceived ‘traditional’, sometimes siloed ways of working in arts, museums and libraries may change.

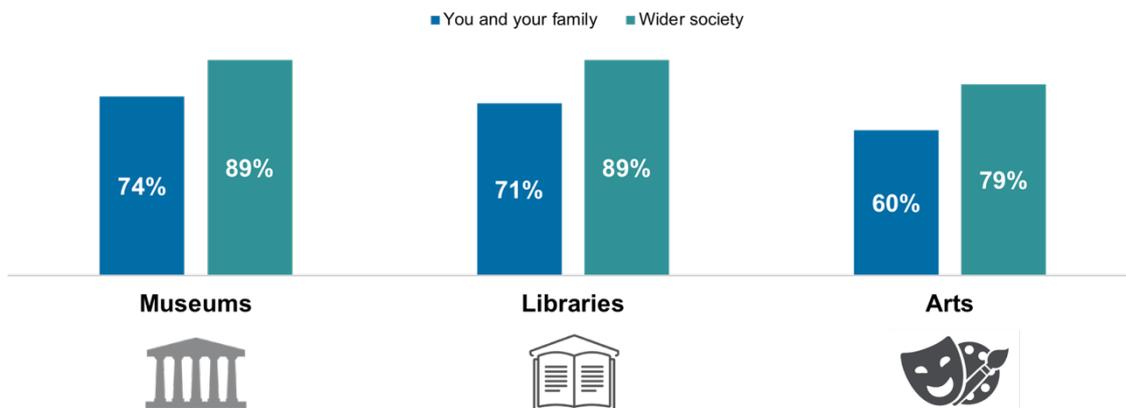
“If hit with arts cuts, then organisations will struggle if they compete for audiences rather than finding multi-arts related collaborations within the industry to keep all art forms thriving.”

Sector, online Conversation

1.2 Arts, museums and libraries bring a wide range of benefits to society

Despite some uncertainty about what the sector comprises, there is a clear sense among both the public and the sector that arts, museums and libraries bring significant benefits to individuals, local communities and the wider nation. Four in five (79%) see the arts as important to wider society, and nine in ten (89%) see museums and libraries as important.

Figure 4: Public: Perceived importance of arts, museums and libraries to them and their family vs. wider society¹²



When it comes to benefits, education is identified by the public as one of the top benefits for arts, museums and libraries. In addition, the arts are also seen to provide entertainment (identified by 53% of the public who perceive arts to be important), museums to enable people to experience things they otherwise couldn't experience in everyday lives (36% of the public who perceive museums to be important), and libraries to help improve local areas (41% of the public who perceive libraries to be important).

Figure 5: Public: Top reasons arts, museums and libraries are important to them and their families¹³



¹² Q2/5. Generally speaking, how important, or otherwise, are each of these for you and your family? Generally speaking, how important, or otherwise, are each of these for wider society? Base: All English adults (n=2097).

¹³ Q3. For which of the following reasons, if any, is this important for you and your family? Base: All English adults who said each was important; Arts (n=1264); Museums (n=1528); Libraries (n=1507).

The non-funded sector and the public agree similar themes when discussing the benefits of arts, museums and libraries unprompted in the workshops, and these align with the findings from the sector in the online Conversation. These can be broadly categorised as follows:

Figure 6: Public: Mentions of benefits of arts, museums and libraries in workshops



1.2.1 Educational benefits

More than other benefits, the sector and the public can see the educational benefit of participation in arts, museums and libraries. Instinctively, they associate this benefit with **children and young people**. However, when probed they mention that arts, museums and libraries can also provide **lifelong learning for people of all ages**.

“I go with my son to the library a lot. He loves dinosaurs, so we often look for books about them. It's important to be able to do that.”

Public, workshop, Newham

Museums and libraries are more commonly seen to provide educational benefits than the arts. While some of the sector discuss the educational benefits of arts participation (e.g., understanding Shakespeare through seeing it, rather than reading it in a classroom), very few members of the public do so to the same extent.

1.2.2. Leisure

Beyond anything else, **participating in arts, museums and libraries is fun**. For the public, arts or museums constitute a ‘day out’, often as a family. As part of this, ensuring that access

(particularly to museums and libraries) **remains free at the point of use is important**, particularly to parents on lower incomes or with limited household finances.

1.2.3. Heritage

The sector and the public alike see one of the main benefits of the sector to be **bringing together the past and future**. Arts, museums and libraries can link the generations, providing something for everyone.

"Knowledge, history, keeping younger generations up to date with older generations. The young people like Banksy, the old people like Van Gogh."

Public, workshop, Newham

Fundamentally, the sector is seen to **preserve our history and heritage**. This is considered important on both a local scale (e.g. recognising the value a local museum brings to ensuring the history of the area is kept alive) as well as a national scale (ensuring our wider history and heritage can continue to be shared across the generations). Some of the public also think that the sector can tell a story about what life might be like in the future.

"It tells you about what England was in the past and how it became what it is. And importantly, how it might be in the future."

Public, workshop, Nottingham

1.2.4 Embracing diversity

Arts, museums and libraries are widely recognised for **helping people to understand more about other cultures**, broadening our understanding and unifying different groups – whether by bringing members of the same family together for a shared experience, or bringing together people from different backgrounds.

"Bringing people together, different cultures, represents stories that are important to the public."

Non-funded sector, workshop, Nottingham

Similarly, museums and libraries are seen as **a great leveller in society**. While libraries, and to some extent museums, are seen to do this successfully at present, the public and the sector alike are less sure that the arts are as inclusive as they could be to everyone.

1.2.5 Health and wellbeing

To a slightly lesser extent, the health and wellbeing benefits of arts, museums and libraries are recognised. These include **reducing isolation** by helping people stay connected with others. This is considered to be important for the future. With potentially **higher levels of social isolation** in the next ten years – particularly in the context of an ageing population - arts, museums and libraries could **help bring communities together**, encouraging people to leave their homes and digital screens in exchange for real life experiences.

“There is no good being on your own, it’s a social thing. It motivates you to get out of the house.”

Public, workshop, York

Arts, museums and libraries are also considered to have a direct impact on **improving health and wellbeing**, and in particular, mental health. This is particularly true of the arts, where the public and the sector note the many health and wellbeing benefits, such as relaxation and stimulation.

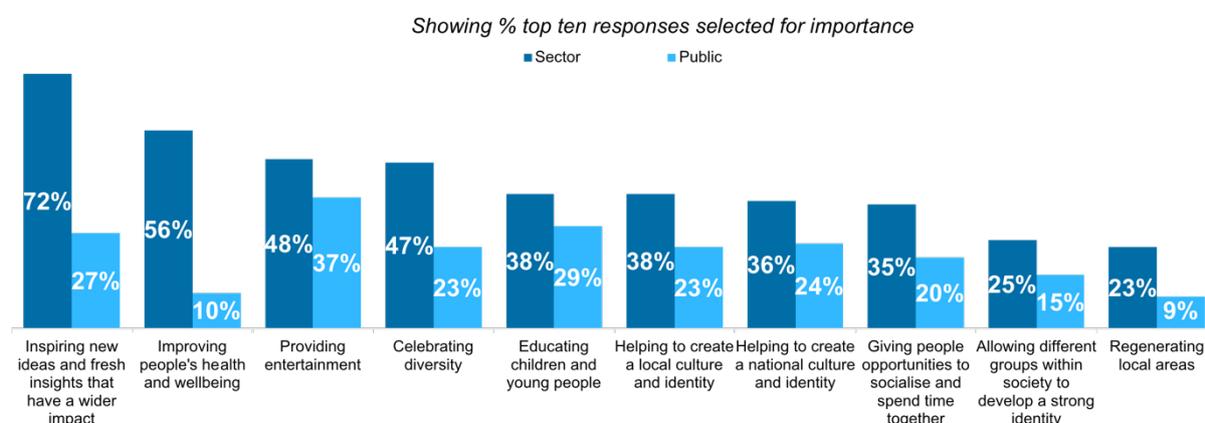
“The arts for those that have the means to access them and that are interested are a hugely positive influence on people’s health and wellbeing. They are a source of escapism, of enjoyment, stimulators of deep thought and passion, drivers of societal change, stimuli for new ideas/creativity, inspiration for the next generation, sources of hope and optimism, but also reminders of bleak, stark facts/events, etc.”

Sector, online Conversation

1.3 The public and the sector attribute different benefits to arts, museums and libraries

Arts, museums and libraries are not seen as a single entity. As such, each of the arts, museums and libraries are seen to have different benefits to society, and these benefits are viewed differently by the public and by the sector.

Figure 7: Sector and Public: Benefits of arts to society¹⁴



When it comes to the arts, the biggest benefit seen by the sector is inspiring new ideas and fresh insights that have a wider impact on society. This is followed by their role improving people’s health and wellbeing. However, for the public, the biggest benefits of arts to society are seen as **providing entertainment**, and educating children and young people.

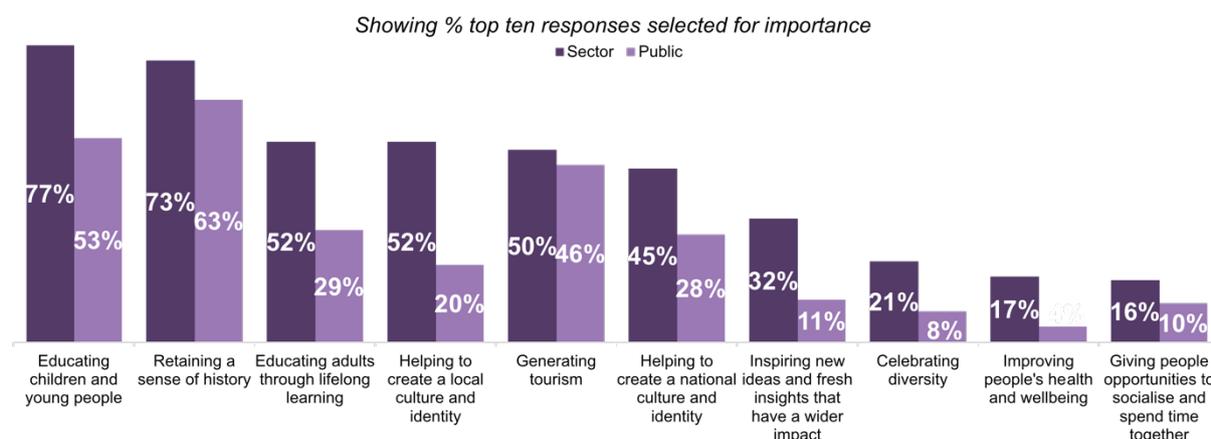
The public are **much less likely to see the cohesive benefits of the arts than the sector**, such as helping to create a local or national culture or identity, or giving people opportunities to socialise and spend time together. They generally talk about this in terms of one-off days out with family and friends, rather than something they regularly participate in.

“They do it as a treat, they go to the theatre.”

Public, workshop, Nottingham

¹⁴ Q6. For which of the following reasons, if any, is this important to society? Base: All English adults who said each was important; Arts (n=1653). Q2. In which of the following ways, if any, do each of the following contribute to wider society? Base: All sector participants (n=1173).

Figure 8: Sector and Public: Benefits of museums to society¹⁵



The sector and the public recognise the part museums play in educating children and young people. However, the public are less likely to see the educational benefit for adults. Workshop participants often reminisce about their experiences of museums as children on school trips, however they are less likely to see museums as an opportunity for learning now they are adults.

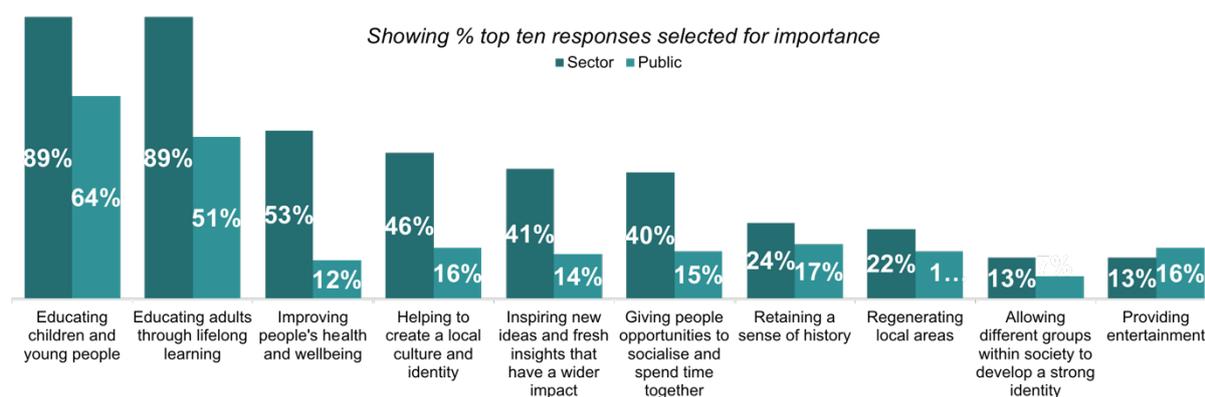
"When I was younger we'd go out as a family every weekend to a museum or gallery or something. Currently, it's not something that I'd go out of my way to do."

Public, workshop, Nottingham

Again, the public are **less likely than the sector to see the benefits that museums bring to a cohesive society** – for example, by creating either a national or local identity or by celebrating diversity.

¹⁵ Q6. For which of the following reasons, if any, is this important to society? Base: All English adults who said each was important; Museums (n=1871). Q2. In which of the following ways, if any, do each of the following contribute to wider society? Base: All sector participants (n=1173).

Figure 9: Sector and Public: Benefits of libraries to society¹⁶



Perceptions of the benefits of libraries are where the differences between the public and the sector are most stark. The sector is much more likely to say that the **educational benefits** of libraries for both children and adults are important, which the public do see, but have less **strength of feeling** about. Lower proportions of the public selecting each benefit of libraries may be driven in part by their limited use of them, in comparison to arts and museums.¹⁷

In workshops, the public are more likely to talk about libraries as benefitting someone else, particularly the most disadvantaged members of communities, rather than themselves. This again suggests that their perceptions may be fuelled by lack of personal engagement.

“Libraries might provide resources for people in relative poverty. For example, being able to have access to the internet.”

Public, workshop, Nottingham

Despite the overarching benefits of arts, museums and libraries to individuals, local communities and society, some of the sector think that **too much emphasis is placed on the impact of arts, museums and libraries on society.** They perceive it to be intrinsically important that the sector can, and does, exist in its own right, without having to demonstrate wider benefits. If this is not the case, they feel that there is a risk that the ‘essence’ of arts and museums or library collections will be lost, and value only attributed to those elements which deliver instrumental benefits.

¹⁶ Q6. For which of the following reasons, if any, is this important to society? Base: All English adults who said each was important; Libraries (n=1862). Q2. In which of the following ways, if any, do each of the following contribute to wider society? Base: All sector participants (n=1173).

¹⁷ Engagement with arts in 2016/2017 was 77.4%, up from 76.3% in 2005/06, engagement with a museum or gallery in 16/17 was 52.3%, up from 42.3% in 05/06. However, engagement with a public library service in 16/17 was 34.0% down from 48.2% in 05/06. DCMS, *Taking Part, 2016/17*.

“The country / the government has to value art for its own sake - 'art for art's sake' has become a derogatory term but as a society we should value what it gives us, for sheer appreciation. We're so bogged down in social impact, economic impact, health and well-being - that we can't just say 'actually, that was great art - a fantastic experience and that's enough'.”

Sector, online Conversation

In light of austerity, many members of the public in the workshops say that it is **important that public funding is spent on that which has value** to the local community, and the nation. Further information about how the public say they would like to see funding to be prioritised is outlined in more detail in later sections of this report.

“The Arts Council should fund organisations which contribute to society the most. Those that help with mental health, help communities. Those are the ones that should be funded.”

Public, workshop, Newham

2. Arts, museums and libraries should continue to celebrate diversity and actively welcome everyone

We heard that promoting inclusive societies and celebrating diversity are seen to be key benefits of arts, museums and libraries. However, these benefits are considered to be contingent on the sector and its work **reflecting the diversity of local populations** and being **accessible to all**. In particular, the public and the sector wish to see:

- A broad definition of diversity which accounts for different cultures, languages, geographies, attitudes, religions, ages, and social backgrounds. There is a sense that diversity is sometimes narrowly interpreted as ethnicity and gender, but that the public and the sector do not think this reflects diversity in today's society.
- A breadth of artforms and museums and libraries provision in an area that reflects the diversity of the population in that area.
- Action being taken across all aspects of the sector to promote diversity in terms of workforce, the activities and programmes on offer, and the leadership of the sector.
- A broad definition of accessibility which goes beyond just welcoming those with disabilities, to include welcoming everyone from the widest range of backgrounds and circumstances.
- Active encouragement of those from less advantaged social backgrounds to participate in arts, museums and libraries. In particular, efforts to break down any perceptions that arts are 'not for people like me' would be welcomed.

2.1 A broader definition of diversity would be welcomed by the public and the sector

Among the funded and non-funded sector, there is a **clear sense among a majority that diversity is broader than just gender and ethnicity**. It is perceived that a far more nuanced, clearly articulated definition would be beneficial, taking account of different cultures, languages, geographies, attitudes, ages, and social backgrounds.

Most of the public and sector say they would like to see **public funding lead the way in supporting a more diverse range of organisations and artists** – they anticipate this could include artforms from other countries and cultures, from artists from a wide range of social backgrounds, and those that exist in rural areas alongside towns and cities. They feel that focusing on diversity in its broadest sense would **help a diverse range of the public feel that there is something 'for them'**, helping to dispel the perception among many that the arts mainly comprise artforms that are 'not for people like me'.

“We’ve been educated that arts are highbrow, that it’s not for everyone. They’ve come to the conclusion that it’s not for them. They think ‘I’m not allowed to participate’ or ‘it doesn’t include my culture.’”

Non-funded sector, workshop, Luton

Almost unanimously, the public and the sector wish to see arts, museums and libraries **actively trying to engage individuals from all backgrounds and cultures to participate in the arts, museums and libraries**. The public often define this as offering “**something for everyone**”, so that regardless of someone’s background, there is a form of arts, museums and libraries provision which they would enjoy and feel welcome at. It is expected that **promoting diversity within the sector in the first place will help ensure this happens**, but specific efforts would also be welcome to draw in groups who are less likely to engage with arts, museums and libraries. Social background and income levels come through particularly strongly, in both the online Conversation and workshops, as a dimension which the public and the sector feel should be a priority group among which to encourage participation.

“Representation in terms of diversity and intersectionality are areas which need to be intrinsic in any discussions regarding future strategy - as reflects the workforce and audiences.”

Sector, online Conversation

2.2 It is felt that the diversity of the local population could be better reflected through the breadth of arts, museums and libraries in a local area

Conversation about **diversity among the public is often approached through a local lens**. The public expect that the breadth of the arts, museums and libraries on offer in an inner city location may differ to that in a rural seaside town. A majority of the public say they would like to see **local provision that reflects the population of the community it serves** – meaning there is genuinely ‘something for everyone’ in that locality. This may be underpinned by **the belief that arts, museums and libraries provide an important way to bring communities together and foster social cohesion** – a benefit valued by the public and the sector alike.

“They need to focus on what people really want by listening to local areas.”

Public, workshop, Taunton

“If you see how diverse Luton is, investing in local areas is a way to encompass the different cultures’ potential.”

Public, workshop, Luton

2.3 The sector feels diversity is best achieved with a bottom-up approach

Many of the funded and non-funded sector feel that the best way to achieve greater diversity in the sector could be to take a more **locally focused approach to supporting and funding organisations**. This is particularly true of the non-funded sector. For example, we heard that the sector would like to see more funding and support directed towards: ‘up-and-coming’ organisations or artists who might be locally popular, but are yet to cut through nationally; and to organisations or artists that are providing benefits to their local communities (such as mental health support or community cohesion). There is hope that **more support for organisations and artists as they emerge at a local level might open up the playing field to a broader range of artforms, museums and libraries** in the sector overall, as noted in later chapters of this report.

The sector also feels that **fostering breadth of provision at a local level may help increase participation rates**, particularly among those who rarely engage in arts, museums and libraries. They say that this may provide something new which could draw in new audiences, and if it is locally rooted might provide a form of arts, museums and libraries which feels relevant to local individuals.

“There are some small, local, cultural arts, museums, etc. that are run by culturally diverse groups - often migrant communities, but also community-led working class initiatives...If you could find a way of engaging with, or at the very least, recognising and valuing some of these underground creative communities, it might help the image of 'the arts' overall - and start to remove the 'it's not for me' attitude.”

Sector, online Conversation

2.4 We heard that diversity should be at the heart of all aspects of the sector, from participants, to creators, and leaders

Almost unanimously, the sector is clear that **diversity needs to cut through every aspect of arts, museums and libraries**. They want to see diversity in the participants coming through the door, the sector workforce itself, as well as in its leadership.

Currently, there is a sentiment held among almost all of the sector that the sector is not diverse enough at each of those levels. This is perceived to have a negative effect on participation rates. In the sector’s eyes, the more diverse it is, the more likely that arts, museums and libraries will encourage participation among the widest range of individuals.

“The opportunities I see are around the continued diversification of the arts – making them less elite, more community-focused, less privileged, more art for all, more participation. If more people from a wider range of backgrounds engage and participate then the art sector will become more relevant and more valued.”

Sector, online Conversation

The diversity of participants, the workforce, and leadership are seen as strongly interlinked by the sector. Increasing diversity among participants, and engaging young people into arts, museums and libraries, is expected to increase the diversity of individuals working in the sector, as the talent pool becomes more diverse. Increasing diversity at the leadership level is expected to lead to greater diversity in the workforce as it becomes more likely that there are relatable role models to aspire to for those of all backgrounds.

2.5 Diversity is expected to grow in future: the sector is seen to need to change to reflect this

Given the increasing diversity of the population, the public see this issue as becoming even more of a priority. Similarly, the survey shows that around two thirds of the sector (67%) believe that **diversity is one of the greatest opportunities for the sector in the next ten years** (compared to 34% of the public who say the same). There is an expectation that the sector should harness this opportunity.

Some of the sector see that it may be inevitable that some diversity ‘categories’ are required in order to implement and evaluate a strategy around diversity – for example, setting targets to fund organisations which represent particular genders, ethnicities or cultures. However, the overarching sentiment from a majority of the sector is that **categories are easily outdated and can lead to a ‘tick-box’ mentality**, which can be perceived to indicate only **surface level commitment**. Instead, ensuring that all funding applications require a holistic approach to diversity would be preferred, using a broader definition of diversity to embrace different cultures, languages, geographies, ages, religions and social backgrounds.

2.6 Accessibility for the sector and the public means providing appealing ways for everyone to engage

While the sector is seen to be progressing with regard to physical accessibility for disabled people, we heard from both the sector and the public that **challenges to accessing arts, museums and libraries are not just felt by disabled people**. They see **barriers to accessibility for a range of demographic groups which need to be overcome in order to widen participation** for everyone.

“These activities have to be accessible to all ages and incomes, they can’t be elite – they’ve got to be a place for mothers and fathers. They’ve got to have facilities for those with disabilities, like braille or T-Loops. They’ve got to be for everyone.”

Public, workshop, Taunton

We heard from the public that they want to see arts, museums and libraries actively ensuring:

- **That those from lower socio-economic backgrounds feel welcomed by all artforms**. There is an assumption that artforms such as opera, ballet and classical music are not felt to be as welcoming among these groups.

- **That there are opportunities to participate for those in rural and more isolated communities.** Members of the public in rural areas often feel that they do not have access to the same quality of arts, museums and libraries as those in the major cities – particularly those living in London.

“While we like musical concerts, we were saying that in the West Country there just aren’t many venues.”

Public, workshop, Taunton

- **That there are concerted attempts to engage those who feel that arts, museums and libraries ‘aren’t for them’.** This is often those perceived to have not engaged with arts, museums and libraries in their childhood.

“There’s a school near here where all the kids went to sing at the Royal Albert Hall. All of the parents were invited, but a lot didn’t go because they thought somewhere like that wasn’t for people like them.”

Non-funded sector, workshop, Newham

2.7 Museums and libraries are currently regarded as more accessible than arts

Libraries are generally regarded as the most accessible of arts, museums and libraries by both the public and the sector. The survey shows that more than four in five English adults (83%) agree that libraries are currently accessible to anyone, whoever they are. This is three quarters (75%) for museums, but only half (53%) for arts.

2.8 Attitudes towards arts, museums and libraries in our survey varies by demographic group

Our survey of the general public found some significant differences by demographic group, as outlined below:

2.8.1. Ethnicity

- BAME adults are more likely than white adults to say that arts and libraries are important to them and their families, but there is no difference in the level of importance they ascribe to museums (69% vs. 59% for arts, and 83% vs. 70% for libraries, respectively).
 - BAME adults are more likely to say that museums and libraries are important to wider society than white adults (94% vs. 89% for museums, and 94% vs. 88%, respectively).

- BAME adults are more likely than white adults to say that libraries, visual arts and combined arts have contributed most to their quality of life (50% vs. 40% for libraries, 26% vs. 16% for visual arts, and 23% vs. 12% for combined arts, respectively).
- BAME adults are more likely than white adults to say that they feel informed about the arts opportunities in their local area (52% vs. 40%). There is no statistically significant difference in how informed BAME people feel compared to white people about museums or libraries.
- White people are more likely than BAME people to report experiencing a range of attitudinal barriers to participating in arts, museums or libraries:
 - I prefer spending my spare time doing other things (32% of white adults vs. 19% of BAME adults);
 - I don't enjoy participating in artistic and cultural activities (20% of white adults vs. 8% of BAME adults); and
 - Artistic and cultural activities don't feel relevant to me (19% of white adults vs. 8% of BAME adults).
- BAME adults are more likely than white adults to say that arts, museums and libraries will each become more important to society in the next ten years (50% vs. 28% for arts, 52% vs. 36% for museums, and 44% vs. 25% for libraries, respectively).

2.8.2 Children in the household

- Adults with children in their household are more likely to say that museums and libraries are important, than those without, but are no more or less likely to say that the arts are important (77% vs. 72% for museums, and 78% vs. 68%, respectively).
- Those with children in their household are more likely than those without to say that combined arts have contributed most to their quality of life (18% vs. 11%, respectively). Those without children are more likely than those with to say that literature has contributed most to their quality of life (39% vs. 33%, respectively).
- Adults with children in their household are more likely to say that they feel informed about museums opportunities in their local area, than those without children (63% vs. 55%, respectively). There is no statistically significant difference between those with or without children for either arts or libraries.
- The one barrier that those with children in their household are more likely than those without to report experiencing is not having enough time to participate in arts, museums or libraries (27% of those with children say this, compared to 21% without).
- Adults with children in their household are more likely than adults without to say that arts, museums and libraries will each become more important to society in the next ten years (36% vs. 27% for arts, 44% vs. 35% for museums, and 37% vs. 23%, respectively).

2.8.3. Disabled people

- Disabled people are more likely than non-disabled people to say that they do not feel informed about arts and museums opportunities in their local area (59% vs. 52% for arts, and 46% vs. 35% for museums, respectively). There is no statistically significant difference between how informed disabled and non-disabled adults feel about libraries.
- In terms of barriers to participation, disabled people are more likely than non-disabled people to say that the following have stopped them participating in arts, museums or libraries:
 - The cost of participating is too high (42% of disabled people say this, compared to 30% of non-disabled people);
 - The types of activities available are not relevant or of interest to me (30% of disabled people say this, compared to 22% of non-disabled people); and
 - It is difficult to travel to the places where these things happen (31% of disabled people say this, compared to 21% of non-disabled people).

3. There is a desire for arts, museums and libraries to thrive locally, and also to remain nationally relevant

There is a perception that funding is still focused in London, but a desire to see greater distribution of funding across the country.

- Despite this, it is felt to be important not to detract from the offering of London, which is seen to be important for the country's international cultural reputation and tourism.
- Suggestions for increasing provision in areas outside of London include greater emphasis on touring collections and shows from London, as well as more emphasis on programmes that are noted to have been a success in building a cultural ecology within places, such as Creative People and Places.
- Local people also want to be involved in what the sector offers in their area, so that the arts, museums and libraries available are ones they want to see and participate in.
- There is felt to be a role that the Arts Council could play in filling a perceived gap in support. Relationship Managers are seen to be well-placed to help facilitate partnerships and support local grassroots organisations in gaining access to funding.
- Libraries are a particular concern, and some say that they may benefit from becoming cultural hubs in communities, providing the non-funded sector a much-needed affordable space, as well as acting as a meeting point for the local community and the local arts sector.

3.1 There is a perception that funding is still focused in London, but a desire to see greater country-wide distribution

Outside London, there is a widely held view amongst the non-funded and funded sector, and the public that the **majority of funding is received by organisations and artists in London**. However, this is not just true of arts, museums and libraries funding, but of all public services. In the Nottingham workshop, some members of the public held the belief that **all central government spending on arts, museums and libraries went to London, and the rest of the country was financed only by local authorities**, which illustrates the extent of misconception among some members of the public.

As a result of the perceived differences in geographical distribution, workshop participants from the non-funded sector can sometimes feel a bit 'left out'. Similarly, the perception that London is the focus for public funding can make the public feel that there is not something 'for them' in their local area, and most of the money is being spent on arts in London.

“An awful lot of money seems to be going to the higher art in London.”

Public, workshop, Nottingham

The public would like more information about what is available in their area, and the non-funded sector outside of London would like to feel that the areas they are based in are important in the arts and cultural ecology.

There is, however, an acknowledgement that London’s arts, museums and libraries are important, and must still be well funded. It is recognised that drastically reducing London’s funding could have **huge implications for the reputation of the sector**, and how England’s respected cultural offer compares internationally.

To ensure a fair distribution of arts, museums and libraries, the public and non-funded sector in workshops feel that a way of addressing the distribution of geographic investment could be through **increased touring of London shows, exhibitions and museum collections**, to ensure that the cultural treasures of the country are available to the public, **regardless of where they live**.

*“Everything seems to go on in London and nowhere else in the country.
Why can’t London exhibitions tour around major cities?”*

Public, workshop, Taunton

*“You need to distribute the funding from London, yes, but also the art.
Take it out of London’s basements and distribute it to museums and
libraries!”*

Non-funded sector, workshop, Nottingham

In the online Conversation, the funded and non-funded sector make the suggestion that a solution could be to **address the amount of funding per head in areas outside of London**.

*“Public funding for arts and culture the regions must be equitable. When
Department for Digital, Culture Media & Sport (DCMS) direct funding to
major ‘national’ cultural organisations is combined with Arts Council
England funding, Londoners receive £69 per head compared with £4.58
per head elsewhere in England. Arts funding in London should not be
reduced but this disparity must be redressed.”*

Sector, online Conversation

There are perceived to have been some **notable improvements in the way in which the sector works in places**. One example is Creative People and Places (CPP), which is seen to have been a **positive programme, regenerating the arts and cultural landscape in the areas in which it currently operates**. From both the public and non-funded sector, one

suggestion we heard for ensuring that this type of work gets more funding was to reduce the amount of money received by National Portfolio Organisations and DCMS funded institutions, with greater funding being distributed to programmes such as CPP, which are perceived to have more impact on in local areas.

A minority of funded organisations suggest that there could be a different way to distribute finances to build the ecology of the sector across England.

“To use two ACE examples; the funding of the Royal Opera House (£96m across 4 years) and the funding of Creative People and Places programme (£36m over 4 years). One is a world-renowned venue staging top quality work from world-class performers and arguably contributes to the ‘high-art’ reputation and attraction of London and the UK. The other is a series [of] 21 independent, arts participation and engagement programmes in regional areas of low arts provision and engagement, which has been hugely successful in reaching audiences.”

Sector, online Conversation

3.2 Local people would like to have more say on the arts, museums and libraries in their area

In the age of austerity, we heard that the public believe that public spending needs to be clearly justifiable. While there is broad support for the funding of arts, museums and libraries, the public tend to feel **negatively about the use of public money to fund projects and services that they do not consider to be necessary**, or that do not directly benefit the local community.

“The Arts Council should fund organisations which contribute to society the most. Those that help with mental health, help communities. Those are the ones that should be funded.”

Public, workshop, Newham

There is a real desire for the public to **be involved in the cultural agenda of their local area**, setting the priorities for what their families, friends and neighbours want to see and be involved in.

The public feel that the sector could focus more on what the communities want, and this was discussed widely in the workshops we held.

“ACE should listen to local people, rather than doing things that nobody wants.”

Public, workshop, Luton

The non-funded sector agrees that in order to address local need, **the sector needs to understand the character and make-up of a local area to identify what should be funded.** As such, a bottom-up approach would be welcomed to identify what arts, museums and libraries are desired in an area, so that **if the sector builds it, there's more chance that the audiences will come.**

“We need to ask people what they want – and stop sitting in our ivory towers. Let's make stuff that the audience will want to come to!”

Non-funded sector, workshop, Luton

3.3 More local support would be welcomed, particularly for funding applications

The roles that the Arts Council could play beyond funding – in building partnerships and brokering relationships (explored in more detail later in this report) – are particularly desirable at a local level. There is felt to be **a gap in holistic support within the sector**, that the Arts Council could play in local areas, to provide support to local organisations and artists. The sector, particularly the non-funded element, reported that they would like the Arts Council to be more visible at a local level, and to be able to provide artform specific advice, as well as more general guidance.

There is perceived to be a **lack of networks within the sector** across the country. Thinking about different roles the Arts Council could play, the funded and non-funded sector feel that it would be well-placed to **play this role**, helping to provide better joined up working and partnerships locally. Linking the sector up more effectively in local areas is felt to be a pressing need; NPOs could (and the non-funded sector in particular think they should) work with the Arts Council to join up artists, funded organisations and non-funded organisations within the sector, as well as with local schools, universities and organisations beyond the sector.

3.4 The future of libraries is of particular concern in local communities; they are thought to need to adapt in order to survive

Both the public and the sector (funded and non-funded) are concerned about the future of libraries in their local communities. As explored previously, libraries are seen to offer **particular benefits to the most vulnerable in society**, and there is a fear that without libraries, these people would be missing out on critical services (e.g. access to the internet, a space to meet and integrate). Additionally, the public have **fond memories of visiting libraries as children**, and feel that they **offer huge educational benefits**, particularly for children, even if they themselves no longer visit their local library.

Changes in society, and in particular a growth in technology (e.g. most households own a smartphone and/or computer, and there has been a rise in consumption of e-Readers), is generating concern that **libraries may be becoming obsolete.**

“[Someone] mentioned how libraries used to have computers there and that used to draw people in, but that’s redundant now.”

Public, workshop, Taunton

The public feel strongly that they want to see libraries remain but recognise that **the ‘traditional’ library does not necessarily have the same place in society now as it has had in the past.** The need for libraries to change is also recognised by both the funded and non-funded sector.

“For libraries...it’s diversify or die. I don’t go to the library, but I do like books. I don’t find them inspiring places – they’re municipal and uninspiring. They don’t appear to have money spent on them. If you combined that with what it needs to be to keep it open, you could make a really beautiful space.”

Non-funded sector, workshop, Luton

In the context of limited public funding, however, the public and the sector alike agree that **libraries cannot be preserved for posterity without addressing their relevance to society.**

“If the government has limited funding, the funding they give has to have value for money. If they are funding a library and they are just throwing money at them and not getting anything for it... it is limited funding, it’s a limited pocket.”

Public, workshop, Nottingham

“As Neil Gaiman says – ‘Google can give you 100,000 answers - a librarian can give you the right one’. ...the Museums and Public Libraries Act calls on local authorities to maintain ‘Comprehensive and Efficient’ services . . . but what was comprehensive and efficient in 1964 would have been about as much use as a chocolate fireguard in 2014! And what we are offering now will almost certainly have to change again and again in the future. And, most importantly, the people who really decide what is comprehensive and efficient - are the end users.”

Sector, online Conversation

As such, there is a feeling particularly among the public and non-funded sector that libraries could **develop into cultural hubs within local communities.** Within the arts, museums and libraries sector currently, the non-funded sector perceives there to be a **limited infrastructure for partnership working and collaboration.** **Libraries are suggested as a potential partial answer to this,** bringing people together in the local community with artists, as well as providing a space for artists to work together.

“If the arts and cultural sectors are to thrive then they must combine forces. Smaller, local theatres, museums, libraries and other cultural spaces cannot stand alone for they will be spread too thin and may not survive for as long. Having cultural hubs where all of these things are shared may be a wonderful opportunity for interdisciplinary collaborations and act as a public space for all to access, especially the general public. Therefore, the purpose of these spaces must be to act as a gathering space for everyone to share ideas, socialise, relax and learn from each other.”

Sector, online Conversation

However, the sector believes that **some caution should be exercised**. Upgrading libraries at the expense of current Capital funding for dedicated arts buildings is seen to have a detrimental impact on the sector’s offering. Rather, libraries are viewed as having a role to play in filling existing gaps for **meeting spaces and collaborative working**, at **low or no cost** to artists and small organisations, to help unite the local sector and facilitate local arts and culture events. It is suggested that these cultural community hubs could ensure that the positive benefits of libraries are still felt in the local area, ensuring libraries can serve those more vulnerable communities.

“Stop pretending that libraries are great places for theatre to happen - let theatres remain as places where the magic happens - or in 10 years’ time we’ll be bemoaning the loss of theatre and mourning the great productions that used to take place when all we’ll have left is a couple of performers doing their best in the stark light of a fluorescent bulb and some dusty books / screens.”

Sector, online Conversation

In addition to this, some of the sector feels that there could be **better communication about the positive impact of libraries on local communities**, in order to **secure more funding** and help ensure the existence of libraries for future generations. Improved financial modelling, showing the impact per pound spent, is thought to have the potential to help to do this. While public use of libraries is on the decline,¹⁸ the workshops among the public show that local communities still value them, even if they do not use them personally.

“One of their [the Scottish Library and Information Council’s] key statements is that for every £1 of public money invested in public libraries, they deliver £8-worth of benefits to the communities they serve. Using this kind of financial value modelling, we need to convince public funding

¹⁸ Engagement with a public library service in 16/17 was 34.0% down from 48.2% in 05/06. DCMS, *Taking Part, 2016/17*

bodies that in an effective modern society, they can't afford not to support us properly."

Sector, online Conversation

4. Digital is seen to present both an opportunity and a threat for the sector

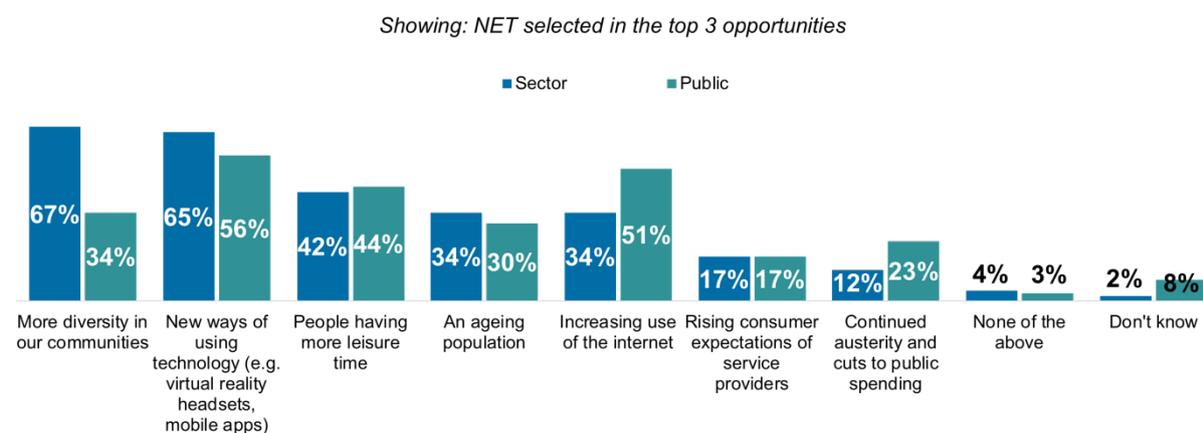
Of all the changes that might be expected over the next 10 years, the growth of **digital technology is perceived to offer some of the biggest opportunities for the sector, but also some threats**. In order to harness the opportunities, whilst mitigating these threats, the sector and the public wish to see:

- Digital being used to remove the physical barrier of participation, such as more access to watching shows live on TV, or digitally experiencing exhibitions or collections. However, this should be in addition to, rather than instead of experiencing arts, museums and libraries in person.
- Removing the 'look but don't touch' perception of museums, using virtual reality or augmented reality to interact with museums during a visit. However, this should not mean that visiting in person becomes an isolated, solitary experience between a participant and a headset. It is seen to be important not to lose one of the greatest benefits of the sector: bringing people together.
- Better communications from arts organisations, museums and libraries, with greater targeted use of social media, to raise awareness of what's on. To do this, they believe the sector needs greater investment in digital skills, and to work with young people who are early adopters of technology.
- Reassurance that there is equity between arts that use digital practices, and those that do not – to dispel the perception held by some of the sector that otherwise non-digital, 'traditional' artforms may be lost.

4.1 The rise of digital technology is seen as presenting opportunities for the sector

The public and the sector see digital advances as a key societal change which will present a great opportunity for arts, museums and libraries, as the following chart shows.

Figure 13: Sector and Public: Perceptions of which societal changes will present the greatest opportunities for arts, museums and libraries over the next ten years¹⁹



Qualitatively, a majority of the sector and the public feel that digital technology has the potential to widen access by helping and encouraging more people to experience arts, museums and libraries. Recent initiatives, such as Event Cinema and the ability to browse collections or exhibitions online are reported to have started to pave the way for arts, museums and libraries to be experienced **without having to visit in person**. Most of the sector and the public in workshops and via the online Conversation reported feeling that making even more of the sector’s offer available online could help harder to reach audiences participate in arts museums and libraries by removing the physical challenges of visiting in person (such as cost and travel). As noted in the chapter on diversity and accessibility, we heard that digital has the potential to help the sector reach out to more diverse groups of people.

Technological developments are felt to also **help open up the sector to those outside of London**; beyond the capital, a majority of workshop participants from both the general public and the non-funded sector feel that London has it all. As a result, they say that if the city’s arts, museums and libraries were made digitally accessible, those outside of London could experience what the city offers.

“Part of the accessibility, is to do with if you can go to London...but a lot of people can’t get to London.”

Non-funded sector, workshop, Nottingham

Digital technology is seen to have the potential to encourage more interactive experiences with arts, museums and libraries, among most of the public and the sector we

¹⁹ Q13/Q5. There are a number of ways in which society might change over the next ten years, which may affect the arts, museums and libraries sector in England. Which of the following, if any, do you think present the greatest opportunities to arts, museums and libraries over the coming years? Base: All English Adults (n=2097); All sector participants (n=1173).

heard from in the qualitative research. It is seen to have the power to encourage people to engage with the sector in a different way. Many of the public in workshops feel that when you go to museums in particular, you can **'look but not touch'**. This is reported to be at odds with the user-led experiences of some recent popular apps, such as those which combine augmented reality (superimposing digital images on the user's view of the world) with real-life experiences like the Pokémon Go app.

“Augmented reality to improve museums in the future – for example, Pokémon Go last year, going around through your phone and you might see the artefact in the museum and interact with it.”

Public, workshop, Nottingham

As a result, in the qualitative research, many of the sector and the public alike see opportunities to **harness virtual and augmented reality to change the way arts, museums and libraries are delivered**. This includes augmented and virtual reality (computer generated scenarios simulating realistic experiences), digital or hologram theatre sets, and bringing museum collections to life, such as being able to virtually 'touch' artefacts. They suggest that this may also benefit the sector by reducing the cost of traditional materials.

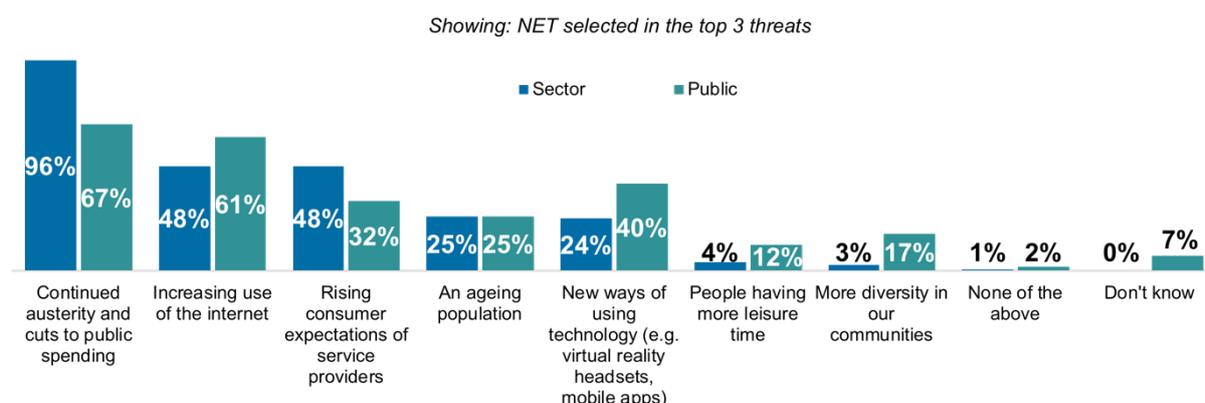
“I think digital technologies will widen the scope of what is possible artistically – e.g. the creation of hologram theatre sets, augmented reality artistic teaching methods, broadcasting what has been traditionally 'live' content worldwide[...] I think this will open up the arts, museums and libraries into new spaces – not just online, but generating interaction between digital and 'real' spaces (e.g. hologram stage sets, augmented reality art trails encouraging people to walk in the 'real' world).”

Sector, online Conversation

4.2 At the same time digital developments are seen as a possible threat to arts, museums and libraries

Beyond continued austerity, which is considered one of the top threats to the sector (by 67% of the public and 96% of the sector), digital technology – as well as offering opportunities – is also seen to present threats to the sector, as the following chart shows.

Figure 14: Sector and Public: Perceptions of which societal changes will present the greatest threats for arts, museums and libraries over the next ten years²⁰



One of the threats of digital is felt to be the risk that it could lead to live experiences and physical spaces becoming redundant. In the qualitative research, the public and sector suggest that if everything is available online, at any time, the ‘physical’ experience of arts, museums and libraries could become a ‘thing of the past’. We heard from the public and the sector that this could have huge repercussions for the sector, particularly for museums and libraries, because people may not need to visit in person to experience what is offered.

"Because of technology there's not much use for libraries and museums anymore."

Public, workshop, Newham

Digital is also seen to have the potential to perpetuate social isolation. Arts, museums and libraries are considered by almost everyone in the qualitative research to be a cohesive force in society, bringing people together. With increasing use of digital technology, many of the sector and the public who participated in workshops think that more people will be spending an increasing amount of time alone. If people are able to participate in arts, museums and libraries alone on screen, without leaving their homes, they are concerned that the sector risks losing one of its key strengths: helping to facilitate social interaction and shared experiences across diverse groups. We heard that even using virtual reality headsets or interacting with an augmented reality screen *within* physical spaces (e.g. within an arts event or at a museum), digital could end up turning **what was once a shared experience into an individual one.**

"We are a Google and YouTube society, people will have lost that connection with seeing people and having Conversations. People will miss"

²⁰ Q14/Q6. And which of the following do you think present the greatest threats to arts, museums and libraries over the coming years? Base: All English adults (n=2097); All sector respondents (n=1173).

this. No one gets letters anymore...there are people who have never experienced the joy of getting a hand-written letter. I'm calling it the Google society."

Non-funded sector, workshop, Luton

"Are we going to be going to the Natural History Museum where we go, just put on a headset, and go virtually?"

Public, workshop, York

To harness the power of digital technologies, many of the sector we heard from in workshops and via the online Conversation feel there must be investment in digital communications. They see this approach as important for using social media to raise awareness about what's on and available to the public, and not relying solely on traditional means of communication (e.g. flyers and posters). In particular, they note that this will be important for engaging the younger generations with arts, museums and libraries, given they tend to be early adopters of new technology and social media.

"People access information through social media. But, if we're still thinking of the old way, even if you get the money you're going to have the same problems. You need to find the means and methods of engaging."

Non-funded sector, workshop, Luton

"While sharing digital experiences may work in favour of participation and increase access to the arts, there is a danger that for many, without skills or desire for digital experiences, exclusion from the arts may follow."

Sector, online Conversation

"At 41 I feel out of touch...if I'm talking to my students I need to be on Snapchat and Instagram. We are going to have to be so connected to that younger generation. You have to be so on the ball with it."

Non-funded sector, workshop, Luton

The caveat we heard here is that we must take care not to exclude those who may not want to, or be able to, use social media. Additionally, the sector feels that there may be a risk for smaller organisations, which might not have the budget, skills or capacity to run social media campaigns with the effectiveness of larger organisations.

4.3 The challenge now for the sector is to take advantage of the opportunities available, and minimise the potential threats

A majority of the sector note that harnessing the potential of digital to increase and broaden engagement, whilst at the same time ensuring that arts, museums and libraries remain inclusive shared experiences, will be critical for the next ten years. **Rather than acting as a replacement for live experiences, they see virtual and digital experiences as having the ability to provide greater interaction;** offering an alternative way of experiencing arts, museums and libraries for those who may struggle to visit in person, and enhancing that live experience for visitors.

Some of the sector note that **digital needs to be seen as integral to arts, museums and libraries, rather than as an add-on.** These individuals and organisations perceive there to be a separate 'digital art' category in the sector, creating an artificial divide between 'digital' and 'non-digital' art. However, they report, many artists are using digital processes in the creation of art, including in 'traditional' artforms. By using inclusive language to make 'digital' and 'non-digital' artists feel welcome, they say that greater partnerships could be facilitated with other sectors (e.g. popular culture, the commercial sector) which do not have separate digital categories.

“This diversification can and should make use of digital (where appropriate and relevant) to increase engagement, access, innovation, and efficient working. And it should include a diversification or blurring of the lines between the subsidised and commercial sectors. The boundaries between 'art' and popular culture help nobody, and more joined-up thinking, engagement and partnerships are a big opportunity to engage and benefit more audiences.”

Sector, online Conversation

Despite the perceived importance of digital over the next ten years, a majority of the sector in workshops and the online Conversation feel that the rise in digital must not detract from artistic practice. Some of the sector feel that because of the rise in digital, funding applications involving a digital element are prioritised. **The perceived division between digital art and non-digital art is felt to create 'digital' and 'other' as two distinct entities,** which is frustrating to those in the 'other' category because they feel pressure to include digital processes where there is no need (e.g. in the creation of pottery).

“Be really clear about what you mean when pushing artists to 'use digital' - not all art should have to include it, and often it's refreshing to be 'real' or analogue.”

Sector, online Conversation

5. Engaging children and young people is considered to be critical in the future for arts, museums and libraries

Children and young people are viewed as important for the future for the sector, but the sector and the public believe that more needs to be done to engage children and young people in arts, museums and libraries. In order to do this, the public and the sector would like to see:

- Better targeting of young people, at an earlier age, to help them see arts, museums and libraries as ‘for them’ and as part of their creative lives.
- The sector addressing government changes to the National Curriculum, where currently STEM subjects are perceived as being prioritised over arts subjects.
- Work undertaken to address concerns about a potential future skills shortage within the sector.
- Better promotion of careers in the arts, museums and libraries, as well as reassurances about the pay and job prospects they offer.

5.1 Young people are more likely to think that arts, museums and libraries are not for people like them

Arts, museums and libraries face a **reputational challenge among young people**. While the public say the sector played an important role in their childhood, most younger workshop participants (aged 16-24) tend to see arts, museums and libraries as ‘**uncool**’ and **not how they want to spend time with their friends**. This is primarily due to limited associations with the sector as encompassing traditional artforms (classical music, ballet and opera), rather than a more diverse range of events in which they may be more interested. Many of the sector in the qualitative research also recognise this to be a challenge.

“Focus the advertising on younger people, making it cool, making it more relatable.”

Public, workshop, Luton

“[The] snag...is that when you ask people – especially children and young people – what they understand arts and culture to mean, it bears little resemblance to the ACE definition.”

Sector, online Conversation

“Big events, street festivals, carnivals can attract younger people and bring people together at a national level.”

Public, workshop, Luton

Linking back to the public findings more generally, young people are **particularly interested in activities that are interactive and that they can engage in**. In Taunton, for example, they mentioned *We The Curious* in Bristol as an example of hands-on discovery they have enjoyed.

“In Bristol they have We The Curious and they have this ball and you go inside it...”

Public, workshop, Taunton

5.2 Early engagement is seen to be key, but increasingly challenging given changes to the school curriculum

Early engagement with arts, museums and libraries is seen to be **key to bringing along future audiences, participants, talent, workforce and leaders**, among a majority of the public and almost all of the sector in the workshops and the online Conversation platform. However, **changes to the education system are seen by the public and sector alike to have built barriers to children and young people experiencing arts and culture in the way they once did**. This is of particular concern for the sector. Children who grow up in households that do not participate in arts, museums and libraries are less likely to engage later in life as an adult.²¹ We heard that school is often the **first point of contact children have with the sector** – a leveller – and without access through schools, arts, museums and libraries may **be accessed only by those who have the means to engage or who have parents who are motivated to do so**.

“Where opportunities do exist initially, too often those who can continue to engage rely on parents/carers who already value the arts to enable them to do so.”

Sector, online Conversation

Of all the educational changes, the **English Baccalaureate was reported as presenting the greatest threat**. The recent perceived focus on STEM subjects in school policy has caused concern among almost of all of the sector across the workshops and the online Conversation,

²¹ *Taking Part 2016/17* (DCMS, 2018) indicates that adults who had visited libraries, museums and galleries as children were significantly more likely to have attended a library, museum or gallery as an adult in the past year. Likewise, adults that had not visited libraries, museums and galleries as children were significantly less likely to have attended a library, museum or gallery as an adult in the past year.

especially regarding future implications for the arts and cultural ecology. If children are not learning about and experiencing arts and culture as part of their education, it is felt that in years to come there will be a generation for whom arts, museums and libraries may not be relevant.

“Every child and young person should have access to a strong cultural education. The implementation of the Government’s STEM agenda and the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) has led to a decline in the take up of arts subjects at GCSE level. Funding bodies must support the education of the cultural workers of the future, and recognise the importance of school students being able to study creative, artistic and technical subjects at GCSE when they have an aptitude or a passion for those subjects.”

Sector, online Conversation

A majority of the sector and many of the general public in workshops and via the online Conversation platform feel that more could be done among organisations working in the arts, museums and libraries to **ensure the right to a cultural education for every child**. This is seen as important because children and young people are the next generation of audiences, workforce and leaders.

“You’ve got to start with the grass roots, which is school. If you’re not encouraging [children] from 6, 7, 8 years old – you’ve missed the boat. I didn’t get interested until my 40s and 50s, and now I’m careful to encourage my grandchildren to get interested.”

Public, workshop, Newham

The way in which arts, museums and libraries are perceived by the public and the sector to be undervalued in the education system raises additional concerns that this **may lead to a more general societal undervaluing of arts and culture in the future**. If arts and culture are not prioritised in schools, where young people often first experience the sector, respondents felt that this may by default make the sector appear less relevant to the nation, and the future of the country.

“Arts are being squeezed in schools, which sets the tone for how we value arts in society. You need to be introduced to arts when you’re young – this then carries through into later life.”

Non-funded sector, workshop, Luton

5.3 A possible skills-shortage is a concern, particularly in light of Brexit

Brexit is seen by all of the sector in workshops and via the online Conversation to be a **huge threat for the sector**, with a potential impact on both **funding** and the **talent pipeline**, particularly for the arts. In the context of this, the sector believe that it is critical for the

Government to focus on **STEAM rather than STEM education in schools**, to help to ensure that the UK can provide the talent and skilled workforce needed to keep a world-renowned sector delivering at the level it is currently able to.

“Brexit also provides an opportunity for the Government to get real about music education. If the implication of restrictions on freedom of movement for EU nationals is British orchestras will have less access to non-UK musicians, then the Government is going to have to invest in UK talent to fill the shortfall.”

Sector, online Conversation

Almost all of the sector in workshops and via the online Conversation feel that the government needs to **take immediate action to confirm the freedom of movement of EU nationals** working in the sector currently, and that the case needs to be made to government to ensure they see the **long-term implications** of a reduction of limited freedom of movement for EU nationals.

5.4 Careers in the sector are not currently seen to offer stability

In line with the focus of the National Curriculum, many young people in the workshops **talk of feeling encouraged in the direction of STEM careers**. They tend to associate arts careers with being unstable and underpaid, which they report does little to encourage them in that direction. Parents we spoke to hold similar perceptions, with many reluctant to urge their child to consider a full-time career in the sector.

“It’s a risky one – you should probably only do it on the side of a proper job.”

Public, workshop, Newham

One of the key concerns among young people and parents is the perceived **low pay of the arts, museums and libraries sector**. There is a **lack of information and advice** about paid careers available in the sector. Young people and parents feel that most people working in the sector are ‘struggling artists’, and they have **limited knowledge of the other roles available in arts organisations, museums and libraries** that may offer more financial security.

“It sounds awful ... life isn’t about money, but artists don’t have a lot of money at all to get by... you think they’d really struggle.”

Public, workshop, Taunton

“I feel like they could have a great job, then the government funding would go, and then they’ve lost their job.”

Public, workshop, York

When considering changes to society in the future, most members of the public are quick to draw on the impact of technology, in particular **automation and the impact on traditional job-functions**. They do not immediately consider that arts, museums and libraries roles may be less likely to be at risk than other sectors.

“The rate at which technology is going...robots, driverless cars. There won't be jobs anymore.”

Public, workshop, York

6. Public funding is felt to continue to play a central role in the future of arts, museums and libraries

Public funding of arts, museums and libraries is widely supported. However, there is recognition of the funding challenges faced by the sector, especially in the context of austerity and continued pressures on the public purse. As a result, it is felt that there are three key areas that could be focussed on by the sector in the coming period:

- Promoting the value of the sector and its cross-cutting benefits; the educational, societal, health and wellbeing benefits of publicly funded arts and culture are felt to be something the sector should be proud of.
- Exploring alternative funding methods, that in the longer-term could help to make the funding of the sector more sustainable. This includes crowdfunding and private investment.
- Focusing on the public benefit. While some of the sector feel that there can be an over-focus on the public benefit of arts, and that ‘art for art’s sake’ remains important, there is a recognition among many in the sector that promoting the wider public benefits of arts, museums and libraries is necessary to help maintain and build support for public funding. This includes the funding of the most popular activities, as well as smaller and more community-based organisations and individual artists.

6.1 There is widespread support for public funding of arts, museums and libraries

The public and sector alike **support public funding of arts, museums and libraries**. Among both groups, it is felt to be particularly important to ensure arts, museums and libraries remain accessible to all, regardless of their background. Without public funding, there is concern that many people would be ‘**priced out**’.

“If it wasn’t publicly funded, it would just become for the rich, those who have the money would be the only ones who could possibly do it.”

Public, workshop, Nottingham

Public knowledge about the distribution of government funding is low. Workshop participants were shown a range of information about the sector, and were **surprised that only 0.58% of**

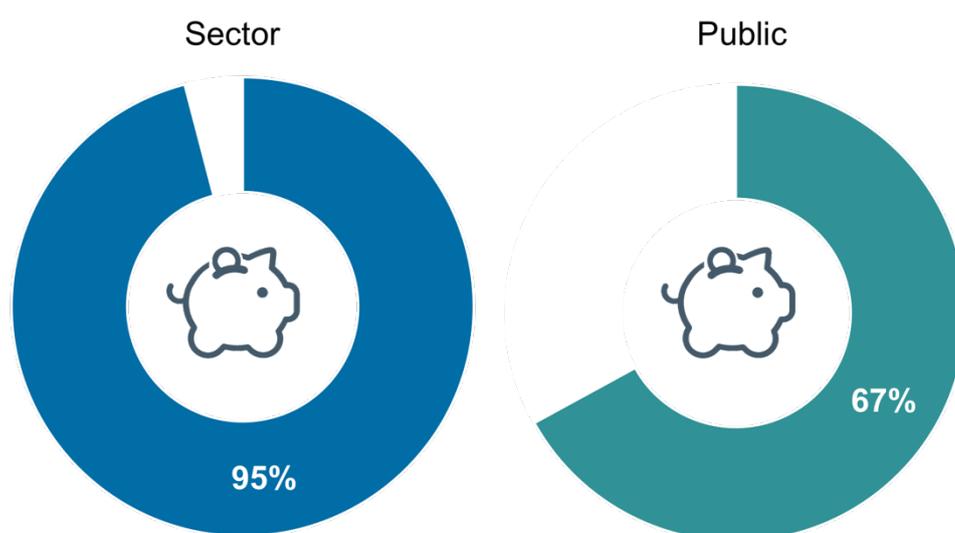
government spending on public services goes to the cultural services.²² The wide-reaching work of the sector is therefore felt to be impressive to most of the public in this context.

In line with this, the public feel that there is an argument for doing more to advocate for retaining current levels of funding; reference was made to the continual case being made for 0.7% of funding to be spent on international aid, yet the case is not as clearly made by the sector to preserve (or increase) the 0.58% spent on cultural services.

6.2 Continued austerity is a concern for the future

In a sector where local authority spending cuts have been keenly felt, we heard that continued austerity and cuts to public spending are considered to be a threat to the sector. This threat is thought to be further heightened with Brexit on the horizon, in light of the range of EU funding programmes the sector benefits from, which they feel are likely to be cut after 2019.

Figure 15: Sector and Public: Percentage selecting continued austerity and cuts to public spending as one of the top threats to the sector in the future²³



Qualitatively, while the public and sector **support more public funding being given to arts, museums and libraries**, they do not necessarily know where it would come from. When

²² In 2016/17, 4,106 million was spent on cultural services in the UK. This amounts to 0.58% of the public spend. Approximately 11.7% of public funding is spent on education, and 16% on the NHS. *HMT Official Statistics, 2017. World Bank.*

²³ Q14/Q6. And which of the following, if any, do you think present the greatest threats to arts, museums and libraries over the coming years? Base: All English adults (n=2097); Base: All stakeholders (n=1173).

asked, frontline services such as the NHS and education are still felt to be a priority over arts, museums and libraries. Alternative funding models are suggested as a potential way to provide greater financial resilience in the future. These suggestions primarily focused on crowdfunding and private funding, with pros and cons recognised for each.

“I feel like people look at the arts and think money should go to NHS and education, not the arts.”

Public, workshop, York

- **Crowdfunding**

- ✓ Suggested by some of the public, this is felt to help to encourage those interested in arts, museums and libraries to invest where their interest is greatest, ensuring that provision in an area appeals to local interests and needs.
- ✗ The potential downside is the risk that the arts, museums and libraries that receive funding are prioritised according to public interest and awareness, meaning those taking more artistic risk, or appealing to a more niche audience, may miss out. This is of particular concern for the sector, who say they want to ensure such activities are able to seek alternative funding support.

“They should use crowdfunding more. It’s a really good way of measuring interest in something.”

Public, workshop, Newham

- **Private funding**

- ✓ Some of the public hold the view that in a time of austerity, arts, museums and libraries should look to capitalise on private sector funding, in particular as part of businesses’ corporate social responsibility agendas. There are seen to be opportunities for collaboration between business and arts, museums and libraries, particularly where there is common ground, e.g. technology companies funding interactive use of digital in an arts event, museum or library.
 - Some say larger organisations, e.g. national organisations that have the power to attract big businesses to collaborate on exhibitions, may be better placed to take advantage of this funding stream, meaning public funding can be diverted to smaller organisations and individual artists at a local level.
- ✗ There is concern among some of the public in workshops that this may pave the way for privatisation, and if too many successful private funding partnerships flourish, it could be detrimental to the case for public funding of the sector.

- × Some of the public and the sector also feel that private funding could carry the risk of supporting only certain types of arts, museums and libraries – specifically, those that fit with the funder’s corporate message. In contrast, they feel that public funding ensures there is no political agenda to the types of arts, museums and libraries that receive funding.

“The cuts to public funding make you wonder if the arts are going to be privatised and they’ll just put the money into education and health.”

Public, workshop, Nottingham

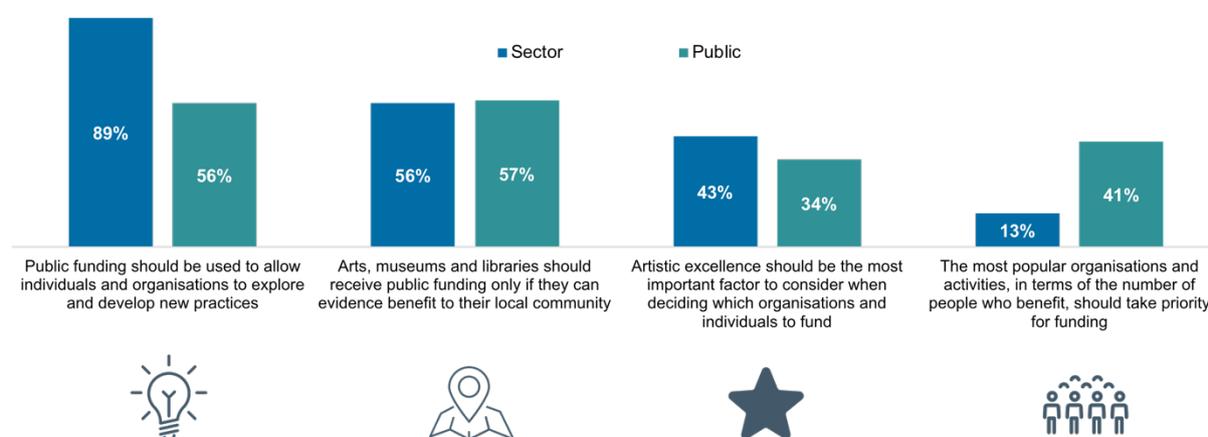
“Many public services are under threat by privatisation, and we should not be so naive to think that this threat does not extend to arts.”

Sector, online Conversation

6.3 As the squeeze is felt, there are thought to be areas where funding could be prioritised

With limited resources, the sector and the public feel that there are some **areas that should be prioritised over others**. From the four broad areas tested in the survey, the sector and the public prioritise the **development of new practices, and funding arts, museums and libraries which can evidence benefit to the local community**. Almost nine in ten in the sector prioritise the former, and almost three in five the latter.

Figure 16: Sector and Public: Priorities for investment for the funding of arts, museums and libraries in England²⁴



In the qualitative research, some tension is expressed between funding for art that demonstrates artistic excellence, without necessarily demonstrating public benefit, and funding for art that has a demonstrable benefit to the local community.

There is a huge amount of support, particularly from the sector, for funding **art for art’s sake, without having any specific public benefit aims attached**. Although it is felt that public funding should have some positive public benefit, some in the sector state that this should not be the sole focus for publicly funded arts, museums and libraries. Some in the sector feel that there has been **too great a focus on the benefits of arts, museums and libraries in recent years**, detracting from the artistic and cultural merit of the sector in its own right.

“The present funding bias (and you can include Heritage Lottery Fund here) is favouring arts, libraries and museums becoming a tool for economic and social regeneration and measuring things on payback (“is this a good investment”). We shouldn’t lose sight of the intrinsic value of artistic activity.”

Sector, online Conversation

“While public engagement is important for publicly funded work, greater weighting should be given to supporting high-quality arts work, in all its forms.”

Sector, online Conversation

²⁴ Q18/Q9. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the funding of arts, museums and libraries in England...? Base: All English adults (n=2097); Base: All stakeholders (n=1173).

In contrast, a majority of the public we spoke to feel **strongly that publicly-funded arts, museums and libraries should demonstrate a benefit to the local communities in which they are based**. Many feel that the current approach is ‘top down’ and elitist, with funding distributors deciding ‘what is good’ for a local area, rather than consulting the local community about what it wants.

“There's no point in funding something that's not wanted.”

Public, workshop, Newham

We heard that this is particularly felt to be true for libraries, with generational differences in how they are perceived. While almost all older members of the public strongly feel that libraries should be publicly funded, younger audiences **feel that they are not particularly relevant to their daily lives** (though, somewhat paradoxically, they like the idea that libraries will still exist when they have children themselves). The desire to have more of a say in how public funding is spent locally speaks to the fact that **many members of the public we heard from feel the sector does not engage with them currently**; and instead, perceive it to be talking amongst itself.

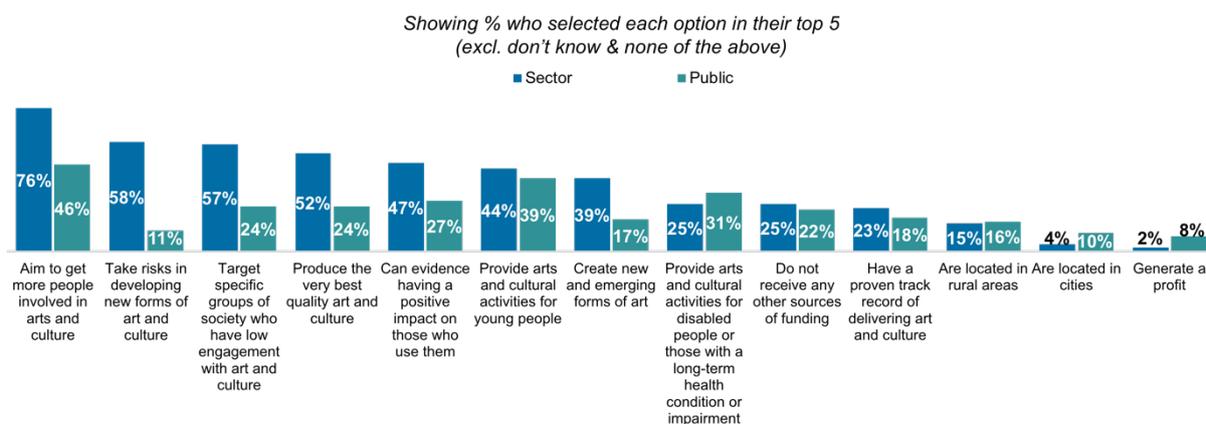
“Maybe put questionnaires, what would they like to see, what does the area need improvement on.”

Public, workshop, Nottingham

When it comes to priorities for public investment, the sector and the public both agree that **organisations that aim to get more people involved in arts and culture should be a priority** (selected by 76% of stakeholders and 46% of the public – the top response for each audience in the surveys).

However, beyond this, their views differ quite markedly. For example, for the public, **participation is more important than many other investment priorities**. Just 24% say that the Arts Council should focus on funding organisations that produce the very best quality arts and culture, and 11% think it should take risks in developing new forms of arts and culture. In contrast, for stakeholders, these represent some of their most important priorities (cited by 52% and 58% respectively).

Figure 17: Stakeholders and Public: Priorities for investment for Arts Council England²⁵



A number of priorities for public funding emerged during the workshops and the online Conversation from both the public and the sector, many of which may be viewed as in conflict with one another. These include:

- 1. Funding arts, museums and libraries targeted to local need.** This stems from a perception that London receives an unfair proportion of public funding compared to the rest of the country, and particularly among the public and non-funded sector, there is a sense that funding could be more targeted to address local need.
- 2. Targeting funding towards children and young people.** With the perception of a decreasing educational offering of arts and culture in schools, engaging children and young people is felt to be of critical importance for most of the public and the sector who participated in workshops or the online Conversation, in order to inspire the next generation of participants, talent, workforce and leaders.
- 3. Preserving with purpose.** With limited resources, 'preservation for preservation's sake' is not seen to be a priority for funding, by most of the public we heard from in workshops. They feel that there has to be a good reason to fund preservation activities (i.e. not funding 'dying' artforms with limited audience numbers).
- 4. Prioritising resilience – but on a short-term basis.** Helping organisations to become resilient is a priority for the sector, but we heard that this should be limited. If an organisation cannot demonstrate its sustainability within a short time period of

²⁵ Q17/Q8. Which of the following types of organisations or individuals do you think Arts Council England should focus on when investing public money in the future? Base: All English adults (n=2097); All stakeholders (n=1173).

receiving public funding, the sector say that it should not continue to be funded indefinitely.

- 5. Ensuring creativity and excellence continue to be important.** Great artistic and cultural practice should continue to remain a high priority to ensure that the excellence of the sector does not diminish in years to come - this is strongly felt among the funded and non-funded sector who participated in workshops or via the online Conversation. In addition, some say that excellence must be judged by those who have direct experience of delivering excellence in that area, otherwise continued excellence in the sector cannot be achieved.
- 6. Supporting innovation.** As part of continued excellence, some of the sector say that it needs to be encouraged to take risks and innovate, and Research & Development need to be a priority for funding in order to support this. Some of the sector feel that the balance of funding between more traditional artforms such as classical music, opera, ballet and fine arts should be readdressed to create funding opportunities for a wider range of artforms, such as jazz, folk, blues, carnival, circus and fringe theatre.
- 7. Investing in helping arts, museums and libraries to run effectively.** Qualitatively, many of the sector note that there have been cuts made to 'back office' staff in recent years as a result of austerity and cuts to funding. In order to facilitate better run organisations, we heard that it would be beneficial to invest in professional development to build the administrative side of organisations.
- 8. Supporting individual artists and small organisations, not just larger institutions,** is noted by many in the sector who participated in workshops or via the online Conversation to be important to support a healthy ecology within the sector overall.
- 9. Helping libraries to become cultural community hubs.** Development of libraries is felt to be needed by many in the sector and the majority of the general public in workshops and via the online Conversation, and it is suggested that the need for collaborative working spaces and arts infrastructure could be met by libraries, which exist at the heart of their communities.

6.4 It is felt that funded organisations could have a bigger role to play in the cultural ecology

The sector and the public recognise that **the Arts Council cannot do and be everything for the arts, museums and libraries sector**. However, there is a strong feeling amongst both sets of respondents that **organisations in receipt of public funding could be required to meet certain obligations locally** in order to benefit the cultural ecology of the country. These are:

- 1. Partnership working.** Many of the non-funded sector who participated in workshops say that there is a lack of sectoral partnership in their local areas. They feel that NPOs could lead the way, supporting non-funded organisations and individual artists in their community. This could meet both practical needs (e.g. help with funding applications, CPD, knowledge sharing) and develop artistic practice (e.g. mentoring, partnership opportunities).
- 2. Engaging more effectively with local people.** NPOs could have a responsibility to engage with local communities, and find out what people want to see in their area, so that the public feel that the sector better meets demand on a local level. NPOs could take the lead engaging with, and communicating with the public. In workshops, we heard that most of the public and many non-funded artists and organisations did not know who the NPOs are in their local community.
- 3. Touring to other parts of the country.** London NPOs could tour their work to other parts of the country to help to dispel perception of the 'London bubble' that is felt outside of London by both the sector and the public. As part of this, organisations not based in London could have the opportunity to tour to London to facilitate better cultural exchange across England.

7. The Arts Council is felt to play a critical role in supporting and facilitating a thriving arts, museum and library ecology

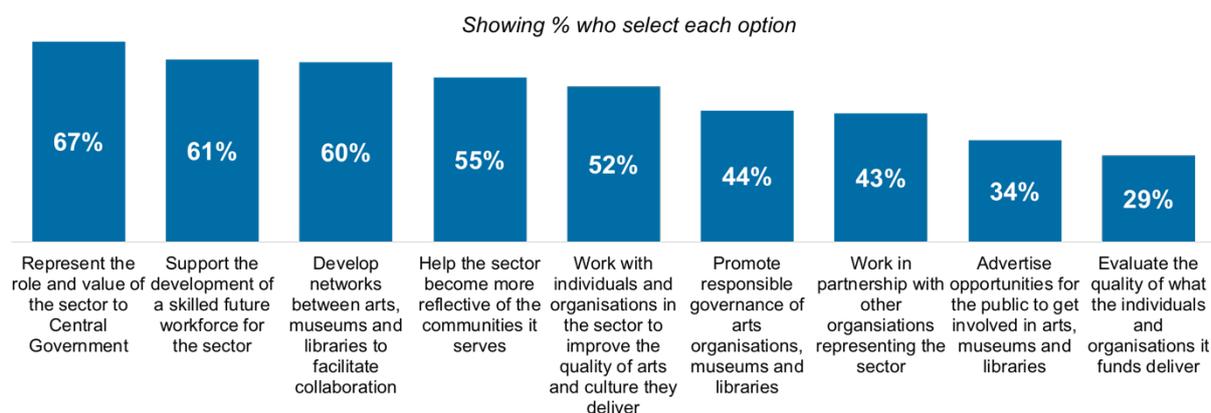
The sector feels that the Arts Council has an important role to play in supporting the future ecology of the sector. Qualitatively, a majority of the sector recognise that it will not be possible for the Arts Council to be all things for all people, but in terms of its future role – beyond funding arts, museums and libraries - we heard that they would like to see it prioritise:

- Making the case for arts, museums and libraries to central government, particularly in light of funding cuts and in the context of Brexit.
- Providing professional development, such as CPD and support for funding applications, and responsible governance, via a series of toolkits for best practice.
- Facilitating collaboration between funded and non-funded organisations across the sector, as well as with the public to inspire their engagement in arts, museums and libraries. As part of this, helping the sector understand more about how to engage audiences and participants who have traditionally been harder to reach would be welcomed.
- Mobilising NPOs to work in partnership with one another and be more hands on in supporting others on the ground in local areas.
- Helping organisations produce high quality work, particularly through the roll out of successful programmes (e.g. Creative People and Places) and through boosting touring, to help great work travel around the country.

7.1 The Arts Council is well placed to demonstrate the value of the sector, particularly in light of funding cuts

The sector sees a wide range of roles that the Arts Council could play beyond its funding remit. Given one of the biggest threats to the sector is seen as continued austerity and cuts to public funding, representing the role and value of the sector to central government is seen as a key role for the organisation – cited by two thirds of stakeholders in the survey (67%).

Figure 18: Sector: What role Arts Council England should play beyond funding



However, this does not necessarily need to be limited to representing the role and value that funded organisations play. The Arts Council could be the **force that unites and speaks on behalf of the sector as a whole**, strengthening its voice and role in the sector.

“There is a role I believe in making the case for the arts above and beyond the immediate direct work of the funded organisations.”

Sector, online Conversation

“Arts Council England has a unique opportunity/duty to lead the sector, whether or not it funds it; no other organisation has access to so much data and expertise, nor so much influence.”

Sector, online Conversation

In line with the **wide range of benefits arts, museums and libraries are seen to have** for those who participate, and for society as a whole, some of the sector we heard from in workshops and via the online Conversation say that the Arts Council could seek to communicate these benefits more widely, both to the public, and to local and national government. These include the health and wellbeing and educational benefits that arts, museums and libraries have. We heard that the impact of this could be **more recognition of the benefits of arts, museums and libraries to mental and physical health, and may be persuasive in improving the delivery of arts in schools.**

“ACE should be taking a much stronger line to convince all elected people, local and national, of the importance of the arts, particularly in education - skills, confidence, well-being, enjoyment, employability, imagination, etc. A UK Art Teacher has just won a world award for the difference her work is making to her students and ACE should use this example to insist on the arts being given its rightful place alongside English, languages and science.”

Sector, online Conversation

Those who mention this say that it could take the form of clear, targeted communications or an advocacy campaign to **mobilise the sector and build support for arts**, museums and libraries, as well as inspire people to participate in arts, museums and libraries. We heard that this may help to show the public that there is something for everyone to get involved with.

“It would allow us all to be seen as one coherent Arts sector voice on important issues that shouldn't be ignored at a governmental level. No vague ‘oh yes we continue to push arts education’ but clear, concise points and hashtagable campaigns.”

Sector, online Conversation

With Brexit on the horizon, most of the sector say that it will be **critically important** that the Arts Council has a role in **speaking up on behalf of the sector**, in order to minimise concerns they have about the impact of leaving the EU.

7.2 The Arts Council could provide development support for the sector as a whole

Qualitatively, some in the sector thought there may be **more that the Arts Council could do to support the sector**. We heard that those outside of the Portfolio find access to support patchy, particularly for advice and guidance. As such, some of the sector say that in light of its prominent role in the sector, **the Arts Council could be well-placed to provide general support for organisations and individual artists** to help with ad hoc issues they may encounter.

“I'm wondering if ACE should be more of a 'go-to' organisation (whether you're funded by them or not [we have occasional project funding]), to help address issues which arise under the 'umbrella' of its interests, i.e. arts, libraries and museums.”

Sector, online Conversation

There are two areas we heard about where the Arts Council's expertise would be welcomed in particular; support with access to funding, and support for CPD.

Beyond its funding remit, many of the sector who participated in the qualitative research feel that **the Arts Council could do more to help organisations access funding, and support applications**. At present, the more successful funding applications are perceived as coming from larger organisations, who may have the budget to employ bid writers. As a result, we heard that **many smaller organisations or individuals without such means feel sidelined**, and that they have less chance of success. Many of the non-funded sector in workshops say that this is putting them off undertaking future funding bids.

Support from the Arts Council on **how to write funding applications would be welcomed** from these smaller organisations in the non-funded sector, as the funding forms are

considered to be complex to complete. Alternatively, we heard that the Arts Council could suggest that NPOs in a local area provide help to local organisations and individuals in need of support. In the case of unsuccessful applications, we heard that more detailed feedback from the Arts Council would help applicants to improve future attempts, as well as **signposting to any other organisations in the sector who can provide support and advice.**

“Facilitate skills and resources swapping. If ACE can’t give you funding they can put you in touch with other organisations...the idea of people in the network helping each other out.”

Non-funded sector, workshop, Luton

Some of the sector note that there could be a role for the Arts Council to play in supporting CPD, such as **introducing an Arts Council ‘kite mark’ accreditation for organisations with good standards in working practices, or a good professional development scheme** for staff. Given the varying sizes of organisations in the sector, it was suggested that this should be scalable – with different ‘levels’ that you could achieve proportionate to the size of the commitment. NPOs could be required to achieve this accreditation, but it could also be open to the whole sector (both funded and non-funded organisations).

“Standards and working practices should be promoted; a kite mark to show who is doing this well would be good.”

Non-funded sector, workshop, Nottingham

7.3 There could be a role for the Arts Council to play in facilitating collaboration

We heard from some of the sector that arts, museums and libraries feel disjointed, and **the Arts Council is considered to be ideally placed to bring the various strands of the sector together.** With its network of funded organisations, and unique position of access to the sector, in the qualitative research we heard that many in the sector say that one approach the Arts Council could usefully take would be **to broker relationships between organisations.**

As the sector feels the squeeze of funding cuts, particularly from reductions in local authority funding, many in the sector say that **more could be done to encourage resources to be shared.** For example, the Arts Council **could link up provision and help identify gaps,** encouraging knowledge sharing across the country. Within local communities, it was suggested by some of the sector that the Arts Council could help NPOs to work closely with Area Arts Council teams and the local arts, museums and libraries to support the sharing of infrastructure (e.g. sharing rehearsal spaces) and support (e.g. business expertise or funding guidance).

“Lots of organisations, whether arts, libraries or museums, have extensive knowledge, equipment and professional expertise. I see the Arts Council as a broker for these resources so that companies / organisations without

the capacity to acquire these resources can still benefit from the expertise of bigger, better resourced organisations.”

Sector, online Conversation

Some of the sector say that the Arts Council’s **ability to broker relationships could expand beyond the sector**, for example by working with universities, who are reported to have access to a wide range of resources and have the potential to become cultural partners with the sector. Those who hold this view say that the Arts Council has the **prominence and expertise to help forge better working relationships** between non-sector organisations and arts, museums and libraries in their respective local communities.

“We have two large universities here. We frequently take on their students for work experience opportunities, but we don’t have a relationship with them [the universities].”

Non-funded sector, workshop, Nottingham

7.4 Diversity continues to be a significant challenge, and the Arts Council is perceived as well-placed to help the sector address this

We heard from the sector that help for organisations to **understand more about communities and individuals who are harder to access** is urgently needed. Many organisations we spoke to say that they do not feel they know enough about who is not participating, or how to get them to engage. They say that the Arts Council could share its insight to promote a greater understanding of how to increase participation among these groups in order to help organisations better target their approach.

Additionally, some of the sector say that advice on **appropriate ways of monitoring demographic criteria such as socio-economic grade** could **help organisations provide more accurate data** on who they are reaching.

“I also think the point about ‘people without financial, social and cultural capital who don’t have awareness, don’t feel welcome, don’t think the arts are for them, and can’t afford to buy tickets for expensive shows’ is absolutely spot on. This is not to my knowledge being adequately addressed or evaluated. It’s a very problematic issue of course - you can’t really ask ‘what class are you?’ on your audience evaluation forms, although somehow we do need a way of gathering evidence on this type of access/reach.”

Sector, online Conversation

7.5 The Arts Council could help organisations to improve the quality of the arts and culture they deliver

Quality can be a thorny issue for the sector, and we heard some debate about the extent to which **the Arts Council is best placed to judge excellence in the sector**. Some note that the Arts Council has limited resources, and, given the size and breadth of the sector, it may be **challenging for the Arts Council to make quality judgements across the entirety of provision**.

However, many in the sector note that there are practical steps that the Arts Council could take to help the sector deliver excellence. These individuals and organisations see the Arts Council as already achieving this via the **Creative People and Places programme**, which is almost unanimously positively discussed. In the context of this, some say that another way the Arts Council could support the sector to deliver excellence could be to **strategically plan the touring of great arts, museums and libraries across the country**, with more ‘joined up’ thinking so that excellence can be shared across England. They see the Arts Council as having oversight of a wide range of organisations through the Portfolio, as well as those funded by strategic funds. If the Arts Council were to take ownership of national touring, centralising the marketing and logistics, we heard that the **impact of touring could be felt more widely**.

“The Arts Council could easily function as an organiser of national touring in the performing arts. It could create economies of scale (a tour of every theatre NPO would be an epic number of dates), deliver enormous marketing clout, and help top non-commercial artists from all over the UK get a national profile. I think this might often make a lot more sense than individual venue marketing teams and programmers working alone or in small groups. I suppose this is kind of an upscaling of the (imo [in my opinion] excellent) creative people and places programme.”

Sector, online Conversation

7.6 The Arts Council would be welcomed to help promote responsible governance

In addition to the previously mentioned kite mark suggestions, some of the sector say the Arts Council could also **provide more support around the governance of organisations**. Many in the sector feel that the impact of cuts has hit ‘back office’ staff and infrastructure, so providing **greater resources for the sector would be welcomed**.

Ideas we heard for this from the sector **included toolkits and templates for ‘how to run’ an arts organisation, museum or library**, with sections on admin, governance, data management, HR and recruitment, and working with volunteers. At present, many in the sector say that a great deal of time and effort is spent by organisations doing this individually, whereas the Arts Council has **greater expertise and authority that could be used to provide a sector-wide resource**.

“It seems possible that ACE could do a great deal more for the sector by providing best practice templates (and possibly online support) for all the administrative elements involved in running an arts organisation... Lots of these functions are endlessly repeated across the sector with each organisation developing its own home-grown solutions for standard functions. By centralising support for this ACE could help reduce costs and make the sector much more efficient while improving performance.”

Sector, online Conversation

Some of the sector acknowledge that the **Arts Council is already doing this to some extent, but report that the resources can be hard to find on the Arts Council website.**

“ACE also offers a great range of (well-hidden) resources for arts organisations, and making arts organisations and artists more aware of these, with better linking pages on the website, would strengthen the sector as a whole as well as making life easier for those organisations.”

Sector, online Conversation

7.7. The Arts Council could increase its influence by working in partnership with other organisations

Although the Arts Council is perceived by a majority of the sector to have a range of strengths – and therefore a range of roles it *could* take up beyond funding – it is seen by almost all of the sector to be **important that in times of austerity, it is not duplicating work which is already being done well by other organisations.** We heard that the Arts Council, working in partnership with organisations that provide unique services such as the Audience Agency and experts in non-Arts Council funding, could help provide good holistic support for the sector.

“I think it is better that ACE funds infrastructure organisations that are expert in their field - like The Audience Agency or Arts Fundraising & Philanthropy, rather than dabbling in aspects of this research or training themselves in ways that are unsustainable.”

Sector, online Conversation

Working in partnership is seen to have the potential to expand the reach of the Arts Council, and we heard this particularly from organisations and individual artists who currently feel that they are more distant. Some of the non-funded sector feel that if they have applied for funding unsuccessfully, the Arts Council can feel like a closed door they do not have the ability to open. These organisations and individuals say that through partnering with other organisations that they do engage with – e.g. unions and umbrella organisations – the Arts Council may have the ability to **broaden its reach among those voices it hears less often.**

“Artform support organisations (ABO, UK Theatre, ITC, One Dance UK etc.) can play a crucial role in connecting ACE with arts organisations outside the Portfolio.”

Sector, online Conversation

The challenge, as viewed by some of the sector, for the Arts Council to facilitate better partnerships is that **it is not always considered to have sufficient resource on the ground**. In order to achieve great partnerships, these individuals and organisations say that The Arts Council needs adequate staff resources, with a high level of expertise in various artforms, museums and libraries.

7.8 Facilitating better communication with the public is seen to be an area the Arts Council could be well-placed to support

While we did not hear that there is demand for the Arts Council to subsume marketing and communications for the sector as a whole, many in the sector do see **the Arts Council as having a valuable role to play in promoting arts, museums and libraries to the public**.

There is a desire to see a **campaign for arts, museums and libraries that the sector could get behind – to promote participation, broaden awareness of what the sector includes, and link up ‘excellence’ across the sector at all scales**. Some of the sector feel that the Arts Council could be in an ideal position to deliver such a campaign, which is perceived to have the potential to open up a dialogue between the sector and the public.

“Increasing public participation and support is a crucial factor in ACE’s relationship with Government and in my opinion, an important part of its role in the sector.”

Sector, online Conversation

Another role we heard that the Arts Council could take is as an information provider about what the public want to participate in, including at the local community level. Given its reach, some of the sector say that the Arts Council could **undertake national projects to understand public sentiment and attitudes, to help the sector better deliver arts, museums and libraries to meet local and national need**.

“ACE has the ability to survey, gather data on and present a national view of arts, museums and libraries which would provide vital information for planning. ACE needs to consult the bodies it funds, listen to them (they understand their particular sectors) and learn how to communicate clearly and effectively.”

Sector, online Conversation

A majority of the public and the non-funded sector we spoke to in the workshops had little or no knowledge about who the NPOs are in their local area. Thus, as part of their funding agreement, many say that it would be beneficial if the **NPOs** committed to **working together and make themselves known to the non-funded sector**, which respondents see as having the potential to benefit the wider ecology in areas across England.

8. Ethnographic interviews: Case studies

8.1. CHUMS Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing Service for Children and Young People, Luton

CHUMS provides creative programmes centred around improving mental health and wellbeing in Bedfordshire, Luton, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Turning 21 years old this year, CHUMS originally began as a bereavement support service for children, funded as part of the NHS. Today, it is a social enterprise that relies on a blended funding stream, integrating funding provided by the Youth Music Service, Luton Music Service and Bedford Youth Foundation.

CHUMs has expanded rapidly over the past few years, growing its programmes and staff, and therefore the number of individuals it benefits. Eight years ago, it was comprised of 6-7 staff members and ran one bereavement support programme. Now it has more than 70 staff members and runs nine different programmes, including the music programme that was observed in the ethnographic interview. This expansion has enabled CHUMs to broaden the number of schools it works with across Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire, widening its geographic reach and increasing its impact.

All of the programmes CHUMs runs are focused on mental health and wellbeing: both supporting those with existing mental health problems and providing preventative support to those at risk. For example, they run a baby-loss service to work with families experiencing childhood bereavement, a football outreach programme for children with behavioural difficulties, and a friendship group for disabled young adults. The programme that was observed for this interview was ENCORE: a therapeutic music programme for children and young people struggling with anxiety, low self-esteem and low confidence. The session observed was the final session, run at a primary school in Luton. There were 6 children involved in this session, and 2 CHUMs staff.

CHUMs approach to using arts and culture for benefiting mental health relies on blending arts and cultural activities with therapeutic exercises. All arts and cultural activities are specifically designed with mental health benefits in mind, and with specific aims and objectives to the sessions. CHUMS uses a therapeutic technique based on the CBT (cognitive behavioural therapy) model. Their sessions with children and young people blend informal discussions, including reflections on emotions, thoughts and feelings, these discussions with musical activities, singing and other art-based activities.

Children are encouraged to think about how music can help them to cope with difficult emotions and put this into practice during the sessions themselves and outside of school. For example, during the session observed, children were asked to reflect on techniques they had learnt in previous sessions and discuss how these had been useful to them. During this discussion, one child said that they could “listen to music” when they were worried about something, while another said they could sing in order to make themselves feel better. Therefore, the benefits of a session are felt to extend beyond the school environment and help children’s mental health in other situations too.

“Music helps me not think about bad things.”

Participant

CHUMs staff feel that the structure of the programme allows children to develop their mental health and clearly progress over the duration of the programme. This is achieved through a number of actions:

- Staff and children set a therapeutic and a musical target at the beginning of the programme to work towards;
- One to one catch-ups with the children throughout the programme help understand how they are progressing and allow them to discuss any problems in more depth;
- Introducing children to the arts shows them and their families the wider benefits of participating, and some go on to participate in more activities outside of school that they might not have done otherwise;
- Outcomes are measured via surveys with the children (at the end of the sessions)
- Parents also contribute to the evaluation so that they are bought into the process, understand the benefits to their children observed at school, and contribute to a holistic understanding of the programme benefits.

Building confidence is a key aim of these sessions – this was visible, and children spoke about how their newfound confidence had enabled them to participate in new activities.

During the session observed, some children became visibly more confident as they participated in the musical activities. For example, one child who was teary at the beginning became more confident at speaking in the group, even smiling and laughing as the song was performed by the group at the end. Another child spoke about how the sessions had inspired them to go to a choir outside of school and that he now had enough confidence to do so.

There are a number of considerations for CHUMs when thinking about the next ten years...

Funding for CHUMs is stretched. As a result, the enterprise is unable to reach many vulnerable children who might benefit from its services. CHUMs reaches out to schools on a first-come, first-served basis. Their operations are limited and not all programmes run in each area of operation. For the music programme, between 80 and 90 schools said they had children who would benefit from the programme, although funding allows only 23 schools to participate. There is now a long waiting list with numerous back-up schools to take the place of those who drop out.

“There is much want but only so much money; schools don’t have money to purchase services from CHUMs.”

Non-funded sector

The potential to join funding for arts and culture with those streams commonly used to support mental health services is a serious avenue for consideration. Blending funding from various sources allows CHUMs to access a wider pool of resources, and also to offer activities outside the realm of ‘mental health’. This means that CHUMs can make the

most of different opportunities in the local area and build its sustainability through a wider range of funding streams.

There is some concern over music becoming a diminishing part of school curriculum. CHUMs staff feel that in Bedfordshire a lot of schools are moving from being infant schools to being all-through primary schools. With this expansion has come a re-purposing of music classrooms as teaching classrooms, with the knock-on effect that there isn't always a space for dedicated music provision. Staff feel that this might diminish the ability for children to experience music – and the therapeutic benefits it brings – outside of intervention programmes such as the one that CHUMs runs. In this context, ensuring the future of outreach programmes such as CHUMs feels more important to staff than ever before.

8.2 Arts, museums and libraries in family life, Taunton



Gordon lives in Burham-on-Sea with his wife and two young children aged 4 and 18 months. After receiving a cancer diagnosis, Gordon stopped working and now looks after his children full time. He is keen to involve his children in a variety of activities to keep them engaged in the world around them and cites multiple ways in which arts, museums and libraries play a role in their family life.

Gordon feels that participating in arts, museums and libraries introduces families to new experiences – in particular broadening their horizons and increasing their awareness of cultural diversity. During his free time, Gordon likes going to comic cons with his son. He describes the comic con community as a kind of creative “*sub culture*” that unites diverse individuals from all over the world, and thinks of comic cons as a type of art. For Gordon and his son, participating in this community has enabled them to interact with new people, many of whom lead lives that are very different from their own. He feels that this can create a more open-minded approach to other cultures and societies and sees this as a benefit to participating, both for himself and for his children.

“You meet people you wouldn’t normally talk to and you learn about different cultures. I’ve learnt more about Japanese culture from the comic cons.”

Parent

“You become more open to different things...I used to be closed off to sub-cultures. But actually, I do quite like dressing up! It’s expanded my range of interests.”

Parent

For Gordon, arts, museums and libraries are important ways to maintain the health and wellbeing of his family. Gordon often speaks about arts, museums and libraries as offering opportunities to disconnect from digital technology. He is clear that he does not want his children to be constantly staring at screens and feels that participating in arts, museums and libraries provides engaging and stimulating alternative activities. Gordon feels it’s beneficial

not to be using a screen for health reasons, but also because time spent away from screens is likely to involve his children being more active and so can bring physical benefits too. In addition to the benefits for his children, Gordon values going to arts events as an opportunity for him to get outside and improve his own wellbeing too.

“Getting out the house is really important and [participating] gets people out moving, it would be too easy just to sit inside and watch TV all day. Every time you turn on the news you hear about obesity causing health problems. It’s important to train the children to be active.”

Parent

“Entertaining a kid in the house alone drives you a bit mad! So it’s good for me too.”

Parent

Libraries are a particularly good way for Gordon to keep his children entertained. He likes to read bedtime stories to his two children and during the summer break his son participates in a reading trail organised by the local library. This trail is highly motivating for his children and he credits the library for the rewards that they give out – stickers for completing a book and a certificate at the end – as a key way to keep his children engaged in the challenge. Gordon feels that structured activities with rewards are a great way to motivate young children to participate in arts, museums and libraries.

“We read a lot of bedtime stories with C and E. The local library also runs a reading trail in the Summer. They’ve got to read 10 or 12 books over the summer, and they collect stickers and then get a certificate at the end saying they completed the trail. He gets all excited because they reward him with stickers.”

Parent

When thinking about the future, there are a number of considerations for Gordon and his family...

Digital technology is regarded as an enabler for their families’ participation, but also seen as a potential competitor for their children’s attention. Gordon mentions that social media is often a source from which he finds out about activities and events going on in the local community. For example, there is a Facebook group he is part of where people post a picture of rocks they have painted and hidden in the local community. Other people then go out to try and find the rocks. He mentions this has been a particularly good way to get the children excited and engaged as they like the mystery of it.

“People round here paint rocks and you have to go and find them. It just popped up on my Facebook feed one day. There’s a big Facebook group where people put a picture up [of the rocks] and then other people

have to find them. It really gets them [the kids] out and about. I was in Asda the other day and we found one in there."

Parent

However, one of the main reasons that Gordon likes his children to participate in arts, museums and libraries is because they provide an alternative to 'screen-time'. Balancing the use of digital technology to enable – but not supplant – these activities is important for Gordon.

Encouraging children to be engaged in arts, museums and libraries is seen as an investment in their future. Gordon is keen to set habits young so that his children continue to participate in arts, museums and libraries in later life. He sees this as particularly important given the other wider (aforementioned) benefits that participating brings: keeping open-minded about other cultures, engaged with the local community, and motivated to read. Despite this, Gordon does have some reservations about his children pursuing careers in the arts, museums or libraries sector. He feels that earnings could prohibit his children from buying a house.

"When you're young, you're like a sponge. You take in everything. If you pick up on something at a young age, it's going to be set in stone how it should be going forward. I try to take my children to as many different experiences as possible."

Parent

"I would never stop them [my children] from doing what they wanted to do. But then if they wanted to buy a house or something they might have to change jobs...wages versus house prices aren't going to marry up."

Parent

Gordon wishes that there could be more regular events on offer for his family to participate in. He feels that events are one of the best ways to engage his family and others in participating because they usually offer something new or novel. Gordon feels that this aspect is important: ensuring that there are new opportunities means that his children are continually building their experiences and keeps their engagement high. It is also important to Gordon that there are interactive opportunities to engage with – again he feels this is important for young children and ensures that arts, museums and libraries can compete with digital technology as a stimulating activity.

"There's a ceramics museum at Bridgewater, but the only time we've really looked at that is at Christmas when there was an event on. Just looking at tiles might bore the hell out of you, but something that's interactive is really good."

Parent

8.3 Pavilion's 'Interwoven Histories' at Leeds Industrial Museum, Leeds

Leeds Industrial Museum is a museum of industrial heritage located in Armley. It is funded as part of the Arts Council's National Portfolio. This ethnographic interview included a visit to the museum with a specific focus on one of its current exhibitions – 'Interwoven Histories', commissioned by Pavilion.

'Interwoven Histories' is an exhibition that uses oral histories and abstract artwork to celebrate the contribution of migrant workers to Leeds's textile industry. Pavilion is a visual arts commissioning organisation and partnered with Leeds Industrial Museum on this project. The exhibition maintains a primary focus on the waves of Commonwealth migration into Leeds after World War II, using visual artwork to bring to life the stories of industrial workers. The exhibition is the first to bring to the fore the stories of black and minority ethnic (BAME) migrants who were industrial workers in the city – these groups had not previously been well-represented in the museum's collections.

Leeds Industrial Museum feels that the Pavilion exhibition is important as part of its work in experimentation and engaging the local community. The visual artwork included within the exhibition is abstract and draws on a range of mediums and techniques – it is not in line with what might be expected to feature in an industrial museum, a sentiment echoed by museum visitors. The museum curator feels that the exhibition is a prime example of how it could innovate and embrace new ideas and techniques to engage the public. One of its challenges as a museum is to appeal to a broad audience and break any stereotypes about what an 'industrial museum' might offer. The museum feels it must challenge any assumptions by putting on a varied and exciting programme of exhibitions which appeal to the whole community.

"They [Pavilion] have opened our eyes as a museum to the different ways we can work with the public."

Funded sector

"There's an idea that industrial museums are for men of a certain age...We're trying to change those expectations."

Funded sector

Preserving local heritage and presenting it in an engaging way is a key focus for the museum and a motivation behind the Interwoven Histories exhibit. The museum feels that providing opportunities for the public to interact with the local history it preserves allows individuals both the space and time to consider what unites the local community across generational, cultural and ethnic divides. Exhibitions such as Interwoven Histories are felt to be important as they can seem relevant to people today, due to their modern and innovative presentation. The museum aims to bring reflections on industrial heritage out of history books and into the twenty-first century. One example of its successes in this area has been to refurbish an old printing press so that it is now back in action and usable for demonstrations with the public.

The museum feels that exhibitions such as Interwoven Histories bring a wide range of benefits to the local community. The museum feels that its exhibitions have varied and wide-ranging benefits for the local community. Specifically, it feels like it plays an important role in providing education, a platform for academic research and opportunities for a fun day out for families and children. The museum also plays a role in promoting mental health and wellbeing in its communities. It has widened its scope in recent years to support a range of projects including a gardening project, in partnership with Leeds Mind, and a series of dementia-friendly screenings in their cinema exhibition.

Visitors to the Interwoven Histories exhibition spoke about the educational benefits the exhibition could bring – educating themselves and their children about local history. Two families visiting the exhibition during the ethnographic described their primary motivations for visiting the museum as educational benefits for their children and learning about local heritage. One mother spoke about wanting her children to know about the heritage of the area she had grown up in and recognised that industrial heritage was a large part of this. As well as benefits for their children, the parents mentioned the benefits that they themselves got from visiting the museum. In both cases, they had been there as children themselves and had fond memories of the visits, which they wanted to refresh in adulthood.

“[Museums are about] educating you, and reminding you of the past. And you can bring children and grandchildren along.”

Visitor

The interactive nature of the museum and the use of innovative visual arts to communicate stories is positively regarded by visitors. Visitors were highly positive towards the museum and its exhibits, which were seen as much improved since the parents had gone as children. The main improvements focused on the exhibits being more engaging, highly varied, and providing fun opportunities for children to engage. More broadly, these visitors felt that the museums sector as a whole has modernised recently, becoming more relevant to a broader range of individuals and becoming less ‘traditional’. This was echoed by the museum’s own sentiments that it makes great efforts to be modern, engaging, and speak to what the local population are interested in with the exhibits it holds.

“It’s about bringing history to life. When you read it in a book, you don’t think about the noise and the smells.”

Visitor

“[Museums] are more accessible these days than they used to be. They’re everywhere now, and they travel as well.”

Visitor

There are a number of considerations for Leeds Industrial Museum when thinking about the future...

The museum feels it must continue to challenge stereotypes and embrace new art-forms. Leeds Industrial Museum is highly positive about the benefits of exhibits such as Interwoven Histories, which challenge possible stereotypes about museums and present history in a modern and accessible way. Continuing to host such exhibits and keeping its offering up-to-date and varied will continue to be high up on the museum's agenda. A key part of this is ensuring that it understands the local community and is responsive to what the public want to engage with.

The museum feels it is fortunate in its funding arrangements, but the stability of this – and potential fallback options – remain a risk. The museum is almost entirely dependent on Arts Council funding and is very grateful for the support that it receives. Thinking about the sector more broadly, it feels relatively fortunate in that Leeds Council has been able to preserve funding levels for the city's museums and compared this situation with nearby Kirklees - which as far as he knows has been forced to close all its local museums. Such funding pressures playing out locally do cast a shadow of doubt over the future of Leeds Industrial Museum. While the Arts Council funding it receives is sustaining its current activities, the museum is almost entirely dependent upon this and without it could fall into difficulties.

"We couldn't do the work we do if we didn't get [ACE] funding."

Funded sector

8.4 Southwest Heritage Trust, Learning Team, Taunton

Southwest Heritage Trust is the umbrella trust for three museums, the main archives, and archaeological services in Somerset and Dorset. The Learning Team works across these three sites and covers both formal learning (e.g. schools programmes) and informal learning (e.g. family learning and public events). During this ethnographic interview we spoke with a senior member of the learning team about the Trust's activities.



The Trust is proud of its local heritage: preserving this and sharing it with local people and tourists alike is a key motivation for their activities. Most of the Trust's collections are firmly rooted in local history. The Learning Team aims to maximise engagement between the public and the collections and exhibitions that the Trust runs. To do this, the Learning Team run a programme of nine larger events per year, plus smaller monthly events and lots of ad hoc talks, activities, events and engagements.

“We have adult audiences who come along to our tea and talks, object handling in the galleries and a million and one other things throughout the year. Our programme is full of big events, smaller regular monthly things, and always things that are built around the exhibitions.”

Non-funded sector

The Learning Team has a structured school programme that reflects the national curriculum, while maintaining a focus on local history. The Team recognises that in order to be optimally relevant to schools in the local area it needs to provide activities and programmes that reflect the national curriculum. Therefore, in addition to the local heritage collections it holds, they also has structured programmes and activity packs which speak to national history too. Where possible it looks to blend the two to make links between national and local heritage.



In addition to its work with children and schools, the Trust works with families and adults of all age ranges too. The Team

make a strong effort to ensure that its programme of events and activities offers ‘something for everyone’. This is seen as a primary tenet of making its collections relevant to the local community and ensuring the broadest range of people can participate. For example, it runs object handlings in the galleries, tours of the local heritage sites, evening talks, lectures and seminars and tactile tours for groups with special needs. The free family day that it runs once a month is a particular area of pride – it is important to the Learning Team that this free provision is available to reduce barriers to participation. By running a wide range of events and activities on a regular basis the Trust hope to benefit the greatest range of the local community.

“Every month we have a free family day. This is really important to us that they’re free, so that anyone can come along and there’s no cost, so that they’re accessible.”

Non-funded sector

The Trust also runs specific outreach projects with groups that otherwise may have more limited opportunities to engage with the museums due to accessibility requirements. For example, the Trust runs reminiscence sessions with older people where it takes local artefacts to residential homes. The purpose of these sessions is to engage participants with local history: a recent project has focused on Somerset’s home front efforts during World War I. The Trust feels it is important that it doesn’t just wait for people to come to it, but make the active effort to take its collections out to the public and tailor these accordingly. This approach is believed to maximise its impact, broaden the demographic it can reach, and reduce accessibility as a potential barrier.

“We have all sorts of visits to care homes, hospitals and active living centres around the county. We’ll take living items, documents out into the

community to work with adults who might find it hard to travel. All of those sessions are based around Somerset themes. We work with those with hearing impairments, autism, everyone. The list of sessions is very open. And we can deliver these at our sites or at other locations too.”

Non-funded sector

Becoming a charitable trust in its own right has allowed the Trust to be more flexible in its offerings and increase its geographic reach. The Trust previously sat within the County Council, but three years ago became a charitable trust. The Learning Team feels that this move has increased its flexibility particularly with regards to the areas and schools that it can work with. For example, whereas it could not previously work across Country boundaries, it now offers services in lower Bristol, areas of Dorset and Devon. This has allowed the Trust to reflect appetite in the local areas rather than work to arbitrary parameters. In turn, this also allows the Trust to make the most of commercial opportunities and accept income from schools beyond the county boundary.

“I think it’s a lot easier now. We’re writing our own story now rather than having to sing somebody else’s tune. It’s a more flexible way of working and in today’s world you have to be flexible, you have to be responsive to your audience’s needs and you customers’ needs. Without that, you get left behind.”

Non-funded sector

There are a number of considerations for the South West Heritage Trust when considering the next 10 years...

Adapting to being a charitable trust rather than funded by the County Council is seen to require an ongoing shift in mentality to thinking about funding. The Trust feels that becoming an independent charitable trust has been a highly positive move, but mentions that it does require a shift in the way it thinks about funding. It has required a more commercial mind-set to be applied when considering the events it runs as it must now generate a profit from these to sustain its future activities, rather than relying on Council funds. This is not seen as a drawback, and it feels that audiences have so far responded well on the occasions where it has introduced fees. However, it is felt to increase the importance of delivering a quality service, to ensure audiences feel they receive value for money and are therefore happy to continue paying.

“We have to have it in our head that we need to develop our own income now; we can’t just be a statutory provider. Everything we do has to generate income and if not then we have to think about funding for it as it’s not just going to come from the county.”

Non-funded sector

“So far our audiences have been responding really well [to entry fees]. I think if you offer a good service, if you offer quality of delivery, quality of what you’re receiving then they don’t mind having to pay.”

Non-funded sector

The Learning Team notes that engaging young people – and particularly teenagers – can be a challenge when competing with other leisure activities. The Trust hopes that by offering collections and activities on topics that feel relevant to young people – e.g. by linking to current cultural references – it can help promote further engagement with this audience. Introducing Wi-Fi to its museum cafes and increasing its digital offering is also hoped to help engage youth audiences.

“We’re competing with the theme parks, the breaks abroad. They [young people] are more likely to go to Thorpe Park or to Disneyland.”

Non-funded sector

Joining up with other local arts, museums and library venues is seen as an exciting opportunity. The Trust feels that as a result of funding pressures, the sector is being forced to work together more. As a result, it’s expected that organisations will be more inclined to share and work together whereas they may have previously seen each other as competitors. The Trust does recognise that eventually they are competing for the same audience, but feel that on balance this is an opportunity for collaboration rather than an additional challenge.

“To have the ability to work with lots of different organisations can only be a good thing. The skills that they all bring to each other are fantastic. I can see in the future there will be a lot of cross-heritage arts trusts.”

Non-funded sector

8.5 The Next Generation Youth Theatre, Luton

The Next Generation Youth Theatre (NGYT) is a small youth theatre and dance group based in Luton. Founded in 2012, the group’s focus is on inclusivity, accessibility and empowering young people. NGYT’s stated ethos is to make sure that young people’s voices are heard and respected.

NGYT is strongly directed at promoting young people to take an active role in arts and culture. We attended a rehearsal for a new play involving a group of approximately 20 young people between 14 and 25-years-old. The group used a technique called ‘co-devising’. Under this method, participants collectively decide on the themes, direction and overall approach of the performance and the founders then shape these core elements into a script. NGYT believes such an approach gives young people an opportunity to explore stories that are uniquely personal – from revenge pornography, and the experience of being a refugee in the UK, to the

difficulties involved in caring for a disabled sibling. This method is also designed to allow young people to take the lead and express their experiences in their own words and actions. While observing this session a number of participants referred to this culture in their own words and referenced the importance of 'listening to young people's voices', suggesting that this philosophy runs through the group.

"We want to tell young people's stories. It's as simple as that."

Non-funded sector

NGYT aims to build a community and culture among the young people who take part.

In addition to providing training in theatre and dance, NGYT also provides a community for young people to build friendships and work together, encouraging them to build social skills and providing a social network. While we observed the session, a number of participants described NGYT as a family, reflecting the language of the NGYT founders and suggesting this ethos has been built among the group.

At NGYT, there is a real emphasis on capturing a variety of different experiences in theatre – including different ethnic backgrounds, socio-economic groups, experiences of gender, sexuality and disability. The theatre is averse to 'targeting' any specific group or promoting an inclusiveness that feels tokenistic. The founders speak about throwing the net as wide as possible – making the most of social media and outreach in local schools – to attract diverse audiences and participants within the local community. The focus is very much on broadening its appeal and raising its profile among the widest range of individuals, rather than specifically aiming to increase participation among particular demographics.

"The arts, for me, [are] just about creating freely from lots of individuals with different voices and backgrounds. That's particularly important in Luton. We want to hear diverse voices."

Participant

NGYT is striving to prepare young people for a possible career in the arts and therefore aims to offer the highest quality of training. During the session we observed, this manifested in high standards among the staff leading the session who were forthright in their criticism and feedback to the group. Discussing this in more detail, they explained that setting high standards was imperative to ensure that there is a collective sense of ambition and that young people are provided with a strong platform from which they could excel if they are going to go into professional acting environments in the future. These ambitions were reflected by a number of participants we spoke to who were either thinking about or already pursuing an acting career.

There are a number of considerations for Next Generation Youth Theatre when considering the next 10 years...

NGYT and young people participating feel that there is something of an 'image problem' for young people engaging in theatre and dance, and this could put some

people off. They feel this needs to be addressed to encourage up-take. While the individuals who do participate in NGYT are highly engaged in arts, they also feel that there is a stigma around engaging with the arts, especially for boys, which could discourage young people from getting engaged. Additionally, NGYT and participants raise the issue of a lack of really engaging provision at school – this is seen as a major barrier to participation.

“If you’re a theatre kid, you’re [seen as] a geeky kid. A lot of people don’t get involved because of that.”

Participant

“I think there’s a bit of stigma, especially for boys.”

Participant

In terms of arts provision in Luton, NGYT would argue there is a long way to go in terms of quality, access and reach. The NGYT does not receive funding from the Arts Council itself. There is a perception that a much greater proportion of Arts Council funding goes to larger organisations rather than to grassroots investment. The theatre feels that the Arts Council might consider engaging with, and funding, smaller arts organisations. In some instances, NGYT say that these smaller groups can be more innovative and impactful than larger and more established theatres.

“The Arts Council is chucking money at Luton, but is it chucking it at the right things?”

Participant

8.6 APE Media, Newham

APE media is a charity operating for public benefit, based in Stratford, London. Founded in 2006, its aim is to provide a community media and youth arts resource for young people (11 years +) who come from disadvantaged communities.

APE media is currently running a Music Production and Drama course allowing young adults in the local community to express their attitudes towards knife crime. The 8-week project has been funded by the Home Office as part of a broader effort to address the issue of youth becoming involved in knife crime in Stratford. Young people attend on one or two evenings per week, for three hours at each session. The session we observed was a music production session, run at the APE headquarters in Newham.



The aims of this project are ultimately threefold:

- To provide young people an outlet for communicating their thoughts about knife crime;
- To gather young people's perspectives on how to solve knife crime; and
- To provide training in the creative industries for young people.

In addition to APE media staff running the project, a number of mentors are present at each session to work with the young people participating. These mentors are creative industry professionals who grew up in the local area and can therefore relate well to the participants and offer them industry insight.

Providing high quality arts and creative media training to allow young people to access careers in the industry is a primary motivation behind APE media. APE media's Founder is passionate about the importance of providing access to state of the art equipment and training for young people who may not otherwise be able to access this. That APE media's courses are free at the point of access is a key tenet of their programme. Many of the young people in attendance had previously been successful in creative fields – e.g. appearing in musicals as children, singing in school performances etc. However, they also tended not to have access to resources such as vocal coaching, recording studios etc. that would allow them to explore that talent further. APE media see itself as playing a part in helping that talent development and fostering talent.

Participants and leaders of the course were clear that being involved in the project had benefits for young people's life skills beyond the creative skills they were learning. When asked about what the biggest benefits of the project are, 'life skills' was cited by the Project Manager, the mentors and the young people who were participating. All individuals we spoke to felt that the project enabled young people to develop their communication skills and ability to work collaboratively, as well as providing transferable skills for working life – for example, presentation skills to help with job interviews. Teaching of these transferrable skills was evident in the activities we observed during the interview. For example, in the drama workshop one coach was explaining to a young person how swivelling on their chair and playing with their hands was distracting to the audience - it was evident that this could be directly applied to a job interview situation. This benefit of participation is regarded as one of the most important aspects of the course.

“They're learning key skills, learning how to do interviews. You might not end up in the arts, you might end up as a corporate manager, but you've learnt those skills here.”

Non-funded sector

“If they work on this and have this experience in song-writing, musicals, theatre, it's a help in education and employment, even if they go into non-creative fields.”

Non-funded sector

Mentors felt that there is little else for young people to do in the local area, and therefore one key benefit of this project is providing activities that keep young people off the

streets. When asked what other similar activities are available in the local area, mentors laughed and were clear they did not know of anything else apart from APE media's activities. There was a strong sense among staff and mentors that there is little for young people to do, and without such activities many young adults spend more time on the streets. Projects like this one are thought to fill an important role in local society by providing young people with engaging alternatives to prevent this.

“If you grow up around here, it's so easy to end up on the streets. There's nothing to do.”

Non-funded sector

Participants mentioned a range of benefits of taking part in the project, from improving their creative skills to developing their confidence. One young person we interviewed explained that the vocal coaching he had received with APE media had made him feel that someone 'believed in him' and gave him the confidence that he could pursue a career in the creative arts. He felt that having a supportive group of people who knew the sector and could build his knowledge and skills was highly valuable in helping him develop his potential future career.

“To be able to come here, for someone to tell me that I have talent. It means I can go for my dreams.”

Participant

“I wasn't sure where I was or what I wanted to be [before coming to APE media]. I wanted to gain that confidence here. Just like anyone else my age, I'm scared.”

Participant

There are a number of considerations for APE media when thinking about the next 10 years...

Being free at the point of access is regarded as critical to helping this group of young people who are underprivileged but talented. Ensuring that APE media can continue to provide free activities to young people is a priority, but inevitably puts pressures on finding funding sources. Partnership working – such as the current project funded by the Home Office – is felt to help with that, however it is likely to be a continuing pressure for the organisation.

Public sector cuts are felt to have influenced the ability of other organisations – and particularly schools – to provide any creative activities for young people. In this context, APE media feels that the activities it runs are even more vitally important for the local community. There is a sense that schools have had to cut back on the after-school activities they may have previously run, meaning that most young people leave school at the end of the day with nothing structured to do with their evening. This leads to many spending time socialising on the streets and can lead to them becoming involved with

gangs. APE media expects this trend is unlikely to reverse. In this context, its role in offering activities for young people to keep them occupied and off the streets is felt to be a public good for the local community.

“Gone are the days when you finished school and went on to a drama class, a dance club. It used to be that anything that happened outside the school gates was still the school’s interest. Now if it happens outside school time and outside the school gates, it’s not their problem.”

Non-funded sector

Working with other organisations is one of the biggest challenges, but also one of the biggest opportunities for APE media. Facilitating more partnership working and shared venue spaces is something they wonder whether the Arts Council might consider in the future. It currently collaborates with venues and other organisations: for example, it’s working with a local charity so that its end of project performance is also the launch event for another knife crime prevention campaign. It hopes that by doing this it can consolidate efforts and make more of a difference. APE media would welcome more opportunities to network and build relationships in the sector so that more partnerships can thrive.

8.7 Inspire Youth Arts, Nottingham

Inspire Youth Arts (IYA) is a performing arts organisation based in Nottinghamshire. It provides opportunities for young people (aged 7-25) to take part in programmes across four main artistic strands – Music, Dance, Digital and Disability – though these are often interlinked. IYA was founded over 20 years, and originally formed part of the Nottingham Youth Service. It was then funded by the County Council, before moving to Inspire – an independent not-for-profit trust – and becoming Inspire Youth Arts.

IYA’s ethos of working is orientated around the young people it works with. Speaking with IYA’s staff, it is passionate about putting young people at the centre of decision-making around its artistic practice. Co-production forms a large part of IYA’s method of working, and it feels that this translates to a focus on supporting young people to explore and develop their own creativity, rather than imposing ideas upon them. This is felt to be something that sets IYA apart from other youth organisations and helps achieve greater success for the young people that it works with – both in terms of continued participation in the performing arts and developing high quality artistic practice.

“We’ve retained a lot of the methodologies [from the Youth Service], the ethos of youth work. It’s really stood us in good stead. We put young people at the centre of our projects and their decision-making is really important for us.”

Non-funded sector

“It’s giving them the opportunity to explore for themselves, but within a structure.”

Non-funded sector

IYA is committed to young people’s progression and this commitment has helped create a network of professional artists that it now works with. It is clear that IYA is proud of its ability to work with young people who may have never participated in performing arts before and support them in their progression as far as they want to go. For some young people, this means supporting them across one project as they try something new. For others, it means supporting them into a career in the performing arts. One of the benefits of this commitment from IYA’s point of view is that it now has a network of ‘alumni’ artists who it collaborates with on projects. By bringing professional artists in to work with the next generation of young people, IYA feels that there is great scope for young people to learn more about careers in the sector and to gain industry-insight.

“We work with people who don’t do art – who don’t even know what it is. They’ve never danced before, and now they’re dancing internationally and running their own dance companies.”

Non-funded sector

Ensuring that all of its work is aspirational has helped make IYA sustainable long-term, as well as providing the highest quality experience for participants. IYA is clear that their work is aimed at achieving artistic excellence, however much experience the young people it is working with have. By setting its sights high, it feels that young people are best supported in their development with no limits placed on their ability to achieve. During the ethnographic interview, we watched some videos of recorded dance performances from young people. Despite some having been relatively new to joining IYA, their high standards showed through in these. The quality that it aims for is also felt to have led to the organisation’s sustainability. IYA feels that the quality of their delivery and outcomes has helped secure funding from the council, as it has clearly been able to demonstrate the benefit of past funding received.

“All our stuff is aspirational, no matter who we’re working with. We want them to produce the best art possible.”

Non-funded sector



IYA is particularly proud of its work with disabled young people and clearly demonstrate the impact it has on their lives. Last year, its Able Orchestra – including children with severe disabilities – performed alongside the BBC Philharmonic and a 400-strong choir at the BBC Proms. Using a mix of traditional instruments and digital technologies, the performance combined live music, synthesised and pre-recorded sounds. When IYA first arrived at rehearsals, it was met with

surprise from the directors of the programme that some of the children would be able to take part. It is evident from the video of this performance that not only were the young people fully participating, but also greatly enjoying the opportunity.

There are a number of considerations for Inspire Youth Arts when thinking about the next 10 years...

Ensuring the longevity of IYA is a primary concern and IYA staff want to ensure there are young people ready to take on their way of working. Due to the focus on co-production (and a sense that other youth organisations in the area are not doing this), IYA feels that it needs young people coming through the organisation and ready to take on leadership roles in order for the ethos of the organisation to continue. This concern also goes more broadly – across the arts sector, it wants to see young people equipped with the skills to be the next generation of leaders. While IYA feels that it is doing this – due to their ‘all-through’ approach and ensuring young people have access to working with professionals – it wants to see more of this across the sector.

IYA feels that there should be more long-term funding contracts available to allow it to develop projects with a real legacy. Staff at IYA say that for them, the Arts Council funding cycle is too short for them to deliver great impact, and hope that in the future longer-term funding (from the Arts Council or elsewhere) may be available. This is because they work with young people, and they are seeking long-term funding that can help young people meet their full development.

“The Arts Council are always talking about sustainability or legacy, but they don’t fund things long enough for that to happen. Three-year projects are expected to have a 10-year legacy. But you need longer to build than that. Ultimately, too much churn means people don’t get the support they need. It’s a major barrier to delivering a project.”

Non-funded sector



IYA includes 'digital' art across many of its different programmes and art-forms. It would like to see this integration of digital reflected more widely in the sector and particularly in funding applications and criteria. In 2017 its Young Creators combined street dance, light projection techniques and experimental music to record Labyrinth – a performance exploring a future where digital technology is entwined through everyday life. The young people were highly engaged and inspired by this project for its creativity and the chance to use genuinely new and innovative techniques. IYA staff feel that defining 'digital art' as a standalone category is not necessarily reflective of how organisations and individuals think of it, and that there may need to be a shift to seeing digital as *part* of other art-forms.

8.8 Create, Carers Lewisham project, Lewisham



Carers Lewisham supports carers in the London Borough of Lewisham. The organisation provides a range of services for carers, including advice, information, emotional support, residential breaks, wellbeing sessions and other opportunities to network with others in a similar situation. These projects provide an opportunity for carers to build supportive, trusting relationships with their peers in a fun, safe and non-threatening environment.

Carers Lewisham is managed by the charity Create. Last year, Create ran 50 projects across the UK and has supported around 37,000 vulnerable people in the UK over the last 15 years since its inception. Create is funded by Arts Council England as a National Portfolio Organisation. The session attended for this ethnographic interview was a creative spoken word and writing session for adult carers. During this ethnographic interview, we spoke to staff at both Create and Carers Lewisham, as well as participants themselves.

Participants are involved right from the start in Create's projects, meaning that all projects are designed to maximise the benefits for the specific group they are working with. Create works with vulnerable people from lots of different backgrounds – carers, LGBT+ young people, vulnerably housed people, teachers, disabled adults, and many others. One key part of Create's approach is to involve the vulnerable people that it works with in designing the project – all projects are designed on a bespoke basis to reflect the group they are intended to support. For example, at the start of this Carers Lewisham project, potential participants were asked about the creative themes they would be interested in exploring during the sessions, and the project was designed to reflect these. This is felt to ensure that projects are tailored to the audience they are working with and therefore maximising their impact.

By empowering the vulnerable groups it works with, Create builds confidence, friendships and social support networks for the people it works with. There are two key ways in which it does this. Firstly, it is important to Create's projects that they are collaborative

and social – requiring participants to work together and communicate well. This is important for building relationships between participants, which is one of the key benefits that Create offers to the vulnerable people it works with. For the carers project specifically, Create staff speak about the importance for carers to have people to turn to, as they are often expected to offer support but do not necessarily have support themselves. These relationships and friendships were evident during the session observed. Secondly, putting participants at the centre of their approach – so they are supported to develop their creativity rather than ‘taught’ – is felt to be crucial for developing confidence.

“We wouldn’t teach people a dance, we’d support them to create their own dance. And through that process they develop their confidence, their communication skills, creative thinking and they develop new relationships.”

Funded sector

Participants speak about participating in Create’s project as a way of carving much-needed time out for themselves, with knock-on benefits for their own mental health. One carer taking part in this project mentioned how useful it can be to have structured activities – such as Carers Lewisham – that they can participate in. Participating in a social environment and at a fixed time, as this organised group offers, ensures that it genuinely represents time for themselves away from other responsibilities and distractions. While participants enjoy taking part in the creative activities in and of themselves, their participation in the group is also felt to have a significant benefit for mental health.

“Carers often experience mental ill health, a lack of self-esteem. They often don’t think that they deserve time to themselves. It’s a chance to connect with other people and give themselves permission to do something for themselves.”

Participant

Create aims to develop long-term relationships with the organisations it works with in order to ensure longevity of projects and develop its local impact. It finds that the initial building of that relationship can be time-intensive, but it is worth it for a number of reasons. Firstly, it can mean a more sustainable source of funding – many projects are funded by the organisations that Create partners with, and a long-standing relationship means it is more likely to receive requests for running future projects. Secondly, it means it can build a deeper understanding of the vulnerable group it is working with over time, and of the local community it is working in. This is important to Create – while it is a national organisation, its tailored approach to each individual project is felt to maximise the benefits to the local community it is delivered within.

There are a number of considerations Create sees when thinking about the next 10 years...

Create sees a great opportunity to expand the number of vulnerable people it works with across the UK. Staff at Create feel that the need is far greater than the number of

projects and places on those projects that it is able to supply. Therefore, one of the biggest opportunities for Create in the coming years is to expand the number of projects that it runs to reach an even greater number of vulnerable people. This is felt to be particularly important as the range of organisations and opportunities supporting vulnerable people is felt to be decreasing. For example, Create points to two of the young carer services that it works with near Lewisham which have closed over the past few years. Without these services available, organisations like Create become more important to fill those gaps of support. The main barrier to achieving their expansion of services is funding.

“We can only work with 200-300 carers per year, but we could work with 1000s.”

Funded sector

“Anywhere in the UK you could find vulnerable people whose lives could be empowered through the creative arts programmes that we design.”

Funded sector

Funding is regarded as the primary challenge for Create moving forwards – this is expected to be a sector-wide issue. While Create does not receive funding from the local authority or central government, its partner organisations are funded in this way. As the organisations it works with are facing public sector funding cuts, Create feels there are fewer opportunities to partner with these organisations and deliver projects. The main concern is that this is limiting the impact that Create *could* have in supporting vulnerable people, were the funding available. In addition to this, Create raise its own funds to support projects. This fundraising may need to become a greater part of its funding model if organisations are unable to raise the funds themselves, but it is a constant pressure already for Create.

“Funding is a real threat. It’s a double whammy for us, we need to raise enough to run our programmes, but we are also dependent on our partner organisations. Our partner organisations are experiencing such chronic funding cuts.”

Funded sector

8.9 Disabled access to arts, museums and libraries, Taunton

Lily is 70 and lives in Burham-on-Sea with her husband. She has had Multiple Sclerosis for 20 years and currently uses a wheelchair. Lily is an active participant in arts, museums and libraries and advocates strongly for their value individuals and society. She visits local exhibitions in and around Taunton and participates in local arts and crafts events. She has been to several Somerset Art Weeks to go and see local pottery works, and she also goes to the local cinema and theatre. Her disability does present a barrier to participation however, and she highlights physical accessibility of venues as an ongoing challenge.

For Lily, arts, museums and libraries play an important role in her life by opening doors to new experiences and ideas. Lily often visits local events and exhibitions because it can be difficult to travel further afield. She feels that one of the main benefits of participating is being able to experience a different set of ideas through art, which she may not otherwise come across. Therefore, even though Lily's experience of art is mainly local, she feels it has a mind-broadening effect and allows her to experience ideas from a much wider reach: for example, seeing art from a different country.

"You always see and find out new things, something interesting. It's another life for you to lead."

Disabled adult

Lily also advocates for the role that arts, museums and libraries play in providing social activities and bringing local communities together. She views the local art galleries, events and festivals in Taunton as meeting places for people. She feels this benefit for herself by participating alongside friends and family, but also recognises it more broadly as a benefit to the local community. For this reason, she feels passionately that there is a need to protect arts and cultural activities in Taunton, as without them people would lose a source of social connection.

"It would be terrible, it's a meeting place for people...people would just be cut off if we didn't have a library or theatres. We do need this."

Disabled adult

That there are local arts and crafts available is important to Lily, however she would like to see more art and crafts at a national level. Lily is active in visiting local places, but rarely goes further than Taunton to participate in arts, museums or libraries. This is in large part due to accessibility requirements but does mean that at times she feels she misses out on some experiences. She tends to associate 'national' level arts, museums and libraries (which often means shows happening in major cities, and particularly London) with being the 'best' arts and culture on offer.

"Local arts and crafts are wonderful. There is local pottery making on Somerset Levels. We've been to several Somerset Art Weeks where you go and see their local pottery works."

Disabled adult

"I can understand why we don't get the top-grade people down here."

Disabled adult

Physical accessibility of venues dictates in large part where Lily can and can't go. There is a sense that her world of arts, museums and libraries is restricted compared to others. Where Lily visits is dictated by where she knows she is able to get around. As a result, she

tends to visit the same places, time after time. She says that venues run by the local council are well equipped because they provide ramps for disabled access, but some older buildings can be particularly troublesome. Existing restrictions within historical buildings cannot be altered, leaving disabled people such as Lily with little choice but to remain outside, exploring the gardens. Lily feels that while accessibility to national museums may have improved, access to smaller venues in rural areas remains an issue. It is precisely these smaller venues that she is most likely to want to visit, because of the difficulties in travelling further afield.

“You feel restricted in many ways that you can’t do things. But that’s part of life.”

Disabled adult

“One of the things one has to accept: some of these old places just can’t put in access for the disabled. Anything newly built now does tend to have disabled access.”

Disabled adult

Transport to and from venues can be a barrier to participation for Lily. Constantly relying on others can make Lily feel as though she is a burden. She finds that she is reliant on those around her to help her access locations of cultural interest and she is reluctant to continually rely on the same friends to assist her. This restricts her capacity to participate in certain events or visit new locations, limiting her view of arts, museums and libraries beyond the physical accessibility of venues themselves.

“You can’t keep asking the same people [to help] and they have busy lives.”

Disabled adult

There are a number of considerations for Lily when thinking about the future...

Primarily, increasing access to arts, museums and libraries is the factor that would make the most difference to Lily’s ability to participate. This is a threefold issue for Lily. Firstly, she would like to see more local venues improving the physical accessibility of their sites so that she is able to fully participate in the local events and exhibitions on offer. Secondly, more touring shows and exhibitions would mean that Lily is able to access more of what she regards as the ‘top quality’ arts and culture. Thirdly, any improvements to local transport would help Lily to go further afield without having to rely on friends and family to support her. Given Lily’s feeling that participating in arts, museums and libraries builds her social life and connection with the local community, improving accessibility in these ways is felt to have a further knock-on impact on her wellbeing.

“I think things are improving – particularly for the national venues. But more needs to be done at a local level and with the older buildings.”

Disabled adult

When it comes to funding, Lily thinks that museums should be prioritised for their educational benefits. She stresses the importance of museums as educational centres, particularly for children and young people. In particular, she regards museums as important for preserving and communicating about local and national history. In turn, this is seen as important for ensuring that young people grow up with a deeper understanding of the world around them.

8.10 Henshaws, Knaresborough

Henshaws is a charity based in the North of England which runs an arts and crafts centre for those with sight loss and other disabilities. At their main site in Knaresborough they currently host around 170 individuals (Henshaws refers to all as 'artists') who attend their art and crafts classes which cover a wide range of different artforms. Henshaws aims to provide high-quality art education, but also has a broader social purpose – through the arts and crafts activities they provide, it aims to develop the life skills of its artists and to foster an inclusive community.



Henshaws believes there are a great number of benefits of its arts and crafts provision to the artists that participate, far beyond the creative skills they are learning. All of the arts and crafts workshops that Henshaws runs are designed at providing a high-quality arts education. However, it is also aiming to encourage artists to develop other life skills such as building their confidence, communication skills, and increasing their employability. As such, it is far more than just creative skills that artists are gaining. This was evident throughout the sessions observed at this ethnographic interview. For example, participants spoke with confidence and pride about the work they had created and what it meant to them. A number of artists have also started working in Henshaws café, having previously developed their communication skills through the arts and crafts workshops. In addition to the arts and crafts activities it runs, Henshaws also offers accommodation services for people with disabilities in Knaresborough, through a housing cooperative. While arts and crafts might be what gets people through the door, participants receive access to a wider range of support than they may first know about.

Henshaws has thought carefully about how to maximise the positive benefit it has for its artists, and has a number of strategies in place to do this. For example, it recently set up its own shop via Etsy (an online retail site). This means that artists can now sell their artwork online if they want to. Speaking to one artists in a metalwork workshop, she was clearly very proud of having sold a number of pieces, indicating that this helps to further build confidence and self-esteem. Another way Henshaws maximises its benefit is by having a diverse body of

staff running the workshops – some with greater experience in the arts and crafts sector, some with greater experience in providing support for vulnerable people. This ensures that artists have access to different kinds of support, and that building creative skills and building life-skills, are very much intertwined throughout the activities and the ethos of the centre.

“I made five things and sold them on the shop. It was good that was.”

Participant

“It really gives them the chance to actually own something. There is such a sense of achievement – people are so excited when something they make is sold.”

Non-funded sector

There are also notable social benefits for the artists who participate at Henshaws. While visiting the centre, a number of participants spoke about the friends they had made, and these relationships were evident while observing artists working and socialising in the café. Henshaws staff feel that this social benefit is important – particularly for people with severe disabilities. Acting as a meeting point for people to share experiences is regarded to have further benefits for their mental health and wellbeing. Henshaws staff feel that their centre offers benefits above socialising at other venues. Because their centre is highly accessible for all disabilities, and is staffed by highly-trained staff, participants are in a very safe environment and thus may feel more comfortable than in places that are not so well-adapted. Henshaws staff feel that making participants feel safe is a critical first step for allowing them to develop their confidence and social relationships fully.

“Using a public gym for example is daunting for some of these people. So being in a safe environment is really important.”

Non-funded sector

Henshaws is committed to providing benefits to the members of the public in the local community as well as to the artists who directly participate. One of the key benefits that Henshaws feel it brings is to break down barriers between disabled and non-disabled people by building a fully inclusive environment. For example, it has recently opened up its café to the general public for coffees, lunch and occasional evening events. Henshaws also provides education workshops for schools in the local community. Both of these initiatives are hoped to help ‘normalise’ disability, by increasing engagement between disabled and non-disabled individuals. Henshaws also aims to open up its spaces to the public to increase the recreational activities available in the local area. For example, last year it created an outdoor beach in its courtyard which was open to the public. Henshaws staff are very proud of this and feel it was highly successful in becoming a local attraction.

“It [one of the benefits] is about breaking down the barriers of social isolation with disabled people and the local community.”

Non-funded sector

Capital funding from the Arts Council in the late 1990s is regarded as having been critical to Henshaws' expansion and success.

It received a substantial grant in the late 1990s to put towards building the centre it currently occupies in Knaresborough. This provided it with many more buildings to host workshops, a café space and outdoor courtyards. Henshaws staff see this investment as critical to their expansion as it has allowed them to develop a number of their own funding streams as a result. This was a clear example of how a one-off funding grant can be used to have a much longer-term impact on financial sustainability for an organisation. Specifically, it has allowed Henshaws to:



- Hold more arts and crafts workshops throughout the day in the additional space it has - these act as an income stream as all artists pay towards them;
- Open up its café to the public - bringing an additional source of revenue, and providing opportunities for its artists to gain work experience there;
- Become a licensed wedding venue – again, generating an alternative source of income; and
- Host public events in its courtyard – which helps Henshaws realise its social purpose and encourages new members of the public into the centre.

“Maybe we could open some sort of bakery next, get those members of the public in and offer them a service. It’s always give and take with the local community.”

Non-funded sector

Henshaws feels that the additional revenue gained from these enterprises has enabled it to absorb local funding cuts better.

“There are a lot of services that have had to shut because of funding problems. If we were just the arts and crafts we would have struggled, but we are a bit bigger than that.”

Non-funded sector

There are a number of considerations for Henshaws when thinking about the future...

The main opportunities that Henshaws sees for the future are increasing its sustainability through multiple funding sources and increasing the number of workshops it can offer. To a large extent, these are seen to go hand-in-hand. Henshaws would like to be in a place where it can open 7 days a week (it currently is open for 6 days) and offer a wider range of workshops than it currently does. Staff feel that this would enable

them to increase their impact by offering more variety to their artists, and by increasing the number of artists they can support. The ability to do this depends on securing more funding, which is why Henshaws is also keen to build its funding streams. Some of the greatest opportunities for this are expected to come through its café and wedding license which it wants to publicise more within the local community.

A key concern for Henshaws is the level of support offered to disabled people by other services, and a sense it is having to ‘fill the gaps’ for loss of other provision.

In particular, it feels that public sector cuts mean that people who would previously be in supported accommodation are no longer able to access this and are therefore using services like Henshaws as wrap-around care. The centre has diversified to support with this – for example, the accommodation service they provide – but is concerned that its artists are not always receiving the support they need outside of the centre. It also means that it is seeing participants with more severe disabilities who may have previously had wrap-around care coming to the centre. Staff mention it can be challenging to meet the needs of all participants at times, especially if this requires more one-to-one support for artists and therefore more staff at the centre.

“We’re getting more and more people who are living at home and using Henshaws as day service provision.”

Non-funded sector