

State of the Nations
research series

**AUDIENCES AND WORKFORCE
IN ARTS, CULTURE AND
HERITAGE SECTORS:
RECENT TRENDS AND NEW EVIDENCE FOR SCOTLAND**

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Contents

Foreword	4
Executive summary	5
1 Introduction	8
2 The geography of the arts, culture and heritage workforce: Evidence from Scotland's Census	11
3 The arts, culture and heritage workforce: Evidence from the Labour Force Survey	14
3.1: Changes in the composition of the UK's arts, culture and heritage workforce	16
3.2: Transitions into and out of arts, culture and heritage occupations	18
4 Arts, culture and heritage engagement: Evidence from England	19
4.1: Trends in cultural engagement	20
4.2: Diversity in cultural engagement	24
5 Arts, culture and heritage engagement: Evidence from the Scottish Household Survey	37
6 Relationships between arts, culture and heritage occupations and engagement across Scotland	46
7 Conclusions	50
8 Policy considerations	52
References	54
Data reference list	56
Data statement	59
Glossary	60

Foreword

When we first launched our State of the Nations research series in 2023, we committed to analysing data for all the nations that make up the United Kingdom. As well as recognising the obvious fact that policy is devolved in key reporting areas like skills, and arts and culture, we'd observed cases where positions on policy framed as addressing UK-wide priorities were in fact informed by the needs of England only. This is one reason why I'm particularly pleased that our latest report on arts, culture and heritage audiences and workforce takes a deep dive into the experience in Scotland.

We show that, while, as expected, Edinburgh and Glasgow are the council areas with the highest share of people working in arts, culture and heritage occupations, as many as ten other councils have a share of greater than 1%, underlining the fact that cultural workers in Scotland are less concentrated in large urban areas than is the case in England.

In cases where the survey design in Scotland and England permits comparisons, we reveal examples of consistent patterns as well as of apparent contrasts, which may have implications for policy priorities in the different nations. For example, the Scottish Household Survey reveals that women are more likely than men to attend a theatrical performance or a museum, to extents that are similar to those

seen in England, whereas the differences that tend to be observed between the share of disabled and non-disabled people going to live music, visiting historic places or museums appear to be larger in Scotland.

In the report, we also assess at the UK level whether the inequalities in workforce participation we have drawn attention to in previous reports have changed over time, and we consider what this might mean for the need for corrective policies.

As ever, we'd love to get your feedback!

**Professor Hasan Bakhshi,
Director, Creative PEC**

Executive summary

What is the geography of the arts, culture and heritage workforce in Scotland, and how are audiences for arts, culture and heritage in Scotland distributed? How did audiences in England and the workforce across the UK in arts, culture and heritage change during 2025? This report takes these questions together, providing up-to-date data on the arts, culture and heritage sectors and offering a deep dive into Scottish data.

For the first time, this report presents data on the geography of the arts, culture and heritage workforce in Scotland. It also presents the most recent data on audiences in England and workforces across the UK, thereby refreshing the consistent approach taken in previous State of the Nations publications.

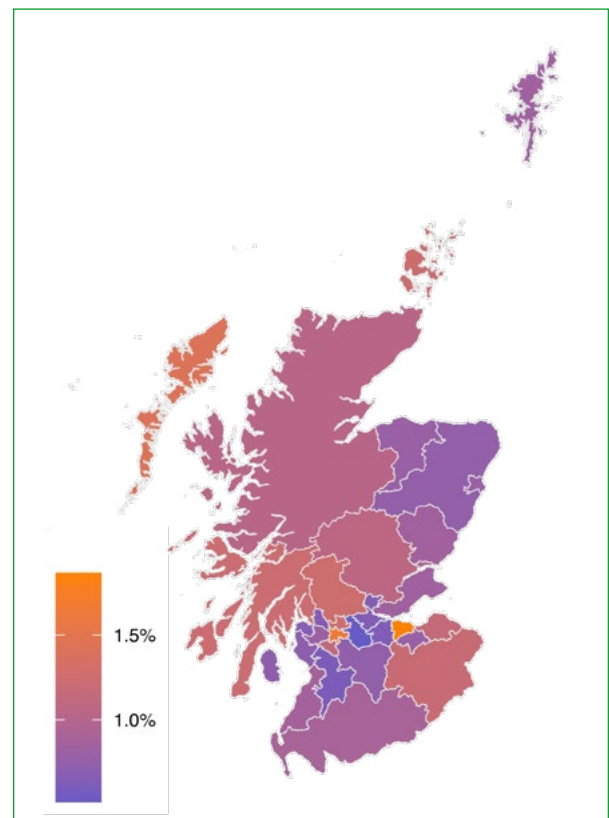
As with our previous reports, this State of the Nations report is accompanied by a series of dashboards. These dashboards allow the reader to interrogate each of our data series in more detail, by comparing findings over time, between groups and between different geographic areas.

The geography of the arts, culture and heritage workforce in Scotland: Evidence from the Census 2022

For the first time, this report analyses data on the geography of the arts, culture and heritage workforce in Scotland using data from Scotland's Census 2022.

Per the census, twelve council areas in Scotland out of thirty-two have 1% or more people working in arts, culture and heritage occupations. This compares with 110 out of 331 in England and Wales. The council areas where these figures are highest are Edinburgh (1.9%), Glasgow (1.7%) and Na h-Eileanan Siar (1.4%), though we should note that the latter has a small population (around 24,000). The overall geographic distribution is shown in the figure below.

There is significant variation in the geographic distribution of individual arts, culture and heritage occupations. For example, the largest percentage of artists can be found in Na h-Eileanan Siar, while the largest percentage of managers and directors in the creative industries can be found in Stirling.



The arts, culture and heritage workforce in the UK

As in our previous reports on the UK's arts, culture and heritage workforce, we analyse data from the Labour Force Survey (LFS). By comparing groups of occupations within these sectors, we can assess whether there were any statistically significant changes in five measures: disability, gender, ethnic group, social class background and contract type. We also analyse the rates at which people joined and left arts, culture and heritage occupations.

The overall picture is one of stability; we do not see statistically significant differences across

most of the different measures. This applies both when we compare trends before and since the Covid-19 pandemic, and when we compare data from 2025 with data from 2024. An exception is that we observe a statistically significant decrease in the percentage of men working in film, television, video, radio and photography occupations, compared with women. Future State of the Nations reports will assess whether this change marks the start of a new trend or whether it is a statistical blip.

Arts, culture and heritage engagement in England and Scotland

We also update the evidence on engagement in arts, culture and heritage by audiences in England by analysing Participation Survey data. Specifically, we compare rates of engagement over time, and between groups, by disability, sex, ethnic group and social class.

The picture again is generally one of stability: in our previous State of the Nations reports, we documented statistically significant increases in several forms of engagement, particularly attendance, year-on-year following the Covid-19 pandemic. We do not observe similar increases for 2024/2025, where overall rates were, in most cases, similar to those observed in 2023/2024.

This levelling out in overall rates of engagement in different forms of arts, culture and heritage means that the significant differences between groups we revealed in previous reports persist. For example, lower rates of engagement have persisted among ethnic minorities and among people working in semi-routine and routine roles in several different forms of arts, culture and heritage engagement.

There are some exceptions to this pattern. In many cases, gaps between men's and women's engagement in specific types of arts, culture and heritage widened between 2023/2024 and 2024/2025. This can be seen in reading for pleasure, attending a theatrical performance, and participating in crafts, among other examples.

We augment our analysis of Participation Survey data on arts, culture and heritage engagement in England with analysis of the Scottish Household Survey.

Some activities in Scotland are widely enjoyed, such as reading for pleasure (62%) and watching a film at the cinema (50%). Around 30% of people reported having attended each of a theatrical performance and a museum. Conversely, 24% of people reported not having attended any of the events that the survey asked about, while the figure is 26% for not having participated in any of the activities that the survey listed.

As in England, there are variations between groups. For example, women are more likely than men to attend a theatrical performance or a museum, and to participate in crafts or dance. The size of these differences is similar in both Scotland and England. Members of minority ethnic groups are less likely than White people to attend classical music or live music, or to participate in crafts or making art. Because of the different way that ethnic groups are measured across Scotland and England, it is not appropriate to draw direct comparisons.

There are also large differences in arts, culture and heritage attendance between disabled people and people who are not disabled; they are particularly large for live music, visiting a historic place and visiting a museum. The scale of these differences is generally larger in

Scotland than it is in England. For example, 41% of people who are not disabled in both countries reported attending live music in the last year; in Scotland, the figure for disabled people is 22%, while in England the figure is 34%.

We conclude our discussion of arts, culture and heritage engagement by analysing the relationships between engagement and employment in Scotland's arts, culture and heritage sectors. This extends our analysis of the spatial patterning of Scotland's cultural workers, who are less concentrated in urban areas than we found to be the case in England. We find that these relationships vary significantly, with activities such as attending an art gallery or exhibition being strongly associated with arts, culture and heritage occupations, but attending the theatre much less so.

Policy considerations

Our findings lead us to several high-level policy recommendations. We have identified persistent inequalities in both participation and employment in arts, culture and heritage sectors, including by disability, social class, ethnic group, gender and geographical location. We have also found that differences between groups are, in many cases, wider in Scotland than in England, and by large margins in some cases. The implications are clear: persistent inequalities mean isolated interventions are unlikely to produce meaningful change. They require longer-term structural change and coordinated policy action, targeting specific barriers faced by underrepresented groups.

Good and fair work in the arts, culture and heritage sectors are closely connected to inequalities. Scotland has been a leading site for the good work agenda in the creative industries. Our findings suggest that structural barriers to entry and progression remain, reinforcing the importance of delivering the ambition set out in Scotland's Culture Strategy Action Plan around diversity, inclusion and fair work.

Geography and place provide the third set of policy implications. The distribution of Scotland's cultural workforce across a diverse range of places challenges the assumption that cultural production is concentrated within large urban centres. It also reinforces Creative PEC's advocacy for rural and coastal micro-clusters as small engines of growth for the creative industries.

Bringing these three themes together, the need for investment is clear. Our research sits in the context of a series of reviews, all of which have identified increasing financial pressures. In this context, cross-portfolio collaborations are increasingly important. Partnership working between national government, local authorities, cultural organisations, universities and community stakeholders will be essential. Higher education institutions can play an important role as regional anchor institutions, supporting skills development, research collaboration and local creative ecosystems.

1 Introduction

This State of the Nations report is being published at an important time for the arts, culture and heritage sectors. There have been major reviews of the national arts councils in both Scotland and England, as well as significant interventions taking place in Wales and Northern Ireland, and policy developments within and across English Mayoral Combined Authorities.

Starting in England, Baroness Hodge published a review of Arts Council England (ACE) in December 2025 (Hodge, 2025). This offered several recommendations for arts, culture and heritage policy in England, the most prominent of which was that the government must retain the Arts Council.

The government and ACE published their responses in March 2026. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) welcomed and accepted many of the review's recommendations. It committed to various organisational reforms within ACE and prioritised reform of the National Portfolio Investment Programme. ACE will deliver this through an interim strategic framework focused on 'artistic excellence, equality and diversity, and place-based impact' (ACE, 2026), ahead of work on a new strategy to start later in 2026.

Neither DCMS nor ACE's responses offer a transformative level of funding to address the 'financial challenges' and 'crisis' noted in the Hodge review. Longer-term funding cuts, that the Hodge review felt 'represent an existential threat to the health and vibrancy of the arts and culture sectors', will not be reversed.

There has, however, been more positive funding news outside of this major review of arts governance. In January 2026, DCMS announced a round of capital funding investment for arts, culture and heritage organisations, bringing their total level of capital investment to £1.5bn across the term of this Parliament. In keeping with DCMS's focus on place-based policy

interventions (DCMS, 2026c), the launch of this investment highlighted its potential impact on local arts, culture and heritage institutions (DCMS, 2026c).

Place-based approaches to policy are also prominent in the new 2028 UK Town of Culture programme (DCMS, 2026f) and the shortlist for the 2029 UK City of Culture (DCMS, 2026e). Arts, culture and heritage sectors will be central to both of these programmes, in both the winning places' activities, as well as the proposals from other bidders.

In addition to this funding focused on the cultural sector, the start of 2026 saw DCMS announce a new finance package aimed at supporting innovation (DCMS, 2026d), as well as provide further detail about the support package that will help finance the creative industries (DCMS, 2026a). These interventions have important implications for arts, culture and heritage individuals and organisations that are part of, or cross over with, the broader creative industries sector.

This broader creative industries sector shapes the landscapes of arts, culture and heritage across the four nations of the UK through policy interventions like the Modern Industrial Strategy (Department for Business and Trade (DBT), 2025) and the Creative Industries Sector Plan (DBT and DCMS, 2025). Announced in June 2025, the Sector Plan is predominantly focused on economic growth, as a part of the Modern Industrial Strategy. Therefore, it highlights music, performing and visual arts, and film

and TV as two of the four sub-sectors with the highest potential for economic growth. At the same time, there are a range of interventions that will have as much cultural and social value as they will economic value. Examples include support for grassroots venues and funding for early-career music artists; a new National Centre for Arts and Music Education in England; and support for the Creative Industries Independent Standards Authority in its efforts to address bullying, harassment and discrimination.

The range of interventions across the Sector Plan are too numerous to summarise here. However, two points are worth highlighting as the most directly relevant for this report. The first is, as with the capital funding announcements, the focus on place. The Sector Plan gives particular prominence to creative clusters as a means of delivering industrial policy for high-potential sub-sectors. This reinforces the importance of Creative PEC's place-based approach to data and analysis, across all Creative PEC research and the State of the Nations research series in particular. The second noteworthy point is the forthcoming announcement of a creative freelance champion. This is particularly important for arts, culture and heritage, due to the high levels of freelancing and other forms of self-employment in the sector.

The broader landscape for arts, culture and heritage is also shaped by developments in media policy. A key milestone in the Sector Plan was the December 2025 DCMS launch for the review of the BBC's Royal Charter (DCMS, 2025b). The BBC is a major supporter, both as a funder and broadcaster, of the UK's arts, culture and heritage sectors. The government is expected to publish a white paper in 2026 which will likely contain significant implications for the future of arts, culture and heritage in the UK.

This flurry of activity at the UK level is suggestive of a major transformation in the policy circumstances for the arts, culture and heritage sectors. However, many of the key issues have already been identified in our previous report (O'Brien, Taylor and Wang, 2025). That State of the Nations report noted how, within the arts, culture and heritage workforce and audiences, the story of continuity between 2024 and 2025 required a significant transformation in policy to address inequality issues.

As we detail in the chapters that follow, the year-on-year data shows a story of consistency in workforce and audience patterns. This suggests the context for issues in arts, culture and heritage are broader than any single policy intervention or investment announcement. Instead, long-term policy action is necessary. This point is brought into sharp relief by the situation of arts, culture and heritage sectors in the UK's four nations, where arts, culture and heritage policy is devolved to governments in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland.

In Wales, there has been the high-profile launch of a new Welsh National Theatre, backed by funding from Welsh stage and screen star Michael Sheen (Pritchard, 2025). This launch follows the closure of the previous National Theatre in 2024 due to funding cuts (Pritchard, 2024).

The launch of the new Welsh National Theatre is an excellent example of the need to go beyond a single intervention to address arts, culture and heritage sector issues. In Wales, key voices in arts policy have been clear that the sector is in crisis. The Senedd Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee report on the Welsh Government's 2025/2026 budget (Welsh Parliament, 2025) noted how, despite an increase in funding for the arts, Welsh

spending on cultural services ranked 24th out of 25 European nations. Many issues in Wales are common to the rest of the UK, for example the impact of national insurance rises on organisations' budgets. Yet the specific dynamics of the funding crisis are having perhaps more significant impacts given the size and scale of Wales's cultural ecosystem.

In Northern Ireland, the 2024 introduction of the Heritage, Culture and Creativity Programme has confronted what it describes as a 'policy vacuum' (Department for Communities, 2025, p. 5), with emerging needs ranging across research and evidence, a skills strategy and a capital strategy. A new arts policy is expected imminently, in the context of an extremely challenging funding environment (McCallion, 2026).

Finally, Scotland faces particular challenges. 2025 saw the publication of a review of Creative Scotland (Scottish Government, 2025c). Creative Scotland has a broader remit than any of the other nations' arts councils, with a more active role beyond arts, culture and heritage sectors into the creative industries. As with the Hodge review of ACE, Angela Leitch's independent review of Creative Scotland recommended that the organisation continue, but she also set out several challenges and possible reforms. These recommendations noted the bigger challenge of funding arts, culture and heritage sectors in Scotland.

The review of Creative Scotland speaks to a broader discussion around the provision of the arts, culture and heritage sectors. For instance, the Scottish Government conducted a survey

of individuals and organisations working in and with the culture sector, and it found major concerns around the gap between the demand for public funding and what was available. Notably, the application process for public funding – both delivered by council areas and by Creative Scotland – was perceived as particularly demanding (Scottish Government, 2025a). Another significant development in this discussion was raised by the independent Culture Fair Work Task Force, which drew attention to the importance of self-employed artists and freelancers in the cultural sector and recommended a Freelance Commission and Freelance Commissioner in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2025b).

The Independent Review of Creative Scotland, and ongoing cultural policy activity across Scotland more generally, have highlighted data issues for both specific decision-making processes and more general advocacy for the arts, culture and heritage sectors in Scotland. Therefore, this report offers deep dives on Scotland's workforce and audiences to help fill that gap.

The data we present throughout this report is supplemented with a series of online dashboards. These dashboards allow the user to zoom into different geographical areas, view detailed longitudinal comparisons between different waves of data and compare relationships between different forms of engagement and employment in Scotland's council areas.

2

The geography of the arts, culture and heritage workforce: Evidence from Scotland's Census

Here, we draw attention to the geography of arts, culture and heritage occupations in Scotland.

As with the other home nations of the UK, Scotland's Census allows us to produce more precise estimates of arts, culture and heritage occupations than other data sources. This is due to the much larger sample size compared to sample surveys, with censuses aiming to capture a very large percentage of national populations.

The other three home nations of the UK delivered censuses in 2021, consistent with a regular ten-year cycle where the previous census had taken place in 2011. In Scotland, however, a decision was taken to postpone the census to 2022, as Covid-19 restrictions posed a challenge to National Records of Scotland in terms of logistical planning, testing of systems and stakeholder engagement (Office for Statistics Regulation, 2023).

The overall rate of return of household censuses in Scotland in 2022 was 89%. This is lower than the equivalent figures for England and Wales, and in Northern Ireland (both 97%). Local authority return rates varied between 94% (Na h-Eileanan Siar, Orkney and Aberdeenshire) and 83% (Glasgow City).

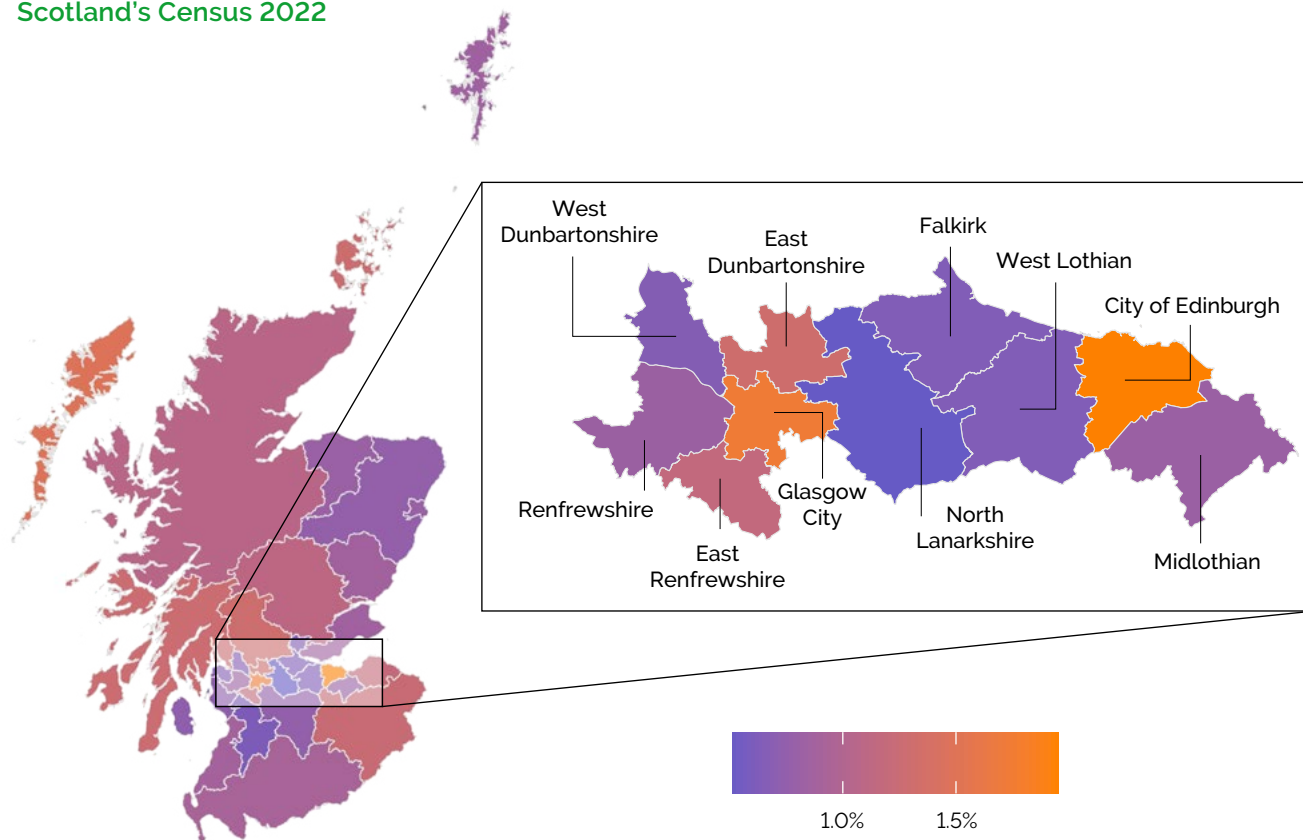
In this section, we report data on variation between Scottish local authorities – also known as council areas – in the percentages of people working in different arts, culture and heritage occupations. The occupations we analyse are based on Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes, and we use the same set of occupations as set out in section 3 of this report.

Our analysis builds on our previous report (McAndrew et al., 2024) in which we presented similar data for England and Wales, and for Northern Ireland. As with that report, this data refers to people working in arts, culture and heritage occupations as their main occupations. Brook et al. (2025) show that the rates of people working in core creative occupations – a definition very similar to our definition of arts, culture and heritage occupations – who hold second jobs is higher than among other occupations. These estimates therefore do not capture people who work in arts, culture

and heritage occupations as a second job. Percentages reported are of all people working in any occupation.

The differences in the timing of the censuses, and differences in the percentages of people who completed the censuses, mean that comparisons between the four home nations of the UK are not perfect. Nonetheless and where possible, we contextualise the rates of people working in arts, culture and heritage occupations in Scotland compared with the other home nations of the UK.

Figure 2.1. Arts, culture and heritage occupations as a percentage of all occupations by council area, Scotland's Census 2022



Source: National Records for Scotland Table CT_0387_2022, and Office for National Statistics licensed under the Open Government Licence v.3.0.

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Figure 2.1 shows the percentages of people in different Scottish council areas working in arts, culture and heritage occupations. The main panel presents a map of all of Scotland, while the inset panel presents that same data for the Central Belt, an area of Scotland that is more densely populated with smaller council areas.

The council areas with the largest percentages of people working in arts, culture and heritage occupations are Edinburgh and Glasgow, at 1.9% and 1.7%, respectively, followed by Na h-Eileanan Siar (1.4%). There are twelve out of Scotland's thirty-two council areas where more than 1% of people in employment are working in arts, culture and heritage occupations.

Drawing comparisons with England and Wales, if we were producing a joint ranking of local authorities and council areas, despite the differences in the censuses, Edinburgh would be in 86th place, between Runnymede and York, while Glasgow would be in 106th place, between Stockport and the Isle of Wight. This is in the context of a total of 331 local authorities in England at the time of the Census 2021.

This distribution of arts, culture and heritage occupations does not show strong evidence of agglomeration. The council area with the smallest percentage of people working in these occupations is North Lanarkshire, which is immediately to the east of Glasgow. Similarly, the

council areas to the immediate east and west of Edinburgh – Midlothian and West Lothian – are in 21st and 29th places, respectively. Instead, local authorities with above-average percentages of people working in arts, culture and heritage occupations can be found across different areas of Scotland, including Stirling, Orkney and the Scottish Borders.

However, there is significant variation between council areas among the twelve specific occupations. Edinburgh has the largest percentages in five cases: authors, writers and translators; dancers and choreographers; newspaper, periodical and broadcast journalist reporters; newspaper, periodical and broadcast editors; and photographers, audio-visual and broadcasting equipment operators.

Glasgow is in first position for three occupations: actors, entertainers and presenters; arts officers, producers and directors; and musicians.

This leaves four occupations: archivists, conservators and curators, with the largest percentage in Orkney; artists, with the largest percentage in Na h-Eileanan Siar; librarians, in East Dunbartonshire; and managers and directors in the creative industries, in Stirling.

Overall, twenty different council areas are among the top ten for at least one of the arts, culture and heritage occupational groups.



3

The arts, culture and heritage workforce: Evidence from the Labour Force Survey

In this section, we continue our work in publishing regular and updated longitudinal estimates of the composition of the arts, culture and heritage workforce. This builds on our work in McAndrew et al. (2024) and O'Brien, Taylor and Wang (2025). In both those reports, we presented data on people working in four groups of arts, culture and heritage occupations: film, TV, video, radio and photography; museums, libraries and archives; music, performing and visual arts; and publishing. In this report, we refresh this analysis with data up to and including the final quarter of 2025.

We analysed people working in these occupations in two ways. First, we showed variation among these four occupational groups in five different measures, which include whether or not people are in employment (as opposed to self-employment); whether they are disabled; their ethnic group; their gender; and their socioeconomic background, measured through the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC). This analysis is based on quarterly data from the LFS.

Second, we showed the percentages of people who were working in each of these occupations and had also been doing so in the previous quarter; those who had started working in one of these occupations after having not done so in the previous quarter; and those who had stopped working in one of these occupations after having done so in the previous quarter. This analysis is based on two-quarter longitudinal data, also from the LFS. We built on this analysis

in a more recent State of the Nations report (O'Brien et al., 2025), in which we described the destinations of people leaving arts, culture and heritage occupations.

Analysis of the LFS since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic has been challenging, due to significant falls in response rates to the survey. This has led to increasing uncertainty in the estimates that we have published. However, in more recent waves of data, response rates have improved. The low point was in the July–September quarter in 2023, when the response rate was 44,238; in the equivalent quarter in 2025, it was 75,757 (Office for National Statistics, 2026b). While this remains slightly below the equivalent quarter in 2019 (by 8,305), it represents a significant improvement overall. This means that the uncertainty associated with our estimates is narrower for more recent quarters than for quarters in and around 2023.

The four groups of occupations we describe are based on a set of individual SOC codes, set out below. Our analysis covers the period 2019–2025 inclusive, which includes a (small) change in the composition of these codes, which is denoted

by the dashed line in the figures that follow. This approach is the same one taken in our previous analysis of the arts, culture and heritage workforce (McAndrew et al., 2024; O'Brien, Taylor and Wang, 2025) to ensure comparability.

Film, television, video, radio and photography:

- Managers and directors in the creative industries
- Photographers, audio-visual and broadcasting equipment operators

Publishing:

- Newspaper and periodical editors
- Newspaper and periodical journalists and reporters

Museums, libraries and archives:

- Librarians
- Archivists and curators

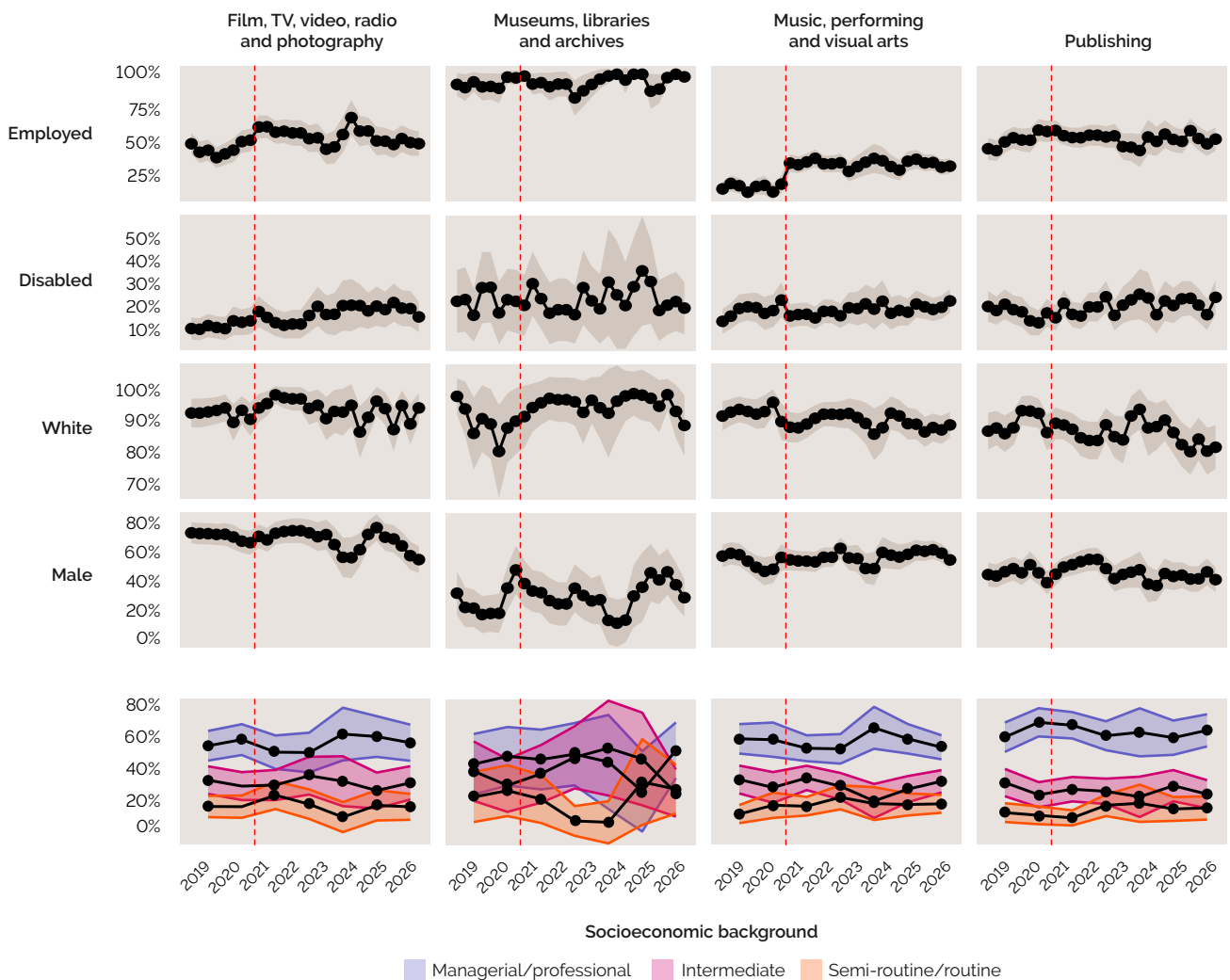
Music, performing and visual arts:

- Artists
- Actors, entertainers and presenters
- Dancers and choreographers
- Musicians
- Arts officers, producers and directors



3.1: Changes in the composition of the UK's arts, culture and heritage workforce

Figure 3.1. Changes in employment, disability, ethnic group, gender and socioeconomic background in different sectors of arts, culture and heritage occupations in the UK, 2019–2025



Source: Quarterly Labour Force Survey January–March 2019 to October–December 2025 inclusive; authors' elaboration. Vertical dashed lines denote an update to the Standard Occupation Classification scheme (from SOC 2010 to SOC 2020).

Figure 3.1 shows how the composition of each of these four groups changed over the period 2019–2025.

In most cases, the relative stability that we observed over the period 2019–2024, despite the disruption of the Covid-19 pandemic, has persisted into 2025. Compared with 2024, there are no statistically significant changes in any of

these occupational groups in the percentages of people who are employed, as opposed to self-employed. Other than for museums, libraries and archives, the percentage of employed people in arts, culture and heritage occupations is significantly lower than in the broader workforce, where the figure varied between 13% and 15% over the same period (Office for National Statistics, 2026a).

There are also no statistically significant changes in the percentages of people working in each of these occupational groups who are White, or who are disabled. In the case of people who are from different socioeconomic backgrounds, grouped into managerial and professional, intermediate, and semi-routine and routine, there are once again no statistically significant changes. In the case of people working in museums, libraries and archives, the uncertainty is relatively higher due to the smaller numbers of people working in these occupations, which was particularly acute in the period where the sample size for the LFS was lowest. In 2025, however, the percentages are once again relatively similar to those for the period 2019–2022, suggesting that the changes in the point estimates did not represent genuine changes in the broader population.

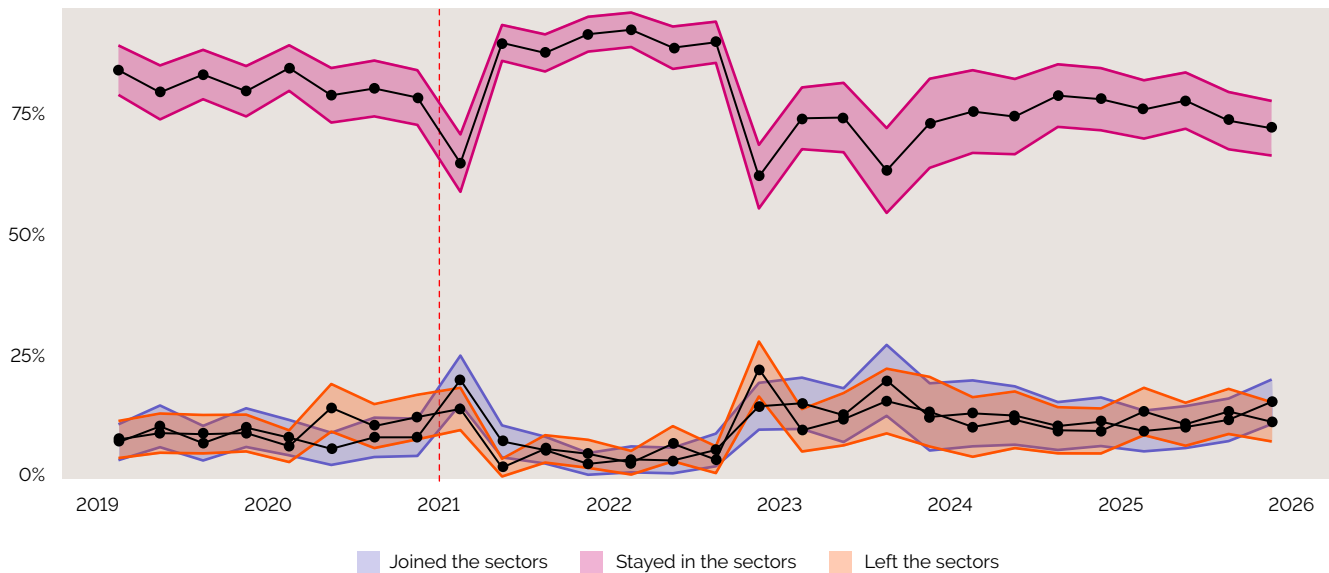
For most occupational groups, the percentage of men also remained consistent over the period analysed here. There is one

exception, which is in film, TV, video, radio and photography occupations. Over the period from 2019 to early 2023, the estimates for the percentage of men in these occupations was consistently around 70%, dropping to 55% by the final quarter of 2023. However, owing to the challenges associated with sample size in the LFS in this period, this change was not statistically significant, and the figure subsequently increased back to around 60% by the second quarter of 2025. However, the estimate for the final quarter of 2025 is around 54%, which is a statistically significant decrease on the high point of the third quarter of 2024.

It remains to be seen whether this decrease in the percentage of men working in film, TV, video, radio and photography occupations marks a new trend, will level out, or will reverse. However, it is noteworthy as it is the only case of a statistically significant change during the period that our analysis covers.

3.2: Transitions into and out of arts, culture and heritage occupations

Figure 3.2. Continuity of employment and transitions into and out of arts, culture and heritage occupations, 2019–2025



Source: Labour Force Survey Two-Quarter Longitudinal Datasets, October 2018–March 2019 to July–December 2025 inclusive; authors' elaboration.

Figure 3.2 shows the changes in the percentages of people leaving and joining arts, culture and heritage occupations, and those staying in these occupations on a quarter-to-quarter basis.

This figure shows that the relative stability in the period from towards the end of 2022 through to 2024, which we described in our previous report (O'Brien, Taylor and Wang, 2025), persisted into 2025. In each of the waves from 2023 to 2025, the percentage of people staying in their occupation on a quarter-by-quarter basis was around 75%, with roughly equal numbers of people both leaving and joining these occupations in each quarter. While there is some variation in the precise point estimates, with a slightly lower estimated percentage of people staying in these occupations in the

final quarter of 2025, these changes are not statistically significant, even taking into account the slightly lower uncertainty associated with these estimates due to an increase in the sample size in the LFS.

The implication of these estimates is that the number of people working in arts, culture and heritage occupations remained fairly consistent over the period from 2022 onwards. This is consistent with DCMS's economic estimates. In these reports, the estimates for the numbers of people working in 'the cultural sector' – a group significantly overlapping with, but not identical to, our definition of arts, culture and heritage occupations – went from 694,000 in 2022, to 666,000 in 2023 and to 700,000 in 2024 (DCMS, 2024a, 2024b, 2026b).

4

Arts, culture and heritage engagement: Evidence from England

Here, we present evidence on the rates of engagement in arts, culture and heritage across England, based on the 2024/2025 Participation Survey. In doing so, we refresh data from both our 2024 and 2025 State of the Nations reports (McAndrew et al., 2024; O'Brien, Taylor and Wang, 2025). This allows us to estimate both whether rates of engagement in different activities changed overall between 2023/2024 and 2024/2025, and also whether any differences in engagement between groups has changed.

As with our previous reports, we address engagement in several forms of arts, culture and heritage engagement among the 16+ population in England. This covers arts attendance (for example, attending a concert or going to the cinema); arts participation (for example, playing a musical instrument or drawing or painting); attendance at a wide range of heritage sites; attendance at museums and galleries; and in-person and online use of libraries. In our figures, we present brief descriptions of the activities in question, such as 'Making art', as opposed to the full descriptions presented to people participating in the survey, such as 'Painting, drawing, printmaking, calligraphy, colouring'. These full descriptions can be found in Annex 3 of the main report on the survey, published by DCMS (2025c).

To retain consistency with our previous reports, we draw attention to the same set of activities. We also compare participation across the same sets of groups in our previous reports, to estimate whether differences in engagement have increased, decreased or stayed consistent.

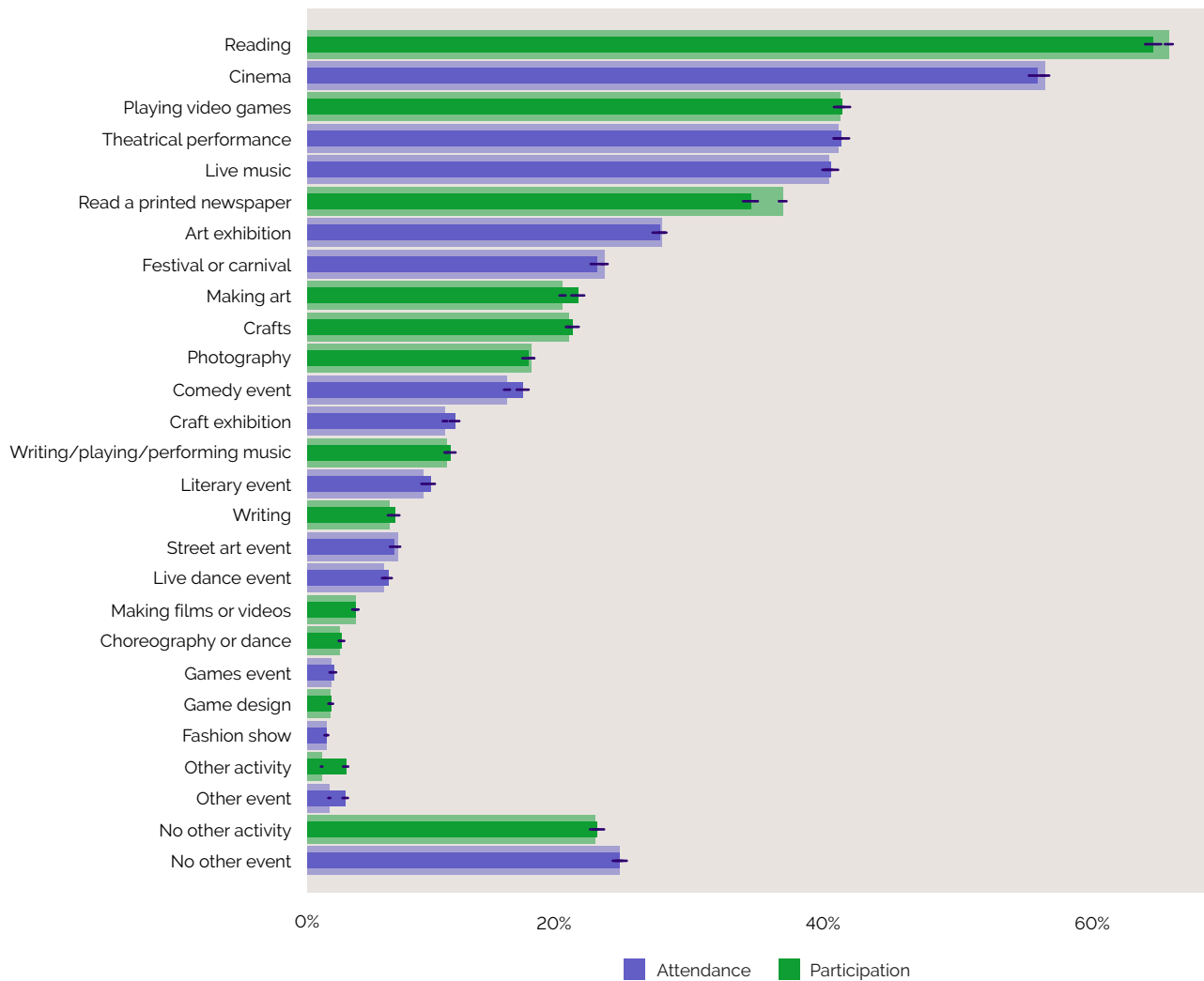
The Participation Survey ran as a standalone survey (see below) over a fieldwork period that started in October 2021. The survey includes questions about people's engagement in in-person cultural activity over the preceding twelve months. This means that, for a large part of the survey data collection periods, people were asked questions about their activity during periods of Covid-19 restrictions, as well as periods in which restrictions had been lifted but where people's comfort in returning to in-person events was limited (Walmsley, Gilmore and O'Brien, 2024).

In this case, we are comparing people's responses during 2024/2025 about how they spent the preceding twelve months with equivalent responses during 2023/2024, and so we do not expect to see differences due to pandemic restrictions. However, evidence suggests that the cost-of-living crisis may have influenced people's willingness and ability to attend future events, and that this may not have been felt evenly across groups (Torreggiani, 2022).

The DCMS's Participation Survey no longer runs as a standalone survey, as fieldwork concluded in September 2026. The material that it covers is now included as part of the broader Community and Engagement Survey, which also addresses material that was previously covered through the Community Life Survey (DCMS, 2025a). When we next report data on people's engagement in arts, culture and heritage, this will be drawn from data from both surveys.

4.1: Trends in cultural engagement

Figure 4.1. Rates of attendance and participation in cultural activities in England (16+), 2023/2024–2024/2025



Source: DCMS Participation Survey 2023/2024 and 2024/2025; authors' elaboration. Wider semi-transparent bars are for 2023/2024; narrower, opaque bars are for 2024/2025.

Figure 4.1 shows the percentages of people aged 16+ in England who had engaged in a range of different activities in 2023/2024 and 2024/2025. Engagement is defined as having attended or participated at least once in the preceding twelve months, with the definitions of 'attendance' and 'participation' based on those used in the survey itself.

Our previous report compared data between 2022/2023 and 2023/2024, in which we showed increases in the rates of attendance in most of the activities measured, as well as for several forms of participation. Here, we see no significant differences between 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 in the majority of forms of engagement. For example, there are no statistically significant differences in the percentages of people who had seen a film at the cinema, played video games, attended live music or attended an art exhibition.

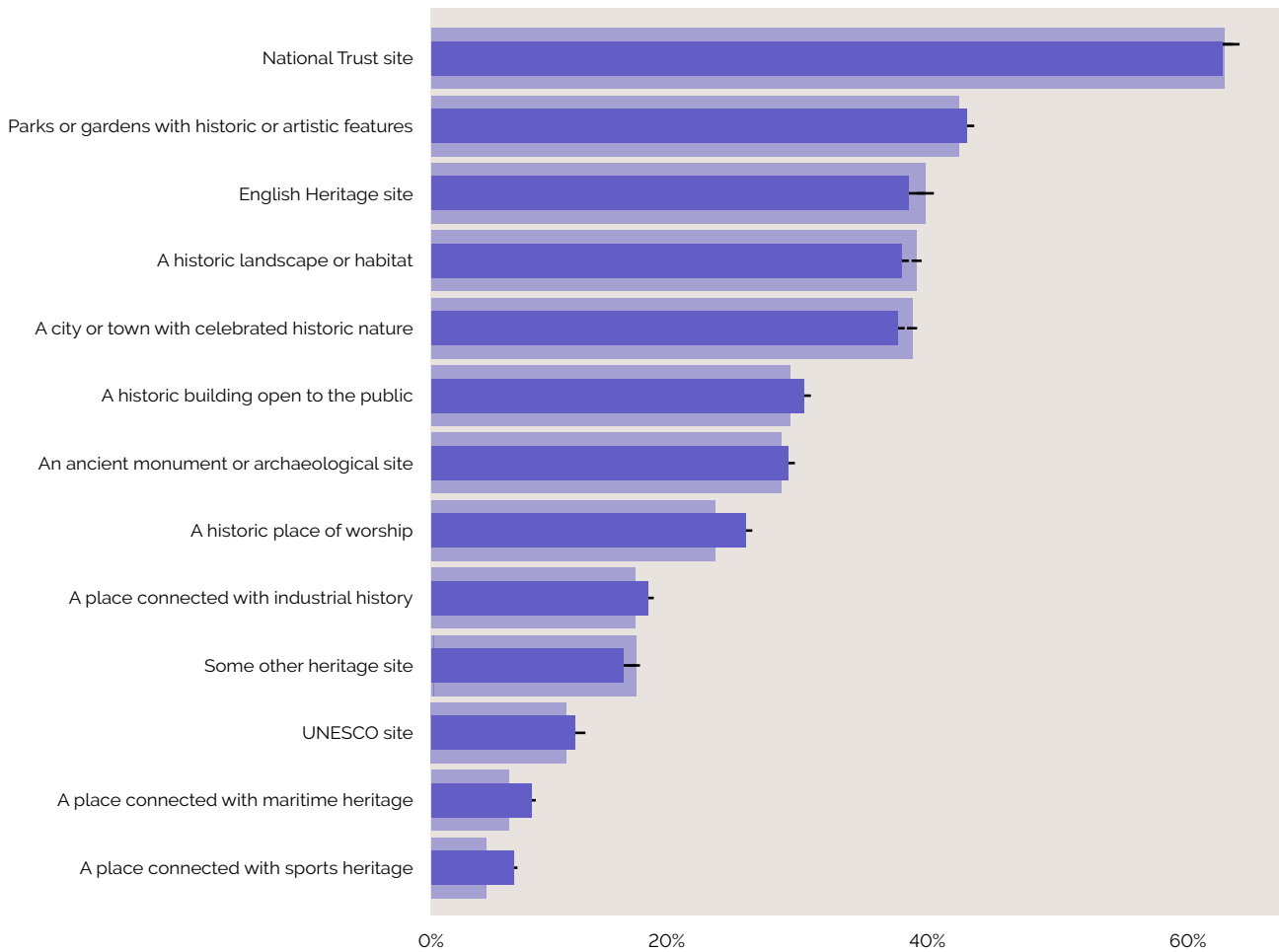
In most cases, where there are statistically significant differences, these are small. We are able to observe these differences because the large sample size of the Participation Survey means that the uncertainty around observations is small. All but two of these changes are by a single percentage point. These include a decrease in the percentage of people reporting

having read for pleasure in the last twelve months, from 64% to 63%; an increase in the percentages of people painting, drawing, printmaking or participating in calligraphy or colouring from 19% to 20%; and an increase in the percentages of people attending a comedy event from 15% to 16%.

There are two cases where there are larger differences. The first is an increase in participation in some other kind of activity, outside of those already specified (from 1% to 3%). In this case, this is a reversion to the equivalent figure from 2022/2023, and so it does not reflect a longer-term trend. The second is a decline in reading news in a printed newspaper (from 35% to 33%). This latter question was only introduced into the Participation Survey in the 2023/2024 survey, and so we cannot draw on a longer time series. However, it is consistent with reporting elsewhere (Press Gazette, 2026) that sales of printed newspapers have been declining over a number of years and are continuing to decline.

These changes – which in most cases are not statistically significant, and in others are just by 1 percentage point or 2 – do not suggest evidence of a substantive change in behaviour in response to the cost-of-living crisis.

Figure 4.2. Rates of attendance at different heritage sites in England (16+), 2024/2025



Source: DCMS Participation Survey 2023/2024 and 2024/2025; authors' elaboration. Wider semi-transparent bars are for 2023/2024; narrower, opaque bars are for 2024/2025.

Figure 4.2 reports the percentages of people attending a range of different heritage site types in 2023/2024 and 2024/2025, with these figures corresponding to whether someone had attended a site of each type at least once in the preceding year.

As with Figure 4.1, which reported change in arts and cultural engagement, while there were several statistically significant changes between 2023/2024 and 2024/2025, very few of these are by more than 1 percentage point. In

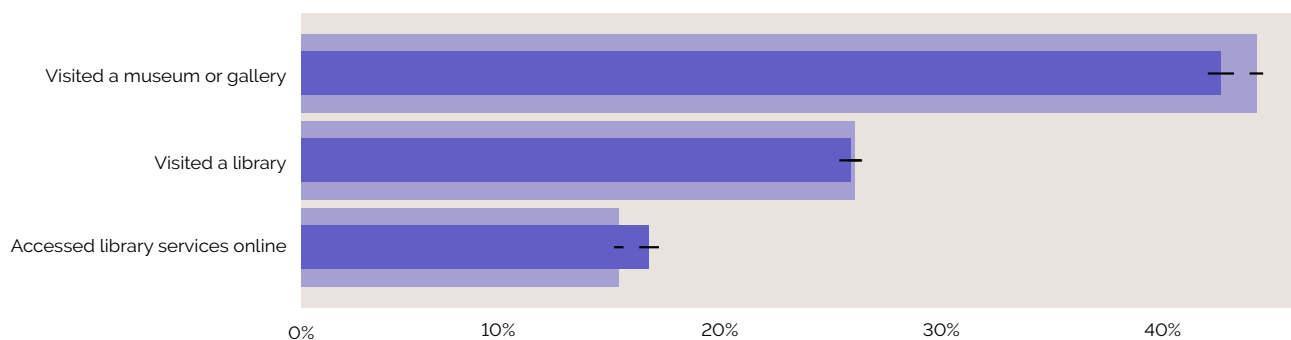
some cases, there are no statistically significant changes at all, such as in visiting parks or gardens with historic or artistic features, and ancient monuments or archaeological sites. In others, there are changes of around 1 percentage point, such as in visiting historic landscapes or habitats, and cities or towns with celebrated historic natures. Again, these changes are perceptible due to the large sample size of the Participation Survey meaning that the uncertainty around estimates is small.

There are two exceptions to this trend: attendance at places connected with maritime heritage, and with sports heritage. In both these cases there were increases of 2 percentage points. However, we should note that these were increases from low bases: from 4% to 6%, and from 2% to 4%, respectively.

In our previous report, we identified changes that were much larger than these. In some cases, there were large increases in the percentages of people attending different types of sites, such

as National Trust sites and English Heritage sites; there were also large decreases in the percentages of people attending cities or towns with celebrated historic natures, and historic buildings open to the public. Figure 3.2 suggests that the percentages of people attending different types of heritage sites stabilised in the subsequent year. As with arts and cultural engagement, it does not show obvious evidence of impact from the cost-of-living crisis.

Figure 4.3. Rates of attendance at museums and galleries and in-person and online use of libraries in England (16+): 2022/2023 and 2023/2024



Source: DCMS Participation Survey 2023/2024 and 2024/2025; authors' elaboration. Wider semi-transparent bars are for 2022/2023; narrower, opaque bars are for 2023/2024.

Finally in this section, Figure 4.3 shows the percentages of people who reported visiting a museum or gallery, visiting a library or accessing library services online.

The percentage of people who visited a library was the same across the two survey years, at 25%, while there is a statistically significant increase in the percentage of people who

accessed library services online: from 14% in 2023/2024 to 16% in 2024/2025. This includes using library services via a library website, a library app and via YouTube. Finally, there was a small but statistically significant decrease in the percentage of people who visited a museum or gallery, from 43% to 42%.

4.2: Diversity in cultural engagement

This section addresses differences in engagement across this set of activities between different groups: by disability, sex, ethnic group and social class, measured through the NS-SEC.

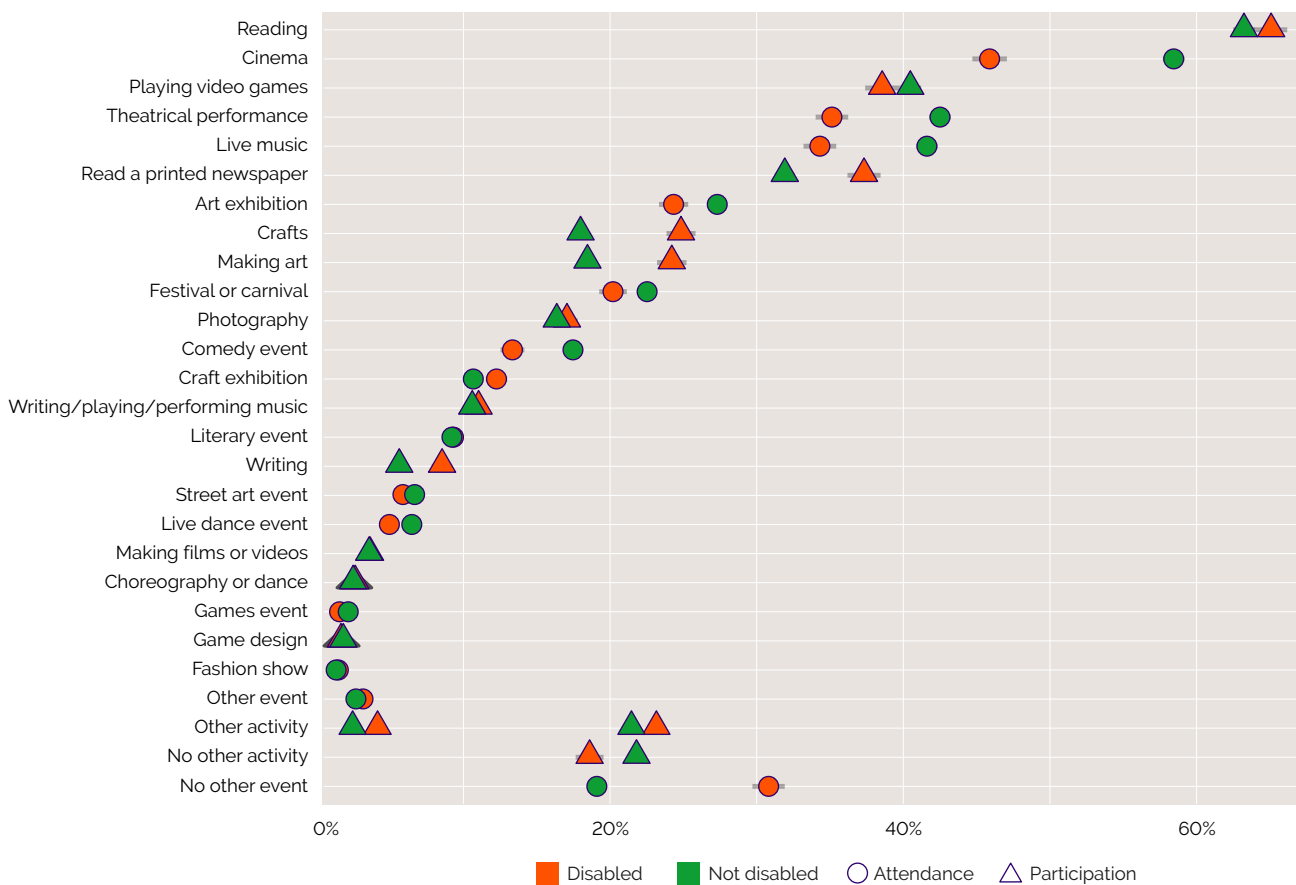
For the majority of the activities we addressed in section 4.1, we did not see significant changes in 2024/2025 relative to 2023/2024; where we did see changes, they tended to not be large. However, it does not follow that all groups' engagement in culture remained consistent; it

is possible that the overall percentage of the population engaging in particular forms of arts, culture and heritage stayed the same, with rates of engagement increasing in some groups, and decreasing in others.

This section includes figures that compare groups for the 2024/2025 survey data collection period. We also describe any significant changes between groups' engagement in these different activities within the text.

4.2.1: Disability

Figure 4.4. Rates of attendance and participation in cultural activities in England (16+) by disability status, 2024/2025



Source: DCMS Participation Survey 2024/2025; authors' elaboration.

Figure 4.4 shows how rates of arts and cultural engagement, covering both attendance and participation, varies between disabled people and people who are not disabled.

For many examples of cultural participation, such as photography as an artistic activity and writing, playing and performing music, there are no statistically significant differences between disabled people and people who are not disabled. However, disabled people are statistically significantly more likely to participate in other activities, such as in crafts (25% compared with 18%) or making art (24% compared with 19%).

For most examples of cultural attendance, disabled people are statistically significantly less likely to attend than people who are not disabled. The largest absolute difference is for seeing a film at a cinema, where the figures are 46% and 58%; for theatrical performances they are 35% and 43%, while for live music they are 34% and 41%.

The patterns of engagement in different forms of arts and culture for disabled people and people who are not disabled are, in most cases,

similar to those we reported for 2023/2024. For example, in terms of photography as an artistic activity, and writing, playing and performing music, the participation rates of disabled people compared to people who are not disabled are similar, and these rates are not significantly different from those in 2023/2024. The relatively higher rates of attending live music and theatrical performances among people who are not disabled are also not significantly different from those in 2023/2024. There was a small change in attending art exhibitions, where the percentage of disabled people who reported attending increased by a small but statistically significant amount (from 23% to 24%), while the percentage of people who are not disabled stayed the same at 27%. We will remain alert to whether these changes persist in future survey data collection. For those activities where we observed changes in the overall percentages of people engaging, such as the decline in the percentage of people who reported reading a printed newspaper, these changes were of a similar magnitude for disabled people and for people who are not disabled.

Figure 4.5. Rates of attendance at different heritage sites in England (16+) by disability status, 2024/2025



Source: DCMS Participation Survey 2024/2025; authors' elaboration.

For many types of heritage site, disabled people are less likely to report having visited than people who are not disabled by a statistically significant margin of 1–2 percentage points. These include visiting parks or gardens with historic or artistic features (40% compared with 42%), an ancient monument or archaeological site (26% compared with 28%), and sites connected with maritime heritage (6% compared with 7%). For the majority, however, there are no statistically significant differences.

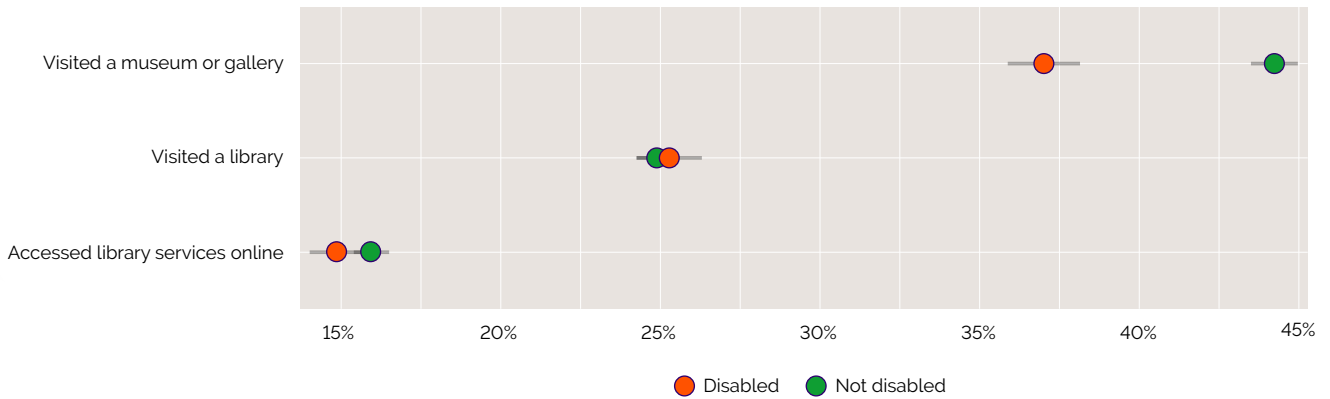
There are some small but statistically significant changes in the differences in attendance of heritage sites. In Figure 4.2 we showed that the percentage of people attending a historic landscape or heritage site had seen a small, but statistically significant, decrease between 2023/2024 and 2024/2025. Here, we can see that the percentage of disabled people attending

such sites stayed around the same at 36%, while the percentage among people who are not disabled decreased from 39% to 37%.

This difference between disabled people and people who are not disabled is not statistically significant, while in 2023/2024 the equivalent difference was statistically significant. There is a similar story for cities or towns with celebrated historic characters, with attendance rates among people who are not disabled decreasing from 40% to 38%.

The other change we see among heritage sites is for attending a historic place of worship. Rates of attendance increased by a greater margin for disabled people (from 21% to 24%) than for people who are not disabled (from 23% to 24%), meaning that there is no longer a statistically significant difference between the two groups.

Figure 4.6. Rates of attendance at museums and galleries and in-person and online use of libraries in England (16+) by disability status, 2024/2025



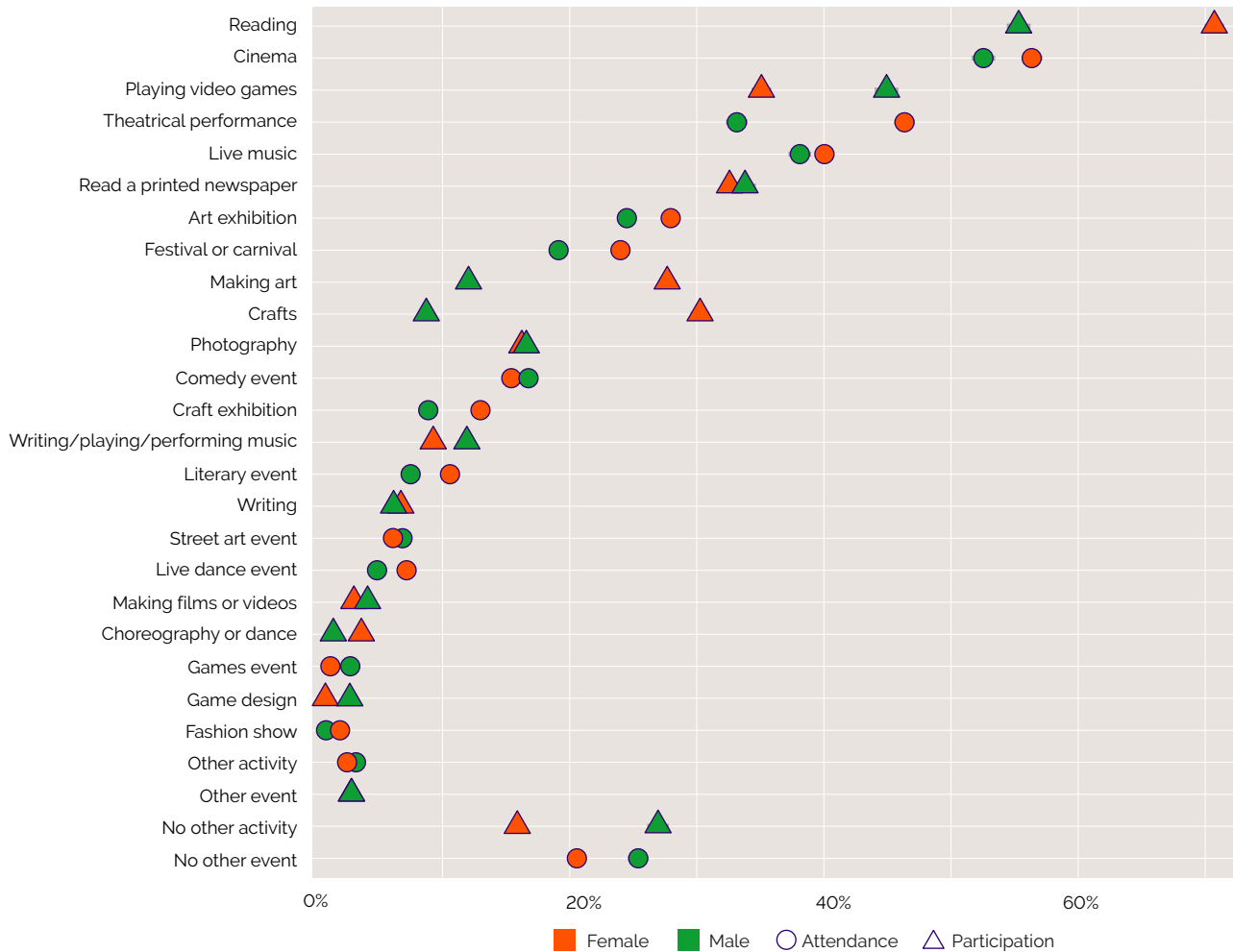
Source: DCMS Participation Survey 2024/2025; authors' elaboration.

Figure 4.6 shows that there were no statistically significant differences in the percentages of disabled people and those who are not disabled in whether they have visited a library, or have accessed public library services online. However, people who are not disabled were significantly more likely to have visited a museum or gallery than disabled people, at 44% compared with 37%.

These represent small, but statistically significant, changes compared to 2023/2024. In 2023/2024, disabled people were statistically significantly less likely to either visit a library or to access library services in person, a gap that had closed in 2024/2025. In addition, the difference in visiting a museum or library slightly decreased, from a 9 percentage point difference to a 7 percentage point difference.

4.2.2: Sex

Figure 4.7. Rates of attendance and participation in cultural activities in England (16+) by sex, 2024/2025



Source: DCMS Participation Survey 2024/2025; authors' elaboration.

Figure 4.7 shows the differences between men and women in their engagement in different cultural activities in 2024/2025. The measurement of sex and gender in the 2024/2025 survey was the same as in 2023/2024, which allows us to make comparisons between those two years, but not with previous waves of the survey due to changes in the way that the questions were phrased.

As shown in the previous report, there are some activities where there are differences in engagement between men and women. This is

largest for participating in crafts, with 9% of men and 30% of women reporting having participated in the last twelve months. Large differences can also be seen for reading, attending theatrical performances, and making art, where women are far more likely to engage or participate; conversely, men are more likely to play video games. There are also several other forms of cultural engagement where differences between men and women are smaller but still statistically significant, such as women being more likely to watch a film at a cinema or attend live music.

In the majority of these cases, the differences in rates of engagement between men and women are similar in 2024/2025 to those in 2023/2024. However, there are some exceptions to this. Most of these exceptions are cases where women were more likely to engage than men, with the gap having increased over the period. Examples of this are as follows:

- **Reading for pleasure:** the percentage of men engaging decreased from 58% to 55%, with women's engagement staying similar at 71%.
- **Attending a theatrical performance:** the percentage of men engaging decreased from 34% to 32%, with women's engagement increasing from 44% to 45%.
- **Making art, such as painting or drawing:** the percentage of men engaging decreased from 13% to 12%, with women's engagement increasing from 24% to 28%.

- **Crafts:** the percentage of men engaging decreased from 12% to 9%, with women's engagement increasing from 26% to 30%.
- **Participating in none of these activities:** the percentage of men who reported not having engaged in any activity increased from 24% to 27%, while the percentage of women doing so decreased from 17% to 16%.

Similar trajectories can be seen for festivals and carnivals, literary events and attending live dance.

While we should not read too much into any individual change due to the large number of comparisons that we draw here, this does suggest a trend among around half of these different ways that people engage in arts and culture, showing increases in existing gaps between men and women. By contrast, where there were no significant differences between men and women in 2023/2024, these same trends persisted into 2024/2025.

Figure 4.8. Rates of attendance at different heritage sites in England (16+) by sex, 2024/2025



Source: DCMS Participation Survey 2024/2025; authors' elaboration.

Figure 4.8 shows how attendance at different heritage sites differs between men and women. In many cases there are no statistically significant differences. Where there are differences, these are generally small; the largest is in people visiting a park or garden with historic or artistic features, with 38% of men and 43% of women reporting having done so.

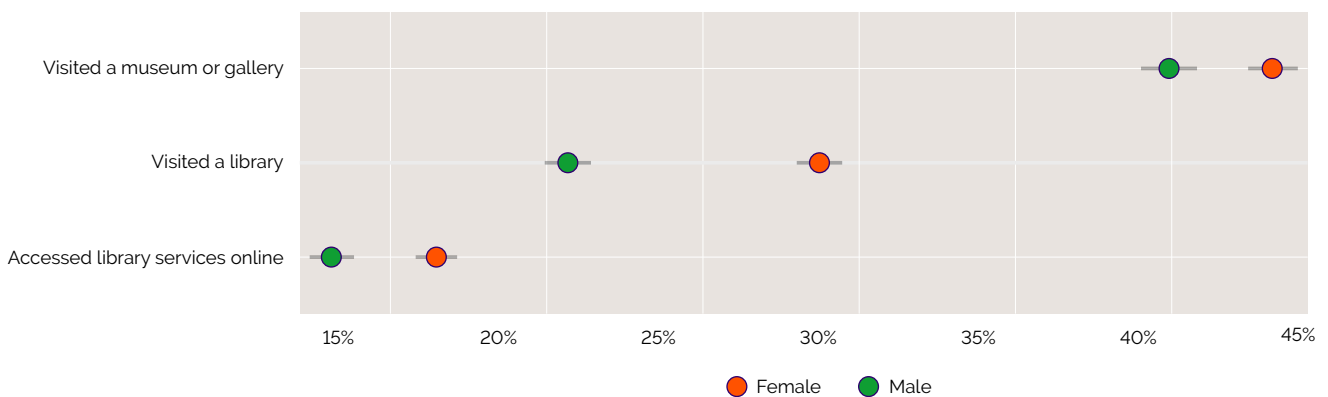
Unlike in engagement in different forms of arts and culture, in most cases we report here, any differences between men and women we show in 2024/2025 are similar to those we reported for 2023/2024. However, there are some small changes, namely:

- In 2023/2024, 28% of both men and women reported visiting a historic building open to the public, whereas in 2024/2025, the figure was the same for men, but for women it had increased to 30%. This is a statistically significant difference.

- At the same time, the percentages of both men and women attending a historic place of worship increased from 2023/2024 to 2024/2025. The percentages increased for women (from 22% to 25%) slightly more than for men (from 21% to 23%), leading to a small but statistically significant difference of 2%.
- Rates of attendance at sites connected with maritime heritage increased for both men (from 7% to 8%) and women (from 6% to 8%). This means that the difference in attendance for men and women is no longer statistically significant.

We should reiterate that these changes are small: in all three cases they represent women's engagement increasing by 1 percentage point or 2 more than men's.

Figure 4.9. Rates of attendance at museums and galleries and in-person and online use of libraries in England (16+) by sex, 2024/2025



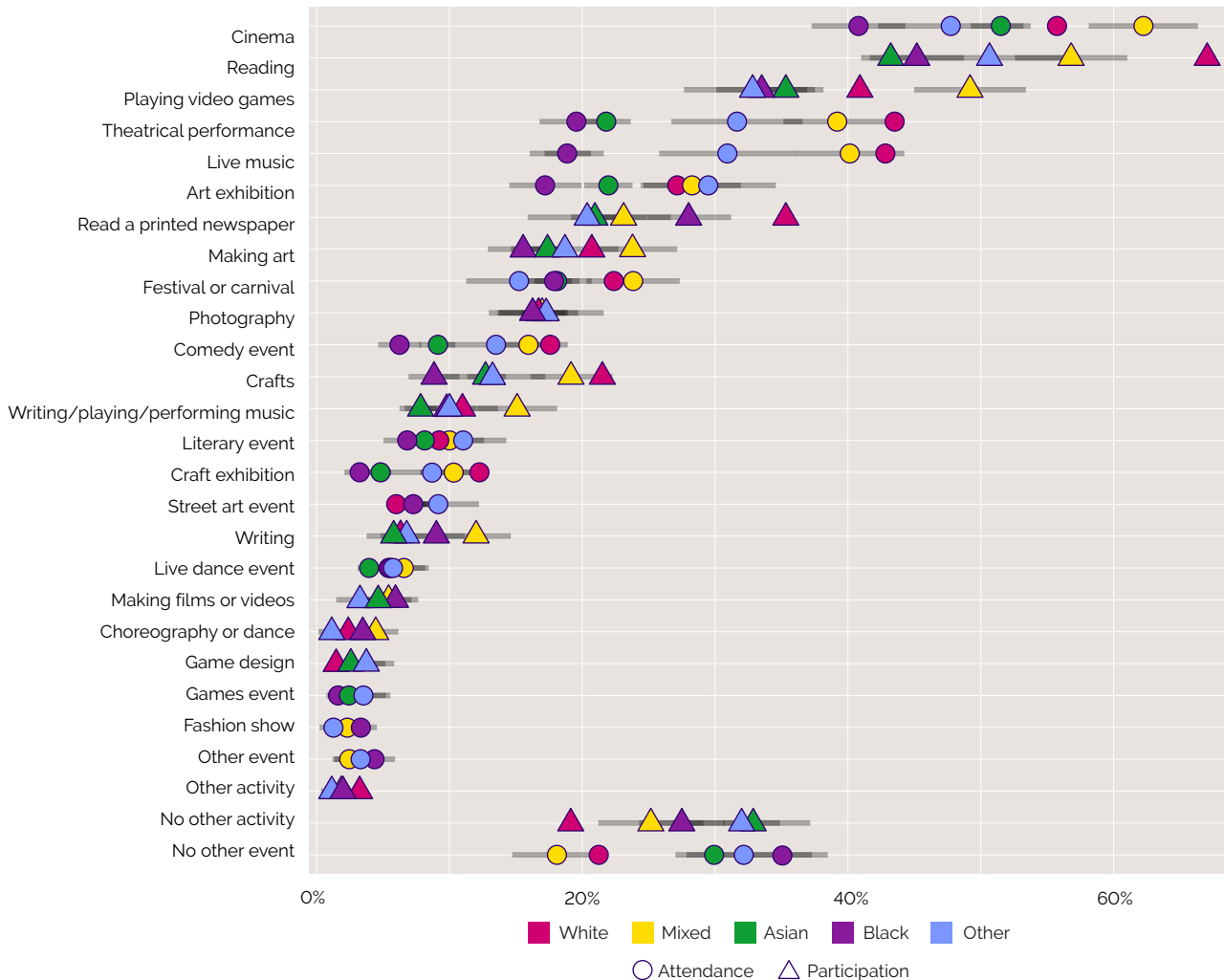
Source: DCMS Participation Survey 2024/2025; authors' elaboration.

Figure 4.9 shows that women are more likely than men to visit a museum or gallery, to visit a library and to access a library service online. The largest gap is for visiting a library, with 29% of women and 21% of men; for visiting a museum or gallery the figures are 43% and 40%, while for accessing library services online they are 17% and 13%, respectively.

The scale of these differences is similar in 2024/2025 compared with 2023/2024. In 2023/2024, we saw increases in engagement both with museums and galleries and with libraries that were similar for both men and women; for the 2024/2025 data, we see that these increases have stabilised.

4.2.3: Ethnic group

Figure 4.10. Rates of attendance and participation in cultural activities in England (16+) by ethnic group, 2024/2025



Source: DCMS Participation Survey 2024/2025; authors' elaboration.

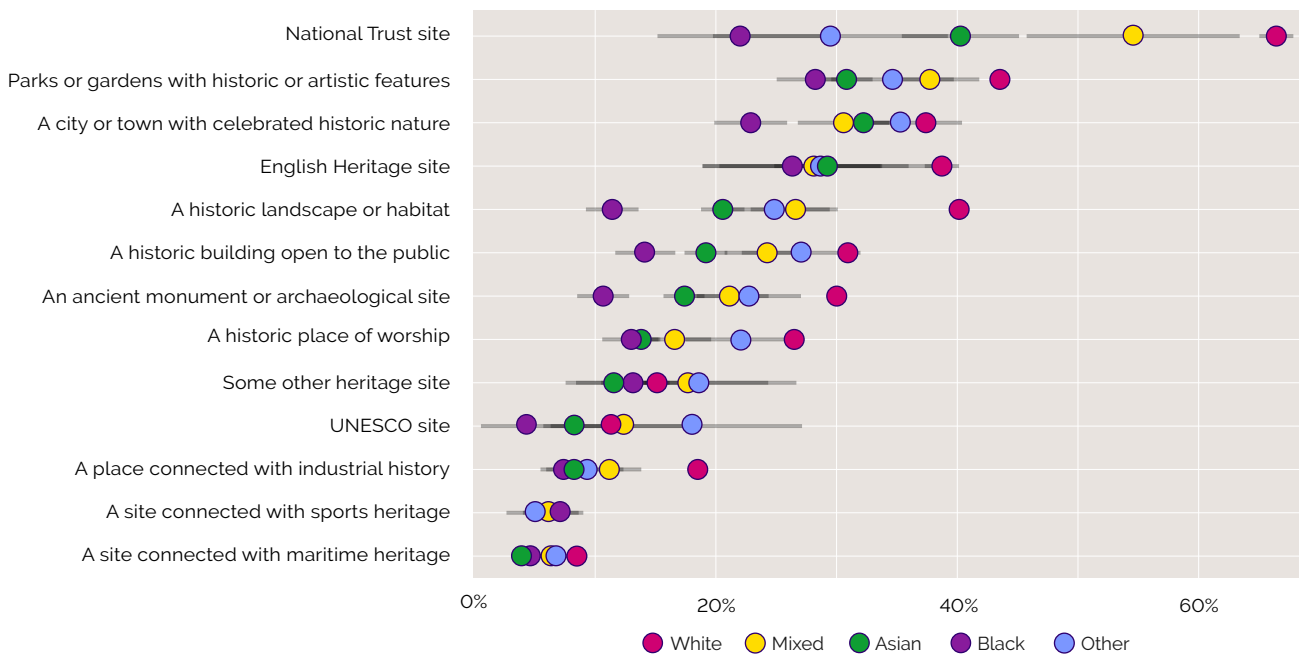
Figure 4.10 shows the percentages of people from different ethnic groups who reported engaging in different forms of arts and cultural activities in 2024/2025. Because of the sample size of the 2024/2025 Participation Survey, the confidence intervals around ethnic groups other than White people are fairly large. This means that it is more difficult to estimate changes between different ethnic groups' engagement in culture compared with 2023/2024, when the survey sample size was larger.

There are once again large differences between different ethnic groups' engagement in some kinds of culture. For example, 27% of White people report having attended an art gallery, compared with 22% of Asian people and 17% of Black people; for attending a theatrical performance, the figures are 44%, 22% and 20%, respectively. There are some activities where differences are not statistically significant, such as attending a live dance event. White people are the least likely to have attended none of these events (21%), compared with 30% of Asian people and 35% of Black people.

The differences we show for the 2024/2025 data are very similar to those for 2023/2024, and there are very few cases where any changes between groups are statistically significant. One exception to this is the 'Other activity' category. We showed in Figure 4.1 that the percentage of people reporting that they had participated in another artistic or cultural activity that was not presented in the survey had significantly increased. This change is driven primarily by White people, with 3% of White people responding positively to this in 2024/2025 compared with 1% in 2023/2024. There was a smaller, but statistically significant, increase for Asian people, from 0.5% to 1.2%, while changes for other ethnic groups are not statistically significant.

By contrast, the increases in the percentages of people reporting that they have attended another kind of activity are greater for Black (from 1.3% to 4.3%) and Asian people (from 1.3% to 4%) than they are for White people (from 1.7% to 2.7%). While the uncertainty around these precise figures is greater for Black and Asian people than it is for White people, what it does show is that, in 2024/2025, Black and Asian people are statistically significantly more likely to have attended one of these activities than White people, which was not the case in 2023/2024.

Figure 4.11. Rates of attendance at different heritage sites in England (16+) by ethnic group, 2024/2025



Source: DCMS Participation Survey 2024/2025; authors' elaboration.

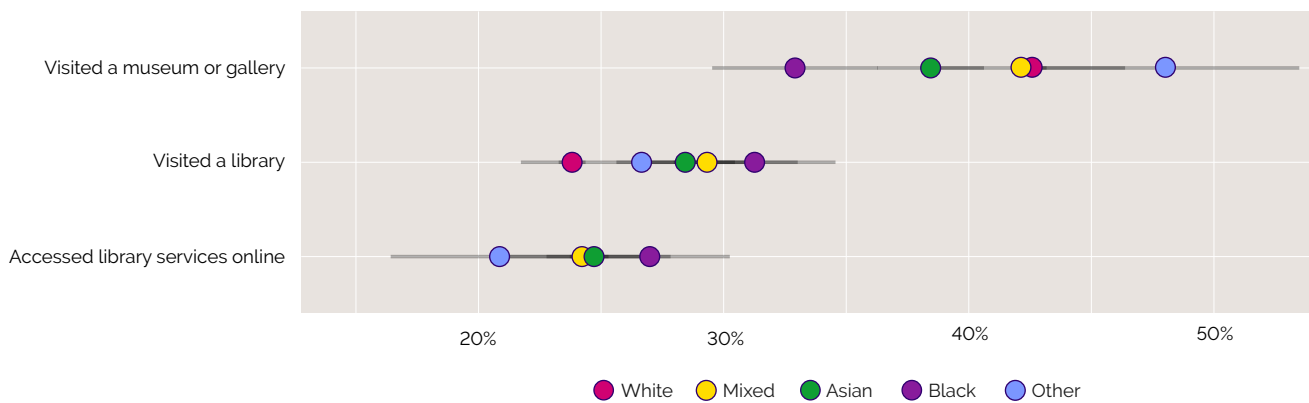
Figure 4.11 shows the rates of attendance at a range of different heritage sites between ethnic groups. For some site types (e.g. National Trust, English Heritage, UNESCO), the uncertainty associated with the estimates is particularly high, since not all respondents to the survey were asked these questions.

The differences between ethnic groups in attendance at a range of heritage sites remains high. 40% of White people reported visiting a historic landscape or habitat, compared with 21% of Asian people and 12% of Black people, while

for places connected with industrial history, the figures are 19%, 8% and 7%, respectively.

We do not see evidence of any significant changes between groups between the 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 waves of data. While there is some evidence that the increase in attendance at sites connected with maritime history is primarily concentrated among White people, with the percentage of people reporting attendance increasing from 6% to 8%, the greater uncertainty among all other ethnic groups means that we cannot assert this confidently.

Figure 4.12. Rates of attendance at museums and galleries and in-person and online use of libraries in England (16+) by ethnic group, 2024/2025



Source: DCMS Participation Survey 2024/2025; authors' elaboration.

Figure 4.12 shows differences between ethnic groups in their visits to museums and galleries and to libraries, and in their accessing library services online.

People in the White, Mixed and Other ethnic groups are the most likely to report visiting a museum or gallery, with figures of 43%, 42% and 48%, respectively. These figures for Black people and Asian people, at 33% and 38%, respectively, are statistically significantly lower.

For visiting libraries, and accessing library services online, the trend is different. White

people are the least likely to have visited a library, at 24%; this is statistically significantly lower than other groups other than the Other ethnic group, for whom confidence intervals are widest. Black people are the most likely to have visited, at 31%. These differences are even larger for accessing library services online, with 14% of White people, and more than 20% of each other ethnic group.

These differences between groups did not statistically significantly change between 2023/2024 and 2024/2025, although the confidence intervals are relatively wide.

4.2.4: Social class

Figure 4.13. Rates of attendance and participation in cultural activities in England (16+) by National Statistics Socio-economic Classification, 2024/2025



Source: DCMS Participation Survey 2024/2025; authors' elaboration.

Figure 4.13 reports the differences in engagement in different forms of culture between different social class groups, measured via the NS-SEC.

Differences between social class groups in engagement with a wide range of different activities remain large. 52% of people in managerial and professional roles report having attended a theatrical performance in the last twelve months; for people in intermediate

occupations, the figure is 43%, while for people in semi-routine and routine roles it is 26%, and for those who are long-term unemployed and have never worked, it is 19%. For live music the figures are 49%, 40%, 30% and 16%, respectively.

Broadly, these differences are larger in relation to attending events than participating in arts and culture. Taking crafts as an example, there are no statistically significant differences between

the percentages of people participating in managerial and professional occupations (23%) and in intermediate occupations (24%); there are also no statistically significant differences between people participating in semi-routine and routine occupations (15%) and those who are long-term unemployed and have never worked (14%). For photography as an artistic activity, rates are higher for people in managerial and professional jobs (20%) compared with other groups, each of which are around 14%, but these are not statistically significantly different from each other.

These differences are longstanding. The differences we see between different social class groups here are in almost all cases similar to those from the 2023/2024 survey. These include the decline in people reporting that they had read a printed newspaper, which is reflected across all social class groups. The one exception to this is in people who reported making art, such as drawing or painting; among people in managerial and professional occupations, the figure statistically significantly increased from 21% to 22%, as it did among people in intermediate occupations, from 18% to 20%.

Figure 4.14. Rates of attendance at different heritage sites in England (16+) by National Statistics Socio-economic Classification, 2024/2025



Source: DCMS Participation Survey 2024/2025; authors' elaboration.

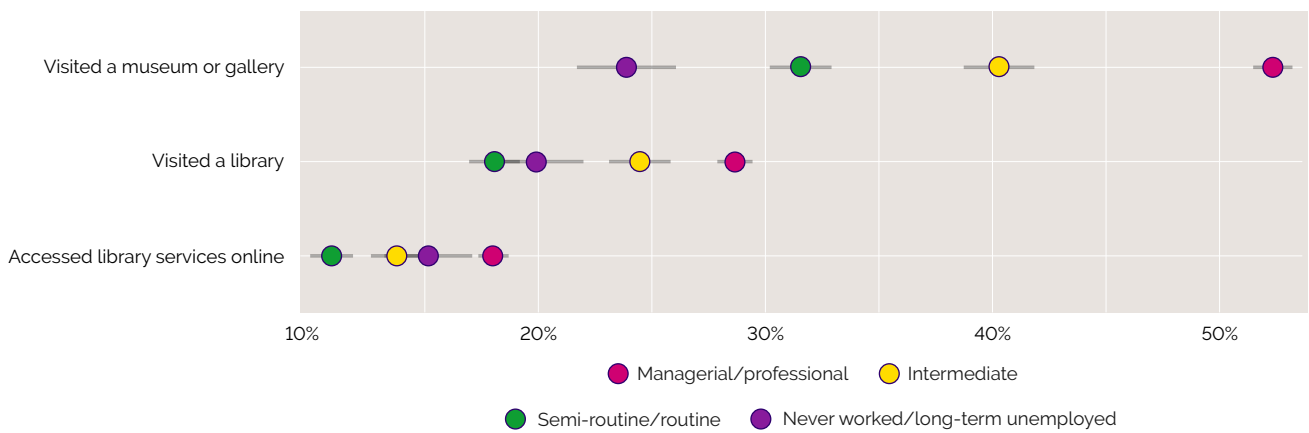
Figure 4.14 shows the percentages of people in different social class groups who report having attended different heritage sites. As with arts and cultural attendance, there are some differences in attendance of these sites: 67% of people in higher managerial occupations and 65% of people in intermediate occupations, compared with 51% of people in semi-routine and routine

occupations, and 40% of people who have never worked and who are long-term unemployed report having visited a National Trust site; for a historic landscape or habitat, the figures are 46%, 37%, 28% and 22%. For other types of sites, the differences are smaller, such as a city or town with a celebrated historic nature.

Most of the differences we report here are similar in scale to the equivalent figures for the previous year. There are exceptions among people who reported being long-term unemployed or having never worked, however, as these figures have increased for several different types of heritage site. These include parks and gardens with historic or artistic features (from 23% to 28%), a city or

town with a celebrated historic nature (from 21% to 26%) and historic buildings open to the public (from 13% to 20%). In these cases, this has meant that there are no significant differences between people who are long-term unemployed or have never worked, and those who work in semi-routine and routine occupations.

Figure 4.15. Rates of attendance at museums, galleries and libraries in England (16+) by National Statistics Socio-economic Classification, 2024/2025



Source: DCMS Participation Survey 2024/2025; authors' elaboration.

Figure 4.15 shows the differences in attending museums and galleries and libraries, and accessing library services online, between different social class groups.

The differences in visiting museums and galleries between social class groups are large; 52% of people in managerial and professional occupations reported doing so, compared with 40% of people in intermediate occupations, 32% of people in semi-routine and routine occupations and 24% of people who are long-term unemployed or who have never worked. All of these differences are statistically significant.

People in managerial and professional occupations are also the most likely to have

visited a library, but the differences are smaller: 29%, 25%, 18% and 20%, respectively.

For visiting a museum or gallery, the differences between social class groups in 2024/2025 are very similar to those we reported for 2023/2024. The percentage of people who have never worked and who report having visited a library decreased slightly between 2023/2024 and 2024/2025, but the other figures have remained fairly similar.

Finally, people in managerial and professional occupations are also the least likely to have accessed library services online, but these differences are smaller yet: 18%, 14%, 11% and 15%, respectively.

5

Arts, culture and heritage engagement: Evidence from the Scottish Household Survey

This section presents analysis of engagement in a wide range of arts, culture and heritage activities in Scotland. This allows us to extend our deep dive into Scotland's arts, culture and heritage sectors that we started in section 2, while also allowing comparisons with the data on arts, culture and heritage engagement in England that we set out in section 4.

Our analysis is derived from the Scottish Household Survey, which differs from the Participation Survey in a number of important ways. First, it covers a wide range of different topics, including perceptions of local councils, trust in public institutions, and discrimination and harassment. This can be contrasted with the Participation Survey, which focuses particularly on subject areas addressed as part of the DCMS portfolio. Second, data is collected primarily via face-to-face interviews rather than online or by post. This has, in principle, a number of advantages in terms of sample representativeness and data quality, but it is also much more resource-intensive per participant. Partly for this reason, the sample size of the Scottish Household Survey is significantly smaller than the Participation Survey. Finally, the content of the Scottish Household Survey is not identical each year, with batteries of questions being cycled in and out over time in order to cover as wide a range of issues as possible.

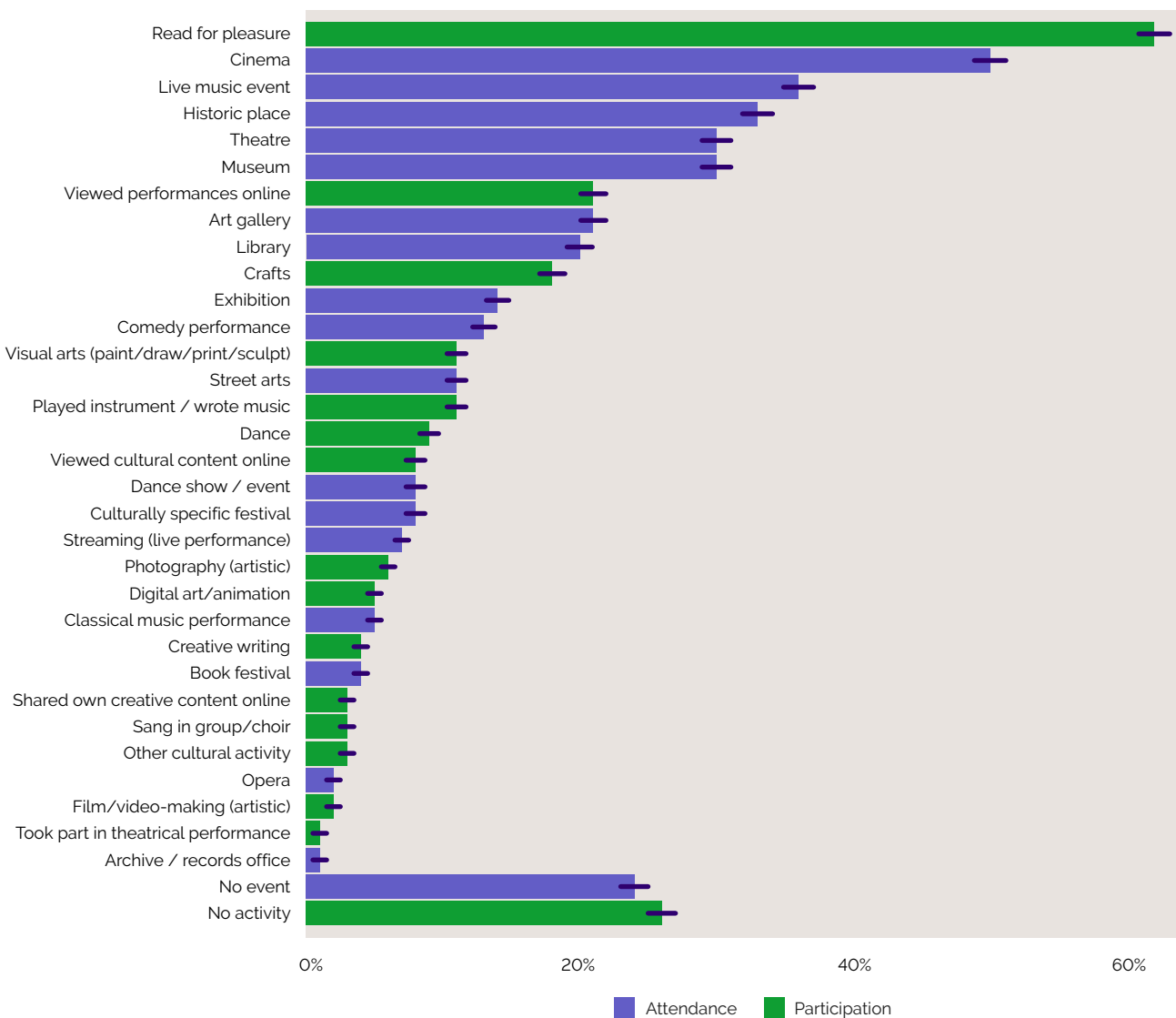
For this last reason, we present data based on the 2023 Scottish Household Survey, whose fieldwork period took place from February 2023 to February 2024 inclusive. Our analysis of similar data in England, shown in section 3 of this report, suggests that the overall rates of engagement in different arts, culture and heritage activities are likely to be similar for the more recent year, and that differences between groups are also likely to be similar.

However, due to a range of differences between the surveys – such as the different periods of fieldwork, the different methods of data collection and the different contexts in which individual questions are asked – we do not consistently present differences between England and Scotland in our analysis of these results. However, at the end of this section we present a summary of the similarities and differences between the English and Scottish data.

There is more to participation in the arts, culture and heritage sectors than the percentages of people who report that they have engaged in particular activities in the last twelve months. Qualitative evidence designed to provide wider context to the data available in the Scottish Household Survey (Scottish Government, 2024) shows that people in Scotland were

overwhelmingly positive about the role that culture and creativity play in their life, while also acknowledging that financial barriers, time scarcity and personal health issues restricted their overall cultural engagement. Our analysis is designed to present important information about the extent of cultural engagement across Scotland, rather than to present it as exhaustive.

Figure 5.1. Rates of attendance and participation in cultural activities in Scotland (16+), 2023



Source: Scottish Household Survey 2023; authors' elaborations.

Figure 5.1 shows the overall rates of people engaging in different forms of arts, culture and heritage in Scotland.

The most common activity is reading for pleasure, at 62%, followed by attending the cinema, at 50%. The other activities that 30% or more of the Scottish 16+ population engaged with are all forms of attendance: live music (36%), visiting a historic place (33%) and visiting a museum (33%). Most forms of cultural engagement are less common, with both playing a musical instrument or writing music and making art at 11%.

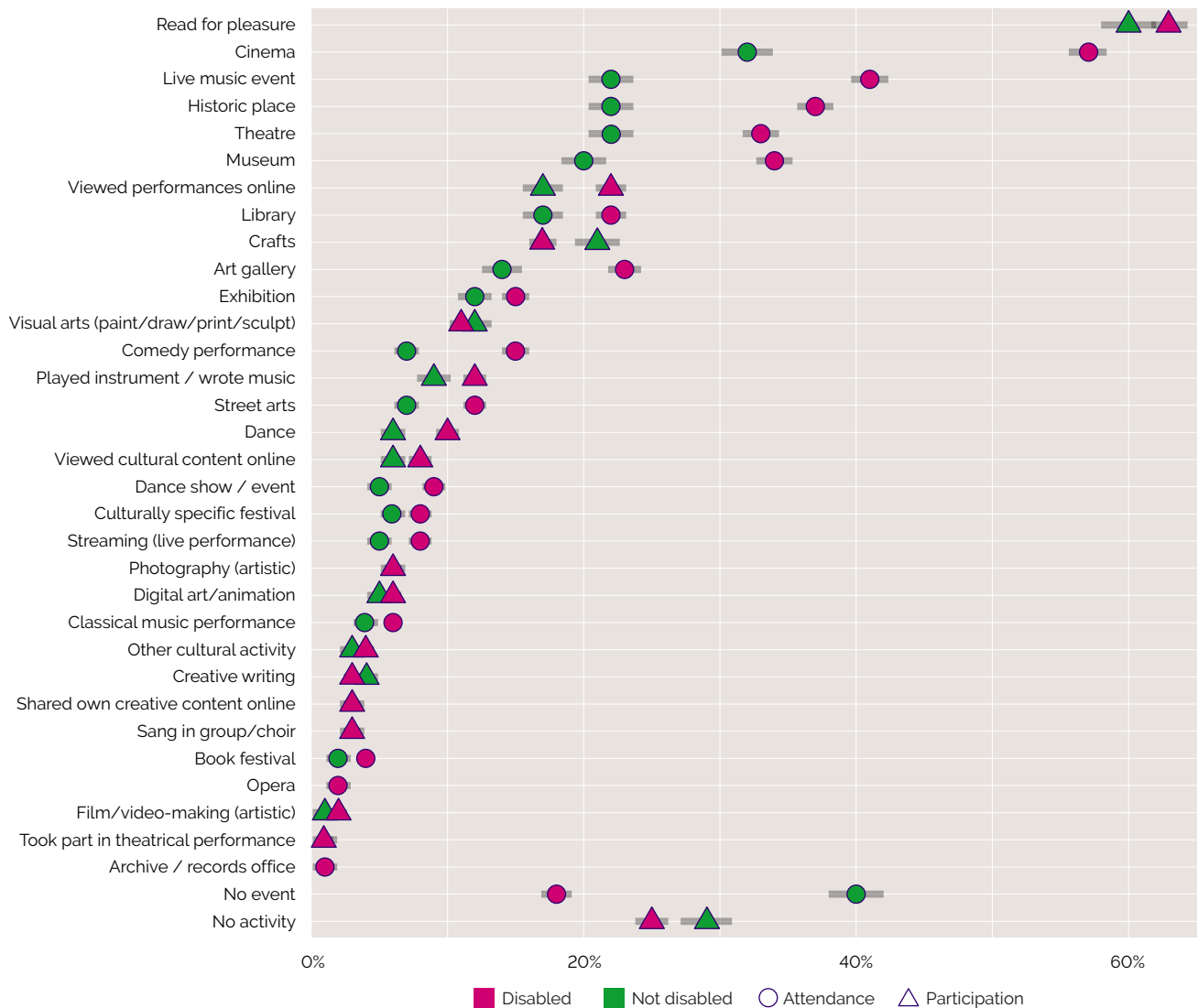
As with England, several activities are relatively uncommon. Fifteen types of attendance and participation involve more than 10% of the Scottish population, leaving seventeen

with fewer than 10%. This comprises a mix of different forms of attendance, such as dance shows, culturally specific festivals and opera, and different forms of participation, such as photography as an artistic activity, singing in a group or choir, or making films or videos as an artistic activity.

Several of these activities are measured in different ways from their equivalents in England. For example, the Participation Survey does not ask directly about opera, which was attended by 2% of the Scottish population; instead, this is captured in the broader theatrical performance category. This may partially explain why the percentage of people in Scotland who report having attended such a performance (30%) is lower than in England (39%).



Figure 5.2. Rates of attendance and participation in cultural activities in Scotland (16+) by disability status, 2023



Source: Scottish Household Survey 2023; authors' elaborations.

Figure 5.2 shows engagement in different forms of arts and culture by disabled people and people who are not disabled.

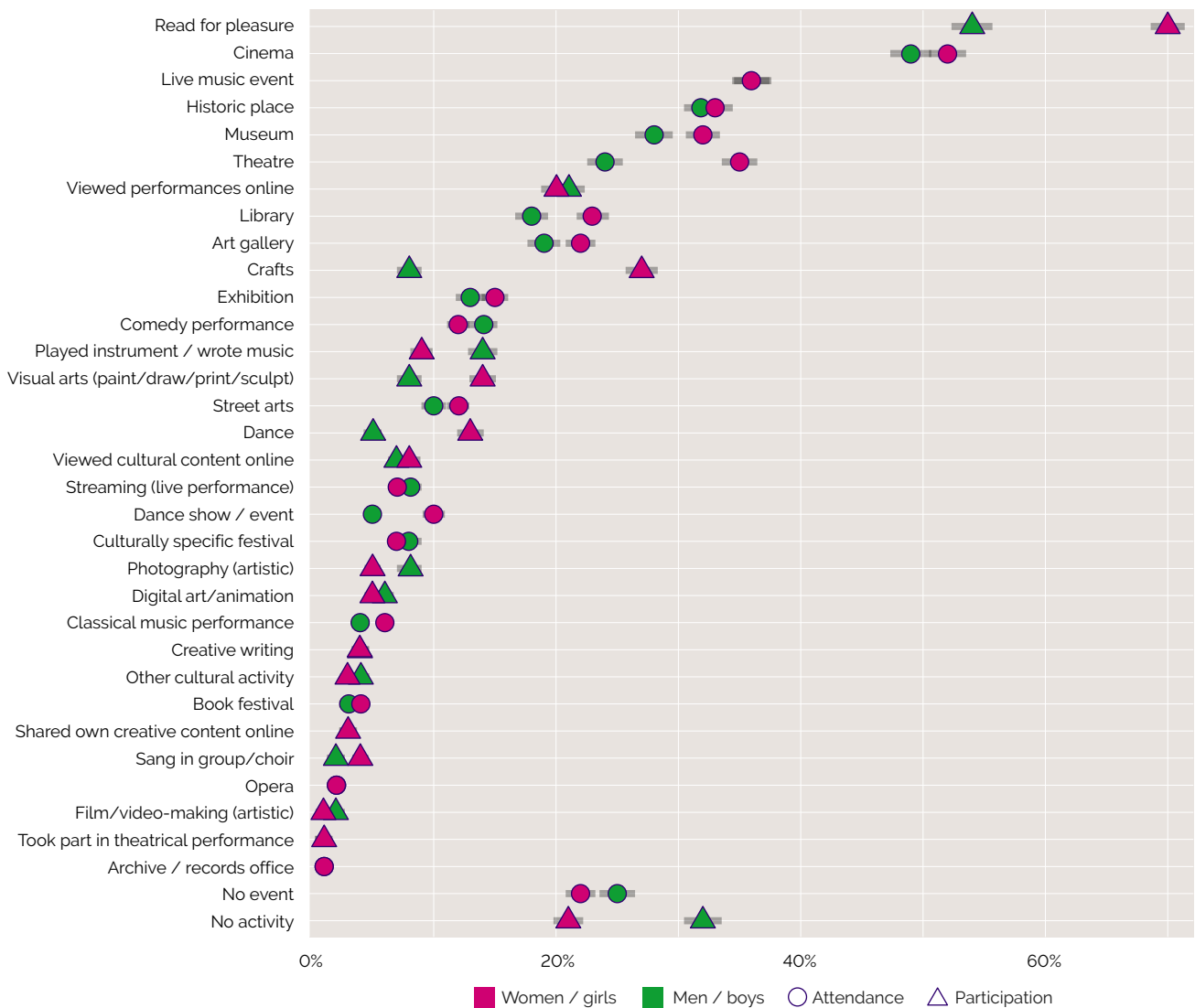
There are large differences in rates of engagement across a large number of cultural events. The largest absolute differences are for the most commonly attended activities, with 32% of disabled people reporting seeing a film at the cinema compared with 57% of people who are not disabled. The equivalent figures

for live music are 22% and 41%, respectively; for visiting a historic place, the figures are 22% and 37%, respectively, and for attending a theatrical performance, they are 22% and 33%, respectively. These differences are not only relevant to in-person events, as 17% of disabled people report having viewed performances online compared with 21% of people who are not disabled; similarly, for viewing cultural content online, the figures are 6% and 8%, respectively.

For most forms of cultural participation, there are no statistically significant differences between the rates of engagement between disabled people and people who are not disabled. This includes some of the most common activities, such as reading for pleasure, making art, and photography as an artistic

activity. However, there are two exceptions. Disabled people are more likely to participate in crafts, with a figure of 21%, compared to 17% of people who are not disabled. Disabled people are also less likely to participate in dance, with 6% reporting having done so, compared with 10% of people who are not disabled.

Figure 5.3. Rates of attendance and participation in cultural activities in Scotland (16+) by sex, 2023



Source: Scottish Household Survey 2023; authors' elaborations.

Figure 5.3 shows how rates of engagement across arts, culture and heritage vary between men and women.

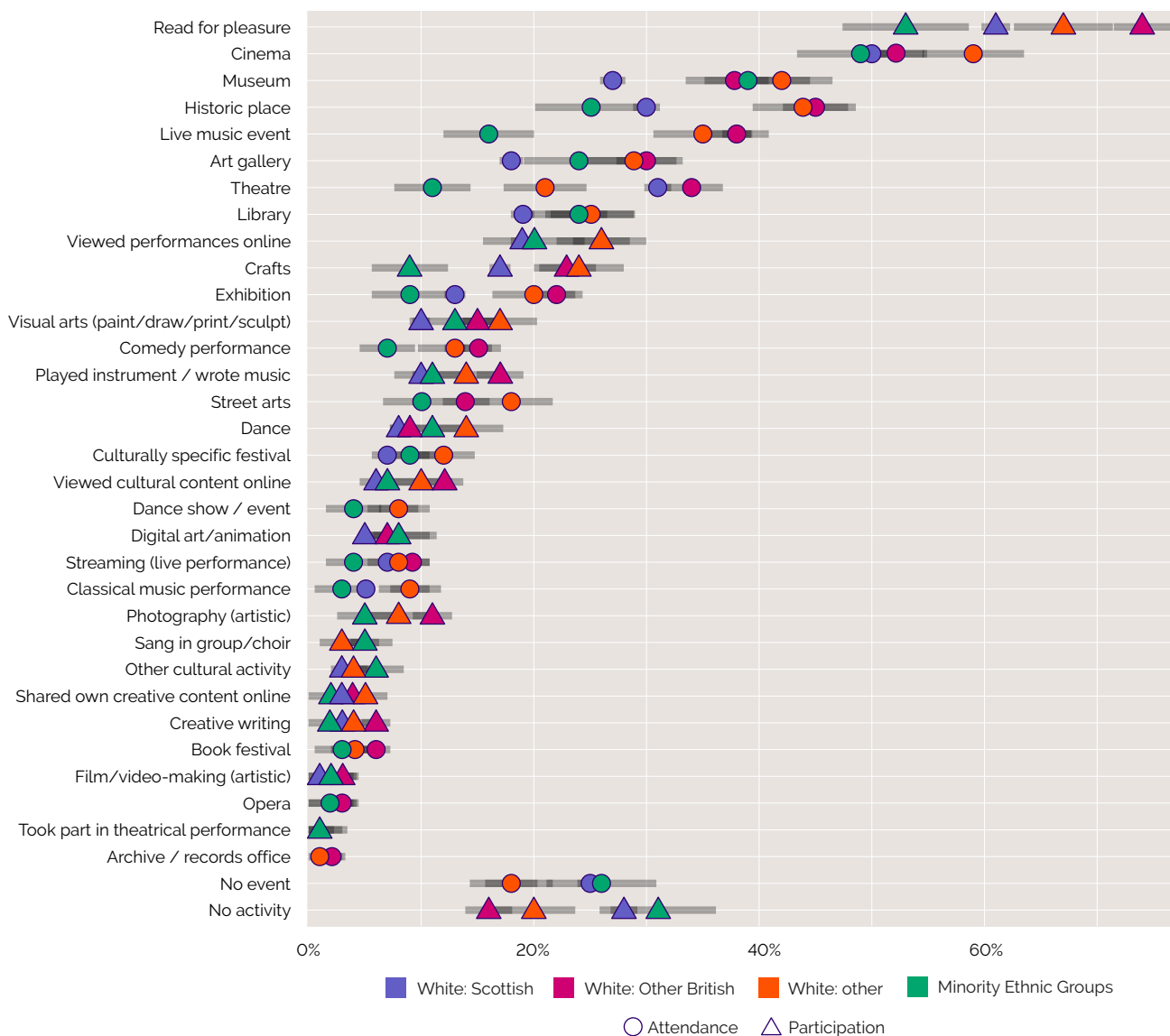
For many activities – both in attendance and participation – there are no statistically significant differences between men and

women. This includes activities that are more popular, such as seeing a film at a cinema and attending live music, as well as a wide range of different forms of attendance and participation, such as visiting an art exhibition or a comedy performance, engaging in creative writing, or making films or videos as an artistic activity.

There are some activities with statistically significant differences. In attendance, these include attending a theatrical performance, with 35% of women and 24% of men reporting doing so; attending a museum, with 32% of women and 28% of men; and attending live dance, with 10% of women and 5% of men. There are no forms of attendance where men are significantly more likely to attend than women.

In participation, the largest difference is for crafts, with 27% of women and 8% of men; women are also significantly more likely to participate in dance (13% of women compared to 5% of men), reading (70% of women compared to 54% of men), and singing (4% of women compared to 2% of men). Unlike attendance, there are some activities that men are significantly more likely to participate in, including photography (8% compared with 5%) and playing a musical instrument (14% and 9%).

Figure 5.4. Rates of attendance and participation in cultural activities in Scotland (16+) by ethnic group, 2023



Source: Scottish Household Survey 2023; authors' elaborations.

Figure 5.4 shows the differences in engagement between different ethnic groups in Scotland. Ethnicity is reported differently in the Scottish Household Survey relative to the Participation Survey, with differences drawn between White people who describe themselves as Scottish (White Scottish); other British, such as Welsh (White Other British); and another White ethnic group (White Other). A difference is also drawn between White people and minority ethnic groups.

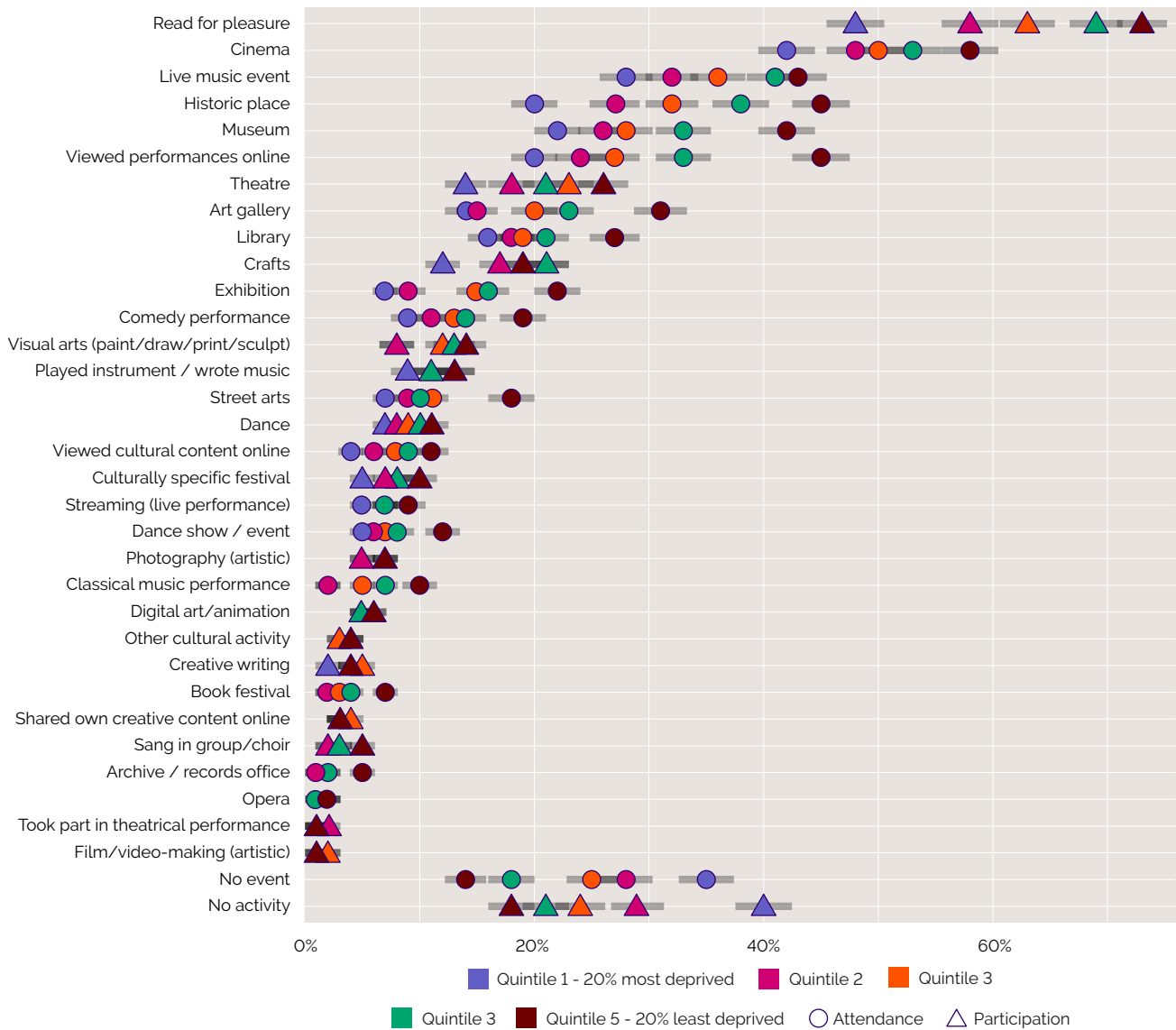
There are some statistically significant differences between ethnic groups' engagement in arts and culture in Scotland. White Other British people are the most likely to report reading for pleasure, at 74%; they are followed by White Other people at 71%, White Scottish people at 61%, and minority ethnic groups at 53%. All of these differences are statistically significant. For live music, the rates of engagement for the three White groups are similar at around 38%; the figure for minority ethnic groups is 16%.

In attendance, other differences can be seen for other activities including attending the theatre (White Scottish at 31% compared to

minority ethnic groups at 11%); visiting an art gallery (White Scottish being the least likely to visit at 18%, which was statistically significantly less likely compared to all other groups); and attending classical music performances (where White Other British and White Other, at 9%, are statistically significantly more likely to attend than White Scottish people at 5% and minority ethnic groups at 3%).

There are differences for some forms of participation. The largest is for crafts, where the figure for White Other and White Other British is 24%, compared with 17% for White Scottish and 9% for minority ethnic groups. There are also differences for making art, such as painting, with 10% of White Scottish people compared with 15% of White Other British people and 17% of White Other people. While the sample sizes of each group make comparing each activity difficult, these differences are most clearly exemplified by the fact that 31% of people in minority ethnic groups and 28% of White Scottish people reported participating in none of these activities, compared with 20% of White Other people and 16% of White Other British people.

Figure 5.5. Rates of attendance and participation in cultural activities in Scotland (16+) by Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2023



Source: Scottish Household Survey 2023; authors' elaborations.

Figure 5.5 shows how the percentages of people engaging in different forms of arts and culture across Scotland vary by Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) quintile.

SIMD is an area-level measure of deprivation, rather than a household- or individual-level measure. This means that just because someone lives in an area of relatively higher deprivation, it does not follow that they themselves are more deprived. It is a helpful

measure to understand differences between households; however, it is important to be cautious about the extents of any inferences.

There are differences between attendance by SIMD quintile in almost all of these activities. In almost every case, the difference between the 20% most deprived areas and the 20% least deprived areas is statistically significant; in many cases, there are other statistically significant differences as well.

Starting with cultural attendance, the differences in seeing a film at a cinema are among the smaller ones, with 58% of people in the least deprived 20% of areas having attended, compared with 42% of people in the most deprived 20% of areas. For attending the theatre, the differences are larger – 45% of people in the least deprived 20% of areas reported having attended, which is statistically significantly higher than all four other quintiles, while the figure for the 20% most deprived areas is 20%. A similar trend can be seen for types of attendance including visiting art galleries (31% compared with 14%, respectively), street art events (18% compared with 7%,

respectively), and classical music concerts (10% compared with 2%, respectively).

For cultural participation, there is a more mixed picture. For some activities, differences are smaller: 13% of people in the 20% least deprived areas reported participating in visual arts, which is the same as the middle quintile; the equivalent figure for the 20% most deprived areas is 9%. For dance, the equivalent figures are 11% and 7%, respectively. However, in some cases, differences are larger. 73% of people in the 20% least deprived areas reported reading for pleasure, compared with 48% of people in the most deprived areas.

The way that data on cultural engagement is collected in England and Scotland means that it is difficult to draw reliable comparisons. However, in this section, we summarise the cases where the differences between the data in the Participation Survey, based in England, and the data in the Scottish Household Survey differ significantly.

Overall figures: For most forms of cultural engagement, differences between England and Scotland are small, if present at all. For crafts, and composing and writing music, the difference is within the margin of error for both surveys. In other cases, differences are larger – for example, the percentage of people reporting engaging in photography as an artistic activity is 6% in Scotland, compared with 16% in England. This may be explained by differences in the precise question phrasing as opposed to by different behaviour.

However, there is a trend where a slightly smaller percentage of people in Scotland reported attending different types of events compared with England. Examples of this include live music (36% compared with 39%), the cinema (50% compared with 54%), and comedy performances (13% compared with 16%). However, this may also be explained by differences in the way that the surveys are delivered.

Disability: Some of the differences in attendance between disabled people and people who are not disabled in Scotland are larger than their equivalent figures in England. For example, 46% of disabled people in England reported watching a film at the cinema, compared with 32% of disabled people, while the figure for people who are not disabled is 58% and 57%, respectively. Attending live music is similar: for people who are not disabled the figures are 41% for Scotland and 42% for England; for disabled people, the figures are 22% and 34%, respectively. However, the trends for cultural participation are similar; in both countries, there are few differences other than crafts, where disabled people are more likely to participate.

Gender: Where different art forms see different rates of engagement between men and women, the scales of these differences are broadly the same across England and Scotland. Where the gaps between men's and women's engagement differ between England and Scotland – for example, in the cases of dance, and photography as an artistic activity – these are cases where rates of engagement overall vary significantly between England and Scotland.

Because of the way that ethnic group, social class and indices of multiple deprivation are operationalised in the different surveys, it is not possible to draw reliable comparisons between the two countries on these measures.

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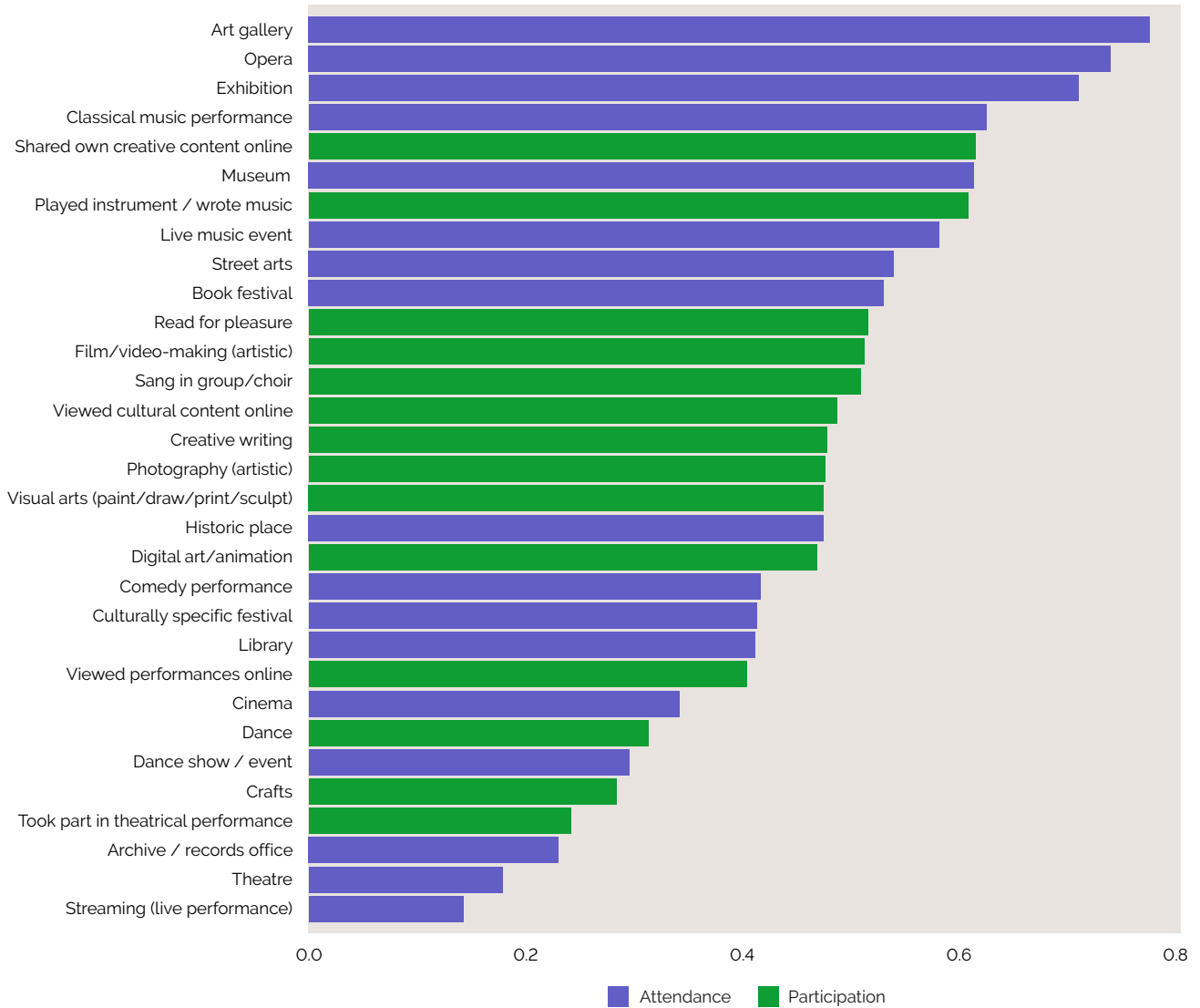
Relationships between arts, culture and heritage occupations and engagement across Scotland

Our final analysis in this report brings together the previous two sections, showing how the levels of employment in arts, culture and heritage occupations across Scottish council areas correlates with engagement in different forms of arts, culture and heritage, both in terms of people's attendance and participation.

We have shown that the distribution of arts, culture and heritage workers in Scotland looks very different from the equivalent in England. In England, the densest concentrations are all in London; the largest concentrations elsewhere are also in urban areas. In Scotland, by contrast, some of the highest concentrations are in rural areas, such as Na h-Eileanan Siar. This difference between the nations may also accompany a difference in the relationship between occupations and engagement. In this section, we therefore investigate this relationship in more detail.

Because of the design and sample size of the Scottish Household Survey, there is a relatively high uncertainty around the percentage estimates of people engaging in different forms of arts, culture and heritage. In the case of Angus, these estimates are based on a sample of around 200 people; overall, the samples per council area are lower than 300 for twenty-four out of thirty-two council areas. For Angus, this means that confidence intervals are around 3.5% where it is estimated that 5% of the population has engaged, rising to around 8% where it is estimated that 50% of the population has engaged. Overall, this means that it is important to be cautious about the strength of the interpretation of these findings.

Figure 6.1. Correlations between percentages of people engaging in different forms of arts, culture and heritage, and percentages of people working in arts, culture and heritage occupations, by council area



Source: National Records for Scotland Table CT_0387_2022 and Scottish Household Survey 2023; authors' elaborations.

Figure 6.1 shows the correlations between engaging in each of the different forms of arts, culture and heritage in the Scottish Household Survey, and the percentages of people working in arts, culture and heritage occupations (see section 2) by council area. A higher correlation,

denoted by a longer bar, means that the relationship between the percentages of people engaging and of people working in these occupations is strong; a lower correlation means that it is weaker.

All of these correlations are positive, which means that, overall, areas with higher percentages of people working in arts, culture and heritage occupations also have higher percentages of people engaging in each form of arts, culture and heritage. However, there is also significant variation in the strengths of these correlations. The strongest correlations are all with different forms of cultural attendance: attending an art gallery, attending an opera and attending an exhibition. Among forms of cultural participation, the strongest relationships are with sharing creative content online and with playing an instrument or writing music.

The weakest correlations are also with different forms of attendance: watching a live performance via streaming, attending a theatre, and visiting an archive or a records office.

Correlations are also relatively weak for two forms of participation: crafts and taking part in a theatrical performance.

In O'Brien, Taylor and Wang (2025), we published similar results for England. Overall, the relationships between arts, culture and heritage engagement and occupations are fairly similar, but the weak correlation between arts, culture and heritage employment and attending theatrical performances that we see in Scotland is very different from the stronger correlation in England.

For this reason, we next highlight a series of relationships with individual forms of arts, culture and heritage engagement, to investigate particular forms of this engagement in more detail.

Figure 6.2. Scatterplots of the relationships between engaging in six different forms of arts, culture and heritage, and percentages of people working in arts, culture and heritage occupations, by council area



Source: National Records for Scotland Table CT_0387_2022 and Scottish Household Survey 2023; authors' elaborations.

The upper part of Figure 6.2 illustrates the relationships between people working in arts, culture and heritage occupations and attendance at different forms of cultural events, by council area. The strengths of the relationships vary: there is a strong relationship between the percentages of people who have attended an art gallery and who work in arts, culture and heritage occupations, while the same relationships with comedy performances and theatre are much weaker.

In the cases of both comedy performances and theatre, these weak relationships are partly driven by the low percentages of people who have attended in Na h-Eileanan Siar and in Orkney. In both cases, these council areas have low percentages of people attending, despite relatively high percentages of people working in arts, culture and heritage occupations – 1.4% and 1.3%, respectively, compared with a Scottish average of 0.5%. Na h-Eileanan Siar has the fewest people reporting attending the theatre, while Orkney has the fourth fewest; for comedy performances, the figures are the third fewest and fewest overall, respectively. While there is infrastructure for these art forms in these council areas, such as the An Tobar and Mull Theatre in Na h-Eileanan Siar, there is less than in the other council areas with relatively high

percentages of people working in arts, culture and heritage occupations, such as Edinburgh and Glasgow.

By contrast, the relationships between participating in different forms of arts, culture and heritage and corresponding rates of people working in these occupations is not driven by these council areas; Orkney has the (joint) highest percentage of people participating in crafts of all council areas, and both council areas are in the top ten for both playing an instrument or writing music. In addition, Shetland – which has a relatively lower percentage of people working in arts, culture and heritage occupations, at 0.84% – has one of the highest percentages of people playing an instrument or writing music, and of participating in crafts.

These figures have been included to illustrate some of the variation in these relationships. Like in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, Scotland's largest cities host the largest percentages of people working in arts, culture and heritage occupations; however, unlike in England, some of the council areas with relatively high levels of people working in these occupations are more rural. This leads to more complicated and different relationships with attendance and participation.

7 Conclusions

This report represents an ongoing commitment to reporting consistent data on audiences and workforces for arts, culture and heritage where possible, along with also reporting on similar data that is collected on a less frequent basis. Our analysis largely shows stability in those same measures, although with some variation. Our analysis also shows some changes over time, as well as some differences between Scotland and England and Wales.

In this report, we have published data for the first time on the geography of the arts, culture and heritage workforce in Scotland. This data shows that the council areas with the largest percentages of people in arts, culture and heritage occupations are Edinburgh (1.9%), Glasgow (1.7%), and Na h-Eileanan Siar (1.4%). Out of thirty-two council areas, there are fourteen with at least 1% of workers who are in these occupations. Unlike in England, we do not see strong patterns of agglomeration, as the council areas with the highest percentages of people working in these occupations are in the Central Belt, but also in Na h-Eileanan Siar, Orkney and the Borders. There is significant variation in the geography of individual arts, culture and heritage occupations; for example, Stirling is the council area with the largest percentage of managers and directors in the creative industries.

The data on the arts, culture and heritage workforce derived from the LFS largely shows stability over the period we have highlighted for analysis. There is only one statistically significant change since we previously reported on this same data, which is that, relative to women, the percentage of men working in film, television, video, radio and photography occupations fell by a statistically significant degree during 2025. It remains to be

seen whether this change will continue, level out or reverse. In other occupational groups, and in other measures including disability, ethnic group, social class background and contract type, we do not see changes.

The same is true of engagement in arts, culture and heritage activities. In England, we saw consistent increases in the percentages of people engaging in different forms of arts, culture and heritage in the period since the Covid-19 pandemic, with growth in most activities each year from 2021/2022 to 2023/2024 inclusive. In our analysis of the 2024/2025 data, we have seen a levelling out of engagement numbers, with very few activities seeing further increases relative to the previous year. The only change we do see of more than 1 percentage point is in reading a printed newspaper, where there was a decline from 35% to 33%.

Overall, the inequalities in cultural engagement that we have previously reported have persisted. Indeed, some longstanding gender gaps, where women are more likely to engage in activities such as reading for pleasure, attending the theatre, and participating in crafts, have, if anything, widened, with men's engagement having decreased.

Our analysis of the Scottish Household Survey shows variation in engagement with different forms of arts, culture and heritage across Scotland. Some activities show large percentages of the population engaging, such as reading for pleasure (63%) and watching a film at a cinema (50%). We observe inequalities in many forms of cultural engagement, as we do in England – between men and women, between different ethnic groups, between disabled people and people who are not disabled, and between people living in areas of different levels of deprivation. While some of these differences cannot be compared with England, because of the ways that they are measured, the differences between disabled people and people who are not disabled in their attendance at cultural events are in many cases, wider.

Finally, the relationships between employment in arts, culture and heritage occupations and engagement in different forms of arts, culture and heritage are, in many cases, weaker in Scotland than they are in England. These

relationships are particularly weak in the case of attending and participating in theatre, and in crafts. The relative weakness of these relationships compared with England can be explained by the fact that some council areas, such as Na h-Eileanan Siar and Orkney, have small percentages of people attending some activities, but relatively high percentages of people working in arts, culture and heritage occupations. This difference is particularly salient in areas such as these where relatively large percentages of people work as artists.

Overall, our analysis in this report shows that, while there has been some variation in employment and engagement in arts, culture and heritage, and that there are some differences between England and Scotland, we see more trends in common than we see changes. The post-pandemic levelling out of arts, culture and heritage engagement at the same time accompanies a stabilising of inequalities.



8 Policy considerations

This report's deep dive on Scottish data suggests several policy implications for Scotland's arts, culture and heritage sectors. At the same time, and as the analysis has demonstrated, there are significant similarities in the issues confronting all of the UK's arts, culture and heritage sectors. For example, participation and employment rates have clearly remained stable over time, but at the same time, inequalities remain deeply embedded everywhere in the UK.

The first policy consideration of this report is on inequalities. Participation and employment continue to vary significantly by disability, socioeconomic background, ethnicity, gender and geographical location.

In Scotland, participation differs sharply according to deprivation level. People living in the least deprived areas are significantly more likely to attend cultural events than those in the most deprived areas. Disabled people are also consistently less likely to engage with many forms of culture. Participation gaps are often larger in Scotland than in England. At the beginning of a new administration in Scotland, the implications are clear: persistent inequalities mean isolated interventions are unlikely to produce meaningful change. They require longer-term structural change and coordinated policy action.

In this context, it will be important to target the specific barriers faced by underrepresented groups, particularly disabled people, minority ethnic communities, and people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

Second, and closely connected to inequalities, is good and fair work in the arts, culture and heritage sectors. Scotland has been a leading site for the good work agenda in the creative industries, including in the arts, culture and heritage sectors. Our analysis shows that across the UK there has been little statistically significant movement in workforce representation by disability, ethnicity

or socioeconomic background. The findings suggest that structural barriers to entry and progression in the arts, culture and heritage sectors remain. This reinforces the importance of delivering the ambitions set out in Scotland's Culture Strategy Action Plan around diversity, inclusion and fair work.

Geography and place are important to the challenges facing arts, culture and heritage workforces and audiences across the UK, which leads us on to the third set of policy implications. Our analysis of Scotland illustrates the importance of the potential of different places within the UK's cultural economy.

For example, Scotland's cultural workforce is distributed across a diverse range of places, including islands, rural communities and smaller towns. Edinburgh and Glasgow have the highest overall concentrations of arts, culture and heritage workers, but several rural and island areas also show strong concentrations of cultural employment. Na h-Eileanan Siar, for example, has one of the highest proportions of artists in all of Scotland.

This challenges the assumption that cultural production is usually concentrated within large urban centres. This finding reinforces Creative PEC's previous evidence on the existence of rural and coastal micro-clusters as small engines of growth for the creative industries, especially given the correlation between arts, culture and heritage assets and creative industries firms located in such spaces.

At the same time, the relationship between local cultural employment and local audience engagement is uneven. Some areas with relatively large arts, culture and heritage workforces have comparatively low levels of attendance at such activities (e.g. as seen for theatre or comedy). As highlighted in our previous reports on arts, culture and heritage audiences and workforces, this suggests that cultural production and cultural consumption are not always occurring in the same places.

Addressing these issues will mean investing in rural and island infrastructure and supporting local venues and cultural spaces. More broadly, it requires wider investment into strengthening transport, digital connectivity and affordable workspaces for arts, culture and heritage workers. Regional collaboration between local authorities may also help strengthen cultural ecosystems and encourage the sustainability of existing creative corridors, such as the one linking Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee together (Siepel, Ramirez-Guerra and Rathi, 2023).

The need for investment, across all three of these sets of policy implications, is clear. As noted in the introduction, the context for our analysis has been a series of governance and funding reviews of arts, culture and heritage sectors across the UK. All of these reviews and subsequent policy responses have identified financial pressures facing arts, culture and heritage sectors. Reviews in both Scotland and England have described the situation as a funding crisis.

Across the UK, cultural organisations face continuing rises in operational costs, continuing reductions in local authority spending and increasing financial precarity in a difficult fiscal landscape nationally and internationally. As governments increasingly recognise the wider social and economic value of culture, including its contribution to health and wellbeing, education, local economies, tourism and community cohesion, there is a disconnect between the aims of policymakers and the sectors' reality.

In this context, cross-portfolio collaboration will become increasingly important. Embedding culture within wider policy agendas such as health, education and community development could help to broaden funding streams while strengthening the case for sustained investment. Partnership working between national government, local authorities, cultural organisations, universities and community stakeholders will be essential. This is an area for national policymakers and sector bodies to consider in their work. This will differ across the four nations of the UK, due to the devolution of a number of important policy areas. However, the importance of collaboration across portfolios applies in all cases.

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Data statement

All Labour Force Survey and Participation Survey datasets used in this report are safeguarded, meaning that the risk of identifiability is remote due to the anonymisation treatment applied to the data and the licence under which they are made available. They were accessed via the lead author's account at the UK Data Service.

The analysis of the Scottish Household Survey presented in this report is based on spreadsheets made available by the Scottish Government, which are freely available at the link in the Data reference list.

The Scotland's Census 2022 data used in this report is a commissioned table due to be released under the Open Government Licence. Details are available at <https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/census-results/download-data/commissioned-tables/>.

The authors remain responsible for any errors or omissions in the analysis.

Glossary

A **census** is an official count of a population, usually within a given country.

Census 2021 is the census that took place in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in 2021, continuing a pattern where censuses took place every ten years. In Scotland, the census was delayed by a year due to the Covid-19 pandemic and therefore took place in 2022.

A **council area** is a general term for an administrative unit in Scotland, roughly analogous to a local authority in the other nations of the UK. The median population of a council area is around 120,000.

Creative industries refer to the industries which have creativity at their core. Definitions of creative industries vary in different countries.

Cultural engagement is defined in this report as any form of engagement in culture, including both attendance and participation. We adopt the definitions used in major surveys to aid comparison.

Cultural attendance is the part of cultural engagement that involves attending. It includes attending performances (for example, live music) and visiting sites (for example, a historic building).

Cultural participation is the part of cultural engagement that involves activity. It includes activities in groups (for example, singing in a choir) and on one's own (for example, practising music at home). It can take place either at home or elsewhere. The boundaries between cultural attendance and cultural participation are not always clear: for example, in the Participation Survey, reading for pleasure is grouped as part of cultural participation.

Local authority is a general term for an administrative district, capturing units including unitary authorities, London boroughs and metropolitan districts. They are often referred to as councils. In England, the average size of a local authority is around 170,000.

The **National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC)** provides a measure of socioeconomic position based on a person's occupation and employment status. It is a nested classification, with 14-class, 8-class (analytical) and 3-class (simplified) versions.

A finding is **statistically significant** if it would be very unlikely to be the case under the null hypothesis. In our analysis, we refer to statistically significant differences; that is, we only draw attention to them when they are likely to be genuine differences in the population, rather than differences due to survey sampling. All references to statistically significant differences are at the 95% level.

A **survey** is a data collection method, in which a sample of people is asked a series of questions. The surveys we use in this report are National Statistics, meaning that they adhere to a set of guidelines set by the Office for National Statistics. This means that their results can be generalised to the relevant population.

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