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State of the Nations research series

UK ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE

AUDIENCES + WORKFORCE

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Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre

Led by Newcastle University with RSA

About the Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre

The Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre (Creative PEC) works to support the growth of the UK's creative industries through the production of independent and authoritative evidence and policy advice. Led by Newcastle University, with the Royal Society of Arts and funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, Creative PEC comprises a core consortium of Newcastle University, Work Advance, the University of Sussex and the University of Sheffield.

For more details visit **www.pec.ac.uk** and **@CreativePEC**

About the State of the Nations reports

The Creative PEC's 'State of the Nations' series analyses the latest data across four thematic areas to inform the development of policies relating to the creative industries. Their scope is the whole of the United Kingdom, and wherever possible data is presented for all the nations and regions.

Regular reports on each area will be published annually over the five years of the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funding. The themes and corresponding Research Partners are:

- R&D, Innovation and Clusters (University of Sussex)
- Internationalisation (Newcastle University)
- Arts, Culture and Heritage Sectors (University of Sheffield)
- Education, Skills and Talent (Work Advance).

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Disclaimer

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UK ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE

AUDIENCES + WORKFORCE

State of the Nations research series

Contents

Foreword

It is widely acknowledged in public policy that arts, culture and heritage define who we are, help us understand where we are coming from, and potentially allow us to forge a better future. However, the statistics suggest that they are also major economic sectors in their own right. Figures from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport suggest that the cultural sector – which includes sub-sectors like the arts; film, TV and music; museums, and the operation of historical sites and similar visitor attractions – accounts for 703,000 jobs and contributes £30.6 billion in gross value added to the UK economy.

As such, policymakers charged with growing the creative industries (which includes the cultural sector) need access to high-quality, timely data on supply and demand for arts, culture and heritage, just as they do for other sectors. This is why Creative PEC has chosen to make the arts, culture and heritage sectors one of four priorities for our State of the Nations publication series, which will produce consistent quantitative indicators to inform policies for the creative industries in all the nations and regions that make up the UK. In this report, we analyse supply issues through the prism of the arts, culture and heritage workforce, and demand issues through arts, culture and heritage engagement and participation data.

But what constitutes the arts, culture and heritage sectors for the purposes of policy formulation is surely even more problematic than it is in other areas of economic policy, for the simple reason that one person's conception of arts, culture and heritage can differ so greatly from another's. In this publication, we adopt a pragmatic approach, and report on data where high-quality, publicly available official data sources can be found, while fully acknowledging the risks of painting an incomplete picture. Inevitably this means that less formally organised activities – both employment and engagement – are less well represented, but this does not mean they are any less important for policymakers. We hope in future issues to address gaps in the data where we can through exploring more novel data sources.

As ever, I welcome any comments on what we have produced and your suggestions for future work.

Hasan Bakhshi

Executive summary

Arts, culture and heritage are an economic success story. According to official estimates, the cultural sector employs 703,000 people, and contributes £30.6 billion in gross value added annually. In the UK, the vast majority of people engage in the arts in some way every year. In addition, UK music, television and film, literature, games, and theatre are known all over the world; and its historic buildings, alongside its intangible heritage and culture, attract tourists from across the globe.

These sectors play an important role in health and well-being, community development, and education. Arts, culture and heritage enrich lives and give people a sense of identity and belonging.

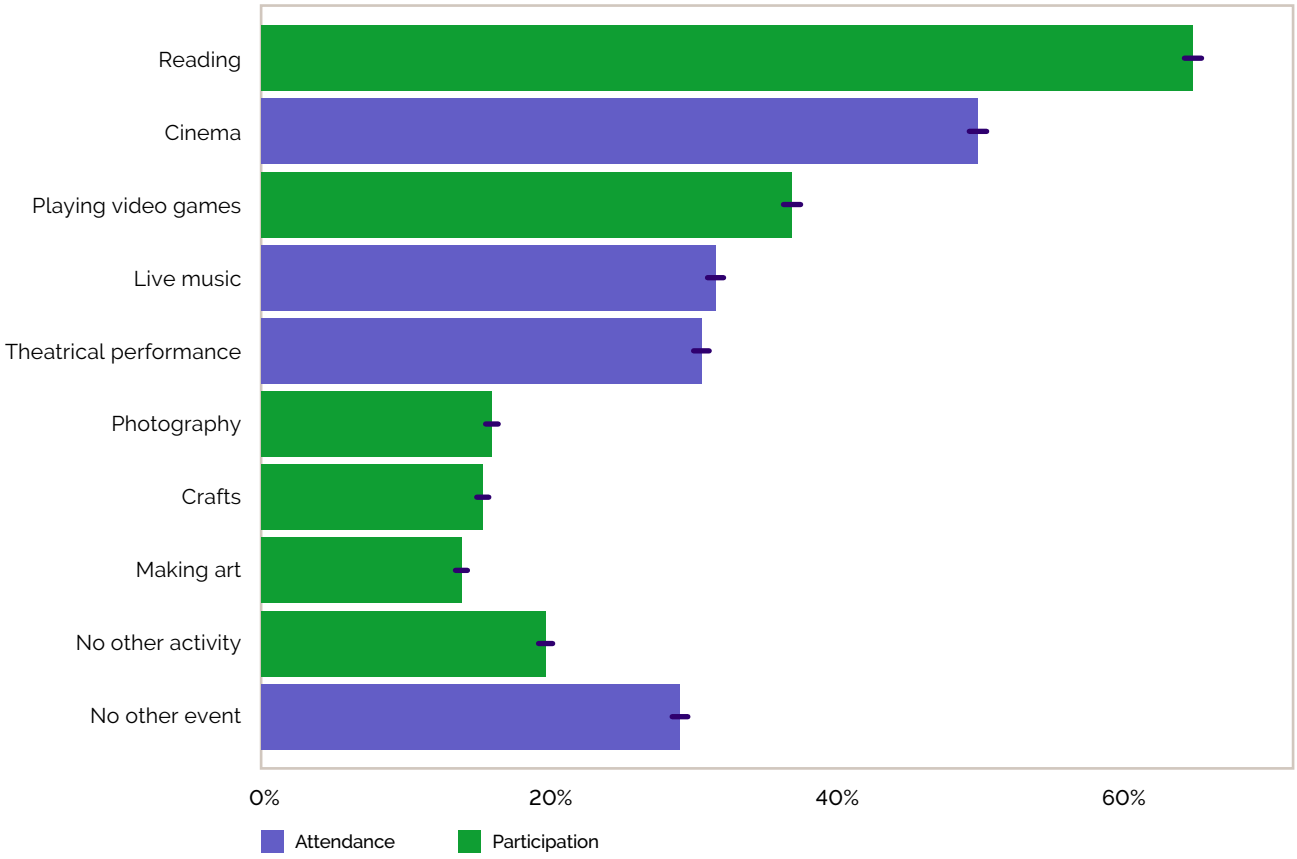
To support policy development, the arts, culture and heritage sectors require high-quality data about their workforces and audiences, analogous to data about supply and demand that would be expected in other industries.

There are longstanding inequalities in the arts, culture and heritage sectors. It is well known that the workforces and audiences have uneven representations of social classes and ethnic groups, though other dimensions of social inequality within the sectors have not received the same level of attention.

This is the context for this report. It builds on the Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre's (Creative PEC's) previous work looking at the sectors' workforces, as well as considering audiences as part of a broader arts, culture and heritage ecosystem. It gives the most recent snapshot of the sectors in terms of workforces and audiences, going into more detail than ever before. The scale of the changes during the period analysed illustrates the significant transformations that the Covid-19 pandemic caused for the sectors, and it is important to continue to monitor this data to understand any future changes.

Data on consumption and participation, derived from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's (DCMS's) Participation Survey, shows the country's rich cultural life. It also shows the path of recovery for in-person cultural consumption since the end of pandemic restrictions in 2020-2021. At the same time, our analysis develops what is already well established by the existing academic literature: patterns of cultural consumption are deeply unequal. These inequalities in consumption, associated with gender, race and ethnicity, social class, and disability, offer an ongoing challenge to policymakers concerned that the arts, culture and heritage sectors do not attract the full range of the UK's population. There is a huge potential audience, particularly for those arts, culture and heritage forms currently attracting the smallest proportions of the population.

Rates of attendance and participation in selected cultural activities in England (16+), 2022-2023



Source: DCMS Participation Survey 2022-2023

In this report, we offer estimates based on survey data and from the 2021 Census. The analysis of surveys involves uncertainty, and so each number should not be interpreted as precise, but the centre of a range of values. Margins of error are presented throughout the report.

Summary of findings

1. Engagement in arts, culture and heritage in the UK is high. The Participation Survey revealed that 90% of people in England had engaged in the arts in some way in the preceding 12 months. There were similar figures overall for the rest of the UK.

2. Patterns of engagement were similar across the four nations of the UK, particularly for going to cinemas, museums or theatres. However, much higher proportions of the Scottish population had participated in dance, and there were higher proportions of attendance at historic places in England.

3. Just under half (49%) of the English population had been to the cinema in the 12 months preceding the survey; just under one-third had attended a live music event (31%) or a theatrical performance (30%).

4. Just under one-third of the population (29%) had not attended any of the cultural events covered by the Participation Survey in the 12 months preceding. This suggests a significant proportion of the population are not attending any formal cultural activities, including those supported by DCMS.

5. While in late 2021 and early 2022 the percentages of the population attending different cultural events were far lower than before the pandemic, by early 2023 rates had recovered for many different activities. For example, even more people interviewed in the first quarter of 2023 said they had attended live music (34%) in the 12 months prior than was the case in 2019/2020 (31%).

6. There were substantial differences in attendance at cinemas, live music, theatre performances, heritage sites, and museums and galleries between disabled people, ethnic minorities and different social class groups. For example, 41% of White people had attended historic landscapes in the preceding 12 months, compared with just 11% of Black people. Other differences, for example between genders, reinforce what we already know about men and women's participation and attendance.

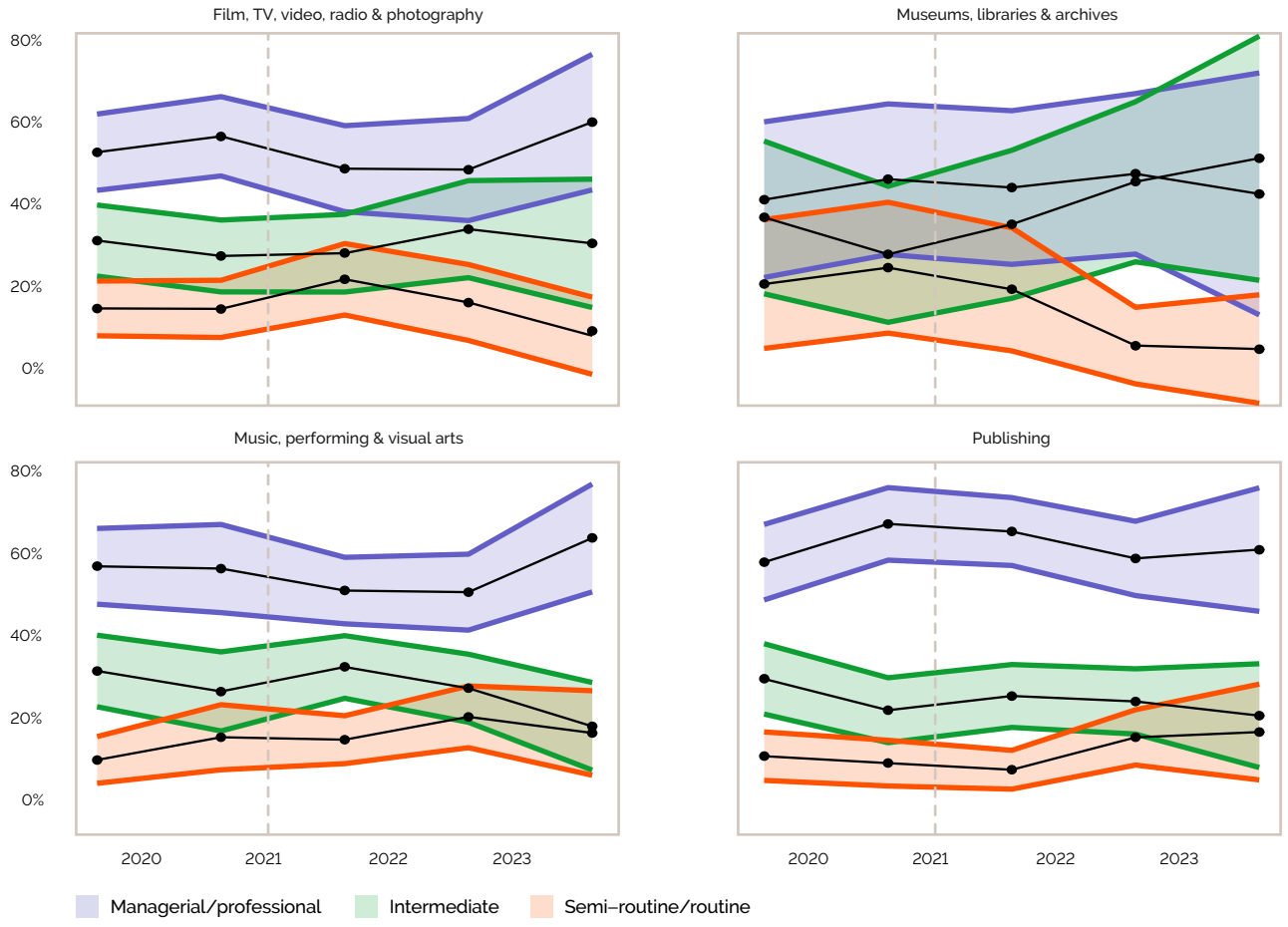
7. Disabled people (39%), Black people (41%) and Asian people (36%), as well as those in routine and semi-routine working-class occupations (38%), were all more likely to say they had not attended any of the arts activities listed in the Participation Survey.

Research has long demonstrated inequalities within the arts, culture and heritage workforces. Analysis of the 2023 Labour Force Survey and the 2021 Census (in England, Wales and Northern Ireland) reinforces this point. The number of people working in occupations central to the sectors has seen a recovery since 2020. Yet, even as employment in these occupations recovered, inequalities remained.

1. The proportion of White people in arts, culture and heritage occupations remained around 90% between 2019 and 2023. This figure was higher than for the general workforce, in which around 85% were White in 2023.

2. The fractions of people from different backgrounds were consistent for key creative occupations, for which around 60% of people grew up in a household where the main income earner was in a managerial or professional role; the equivalent figure for the general workforce was 43%. In film, TV, video, radio and photography, under 10% of people were from working-class backgrounds; the equivalent figure for the general workforce was 23%.

Percentages of people from different social backgrounds in arts, culture and heritage occupational groups in the UK, 2019-2023

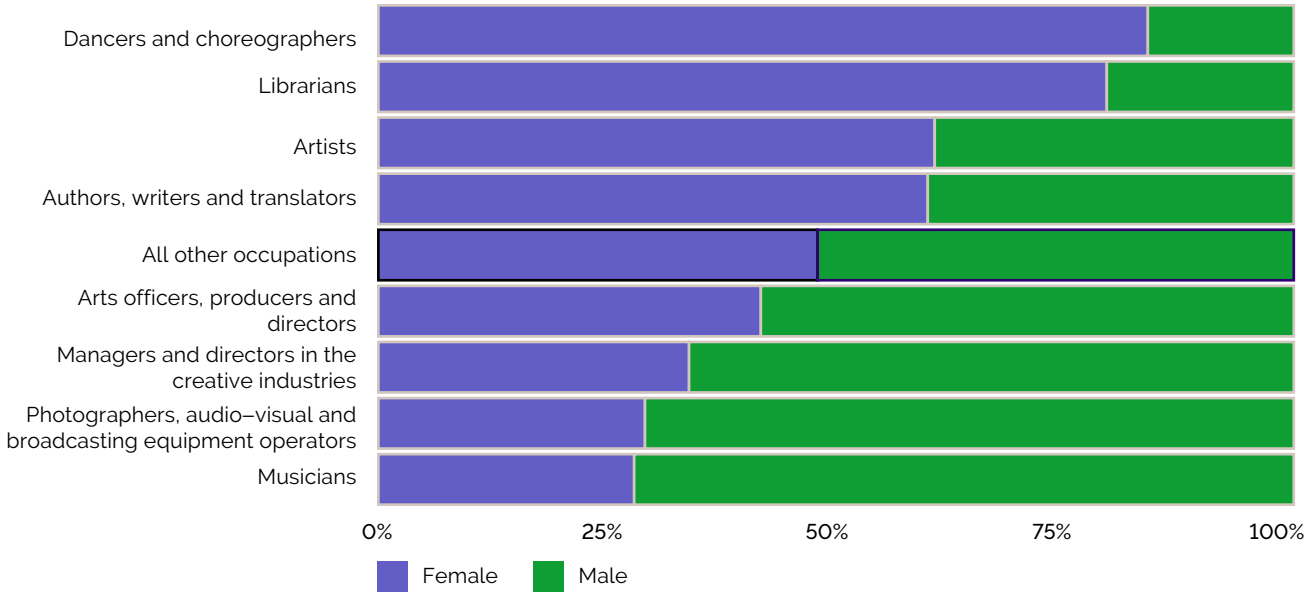


Source: Quarterly Labour Force Survey July-September 2019 to July-September 2023 inclusive.

The 2021 Census allows for a more detailed look at arts, culture and heritage occupations (as opposed to occupations in the arts, culture and heritage sectors because industrial breakdowns in the census data are less granular). It offers, for the first time, a detailed picture of demographics, such as the genders, sexualities and religions of artists, librarians and musicians. It also reinforces the uneven geography of arts, culture and heritage occupations in England and Wales, with concentrations of key occupations in particular London boroughs.

1. As with the arts, culture and heritage audiences, there were large gender differences in certain occupations. While dancers (84%), artists (61%) and librarians (80%) were largely women, men made up 66% of "managers and directors in the creative industries".
2. Against the backdrop of current debates over sexism in the film and music industries, it is notable that in England and Wales in 2021, 72% of musicians and 71% of photographers, audio-visual and broadcasting equipment operators were men.
3. We saw the least ethnic diversity in managers and directors in the creative industries (90% White) and this occupation category also had one of the smallest proportions of Black people (1%).
4. Every single arts, culture and heritage occupation had a smaller percentage of heterosexual workers than the average across the general workforce.

Percentages of men and women in selected arts, culture and heritage occupations in England and Wales



Source: Office for National Statistics (2023): Diversity in the Labour Market.

You can learn more about our analysis of the 2021 Census in the data dashboard and online map available here: pec.ac.uk/state_of_the_nation/arts-cultural-heritage-audiences-and-workforce

To support and embed diversity in audiences and workforces for the arts, culture and heritage sectors, policies must be grounded in data that is high quality and ongoing, while also taking advantage of infrequently collected data that allows additional insights. For this reason, the Creative PEC is committed to monitoring future developments.

1 Introduction

1.1: Arts, culture and heritage in the UK

The arts, culture and heritage sectors are a hugely important part of the UK's economy and society. The UK government's most recent economic estimates (DCMS 2023a, 2023b) show that in 2021, the cultural sector contributed £30.6 billion in gross value added to the UK economy, employing 703,000 people.

UK arts, culture and heritage are a global success story. Music, television and film, and theatre from the UK are known all over the world (Baker et al 2024). The UK's historic buildings and its intangible heritage and culture attract tourists from across the globe (DCMS Select Committee, 2023a). In 2021, the cultural sector exported £7.2 billion, with a net balance of trade of £0.5 billion (DCMS 2024c).

Arts, culture and heritage bring clear social benefits. The sector plays an important role in health and well-being, community development, and education. Arts, culture and heritage enrich people's lives, giving them a sense of identity and belonging (Dowlen, 2023; Oakley and Ward, 2018; DCMS Select Committee, 2023b).

The economic and social success of these sectors is matched by the range of other benefits they offer. Arts, culture and heritage are a crucial element of soft power, influencing everything from foreign policy to students' decisions to study at UK universities (British Council, 2021).

Arts, culture and heritage are sometimes presented in research as an ecosystem, or ecosystems (de Bernard et al, 2023). This involves acknowledging the different levels at which sectors work and understanding the interactions within them. While we do not fully engage with this literature here, it informs our decision to address both audiences and workforces in a single report, with the make-up of the workforce informing the kind of work that is made, thereby likely affecting the composition of audiences; and, on the other side, the composition of audiences feeding into eventual workforces (O'Brien et al, 2019). These are not all the levels of the ecosystem: other crucial elements include the education and training systems and the content and presentation of the arts, culture and heritage itself. We intend to study these other levels in future reports.

Aiming for the benefits of the arts, culture and heritage sectors to be accessible to all, policymakers across the UK nations have made significant commitments around diversity in these sectors, addressing both audiences and workforces (see for example Arts Council England 2023, Arts Council of Northern Ireland 2019). Realising these commitments to diversity requires up-to-date and high-quality data that allows monitoring on several dimensions.

This report provides a set of baseline figures around audiences and workforces in the UK arts, culture and heritage sectors. The UK's data infrastructure allows regular monitoring of several key measures, including rates of attendance at different activities; the balance in the arts, culture and heritage workforces between employed and self-employed people; and the demographic diversity of audiences and workforces. Future reports will continue to monitor these measures and keep track of any changes.

The definitions of each of the key terms we use are subject to a range of debates. Measurement is often based on a deficit model, in which only certain activities are represented as worthwhile, and lower rates of engagement in these activities among particular groups are interpreted as problems to be solved. In doing so, engagement in other activities can go unrecognised (Miles and Sullivan, 2016).

This is not our intention. Nonetheless, our treatment of arts, culture and heritage in this report is data-driven: on the workforce side, using sets of specific occupations; and, on the audience side, using activities, participation and visits based on questions used in large national surveys. One consequence is that some forms of culture are not discussed at all, including several forms of what are characterised as "everyday creativity". This does not reflect a position that only "formal" culture should be included in the definition of arts, culture and heritage; rather, it reflects our focus on measures that can be reliably tracked over time.

For future reports, we do not aim to exclusively limit ourselves to the measures of arts, culture and heritage that we use here. While we have identified a set of measures that can be tracked consistently over time, we aim to continue to incorporate a wider range of different data sources and different measures, to draw as full a picture of the arts, culture and heritage sectors as possible.

1.2: Arts, culture and heritage engagement

The arts, culture and heritage sectors in the UK cover a wide range of activities. Our approach is to start with engagement, and then to make distinctions within that category. At the simplest level, we distinguish between engagement as attendance and engagement as participation.

Attendance includes events that may be uncontroversially interpreted as arts, culture and heritage, such as a classical music concert, a ballet or a play at a theatre. It also covers other in-person activities, such as gigs and stand-up comedy, as well as engaging in activity digitally, such as watching live streams of theatrical productions. As well as engagement at events, we also address engagement at sites. This includes heritage sites, such as sites of industrial history or historic places of worship, museums and galleries, and libraries.

By participation in arts, culture and heritage, we mean people's engagement in creative activities. Examples of this include people singing in choirs, writing short stories and making crafts.

The boundaries between attendance and participation are not always precise: someone borrowing books from their local library could be understood as either category. However, this centring on engagement should set out a clear sense of the focus for these reports.

There are several dimensions of arts, culture and heritage engagement that this report does not cover. It does not include detail on the specifics of people's engagement: which books they read and games they played, and so on. It does not cover engagement with broadcast media (TV and radio) or listening to recorded music, which often occurs at home and can be secondary to other activities, such as eating or DIY. While central to cultural engagement in the broadest sense, a thorough review would require a time use and content of media consumption study beyond the scope of this report. Further, it does not include engagement in heritage beyond visits to sites. It also does not include detail on whether people are engaging as part of work or study or through volunteering. We aim to address some of these dimensions, as well as others, in future State of the Nations reports.

Engagement in arts, culture and heritage in the UK is high. Estimates from the 2022/2023 Participation Survey, which ran from April 2022 to March 2023, show that 90% of people in England had engaged in the arts in some way in the previous 12 months (DCMS 2023b); in both Scotland and Northern Ireland the 2022 figure was 88%; and in Wales, 72% of people had engaged in arts, culture and heritage at least three times (Scottish Government, 2023; Welsh Government, 2023; Department for Communities, 2024).

However, treating engagement as a single category masks differences across different activities. In England, for example, 49% of the adult population had seen a film at a cinema in the preceding 12 months and 64% had read for pleasure, while for all other activities, the relevant figures were less than half of the population (DCMS, 2023b). For this reason, we do not only highlight trajectories in broad categories of engagement; instead, we highlight trajectories across many individual modes of engagement.

Engagement in arts, culture and heritage is also a site of significant social inequalities (Brook et al, 2022). Although arts, culture and heritage have such an important social and economic role, there are significant demographic differences between audiences and participants in the arts.

There is a very well-established literature, both internationally and in the UK, on who attends and who participates in arts, culture and heritage. For at least 50 years, social science has demonstrated class inequalities in the arts (Bourdieu, 1984), with more recent work demonstrating inequalities associated with race, gender and other demographic characteristics (see Brook et al, 2020 for a summary).

There have been numerous papers, books and reports suggesting a distinction between a relative minority of the population who are heavily engaged in the sorts of arts, culture and heritage that are substantially and strategically supported by the government, such as classical music and theatre, and the bulk of the population who engage in everyday cultural practices, such as days out or going to the pub.

Policy has also recognised these inequalities in various ways. Each of the constituent UK nations' cultural policies aim to encourage more engagement, particularly by those who are seen to be underrepresented in current audiences. Emphases differ across the nations: issues of access to culture by rural communities are more prominent in Scottish cultural policy (Stevenson, 2014 and the associated papers in that special issue), community representation and equity are more prominent in Northern Irish cultural policy (Durrer and McCall Magan, 2017 and the associated papers in that special issue), and language issues are more prominent in Welsh cultural policy (Allard, 2007). Nevertheless, all of the UK shares Arts Council England's focus on getting arts, culture and heritage audiences to better reflect the whole population.

Patterns of engagement are also very slow to change over time. This is despite significant social transformations, introduction of new technologies, changes in funding models and attendance habits, and major events such as the Covid-19 pandemic.

Engagement in arts, culture and heritage has been significantly affected by the pandemic (Walmsley at al, 2024). During 2020, virtually every type of in-person audience activity was paused. There were high-profile discussions of a total switch to digital, with an assumption that arts, culture and heritage might be consumed at home in both the short and long term. In this period, engagement in other forms of online participation, such as watching live streams on Twitch and playing video games, changed significantly (Leung and Davies, 2021). However, research using data on consumption habits from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and The Audience Agency suggested that there was little evidence of a pivot to digital engagement.

The pandemic confirmed the "stickiness" of tastes and consumption patterns (Feder et al, 2022; Bakhshi, di Novo & Fazio, 2023). Those who were not interested in key arts, culture and heritage activities before the pandemic did not engage when organisations switched to digital or deepened their existing digital offer. Indeed, there is some evidence that the attempt to return to in-person "business as usual" was at the expense of those highly engaged consumers who found in-person attendance difficult before the pandemic (Walmsley et al, 2024).

The return to in-person audiences has also been uneven (Walmsley et al 2024). Alongside the cost-of-living crisis, there has been a slower-than-expected return of in-person, core audiences. This situation, along with reduced funding, was felt particularly sharply by those organisations relying on local and central government support, in-person audiences, and ticket sales for revenue. The post-pandemic cultural landscape has therefore created significant new challenges for both engagement and workforces in arts, culture and heritage.

The collection of statistics on engagement in arts, culture and heritage has been devolved. In England, data was collected over the period 2005/2006-2019/2020 through the Taking Part Survey, run by DCMS. Taking Part interviewed around 10,000 adults per year, face-to-face in their homes. The survey did not take place during the pandemic as in-person contact was not possible. However, more generally, there has been a significant decrease in people's willingness to participate in social surveys, measured through dimensions such as responsiveness to contact (see eg Office for National Statistics, 2024). For these reasons, the Taking Part Survey has since been succeeded by the (push-to-web) Participation Survey.

In Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, data on engagement in arts, culture and heritage is collected as part of broader surveys: the Scottish Household Survey, the National Survey for Wales and the Continuous Household Survey, respectively. As these surveys address a broader set of subjects than the Participation Survey, the questions about arts, culture and heritage are, in some cases, less detailed, and in others are not asked in each annual survey. For this reason, results from all four nations of the UK are limited in this report; we can only present comparisons as far as possible, because of differences in data availability and approaches to reporting.

Large social surveys are not the only means of measuring engagement in arts, culture and heritage. Organisations within the sectors have their own data about their audiences, including from databases of transactions, such as ticket sales, on-site surveys and surveys collected either digitally prompted by sales or after visits, and from other sources. In some cases, such data is only collected and analysed by individual organisations: for example, a theatre has insight into its audiences based on who attends. However, there is also significant infrastructure at a sector level. For example, The Audience Agency has an insight tool, Audience Answers, that allows organisations to analyse their own ticketing and survey data to better understand their audiences, both individually and in relation to regional and national pictures.

Other large surveys are also relevant to understanding engagement in arts, culture and heritage. The Office for National Statistics' Living Costs and Food Survey collects detailed data about household spending, allowing us to identify, for example, that the average household spends 90p per week on the category "live entertainment: theatre, concerts and shows".

In addition, data can be collected from credit and debit card spending based on different categories. Banks and card providers present data to their customers based on the retailers where they have spent money; data can also be collated at a high level to understand how spending in different categories and locations varies over time (see for example Cook and Hollowood, 2020).

Our analysis focuses specifically on the Participation Survey as it provides an overview of a wide range of different modes of engagement in arts, culture and heritage from the perspective of the audience member, participant or visitor. This does not mean that we consider social survey analysis the only appropriate means of answering these questions; we recognise the value in all the different approaches described.

1.3: Employment in the arts, culture and heritage sectors

The arts, culture and heritage sectors are major employers in the UK. In addition to the 703,000 people employed in the cultural sector (DCMS, 2024b), employment in the heritage sector is estimated at around 207,000 people (Historic England, 2023).

As with engagement, employment is also a major site of social inequality (Brook et al, 2020). Extensive research, particularly in the UK, has demonstrated that these occupations and industries are marked by profound divides in terms of gender (Conor et al 2015), race and ethnicity (Saha, 2017), social class (O'Brien, et al 2017), and disability (Randle and Hardy, 2016).

We know, in considerable detail, about pay and benefits; job security and flexibility; working conditions; well-being and health; worker representation; and professional development and progression. There are inequalities in all these aspects of work in the arts, culture and heritage sectors (see Brook et al, 2020 for a summary).

As Carey et al (2023) demonstrate, exploitative employment relations and intensive working patterns characterise highly competitive labour markets, with often disastrous results for the well-being of workers. Earnings are highly uneven, with large differences between high-

paid, prominent stars and most other workers. Moreover, pay is often irregular and uncertain in arts and cultural jobs, and it can be very low relative to other sectors. This is because of a combination of the project-based nature of much creative work and the difficulties in funding jobs in more secure arts, culture and heritage institutions. Project-based work, often as a series of short-term contracts, means that alongside pay, job security is also highly uncertain. This uncertainty undermines career prospects. The more structured career paths and progression found in traditional professions are rare in the arts, with reputation-based progression to more prominent projects being a core characteristic. Many leave the sector, even from secure roles like those in museums and galleries, because of low pay (Brook et al, 2020).

Pay, security and progression are intertwined with the employment status of workers. Self-employment and forms of freelance work are dominant in specific areas of the arts, culture and heritage sectors, for example in performing and visual arts. While this offers flexibility and links to more hopeful visions of cultural labour, it also means that responsibility for employment benefits, such as sick pay, holiday allowances and pensions, along with responsibility for associated employment risks including the need for insurance, are placed onto the worker alone, rather than shared as part of an employer–employee relationship.

Low and no pay are a generational issue that younger creative workers see as an unavoidable element of jobs in creative industries. The creative workforce itself raises questions of institutionalised ageism, given that it is younger, on average, than other sets of occupations in the economy (Oakley et al, 2017). Workforce demographics are skewed in other ways, with people from working-class backgrounds, disabled people, those without degree-level qualifications and people of colour being underrepresented. Moreover, the geographical concentration of creative industries in urban centres, with a disproportionate clustering in London, means workers face the additional problems of cost of housing and other social policy crises.

Freelancers are a key priority in arts, culture and heritage research. The experience of freelancers is likely to be significantly different from those who are traditionally employed for a number of reasons (Carey et al, 2023). Freelancers may value the opportunities and potential high pay rates associated with not being tied to a traditional employment contract. However, the research literature suggests freelancers and other creative workers with similar forms of self-employment face the most severe issues of precarity and uncertain working patterns (Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2010). They were also hit extremely hard by the pandemic (Maples et al, 2022), with freelancers in some sectors facing further issues even after various parts of the cultural and creative sectors fully reopened (Freelancers Make Theatre Work, 2023, Film and TV Charity, 2024).

Employment in arts, culture and heritage is also not evenly distributed around the UK. Rates are highest in London and the south-east, with various regional clusters and smaller pockets constituting the rest of the UK's creative economy (Siepel et al, 2023). As with other research in the creative economy more broadly, it is important to emphasise that geographic differences in employment in creative industries may not be the same for the arts, culture and heritage sectors: the largest occupational groups in the creative industries are within the IT and software category, which we do not include.

Existing research on employment in the creative industries is often based on definitions drawn up by DCMS. These definitions have changed over time, shifting from a focus on intellectual property-based definitions to understandings associated with the intensity of creative activity in a given industry. Even as the underlying rationale for the definition has changed, a broadly similar cluster of industrial sectors and occupations has remained (Easton, 2023).

It is also important to highlight the distinction between occupations and industries. There are creative occupations within creative industries, for example a designer working at a design agency; creative occupations in non-creative industries, for example a designer working at an accountancy firm; and non-creative occupations in creative industries, for example an accountant working at a design agency.

Our analysis uses a specific set of Standard Occupational Classification codes across four wider categories. They are as follows:

Film, television, video, radio and photography:

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

Publishing:

1. Newspaper and periodical editors
2. Newspaper and periodical journalists and reporters

Museums, libraries and archives:

1. Librarians
2. Archivists and curators

Music, performing and visual arts:

1. Artists
2. Actors, entertainers and presenters
3. Dancers and choreographers
4. Musicians
5. Arts officers, producers and directors

The main data source for measuring employment in the arts, culture and heritage sectors is the Labour Force Survey, which takes a large sample of households each quarter. Because of the very large sample of this survey, we can focus on people working in the arts, culture and heritage sectors and retain a sufficient sample size for analysis. This data is not at a scale that allows analysis of each individual occupation or industry, for example, by showing changes in the gender balance of dancers on a quarter-by-quarter basis. However, it does allow analysis of occupational groups. The Labour Force Survey also has a longitudinal design, where people are interviewed in each of five consecutive quarters, allowing for analysis of, for example, people joining and leaving different occupations.

The Labour Force Survey has suffered from decreases in response rates. In the first quarter of 2019, the response rate was 40%, with a total sample size of 87,417 individuals in 37,167 households (Office for National Statistics 2019). By the final quarter of 2023, the response rate was 14.8%, with a total sample size of 44,338 individuals in 20,324 households (Office for National Statistics, 2024). These changes have two key implications for our analysis. The first is that, as overall response rates decrease, so too do the response rates for people working in arts, culture and heritage occupations. As we are making inferences based on fewer people, the uncertainty around the estimates we produce is greater: we can be less confident that any changes in percentages that we report are due to genuine changes in these occupational groups, for example. Secondly, as response rates

decrease, the likelihood of people responding to follow-up interviews also decreases, meaning that sample sizes are even lower for analysis of changes: that is, the uncertainty around the rates of people joining and leaving arts, culture and heritage occupations is greater. The Office for National Statistics is in the process of implementing changes to the Labour Force Survey and introducing the Transformed Labour Force Survey in parallel (Office for National Statistics, 2023c), so it may be that these challenges are addressed in future.

The other key data source for measuring employment in the arts is the 2021 Census, which took place in England, Wales and Northern Ireland; in Scotland, it was postponed until 2022. We aim to extend the analysis in this report to Scotland in future. As the census collects data for the entire population, including their occupations, this allows analysis of individual occupations that would not be possible using survey data. It also allows analysis at more detailed geographical levels.

As with arts, culture and heritage engagement, large social surveys are not the only source of data on arts, culture and heritage employment. Industry bodies undertake custom surveys of their workforces (for example, Historic England, 2022); these are particularly relevant when an occupational group is small, and so not effectively measured through national surveys, and when standard occupational or industrial codes are not suitable for capturing a particular population. Large employers hold data about their own staff, which trade associations sometimes combine to draw pictures of relevant industries or occupations. The sectors are also diverse, and variations within occupational groups are important. For example, Arts Council England publishes data on the workforce of its National Portfolio Organisations, an important part of the broader arts and culture ecosystem (Arts Council England, 2023).

Estimates of the scale of the sectors, for example the numbers of companies in arts, culture and heritage, can also be drawn through other means, such as through Companies House registrations and through real-time data (Purdy, 2023).

Our approach allows analysis both of detailed change over time on relevant indicators (through the Labour Force Survey) and deep-dive geographical, demographic and occupational breakdowns (through the 2021 Census). However, these are not the only important ways to understand the arts, culture and heritage sectors, and we recognise and indeed use the other data sources in this area.

2 Arts, culture and heritage engagement

This section summarises rates of attendance and participation in cultural and heritage activities, including attendance at museums and galleries and engagement with libraries. Activities are presented with brief descriptions; the full details of the question phrasing can be found in the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) main report (DCMS, 2023b).

The analysis in this section is motivated by two main questions. The first is: how widespread are different modes of engagement in arts, culture and heritage, and how has this changed since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic? Our interest in this question reflects the importance of the arts, culture and heritage sectors and the differences within them. Based on past evidence, we expect that rates of engagement vary significantly. We also expect that the pandemic had very different effects across the ways that people engage, with rates of recovery also varying substantially.

Our second question is: how much do different modes of engagement vary between groups? This is motivated by existing literature that shows arts, culture and heritage as major sites of inequality; our analysis allows us to assess whether this has changed in activities that have received significant attention in the past and to highlight activities that have previously had less attention.

We use the general term "engagement" to cover: attending events and venues; different forms of participation; and visits to heritage sites. We consider all three of these to comprise different types of engagement, while also recognising that the boundaries between attending, participating and visiting are not always clear.

To answer these questions, we start by summarising the overall fractions of the population who had attended or participated in these activities in the preceding 12 months, with data derived from the 2022/2023 Participation Survey. We then show how these fractions varied during the six quarters that the Participation Survey has run, starting in October 2021.

People who complete the Participation Survey are asked: "In the last 12 months, how often, if at all, have you attended each of the following in person, in England?", followed by "In the last 12 months, how often, if at all, have you done each of the following activities?" They are then presented with a series of options associated with the arts. Later in the survey, they are asked "In the last 12 months, how often, if at all, have you visited each of these places in person, in England?" We include all the options in response to these questions in our analysis. In doing so, we do not aim to exclude other activities from the definition of culture, such as those associated with everyday creativity: our decision is driven by the options available in the survey questionnaire.

Finally, we demonstrate how engagement in different forms of arts, culture and heritage varies across different groups. Specifically, we draw attention to differences based on disability, gender, ethnic group and social class, comparing rates in each of the activities classified as attendance, participation, visiting heritage sites, visiting museums and engaging with libraries. Previous evidence (Brook et al, 2020) has shown inequalities in rates of engagement across each of these variables, hence our focus on these same variables here. We also report confidence intervals, to express the uncertainty around each individual estimate.*

Our measurement of these categories is as follows.

1. People are included in the "Disabled" group if they respond "Yes" to "Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last for 12 months or more?", and either "Yes: a lot" or "Yes: a little" to "Does your condition or illness reduce your ability to carry out day-to-day activities?" People who respond "No" to either one of these questions are included in the "Not disabled" group. This is consistent with the approach taken by the Government Analysis Function (White, 2011).

2. Gender is measured by responses to the question "Would you describe yourself as…", with the options being "Male", "Female", "Prefer to self-describe" and "Prefer not to say". The majority of responses are either "Male" or "Female". This means that the uncertainty around estimates for other genders is very high. For this reason, we do not report data for other genders.

3. People are asked the question "What is your ethnic group?" They are first presented with the categories "White", "Mixed", "Asian or Asian British", "Black or Black British" and "Other ethnic group". People are then presented with a follow-up list with more detailed categories. Here, we report data from the five large categories, so that our sample sizes limit uncertainty around reporting.

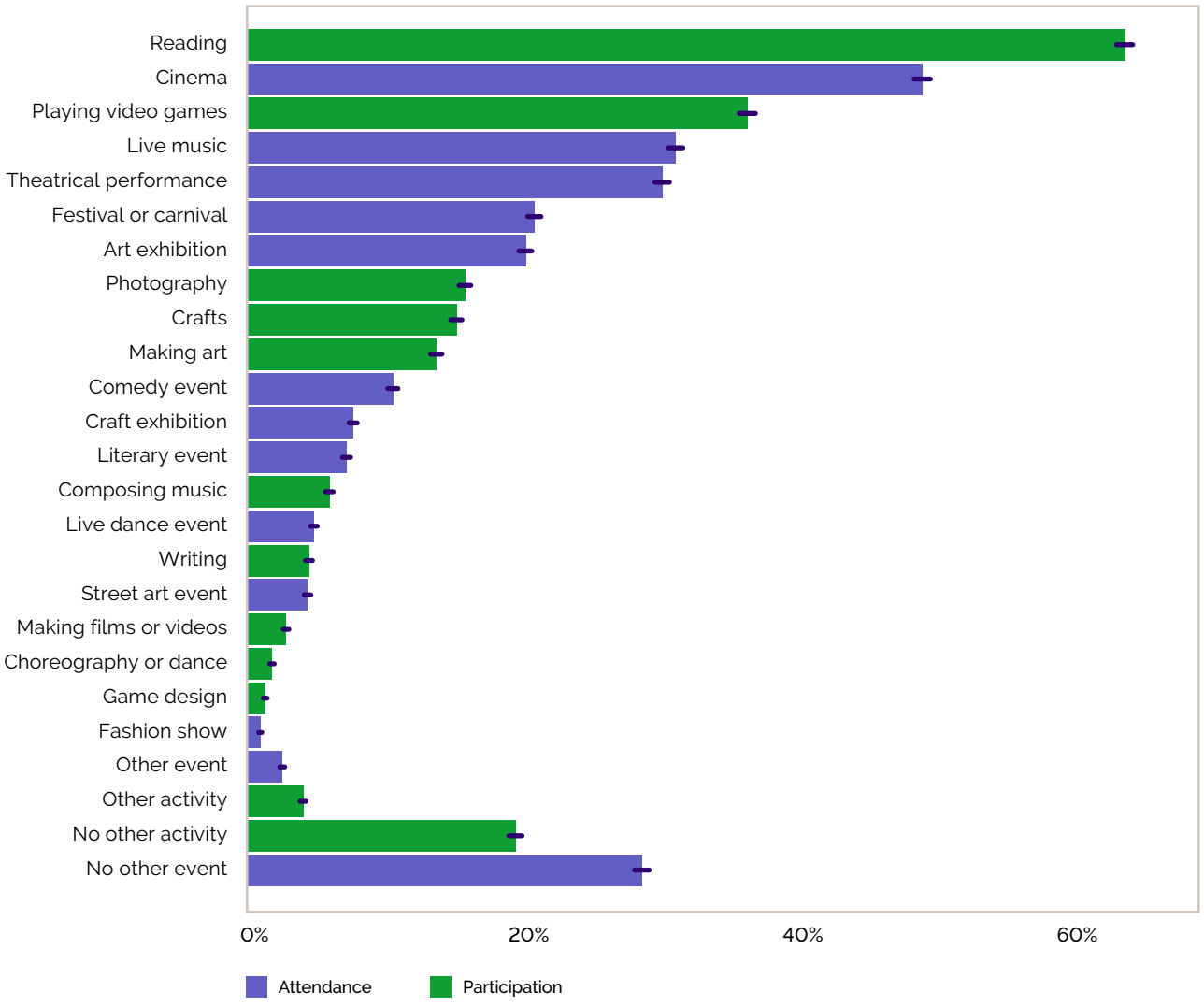
4. People are asked "Which of the following describes the kind of work that you do?" (if currently in employment) or "did" (if not) and are presented with a set of categories. From their answer, combined with their answers to questions about their workplace and any supervisory responsibilities, they are classified into four groups: "Managerial or professional occupations", "Intermediate occupations", "Semi-routine and routine occupations" and "Never worked or long-term unemployed". We describe these groups as social classes, consistent with the original design of the scheme that these categories are based on, the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (Rose and Pevalin, 2001). This classification is based on Office for National Statistics guidance (Office for National Statistics, nd). However, it is less accurate than estimates based on asking respondents about their job title and the kind of work that they do, with data subsequently being coded (Birch & Beerten, 1999).

*Note that there may be statistically significant differences between engagement type even where confidence intervals overlap. However, precise results depend on further testing beyond the scope of this report.

The presentation of data in this section addresses different ways of engaging with arts, culture and heritage individually, rather than looking at the overlaps and relationships between them. For example, we do not report how many people had both attended live music and played video games in the preceding 12 months. A significant body of research has investigated similar relationships (for a summary see Brook et al, 2020), and we aim to build on this tradition in future reports.

2.1: Overall figures: England

Figure 1. Rates of attendance and participation in cultural activities in England (16+), 2022-2023



Source: DCMS Participation Survey 2022-2023.

Figure 1 presents the headline data of the rates of participation in and attendance at cultural activities in England for 2022-2023.

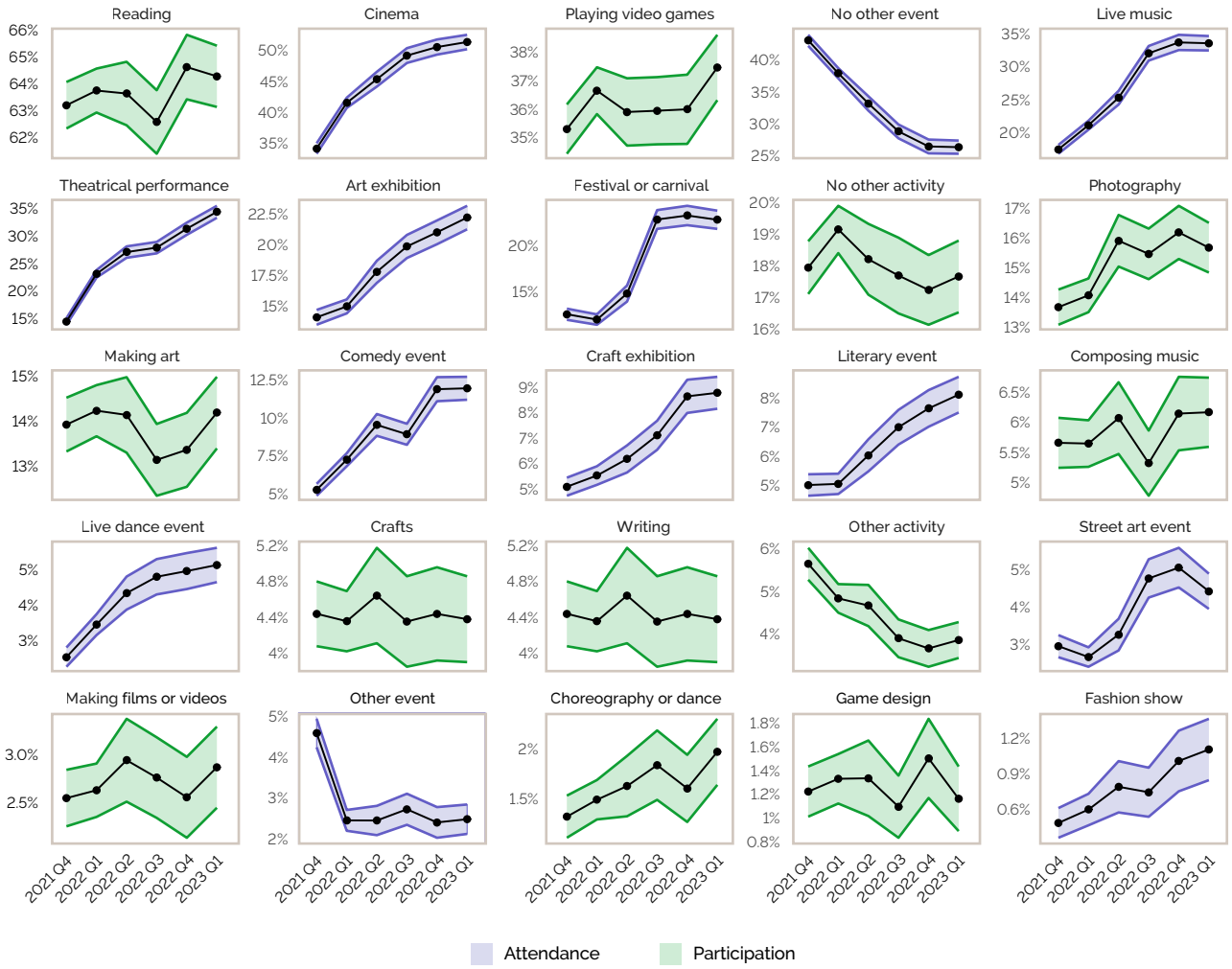
It shows that reading for pleasure, classified as cultural participation, was by far the most popular activity, covering more than half of the population. This is consistent with previous estimates (Brook et al 2020). For context, England's 64% is higher than the equivalent figure for the United States (53%), but lower than that of Australia (69%). Watching a film at a cinema was in second place, with a little less than half of the population having attended; this is lower than equivalent figures pre-pandemic (Brook et al 2020) but may be reflective of changes during the survey period. This figure is nonetheless above several other countries, including the United States (43%), Australia (44%) and Spain (28%), but below Germany (54%) (Menzer et al, 2023; Creative Australia, 2023; Ministeria de cultura e deporte, 2023; Güls, 2023).

In terms of other forms of cultural attendance, the figure shows that similar proportions of people had attended a live music event or a theatrical performance (around 30%), while smaller proportions had attended a festival or carnival or art exhibition (around 20%). All other types of events had been attended by fewer than 10% of the population, with the least commonly attended event being a fashion show. Around 30% of the population had not attended any of the cultural events in the list. Some of these figures can be compared with other countries because similar (albeit not identical) questions are asked in their national surveys. England's 30% attending a theatrical performance is the same as Germany, higher than Poland (19%) and Spain (8%), but lower than Australia (36%) (Güls, 2023; Statistics Poland, 2021; Ministeria de cultura e deporte, 2023; Creative Australia, 2023). The 30% attending live music is significantly lower than Australia (47%), Germany (41%) and Poland (34%), but higher than the United States (18%) and Spain (13%) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2023; Güls, 2023; Statistics Poland, 2021; Menzer et al, 2023; Ministeria de cultura e deporte, 2023).

Other than reading for pleasure, the most common form of cultural participation was playing video games, with around 35% of the population reporting that they had done so at least once in the preceding 12 months. Photography as an artistic activity, crafts and making art (painting, drawing, printmaking and sculpture) all had around 15% of the population participating. Other activities had fewer than 10% of the population participating, and around 20% of the population had not participated in any of the activities listed.

The data in Figure 1 shows that cultural engagement is widespread in England, but also that there is significant variation across the different ways that people engage in arts and culture. We next move to analyse changes during the survey period, to understand the different scales of recovery following the Covid-19 pandemic.

Figure 2. Changes in rates of attendance and participation in cultural activities in England (16+), 2021-2023



Source: DCMS Participation Survey 2021-2022 and 2022-2023

Figure 2 shows how the percentages reported in Figure 1 varied over the survey period, from October-December 2021 through to January-March 2023.

Most forms of participation (shown in pink) were relatively stable throughout the survey period. The percentage of people reporting having read for pleasure in the preceding year varied between 63% and 65%; those having written stories, plays or poetry was consistent at around 4.5%, and those reporting making art varied between 13% and 14%. Similarly, around 18% of people reported having participated in no other activity throughout this period. There was one exception to this pattern: photography as an artistic activity was lower in 2021 (13.5%) than from the second quarter of 2022 onwards (16%). This may be indicative of people having fewer restrictions on their movement by the end of the survey period than at the start, with an accompanying ability to take photographs on holiday or in groups rather than as individuals.

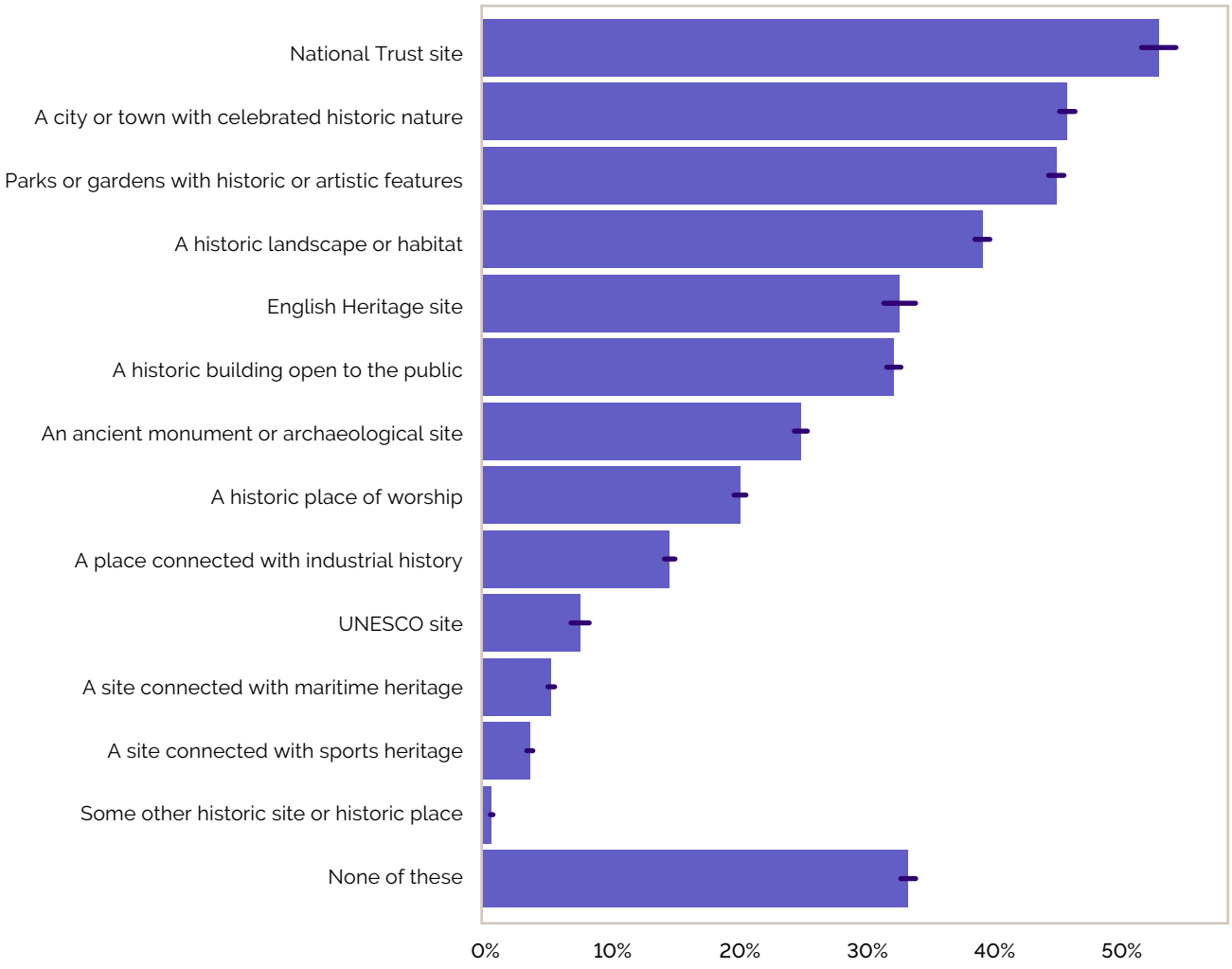
By contrast, there were significant increases in the percentages of people who had attended different activities (shown in purple) throughout the survey period. The impact of a return to in-person cultural activity following public health measures and the start of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 is clear. In the post-2020 context, we should be wary of seeing these as major expansions of the audience. Rather, they reflect the return of the audience after 2020.

Rates of engagement in some activities doubled, or experienced even greater increases: attendance at theatrical performances increased from 15% to 35%, comedy events from 5% to 12%, live dance events from 2.5% to 5% and live music from 17% to 34%. Other significant increases included art exhibitions from 14% to 22% and craft exhibitions from 5% to 9%. Another example is festivals or carnivals: for surveys occurring before July 2022, the figure was between 12% and 15%; afterwards, the figures were similar at around 22%. This likely reflects seasonality, with many festivals and carnivals taking place in the spring and summer. These overall increases can be summarised with the proportion of the population reporting not having attended any of these events in the preceding 12 months decreasing from 42% to 26% over the period.

Taken together, we can see three patterns in the changes in engagement over the period 2021-2023. Participation in arts, culture and heritage stayed constant; most of these activities were not restricted by lockdown rules. Attendance at events that take place at specific times indoors increased substantially, likely reflecting both the consequences of restrictions and audience discomfort and hesitancy in the earlier part of the time period. Forms of attendance that do not require people's presence at a particular time, such as visiting an art exhibition, increased more modestly. In almost all cases, the rates of attendance and participation by the first quarter of 2023 were similar to those prior to the pandemic, based on Taking Part data, although the differences in data collection methods mean we should be cautious about comparisons. Rates of attendance at live music by early 2023 were even higher than prior to the pandemic, but rates of attendance at the cinema were not as high; by early 2023, just over half the population had attended a film at a cinema in the preceding 12 months, compared with 60% before the pandemic.

We next examine the equivalent figures for engagement in heritage, allowing us to identify similarities and differences in these patterns.

Figure 3. Rates of attendance at different heritage sites in England (16+), 2022-2023



Source: DCMS Participation Survey 2022-2023

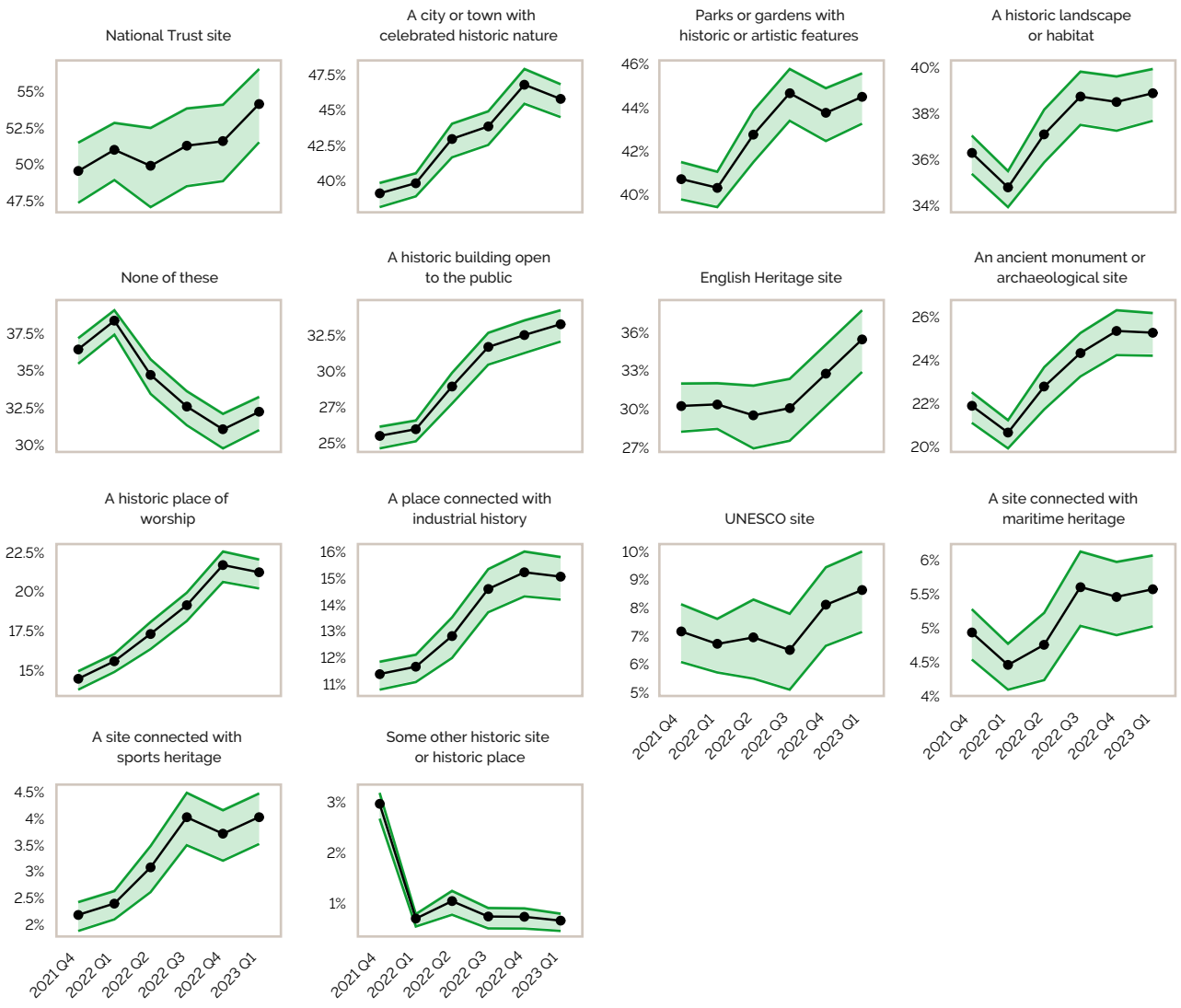
Figure 3 shows attendance at different types of heritage sites in England in the 2022-2023 Participation Survey.

The most commonly attended category was National Trust sites, with around half of the population having visited them. Data from the National Trust itself reported 24.1 million visits to their sites over the same period (National Trust, 2023), which reinforces the reliability of these high rates of visits given the alternative mode of measurement. After National Trust sites, cities and towns with celebrated historic natures and parks and gardens with historic or artistic features had the most visitors, at around 43% of the adult population. Less than 10% visited sites connected with maritime or sports heritage. Overall, around 36% of people had not visited any of these types of sites in the preceding 12 months.

The 36% of people who had not visited any of these sites is similar to the percentage of people who had not attended any of the arts and culture activities shown in Figure 1. However, more than 30% of people visited 6 different types of heritage sites out of a total of 13; this can be contrasted with 5 out of 20 in the case of arts and culture activities. This suggests that there are few types of heritage site that are visited by very small fractions of the population.

As with arts and cultural engagement, we now move to a comparison of how attendance at different heritage sites varied in the period of 2021-2023.

Figure 4. Changes in rates of attendance at different heritage sites in England (16+), 2021-2023



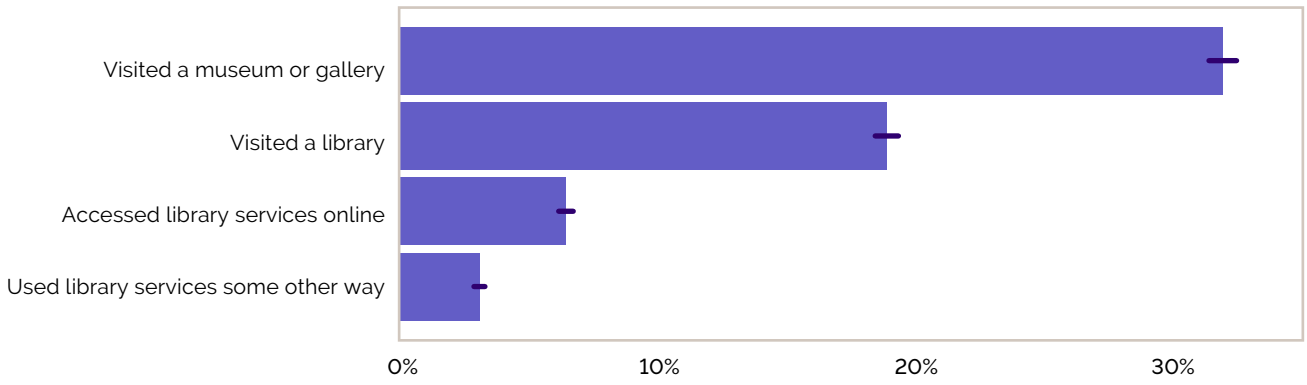
Source: DCMS Participation Survey 2021-2022 and 2022-2023.

As with cultural attendance, there were increases in the percentages of people attending different heritage sites between the fourth quarter of 2021 and the first quarter of 2023. Again, it is important to read these trends in the context of the impact of Covid-19 and 2020 lockdowns.

These increases were more modest; while the percentage of people attending several different forms of cultural events more than doubled over this period, there was only one doubling among heritage sites: those connected with sports heritage, which was the type of site with the lowest attendance overall. The larger increases were broadly in sites that are usually indoors: historic buildings, places connected with industrial history and places of worship, reflecting a possibility that low rates of attendance in 2021 may have been due to either restrictions or hesitations about indoor activity, again reflecting the post-2020 context. By contrast, outdoor sites, such as parks and gardens, ancient monuments, and English Heritage sites, saw smaller increases. These patterns reinforce the story that we saw with arts and culture: the larger increases for indoor (relative to outdoor) heritage sites are roughly the same as the increases for indoor arts and culture (like going to a gallery).

Finally, in the next section, we address overall rates of engagement in museums and libraries.

Figure 5. Rates of attendance at museums, galleries and libraries in England (16+), 2022-2023



Source: DCMS Participation Survey 2022-2023.

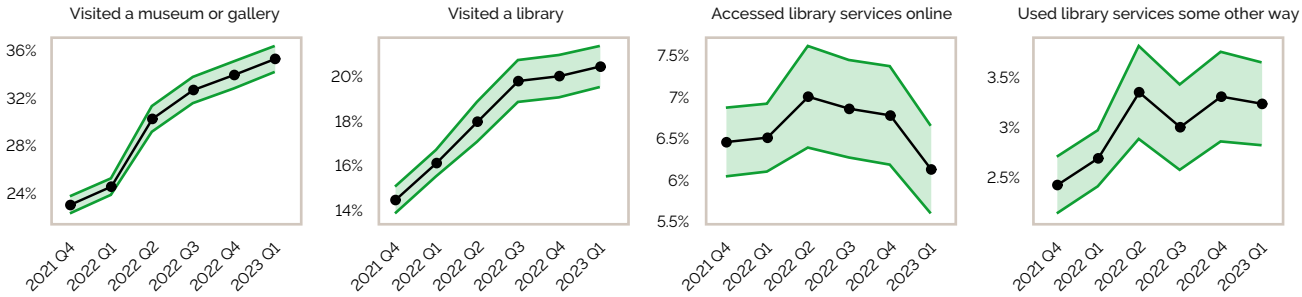
Figure 5 shows the fractions of people who had attended a museum or gallery or engaged with libraries in some way in the preceding 12 months.

It shows that around one-third of the population had visited a museum or gallery and around one-fifth had visited a library. Less than 10% had accessed library services online or used library services some other way.

The figure for museums is lower than in Germany, where the equivalent is 45%; however, the figure is similar in Poland (32%), and significantly lower in Australia (17%) and Spain (20%) (Güls, 2023; Statistics Poland, 2021; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2023; Ministerio de cultura y deporte, 2023).

The figure for museums was similar to that for historic buildings open to the public: while the figure for historic buildings was lower than for other heritage sites (outdoor), it was the largest for any type of indoor site.

Figure 6. Changes in rates of attendance at museums, galleries and libraries in England (16+), 2021-2023



Source: DCMS Participation Survey 2021-2022 and 2022-2023.

Figure 6 shows how rates of attendance varied. The fractions of people visiting museums or galleries and libraries increased by around half in each case: museums or galleries from 24% to 36% and libraries from 14% to 21%.

By contrast, the fraction of people accessing library services online or using them some other way stayed roughly consistent over the period. The increase in visits to both museums and galleries and to libraries, around 50%, are of the same scale as increases in visits to art exhibitions and craft exhibitions, again reinforcing a general pattern of increases in visits to indoor arts, culture and heritage venues for activities that do not take place at specific times.

Overall, we see a number of common threads. Engagement in arts, culture and heritage in England is widespread but not uniform; there are several activities that very small percentages of the population engage in, which are largely in the arts and culture category; and the changes in engagement following the pandemic are closely associated with whether activities take place at home (in these cases we observe no changes), outdoors (small increases), indoors, but not associated with particular times (moderate increases) or indoors, associated with particular times (large increases).

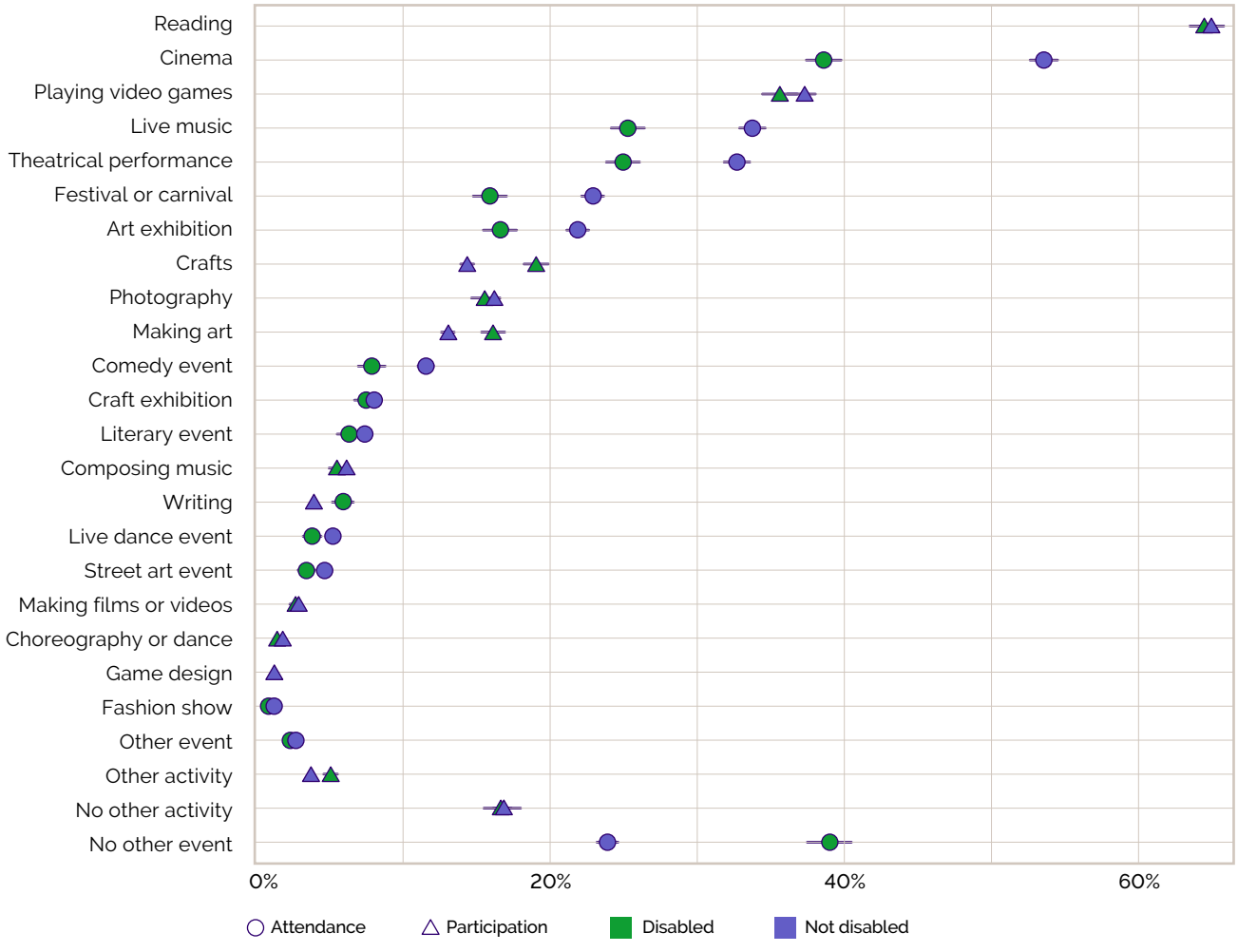
2.2: Diversity in cultural engagement: England

We next analyse how these rates of engagement vary by different groups, to answer our questions on the extents to which arts, culture and heritage engagement remain sites of inequality in England. We first address disability, followed by gender, ethnic group and social class.

2.2.1: Disability

Disability has received less attention than other dimensions of social inequality in relation to the quantitative analysis of engagement in arts, culture and heritage. However, there is strong evidence that disabled people are underrepresented in the arts, culture and heritage workforces in England (Arts Council England 2014) and that there are clear relationships between inequalities in audiences and workforces (O'Brien et al 2017). Our analysis here presents evidence about any inequalities in arts, culture and heritage audiences.

Figure 7. Rates of attendance and participation in cultural activities in England (16+) by disability, 2022-2023



Source: DCMS Participation Survey 2022-2023.

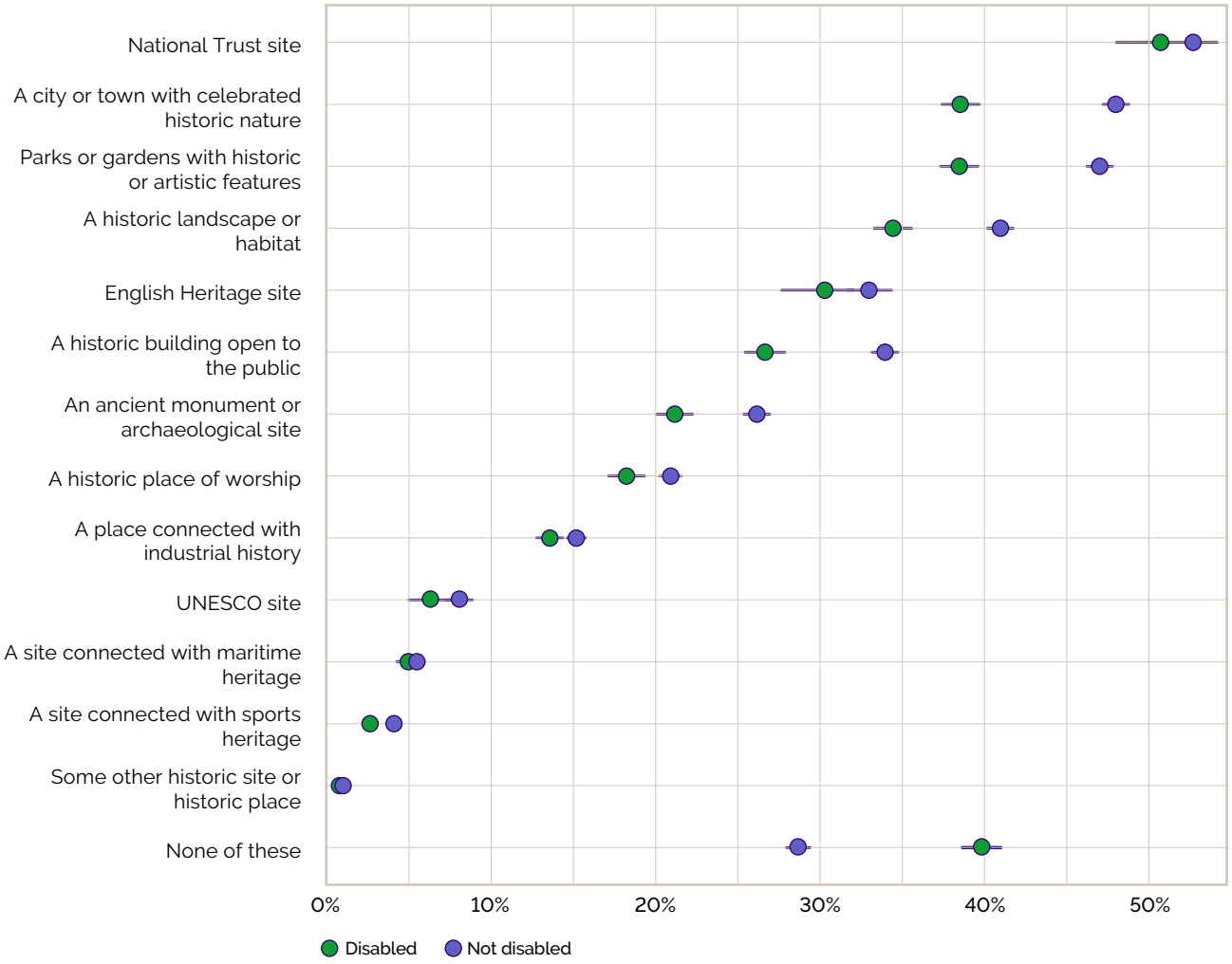
Figure 7 shows how attendance at and participation in cultural activities varied by disability status, reporting the percentage of people within each group who had engaged with each of the activities.

For several of these activities covering attendance and participation, rates of engagement were similar for people who are disabled and people who are not disabled. For example, rates of reading for pleasure, photography as an artistic activity and composing music were almost identical. This pattern was most consistent among those activities classified as participation, exemplified by the fact that almost identical fractions of both groups did not engage in any of the activities classified as cultural participation.

This is not to say that rates of engagement in cultural participation were identical for every activity. Disabled people were more likely to write stories, plays or poetry, and more likely to engage in crafts. There was no form of cultural participation where non-disabled people were significantly more likely to participate.

For cultural attendance, the story is different. For most activities, disabled people were significantly less likely to have attended. The difference was largest for having been to a cinema, with 39% of disabled people compared with 54% of non-disabled people. However, there were differences for almost all forms of attendance, including live music, theatrical performances, festivals and carnivals, and art exhibitions. Even among activities where a small fraction of the population attends, such as live dance events and street art events, differences were small but statistically significant: that is, the small differences we see are unlikely to be due to chance. Overall, this effect is visible in the fact that almost twice the fraction of disabled people had not attended any activity on this list (39%) relative to non-disabled people (22%).

Figure 8. Rates of attendance at heritage sites in England (16+) by disability, 2022-2023

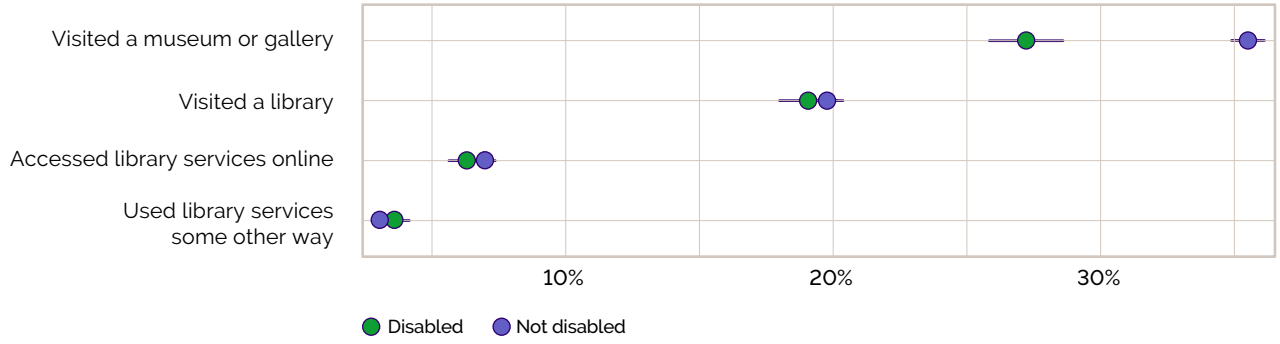


Source: DCMS Participation Survey 2022-2023.

Figure 8 shows how attendance at different heritage sites differed between disabled and non-disabled people.

For some sites, there were no statistically significant differences: this applied to National Trust, English Heritage and UNESCO sites, as well as sites connected with maritime heritage. However, for all other types of sites, disabled people were less likely to have attended, with differences of about 10 percentage points for cities and towns with celebrated historic nature, parks or gardens with historic or artistic features, and historic buildings open to the public. Overall, 29% of non-disabled people had attended none of these sites in the preceding 12 months, compared with 40% of disabled people. The overall percentage of disabled people who had not attended a heritage site was around the same as that for attending arts and cultural events.

Figure 9. Rates of attendance at museums, galleries and libraries in England (16+) by disability, 2022-2023



Source: DCMS Participation Survey 2022-2023.

Figure 9 shows how rates of attendance at museums, galleries and libraries varied by disability.

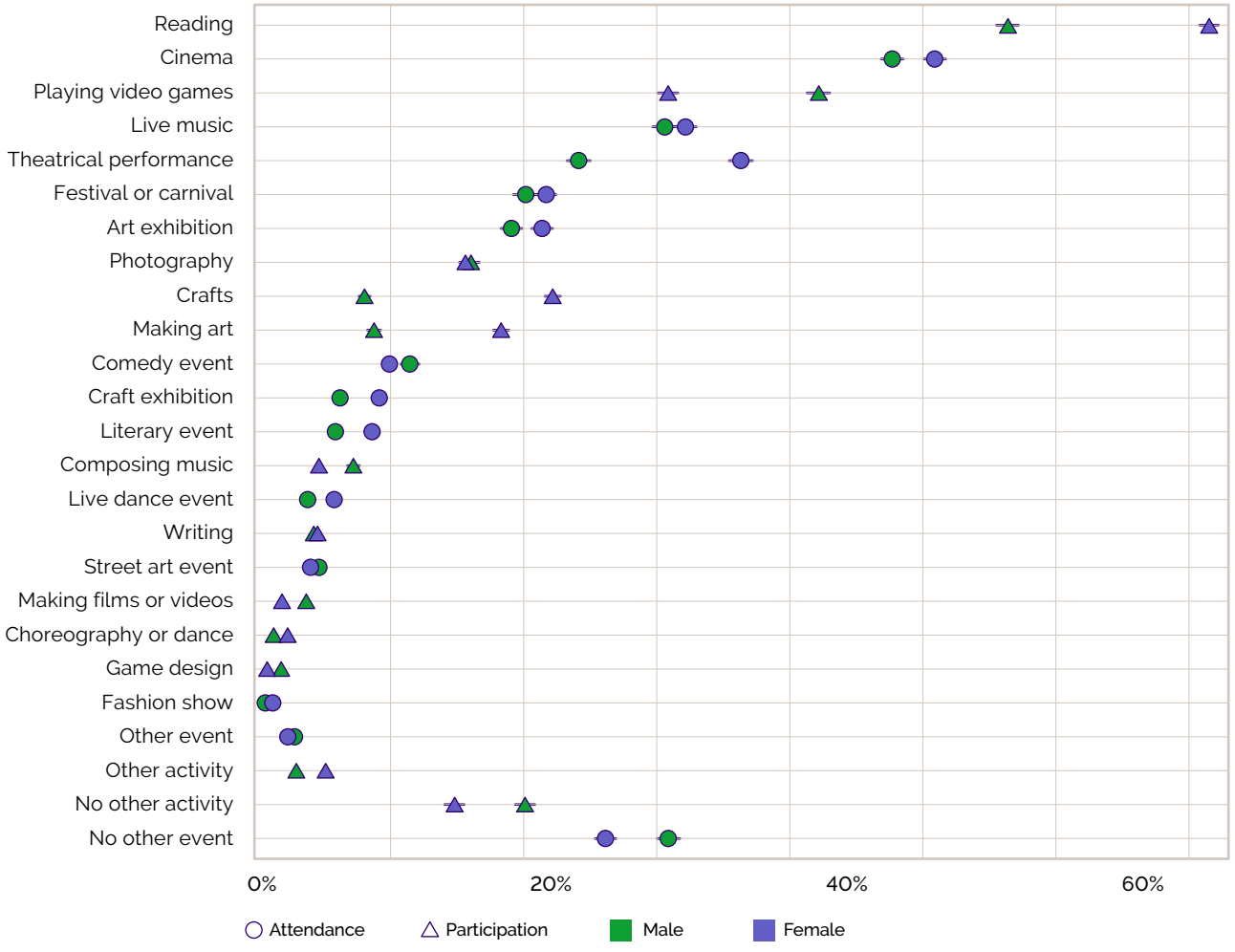
There were no statistically significant differences in library use by disability, across all three measures of the library services. By contrast, there was a difference in whether people had attended a museum or gallery: around 27% of disabled people had, compared with around 35% of non-disabled people. While this is a statistically significant difference, it is a smaller difference than we saw with heritage sites and for most forms of cultural attendance.

Taken together, there are major differences by disability in arts, culture and heritage engagement. Differences in cultural participation included that more disabled people had participated in certain activities, such as writing and crafts; in most cases, there were no differences. By contrast, almost all activities that involved attendance at a particular location had large differences, with disabled people less likely to have attended, albeit with the notable exceptions of National Trust sites, English Heritage sites and UNESCO sites.

2.2.2: Gender

The gender gap in audiences for arts, culture and heritage is well established in the academic literature (for a detailed discussion in the UK context, see Bennett et al, 2009). Most studies tend to find that women are more likely to engage than men; however, this varies by the particular activity under discussion. In this section, we interrogate the most up-to-date gender differences.

Figure 10. Rates of attendance and participation in cultural activities in England (16+) by gender, 2022-2023



Source: DCMS Participation Survey 2022-2023.

Figure 10 shows gender differences in attendance and participation in cultural activities.

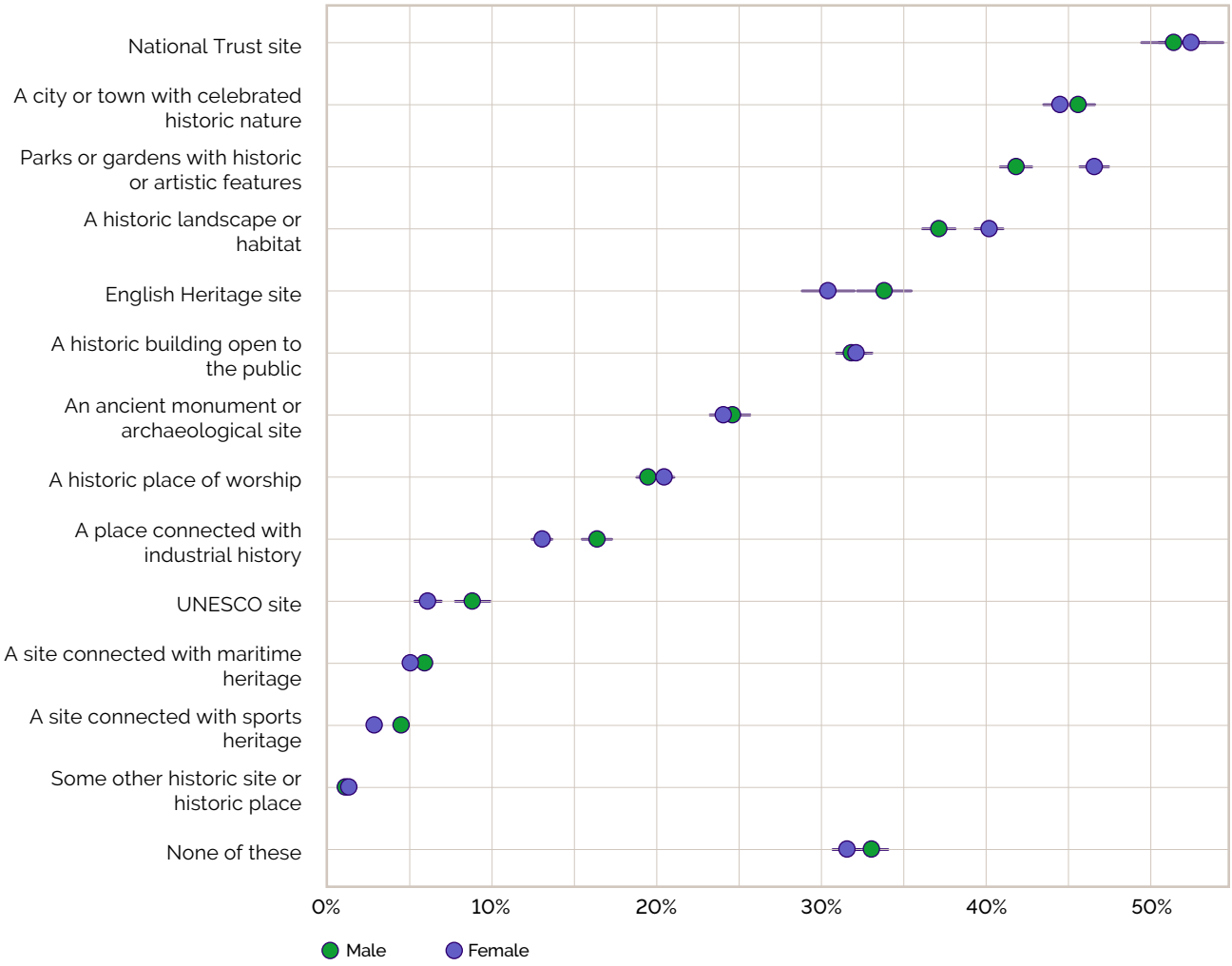
Overall, women were slightly more likely to have attended and participated in different cultural events and forms. Around 20% of men had not participated in any of the activities, compared with about 15% of women; the equivalent figures for attendance were 31% and 27%. However, the scales of the differences varied significantly across specific activities.

Taking attendance first, the largest absolute difference was in theatrical performances, which far more women (38%) had attended than men (22%). Among activities that were less widely attended overall, there were several other large differences: both craft exhibitions and literary events had been attended by around 10% of women, compared with 7% and 6% of men respectively. The only type of cultural event where men were significantly more likely to have attended was comedy performances, and this difference was small. Roughly similar fractions of men and women had attended a live music event (around 31%), and the fraction of women who had been to the cinema was only slightly larger than that of men.

The differences were larger for cultural participation. Far more women had read for pleasure (71% compared with 57% of men); far more women had engaged in painting, drawing, printmaking or sculpture (19% compared with 9%). The largest relative difference was in crafts, where 21% of women had participated compared with 9% of men. For attendance, in contrast, there were a few activities where more men had participated than women: playing video games (41% compared with 31% of women); composing music (8% compared with 5%); and making films or videos (4% compared with 2%).

These gender gaps are consistent with existing research. Women were more likely to engage in different forms of arts, culture and heritage than men, and the relative differences were largest in relation to activities that take place in the home. Moreover, there were very few cases where differences were small or non-existent. The scales of the gender gaps in engagement were very similar to their equivalents pre-pandemic (Brook et al, 2020). Next, we analyse gender differences in heritage engagement.

Figure 11. Rates of attendance at heritage sites in England (16+) by gender, 2022-2023



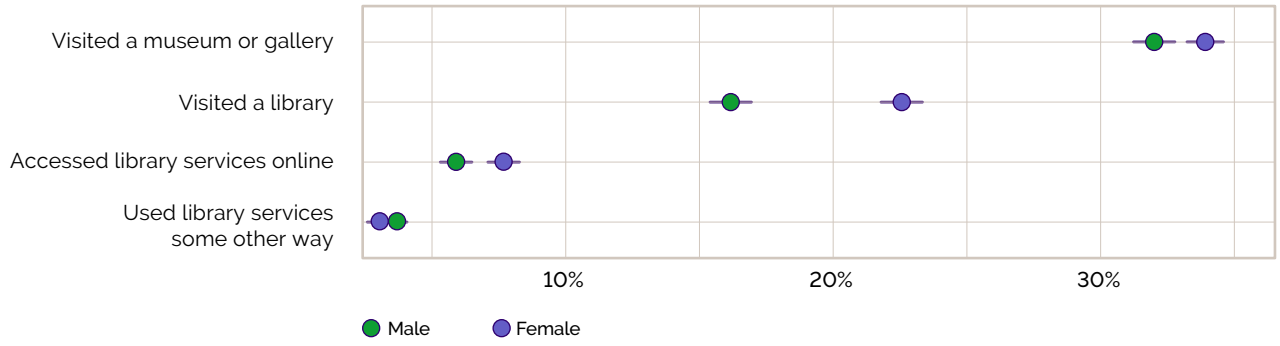
Source: DCMS Participation Survey 2022-2023.

By contrast with arts participation and attendance, most different heritage sites had similar rates of attendance by men and women: in 8 out of the 13 site types, there were no statistically significant differences. Women were more likely than men to visit parks or gardens and historic landscapes or habitats, but the differences were fairly small: 46% compared with 42%, and 40% compared with 36%, respectively.

Men were more likely than women to have attended places connected with industrial history, UNESCO sites or sites connected with sports heritage, but these differences were, again, small. These similarities are noteworthy given how much they differ from engagement in arts and culture.

Finally, we now address gender differences in engagement with museums, galleries and libraries.

Figure 12. Rates of attendance at museums, galleries and libraries in England (16+) by gender, 2022-2023



Source: DCMS Participation Survey 2022-2023.

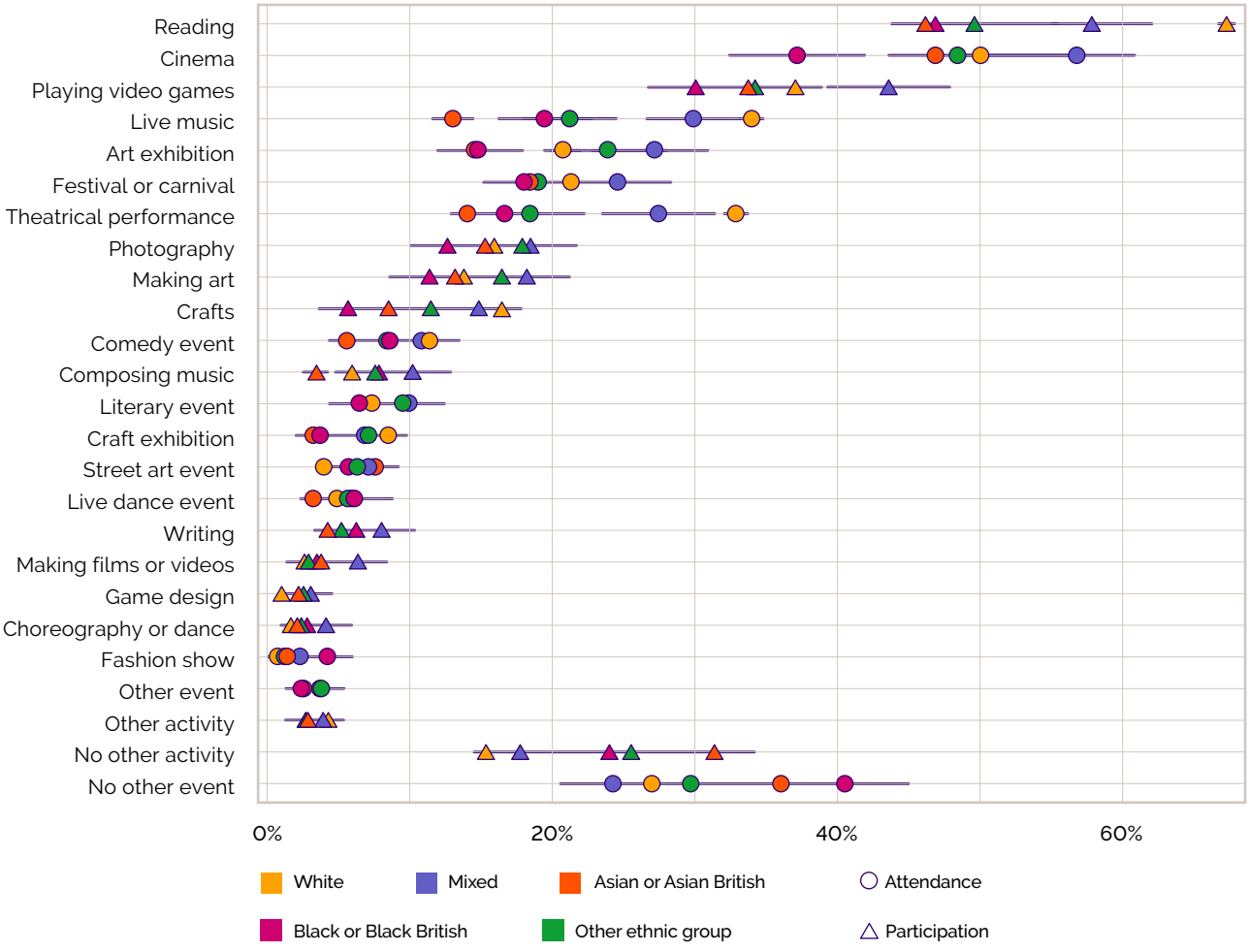
Figure 12 shows the differences in engagement with museums, galleries and libraries by gender. Slightly more women had visited a museum or gallery than men (32% compared with 31%), and substantially more had visited a library (23% compared with 16%). Slightly more women had accessed library services online (8% compared with 6%).

Taken together, we can see that the largest gender differences in arts, culture and heritage audiences are in cultural participation. Women were far more likely than men to read for pleasure, to make art and to make crafts. There were also very large differences in cultural attendance, where attending a theatrical performance was the largest. There were smaller differences in attendance at heritage sites, museums and galleries, and libraries, although very few modes of engagement with arts, culture and heritage had no gender gaps at all.

2.2.3: Ethnic group

As with gender, there has been significant research on ethnic differences in arts, culture and heritage engagement. This research tends to find large differences in almost all activities, with higher probability of attendance among White people (Bennett et al 2009). However, this is not uniformly the case, with Black people more likely to attend carnivals and Black, Asian and mixed-race people more likely to attend culturally specific festivals (Chan et al 2008). In this section, we build on this research base.

Figure 13. Rates of attendance and participation in cultural activities in England (16+) by ethnic group, 2022-2023



Source: DCMS Participation Survey 2022-2023.

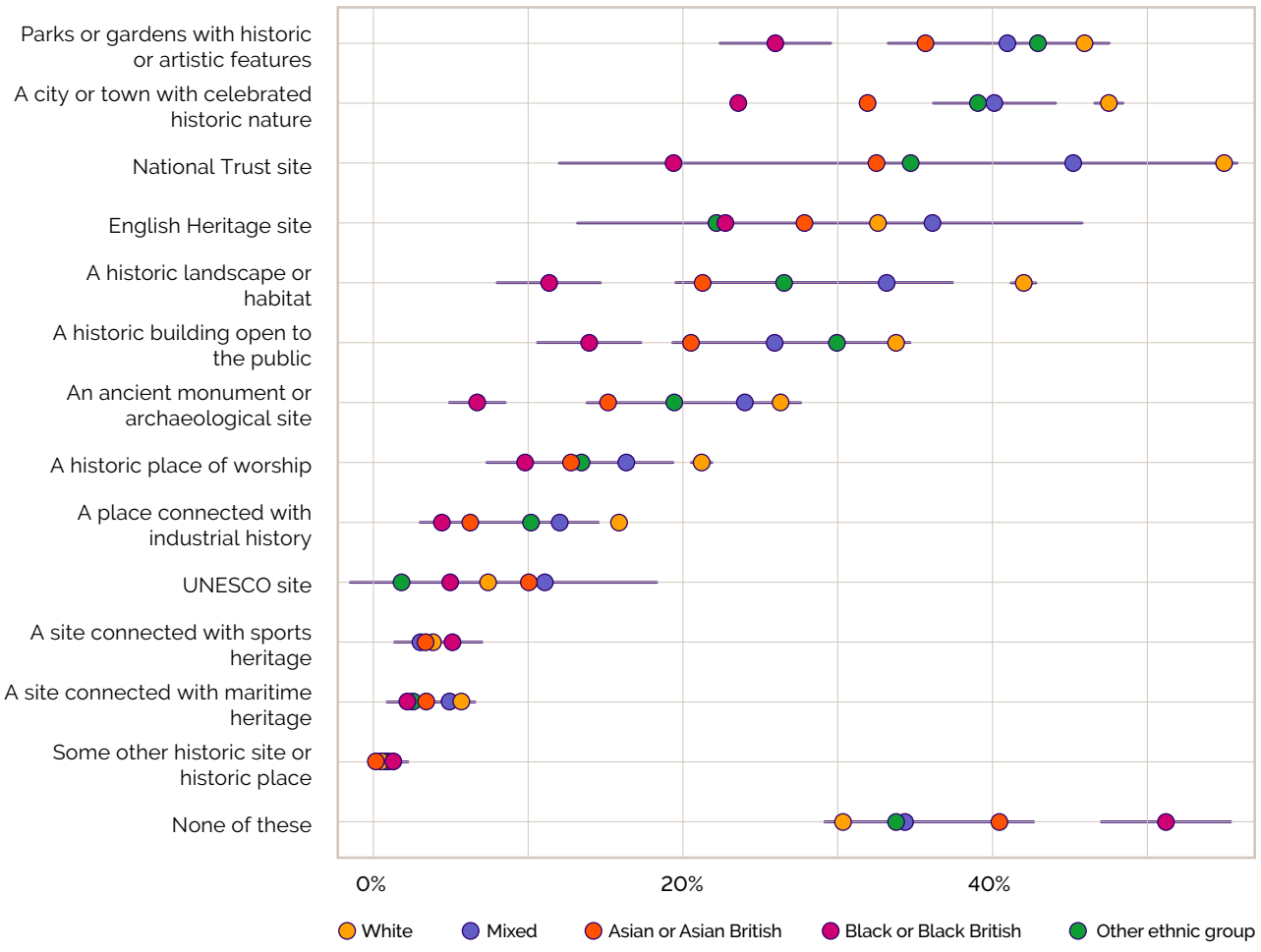
Figure 13 shows the rates of engagement in different forms of cultural attendance and participation by ethnic group. Because the majority of respondents to the survey were White, the uncertainty around the estimates for other ethnic groups is greater.

While there is no overall pattern, White people were quantitatively the most likely to engage with most forms of attendance and participation. In some cases, they were significantly more likely to engage than all other ethnic groups: this was the case for reading for pleasure and attending theatrical performances. In others, there were significant differences between White people and some ethnic groups, but not others. For example, the difference between rates of attending a film at a cinema between White people and people with mixed or multiple ethnic groups was not statistically significant. However, White people were more likely to attend the cinema than Black people, Asian people or people from other ethnic groups, and these differences were statistically significant. This applied across both attendance and participation: for example, White people were more likely than Black or Asian people to attend live music and participate in crafts.

While a large number of activities and modes of participation had a higher estimate for White people's engagement than for other ethnic groups, these differences were not statistically significant. This means that we cannot infer that there are any major underlying differences between different ethnic groups.

Overall, this confirms the existing evidence of major ethnic differences in arts and cultural engagement. It also builds on this research in distinguishing between White, Black, Asian and other ethnic groups, highlighting further differences. This means that it is hard to compare the magnitudes of the differences with those pre-pandemic, since those statistical comparisons were between White people and all other ethnic groups combined. We now move to similar analysis with a focus on heritage sites.

Figure 14. Rates of attendance at heritage sites in England (16+) by ethnic group, 2022-2023



Source: DCMS Participation Survey 2022-2023.

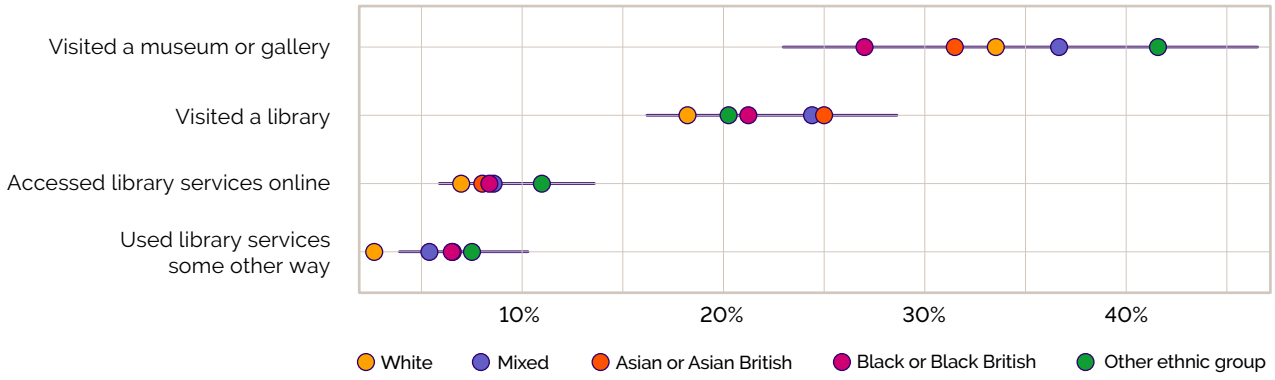
Figure 14 shows differences between ethnic groups in attendance at different heritage sites. Not all questions were presented to all participants; because of this, there is significant uncertainty around certain items.

As with attendance and participation in cultural activity, White people were consistently most likely to have attended different heritage sites in the preceding 12 months. White people were more likely to have attended than all other ethnic groups for four different types of heritage sites: cities and towns with celebrated historic natures, historic landscapes and habitats, historic places of worship, and places connected with industrial history. They were also significantly more likely than other ethnic groups to have attended other types of sites: for example, White people were more likely to have attended a historic building open to the public than Asian or Black people.

The figure shows that Black people were significantly less likely than all other ethnic groups to have attended four different types of heritage site: parks and gardens with celebrated historical or artistic features, cities or towns with celebrated historic natures, natural landscapes and habitats, and ancient monuments and archaeological sites. This is particularly noteworthy given the confidence intervals here were wider than those in the preceding figures. For example, 41% of White people had attended historic landscapes or habitats compared with 11% of Black people, and the equivalent figures for ancient monuments and historic sites were 26% and 7% respectively. More than 50% of Black people had not attended any of these types of historic sites during the preceding 12 months, compared with 30% of White people.

This reinforces our existing knowledge about differences between ethnic groups in the probability of engaging in arts, culture and heritage. In fact, these differences were even larger than for engagement in arts and culture, suggesting that our previous understanding of ethnic differences may not have gone far enough. We finish this section with analysis of differences in attending museums, galleries and libraries.

Figure 15. Rates of attendance at museums, galleries and libraries in England (16+) by ethnic group, 2022-2023



Source: DCMS Participation Survey 2022-2023.

Figure 15 shows the rates of attendance at museums, galleries and libraries by ethnic group.

It shows that White people were the least likely group to use library services online: in the case of using library services in some other way, they were significantly less likely to engage than any other ethnic group, while in the case of visiting a library, they were less likely to attend than Asian or Asian British people. The differences between groups in accessing library services online were not statistically significant.

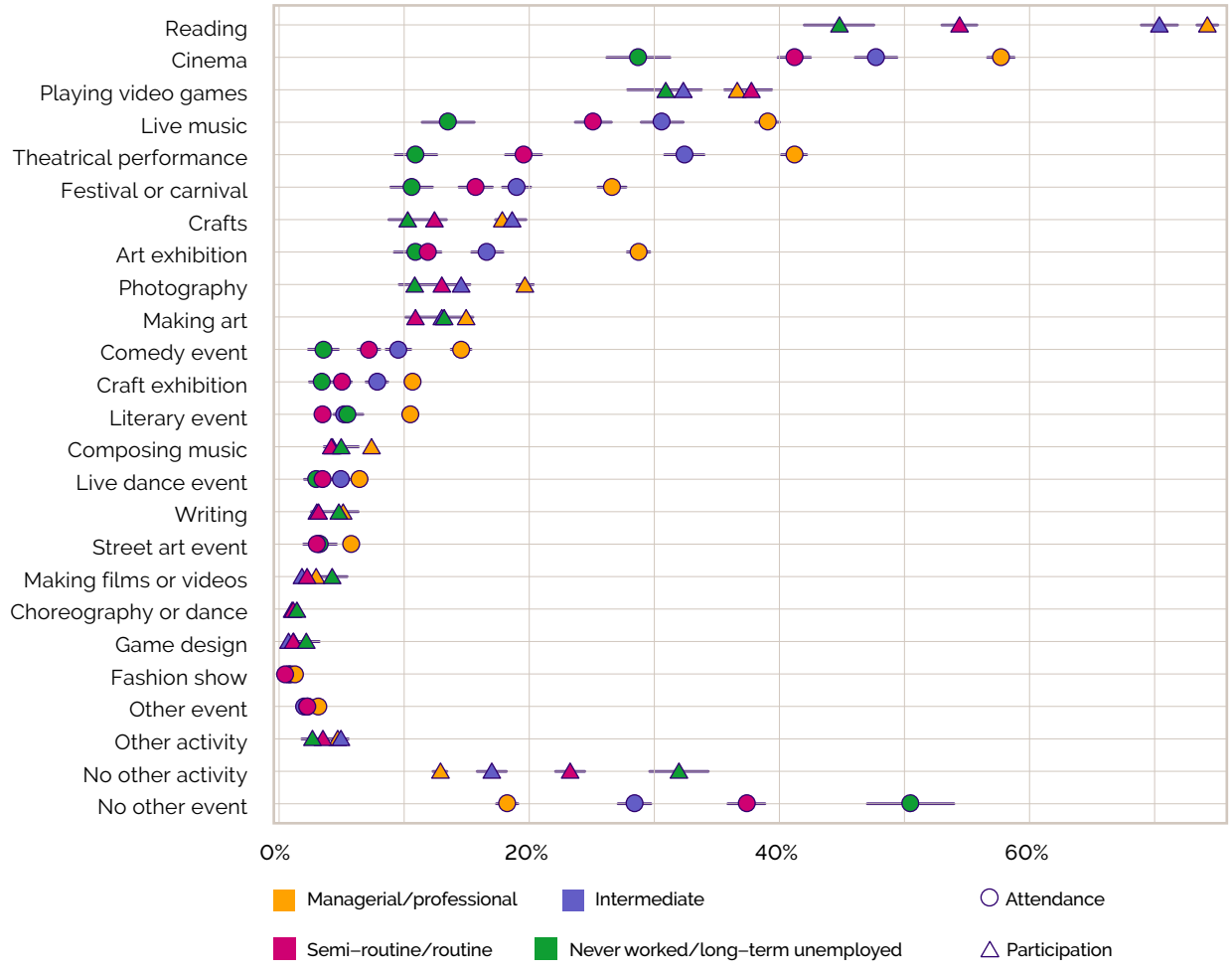
White people were less likely to visit museums or galleries than people who selected the "Other ethnic group" category, but were more likely to attend than Black people, who were themselves less likely to attend museums than all groups.

This data confirms the evidence of differences in engagement with arts, culture and heritage between ethnic groups. The differences between Black and White people's likelihood of engagement in visiting heritage sites were particularly large. However, White people were not the most likely to engage in every single activity, being the least likely to attend libraries. Some forms of arts and culture had only very small differences between different ethnic groups, including attending literary events and street art

2.2.4: Social class

Social class is perhaps the dimension of social life that has had the most attention in relation to engagement with arts, culture and heritage. A long tradition of research has identified major differences between different social class groups in most (but not all) forms of arts, culture and heritage (see Brook et al 2020 for an overview). In this analysis we use the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification, a form of measurement for social class.

Figure 16. Rates of attendance and participation in cultural activities in England (16+) by National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification, 2022-2023



Source: DCMS Participation Survey 2022-2023.

Figure 16 shows the rates of engagement with different forms of cultural attendance and participation by social class.

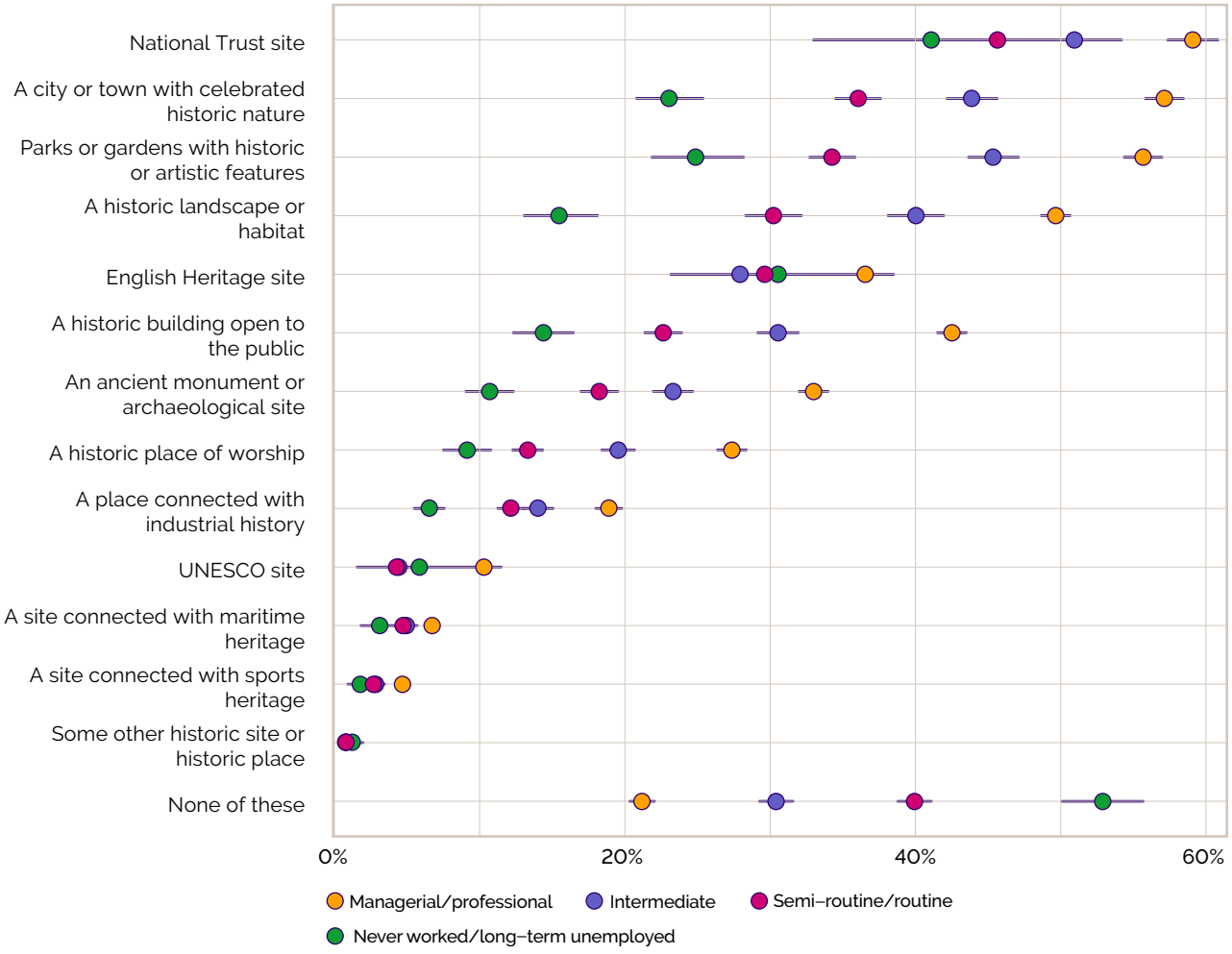
People working in managerial or professional roles, or whose most recent role was managerial or professional, were more likely to have engaged in almost all of these categories. This applied across attendance and participation, as they were the group most likely to have read for pleasure, been to the cinema, attended live music, engaged in photography as an artistic activity and written music. However, it was more pronounced for attendance, with only 18% of this group not having attended any of the events listed compared with 28% of people in the intermediate category (which includes roles such as secretaries and toolmakers), 38% of people in the semi-routine or routine category (which includes roles such as postal workers and cleaners) and half of the people in the "Never worked/long-term unemployed" category. By contrast, the equivalent figures for having not participated in any of the relevant activities were 13%, 16%, 23% and 31% respectively.

Several of these differences warrant further attention. One of the largest absolute differences was in theatrical performances, which were attended by 40% of people in the managerial or professional category, but 19% in the semi-routine or routine category. The equivalent figures for art exhibitions were 29% and 12%, while for literary events they were 10% and 4%.

By contrast, several forms of cultural participation had much smaller differences between social class groups. For playing video games, one of the most widely enjoyed forms of cultural participation, the difference between the managerial or professional and semi-routine or routine categories was not statistically significant. Similarly, for crafts, there was little difference between the managerial or professional and intermediate categories.

This data reinforces the findings of a long tradition of research: people in managerial and professional households are more likely to engage in almost all forms of arts and culture. We next move to compare these findings with forms of engagement with heritage.

Figure 17. Rates of attendance at heritage sites in England (16+) by National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification, 2022-2023



Source: DCMS Participation Survey 2022-2023.

Figure 17 shows the differences in engagement with different forms of heritage by social class.

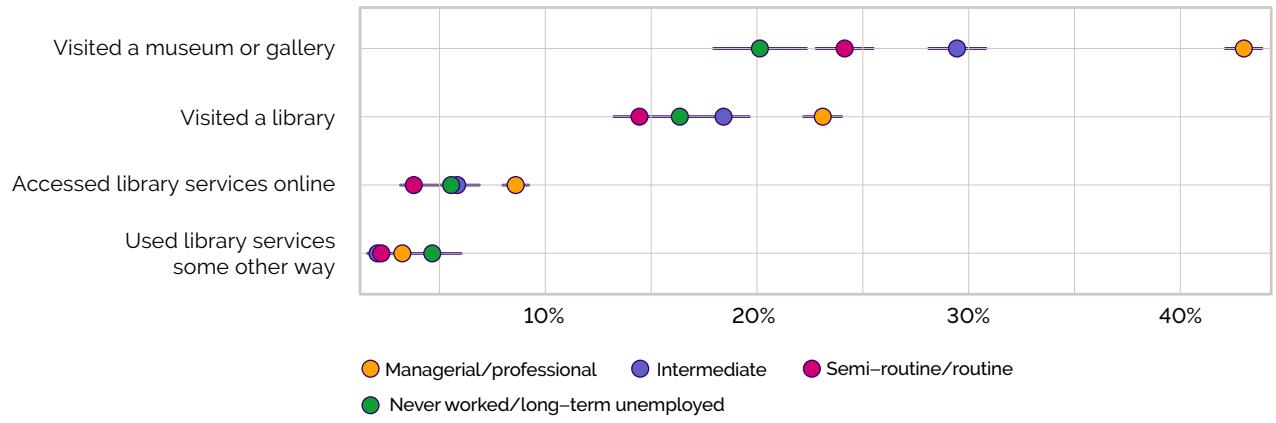
As with cultural attendance and participation, people in the managerial or professional category were consistently the most likely to have attended, with the differences generally being statistically significant; the exceptions were English Heritage and UNESCO sites, where the confidence interval was wider due to the question not being asked to all survey participants. In most cases, differences between all four groups were statistically significant. The pattern here is relatively consistent: the fraction of people in the managerial or professional category having attended different heritage sites was roughly double that of people in the semi-routine or routine category.

There were exceptions to this pattern, particularly in visiting National Trust and English Heritage sites. While the confidence intervals around the estimates for these activities were wider than for other forms of visiting heritage sites, the differences between different social class groups were smaller; 59% of people in the managerial or professional group had attended a National Trust site in the preceding 12 months, and the equivalent figure for the intermediate group was 52%. For English Heritage sites, there was almost no difference between people in the intermediate and semi-routine or routine groups.

These results may reflect differences in how respondents interpret the questions. Someone asked if they have been to a city or town with celebrated historic nature in the past year might have been to Canterbury or Chester, but might interpret them differently; in contrast, the language of named institutions allows less room for interpretation. If this is part of the explanation, the differences we see here may be exaggerated.

However, the overall pattern is once again that people in managerial and professional households were statistically significantly more likely to engage in almost all forms of arts, culture and heritage. The scales of the differences varied, but there was only one case without a statistically significant difference: visiting English Heritage sites. We finally move to compare attendance between social class groups at museums and libraries.

Figure 18. Rates of attendance at museums, galleries and libraries in England (16+) by National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification, 2022-2023



Source: DCMS Participation Survey 2022-2023.

Figure 18 shows the rates of attendance at museums, galleries and libraries.

It shows that people in the managerial or professional category were the most likely to have attended museums, visited libraries or accessed library services online. In the case of visiting museums and galleries, the difference was very large: 42% of people in the managerial or professional category had visited them, while for the other groups the figures were below 30%. For libraries, the differences were smaller but still significant.

Taken together, this reinforces a long tradition of research: arts, culture and heritage are a major site of class inequality. This analysis highlights the role of heritage in this space.

2.3: Comparing England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland

Data on participation and attendance in arts, culture and heritage is collected in different ways across the four nations of the UK. England is the only nation with a dedicated survey: the Participation Survey, which has a very large sample size. In other nations, questions on arts, culture and heritage are not asked every single year, or are asked at different levels of detail. For example, the National Survey for Wales asks questions about attendance at performing arts each year but does not always ask about the specific types of performing arts.

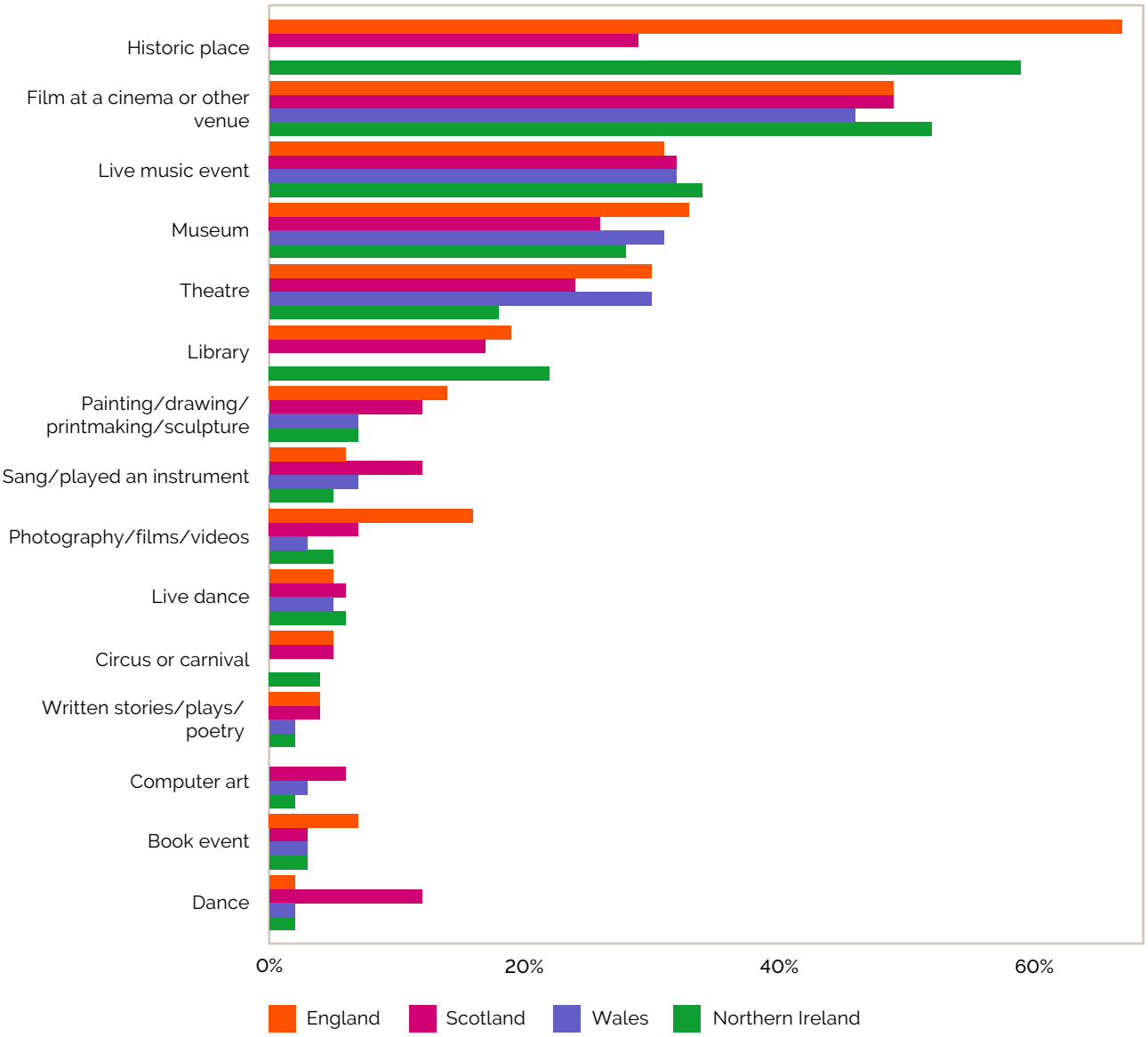
Some activities are only asked about in one nation, reflecting differences in the activities taking place between nations. For example, the National Survey for Wales has historically asked about people's attendance at Eisteddfod (Welsh Government, 2023).

In less-disrupted periods, it would be possible to compare rates of participation and attendance between surveys with different data collection periods. If nations show relatively consistent engagement over time, using data from one year in one nation with data from another year in another nation could yield meaningful comparisons. However, the evidence from England shows that rates of change in engagement varied significantly over the period 2021-2023, meaning that a comparison between different data collection periods would be misleading.

For this reason, our analysis of comparisons between the four nations of the UK is more limited than our analysis of participation in England. We present comparisons where the questions about people's activity were sufficiently similar, and where data was collected in the period 2022-2023. We do not include activities that were only included in one national survey. Overall, this means that we compare attendance at nine different types of events, and participation in six different types of activities.

Finally, the data availability for these surveys varies. While the most up-to-date data on the Participation Survey and the National Survey for Wales was available through the UK Data Service at the time of writing, this was not the case for the Scottish Household Survey and the Northern Ireland Community Survey. This makes it impossible to draw the same comparisons between groups as for England. We plan to draw these comparisons in a future State of the Nations report.

Figure 19. Rates of attendance and participation in cultural activities in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (16+), 2022-2023



Source: DCMS Participation Survey 2022-2023; Scottish Household Survey, 2022; National Survey for Wales, 2022/2023; 2022/23 Continuous Household Survey.

Figure 19 shows the different rates of engagement with a range of arts, culture and heritage activities across the four nations of the UK.

For several activities, particularly attendance, engagement rates were similar across all four nations: rates of seeing a film at a cinema varied from 52% in Northern Ireland to 45% in Wales; while rates of attending live music were even more similar, varying from 32% in Northern Ireland to 30% in England.

The largest difference was in attendance at historic places, where more than 60% of people in England reported attendance, compared with 22% in Scotland. With differences at this scale, it is likely that people systematically interpreted the question differently. Other than historic places, the largest difference in attendance was evident in events associated with books or writing; in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the rates were similar at around 2%, while in England the rate was significantly higher at around 7%.

There were larger differences in rates of participation between nations. In England and Scotland, the rates of different forms of engagement in visual art (painting, drawing, printmaking and sculpture) were higher than in Wales and in Northern Ireland. People in England were also far more likely to report having engaged in photography as an artistic activity. However, by far the largest difference was in reported participation in dance: in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the figures were all around 2%, while in Scotland the figure was 12%. With questions having been phrased almost identically, this is likely to represent genuine differences in the populations, with traditional dance in Scotland being a much more widespread and mainstream form of cultural participation than in the other nations of the UK.

We should interpret these results cautiously. While we see some large differences, it is difficult to interpret the extents to which these differences are because of question phrasing, the timings of the survey fieldwork or genuine differences between the four nations. In the same way, we should not interpret similarities as representing no differences between the four nations. What these figures do demonstrate is that rates of engagement with arts, culture and heritage appear to not significantly differ overall, even though there are differences with respect to individual activities.

3 The arts, culture and heritage workforces: evidence from the Labour Force Survey

This section summarises some key statistics about employment in arts, culture and heritage occupations across the UK, with data from the Labour Force Survey.

This is motivated by the ecosystem approach that we describe at the start of this report: the composition of a workforce has implications for what is produced and how audiences are comprised. Specifically, we focus on the demographic make-up of the workforce, mirroring our similar analysis of audiences. We also focus on the balance of employed and self-employed people in the sectors and on transitions into and out of the sectors, to assess the stability of the ecosystem.

The Labour Force Survey allows analysis over short time periods, with data being collected every quarter. This means we can analyse the potential effects of interventions and shocks, such as the Covid-19 pandemic. However, we should note that our analysis of Labour Force Survey data does not address all aspects of work: for example, pay, worker representation and professional development. Nor does it show how demographic differences vary with seniority in different occupations, which previous Creative PEC research has highlighted as an issue (Carey, Giles & O'Brien, 2023)

3.1: Changes in the composition of the arts, culture and heritage workforces

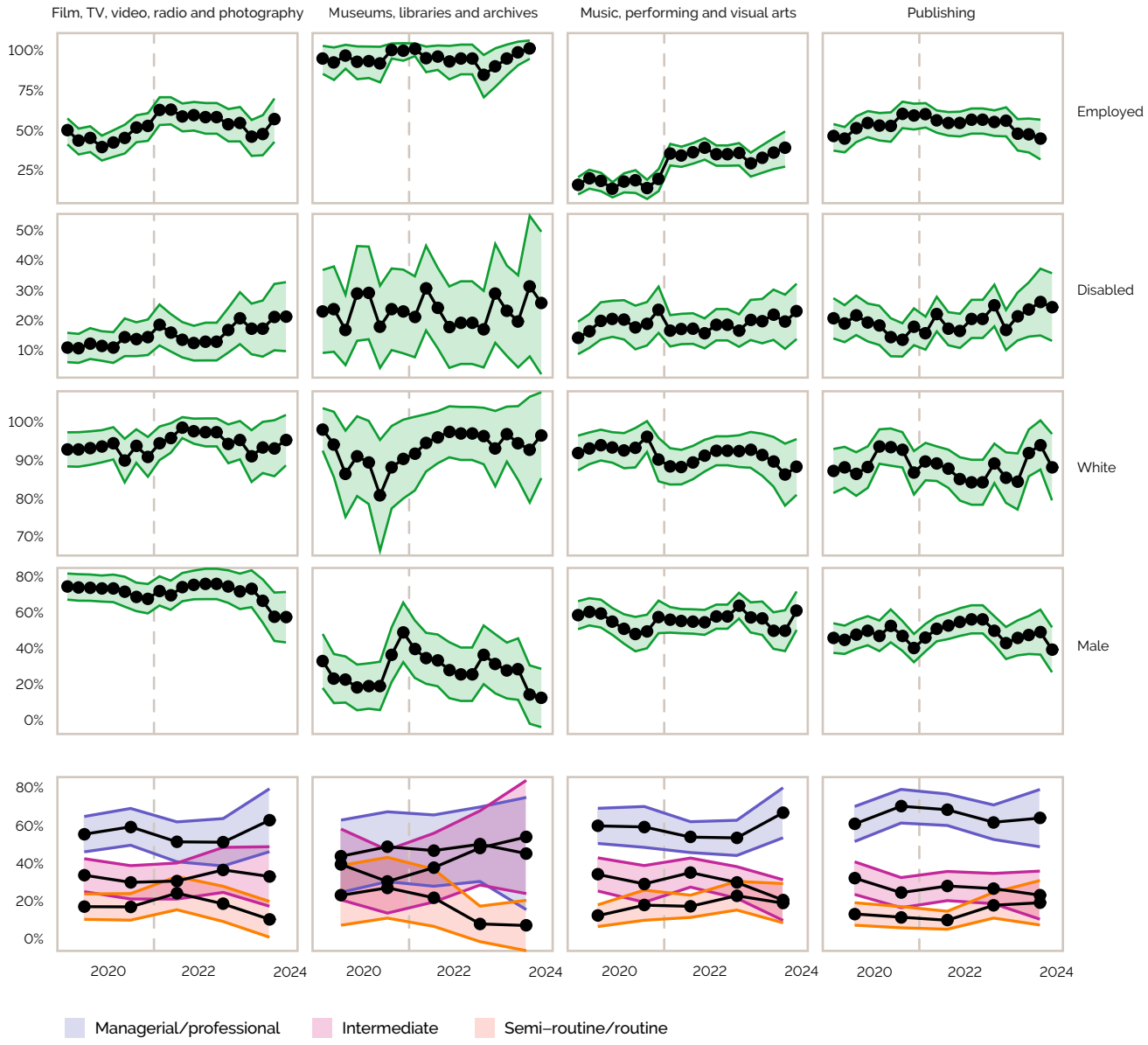
The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) publishes estimates of the numbers of people working in relevant sectors, measured through industrial classifications. The DCMS definition of the cultural sector uses a total of 20 Standard Industrial Classification codes, including television programming and broadcasting activities, artistic creation, and museum activities. This data is derived from the Annual Population Survey, which is itself derived from the Labour Force Survey. DCMS estimates that the cultural sector employed 703,000 people during the period July 2022-June 2023: of these, 52% were employed (as opposed to freelance), 51% were men, 90% were White and 20% were disabled (DCMS, 2024b).

Here, we distinguish between four key parts of the arts, culture and heritage workforce: film, TV, video, radio and photography; museums, libraries and archives; music, performing and visual arts; and publishing. We focus particularly on people in creative occupations rather than in broader creative industries. As with our analysis of arts, culture and heritage engagement, we include confidence intervals, while also publishing quarter-by-quarter estimates derived from the Labour Force Survey. Finally, we show the socioeconomic backgrounds of people working in these sectors, a crucial dimension of inequality in creative occupations (Brook et al, 2020).

Every 10 years, occupational codes are updated by the Office for National Statistics. These updates reflect changes in the labour market. For example, some occupations are genuinely new and are therefore recognised in the introduction of new codes, and some existing occupational codes are distinguished into more than one, reflecting changes in the composition of those roles. These changes are relevant for our analysis, as the most recent change was introduced in the Labour Force Survey at the start of 2021: the group "Managers and directors in the creative industries" was introduced, with DCMS estimating that 88% of people in this group would have previously been included in the group "Managers and proprietors in other sectors not elsewhere classified" (Office for National Statistics 2023b). We have included this group in the film, TV, video, radio and photography category, as we estimate that this is where the largest number of people in this occupational group are working, although we acknowledge that some people in this group would be better allocated to others. The change in coding is denoted in our figures with a dashed line.

We present the analysis of the characteristics under discussion together in a single figure. This allows us to compare different occupational groups and characteristics over time: if there are changes, we can see whether these coincide, or whether changes in different characteristics have occurred at different points.

Figure 20. Changes in employment, disability, ethnic group, gender and socioeconomic background in different sectors of arts, culture and heritage occupations in the UK, 2019-2023



Source: Quarterly Labour Force Survey January-March 2019 to October-December 2023 inclusive.

Figure 20 shows the changes between 2019 and 2023 in these characteristics of creative workers, distinguished between four groups of occupations.

The vast majority of people working in museums, libraries and archives occupations were employed as opposed to self-employed. At the end of 2022, this percentage fell from 93% to 82%, but this was followed with a recovery; by the end of 2023, the fraction of people employed rather than self-employed in these roles was close to 100%.

In the other sectors, the fractions of people who were employed, as opposed to self-employed, were significantly lower. In both the film, TV, video, radio and photography and publishing categories, the figures were close to 50%; in music, performing and visual art, the numbers were even smaller. In music, performing and visual art occupations, there was an increase in the fraction of employed people after the change in coding scheme in 2021, but since then the rate of employment compared with self-employment has been fairly stable, which was also the case for film, TV, video, radio and photography. In publishing, there was a decrease in the fraction of employed people from the second quarter of 2023.

The fractions of disabled people working in all these groups of arts, culture and heritage occupations did not significantly change over the period 2019-2023. While the figures for film, TV, video, radio and photography increased from around 10% at the start of the period to around 20% at the end, there is significant uncertainty around these estimates, so we cannot state confidently that these changes reflect differences in the populations.

Similarly, the percentages of White people in these occupations were similar throughout the period, at around 90%. These figures were higher than for the general workforce, where the equivalent figure was around 85% in 2023 (UK government, 2023). As with the fraction of disabled people, we do not see any evidence here that the percentage of White people working in arts, culture and heritage changed between 2019 and 2023.

We do see differences in the percentage of men working in these occupational groups. There was a significant increase in the percentage of men working in museums, galleries and libraries during 2020, likely reflecting the change in the overall composition of the workforce in this period, with the (largely more senior) men working in these occupations more likely to retain their roles after venues closed (Walmsley et al, 2024). By 2023, the figures were similar to those before the Covid-19 pandemic, with around 17% of people working in these sectors being men. We also see a dip in the percentage of men in film, TV, video, radio and photography occupations in 2023; these occupations had previously been around 70% male, but by the end of 2023 the figures were between 50% and 60%. As with changes in the fraction of employed people in publishing, we will remain alert to whether this trend continues or reverses.

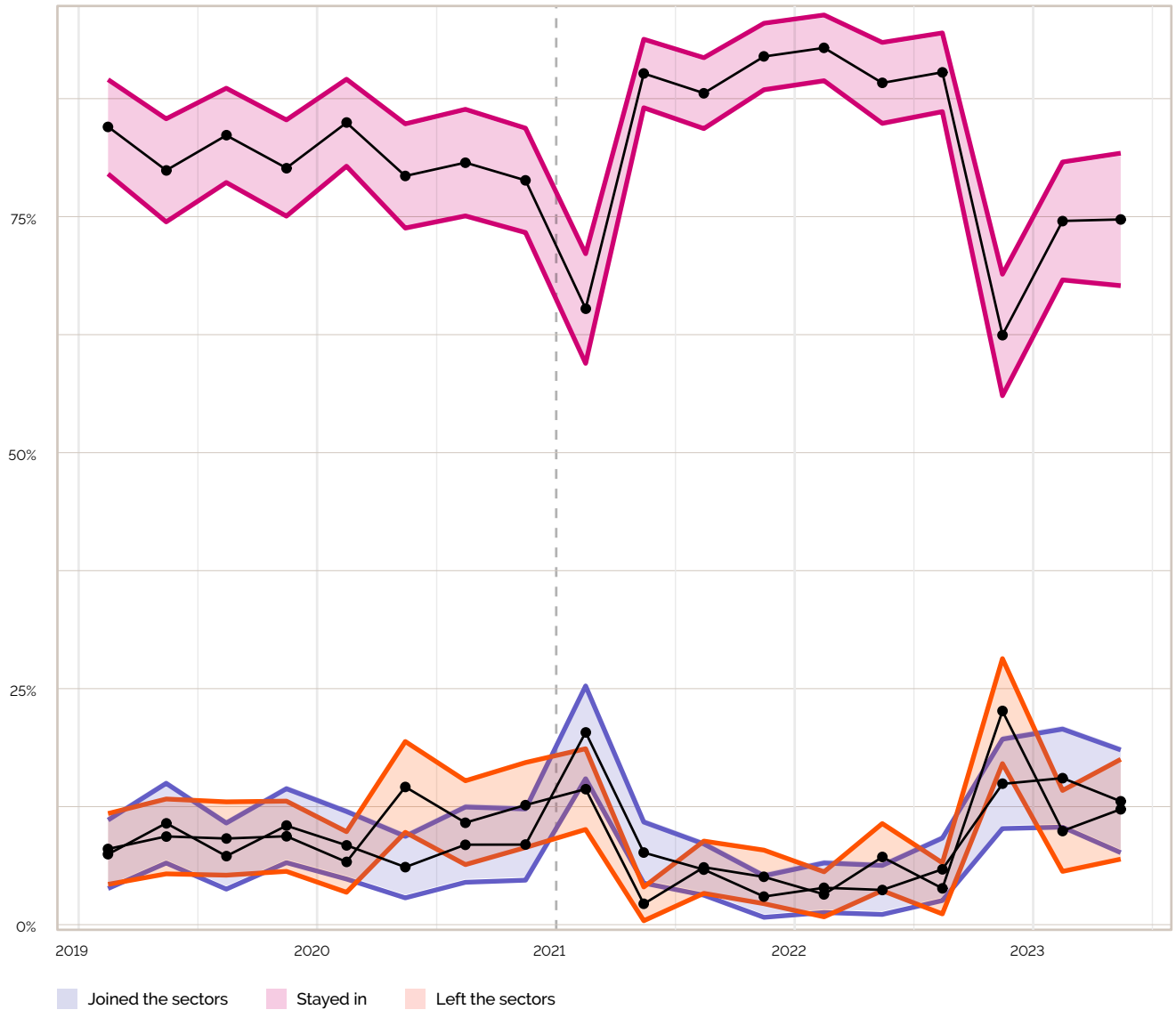
The fractions of people from different backgrounds were also consistent for each of the four occupational groups. In all four, around 60% of people grew up in a house where the main income earner was in a managerial or professional role; the equivalent figure for the entire workforce was 43%. While there were some changes in the fractions of people coming from different backgrounds, they were not statistically significant nor indicative of a trend, so we do not have any evidence that there were any changes in the class backgrounds among arts, culture and heritage workers overall. The question about people's social origins is only asked in the third quarter of each year, hence the smaller number of data points in these panels compared with the others.

This broad analysis highlights the stickiness of the inequalities in arts, culture and heritage occupations: despite this period including the significant disruption of the Covid-19 pandemic, the structure of these occupations remained consistent in most ways. Where there were exceptions, such as the changes in the gender balance in film, TV, video, radio and photography, it is important to remain alert to whether these changes will persist over time.

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

The stability of the arts, culture and heritage workforces has crucial implications for the retention of skills. If there is significant churn, expertise and skills are likely lost. While we would not expect nor hope for zero levels of joining and leaving, which would lock out new talent, we aim to understand how levels of churn have changed since late 2018.

Figure 21. Transitions into and out of arts, culture and heritage occupations, 2019-2023



Source: Labour Force Survey Two-Quarter Longitudinal Datasets, October 2018-March 2019 to January-June 2023 inclusive.

Figure 21 shows how the percentages of people joining, leaving or remaining in arts, culture and heritage occupations varied between 2019 and 2023.

For the majority of this period, the percentages of people who stayed in arts, culture and heritage occupations on a quarter-by-quarter basis was relatively consistent at around 80%. However, there were some important variations; the figure stayed consistent during 2019 and 2020, in spite of the impact of the pandemic, which we may have anticipated would lead to significant transformations within the sector. The change between the final quarter of 2020 and the first quarter of 2021 was significantly different, with closer to just two-thirds of people who worked in an arts, culture or heritage occupation staying in in their roles in both quarters. For the remainder of 2021 and most of 2022, the figures remained stable, although with a small change between the final two quarters of 2022. The first half of 2023 saw no changes.

Changes in the percentages of people staying in arts, culture and heritage occupations can reflect changes in the numbers of people joining these occupations, leaving these occupations or some combination of the two. In most quarters, these figures were relatively similar. The exception was between the first and second quarters of 2020, where significantly more people left arts, culture and heritage occupations than joined them. This is consistent with analysis elsewhere that shows that at the start of the pandemic, a large fraction of people working in arts, culture and heritage occupations left their jobs (Walmsley et al, 2024).

4 The arts, culture and heritage workforces: evidence from the 2021 Census

In this section, we extend the analysis of the arts, culture and heritage workforce using data from the 2021 Census.

The Labour Force Survey is a high-quality source of data on these occupations. However, as a representative sample of the population, it has limitations for fine-grained analysis. By contrast, the census aims to collect data from each individual resident on the relevant date. Inevitably, not every single person completes the census, but rates of compliance are very high; in England and Wales, more than 97% of the usual resident population completed the 2021 Census (Office for National Statistics 2023b).

This allows more detailed analysis of the arts, culture and heritage workforce. We can examine the demographics of individual occupations, rather than groups of occupations, and interpret the geographic distribution of those occupations. This builds on our existing focus on arts, culture and heritage occupations as a site of inequality, as well as other Creative PEC research on the geography of creativity (Siepel et al, 2023).

At this stage, our analysis is more detailed for England and Wales than for Northern Ireland. The release of data across the nations of the UK takes place on different schedules, and we aim to extend analysis of census data from Northern Ireland in future State of the Nations reports.

We also aim to publish detailed analysis of census data from Scotland; as the census was conducted in 2022 rather than 2021, data is not yet available at the same level of detail.

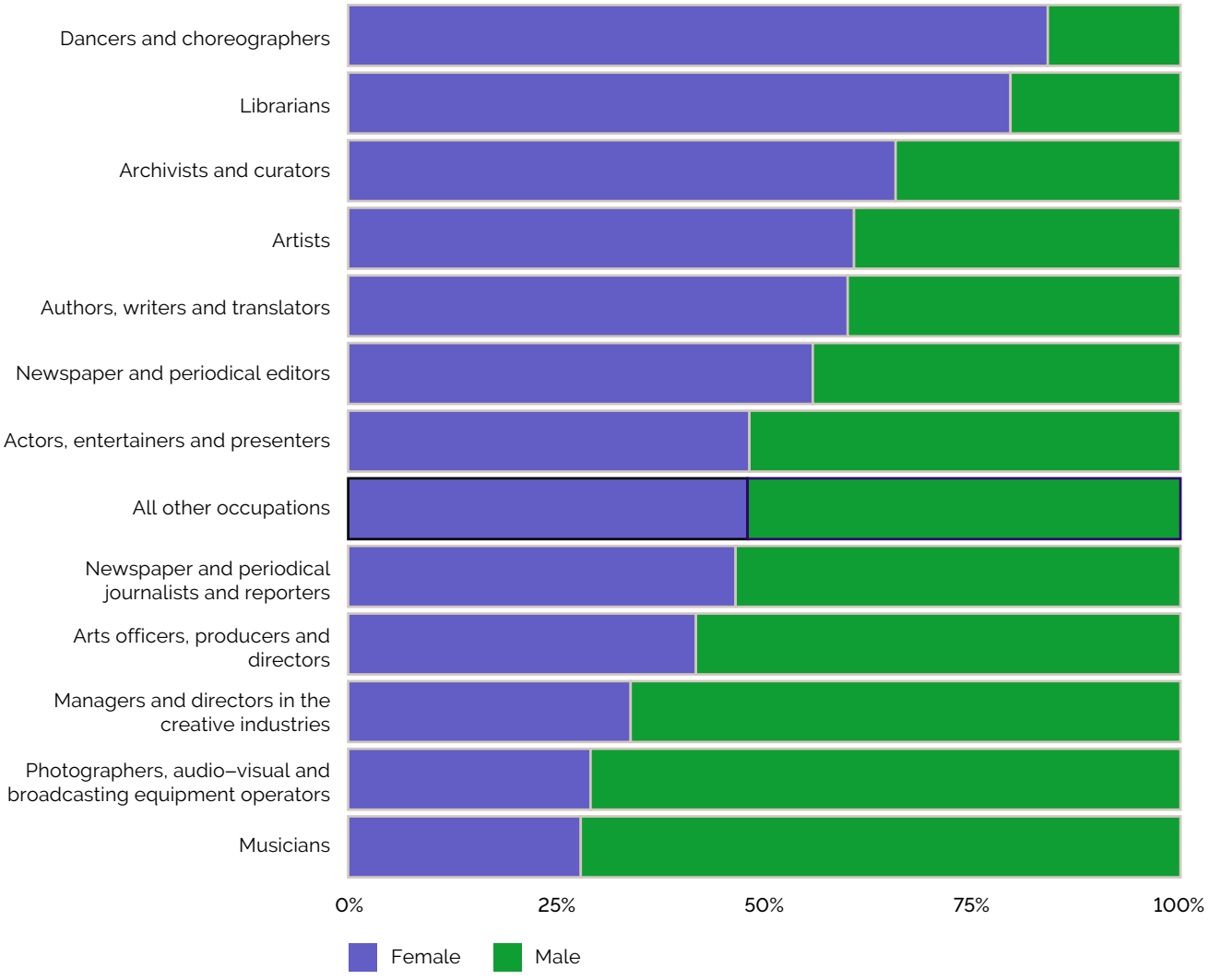
This analysis addresses gender, ethnic group, disability, religion and sexuality. Some of these characteristics have had major attention in existing research, as described and addressed in the previous section. However, quantitative analysis of religion and sexuality in arts, culture and heritage research has been much more limited, despite research drawing attention to, for example, the experience of religious minority cultural workers (Warren, 2022). Analysis of religion and sexuality is challenging due to potential sensitivities in survey questions and the limited ability of surveys to capture data on minority groups. This is, therefore, the first opportunity to present analysis of these important characteristics.

The data presented in this section corresponds to people's main jobs. Around 8% of people working in arts, culture and heritage occupations also hold second jobs; it is harder to estimate how many people work in arts, culture and heritage occupations while having a main job in another sector. For this reason, it is important to exercise caution: this data does not capture the entire arts, culture and heritage workforces, just the people for whom their arts, culture and heritage occupation is their main job.

4.1: Diversity in arts, culture and heritage occupations: England and Wales

We start with analysis of the demographics of different arts, culture and heritage occupations according to the demographic characteristics available in the 2021 Census. In each case, we show the fractions of different groups across each occupation and include the category "All other occupations" as a comparison.

Figure 22. Arts, culture and heritage occupations by sex, Census 2021 (England and Wales)



Source: Office for National Statistics (2023): Diversity in the Labour Market.

Figure 22 shows the percentages of men and women in arts, culture and heritage occupations in the Census 2021 in England and Wales. Occupations are ordered from those with the largest fractions of women at the top, to those with the largest fractions of men at the bottom.

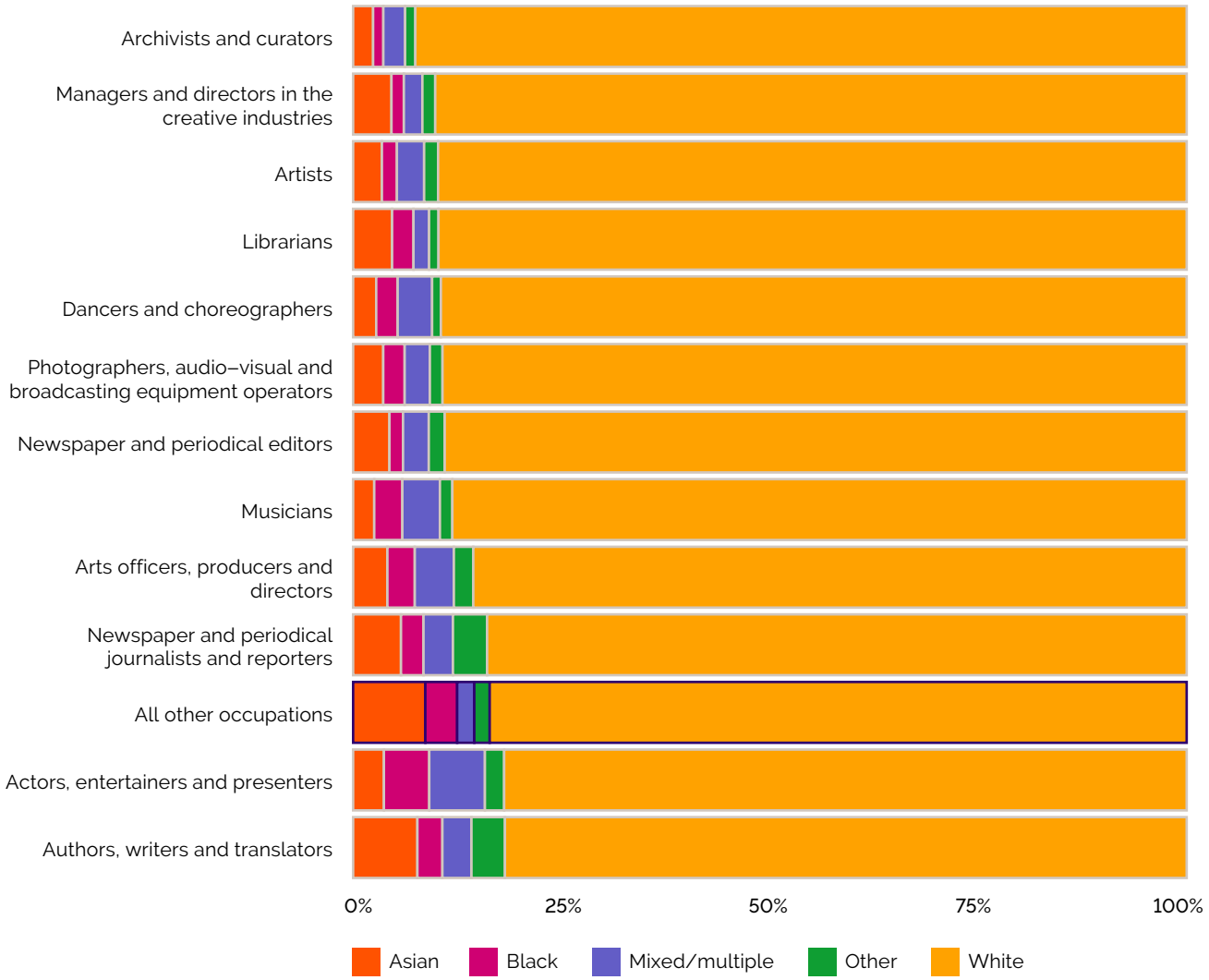
The figure shows that the overall rate of employment of men was slightly higher than for women, leading to the "All other occupations" category comprising 48% women and 52% men. Among arts, culture and heritage occupations, the figures were 47% women and 53% men.

Of the 12 occupational groups that we include in the arts, culture and heritage category, 6 had more men than women and 6 had more women than men. Musicians were the group with the largest fraction of men, at 72%, closely followed by photographers, audio-visual and broadcasting equipment operators at 71%. This contrasts with dancers and choreographers, of whom 84% were women, and librarians, of whom 80% were women.

These distinctions between occupations show the importance of disaggregating larger categories. The category "Music, performing and visual arts", which is used extensively for analysis of arts, culture and heritage occupations, contained both the occupations with the largest fraction of men and the largest fraction of women. It is also significant that two-thirds of managers and directors in the creative industries were men, given existing qualitative evidence that shows gender inequalities in creative work increase with seniority (Brook et al, 2020). It adds further detail to our understanding of arts, culture and heritage work as a site of gender inequality, given the variation across different occupations.

We next move to analysis by ethnic group. Quantitative analysis has shown that White people are overrepresented among most arts, culture and heritage occupations (Brook et al, 2020); however, analysis of differences between ethnic groups other than White people have been significantly more limited. Here, we present analysis of different ethnic groups across all arts, culture and heritage occupations.

Figure 23. Arts, culture and heritage occupations by ethnic group, Census 2021 (England and Wales)



Source: Office for National Statistics (2023): Diversity in the Labour Market.

Figure 23 shows the percentages of people in different ethnic groups in arts, culture and heritage occupations in the Census 2021 in England and Wales. Occupations are ordered from those with the largest fractions of White people at the top, to those with the largest fractions of all other ethnic groups at the bottom.

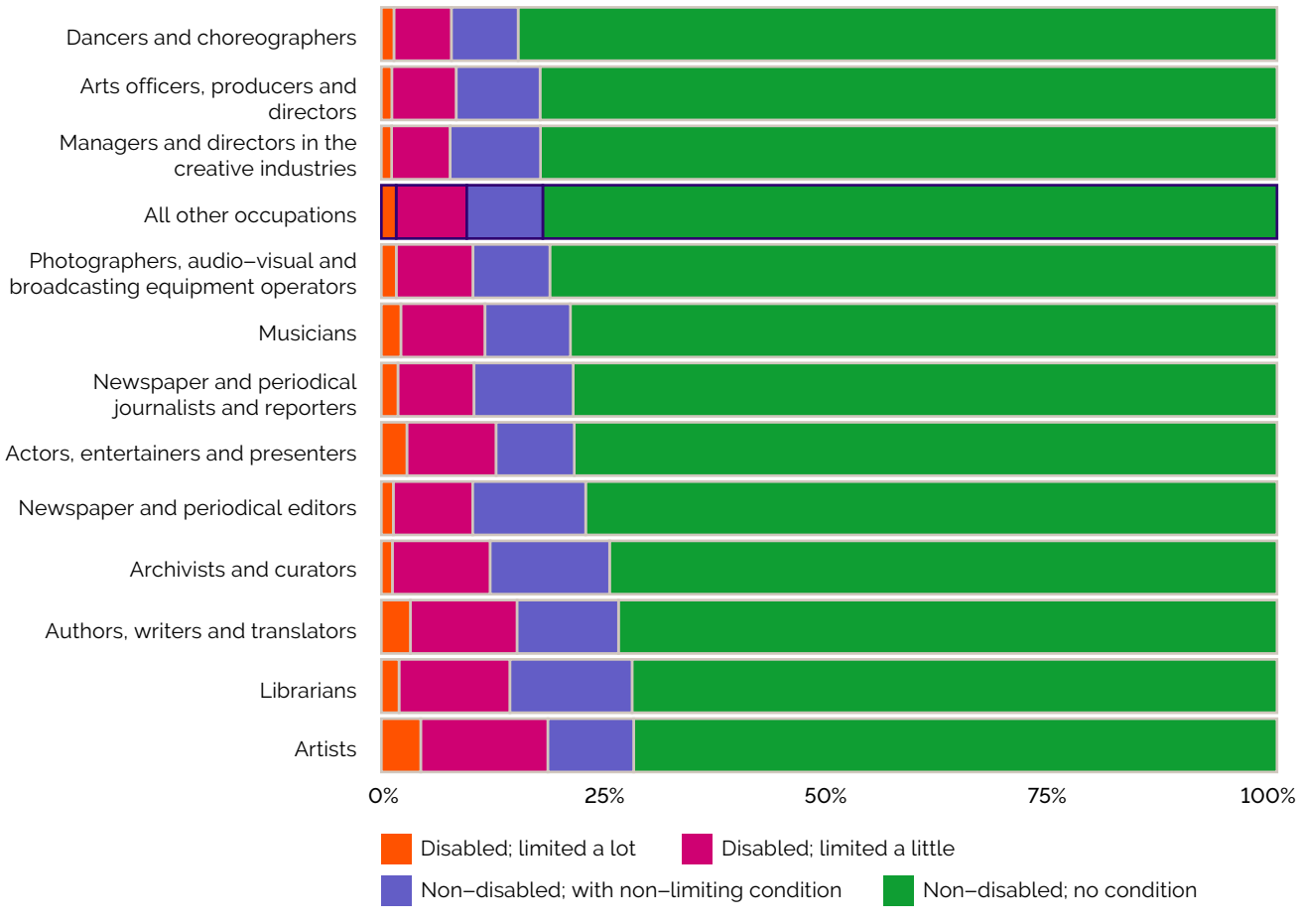
Overall, the percentage of White people in arts, culture and heritage occupations was higher than in all other occupations: 87% compared with 84%. There were slightly larger fractions of people with mixed or multiple ethnic groups and those classified as "Other" in arts, culture and heritage occupations than all other occupations: 3.7% compared with 2.1% for people from mixed backgrounds and 2.2% compared with 1.8% for people in the "Other" category. By contrast, Black and Asian people were underrepresented in arts, culture and heritage occupations compared with other occupations: 2.8% compared with 3.8% for Black people and 4.5% compared with 8.7% for Asian people.

Two occupations had smaller-than-average fractions of White people: actors, entertainers and presenters; and authors, writers and translators. For authors, writers and translators, 7.7% were Asian, close to the equivalent figure for the overall workforce; there was also a larger-than-average fraction of people in the "Mixed/ multiple" and "Other" categories. Among actors, entertainers and presenters, the fraction of Asian people was lower than the equivalent figure for the overall workforce, the fraction of Black people slightly higher and the fraction of people with mixed or multiple ethnicities significantly higher at 6.7% compared with 1.9%.

This analysis reinforces existing research that shows arts, culture and heritage occupations as a site of ethnic inequality. Most of these occupations had larger-than-average percentages of White people, and Black and Asian people were particularly underrepresented relative to other occupations.

We next move to analysis of disability. While quantitative analysis shows under-representation of disabled people in arts, culture and heritage occupations, this does not extend to individual occupations, which we present here.

Figure 24. Arts, culture and heritage occupations by disability, Census 2021 (England and Wales)



Source: Office for National Statistics (2023): Diversity in the Labour Market.

Figure 24 shows the percentages of people with different disability statuses in arts, culture and heritage occupations in England and Wales. Occupations are ordered from those with the smallest fractions of people reporting disabilities or conditions at the top, and the largest fractions at the bottom.

Overall, a larger percentage of people working in arts, culture and heritage occupations reported a disability or condition than in the workforce more broadly: 21% compared with 18%. Larger numbers of people in the arts versus the general workforce reported having a disability or condition that limited their day-to-day activities a lot (2.1% versus 1.6%), a little (9.4% versus 7.9%), and having a disability or condition that did not limit their day-to-day condition (10% versus 8.5%).

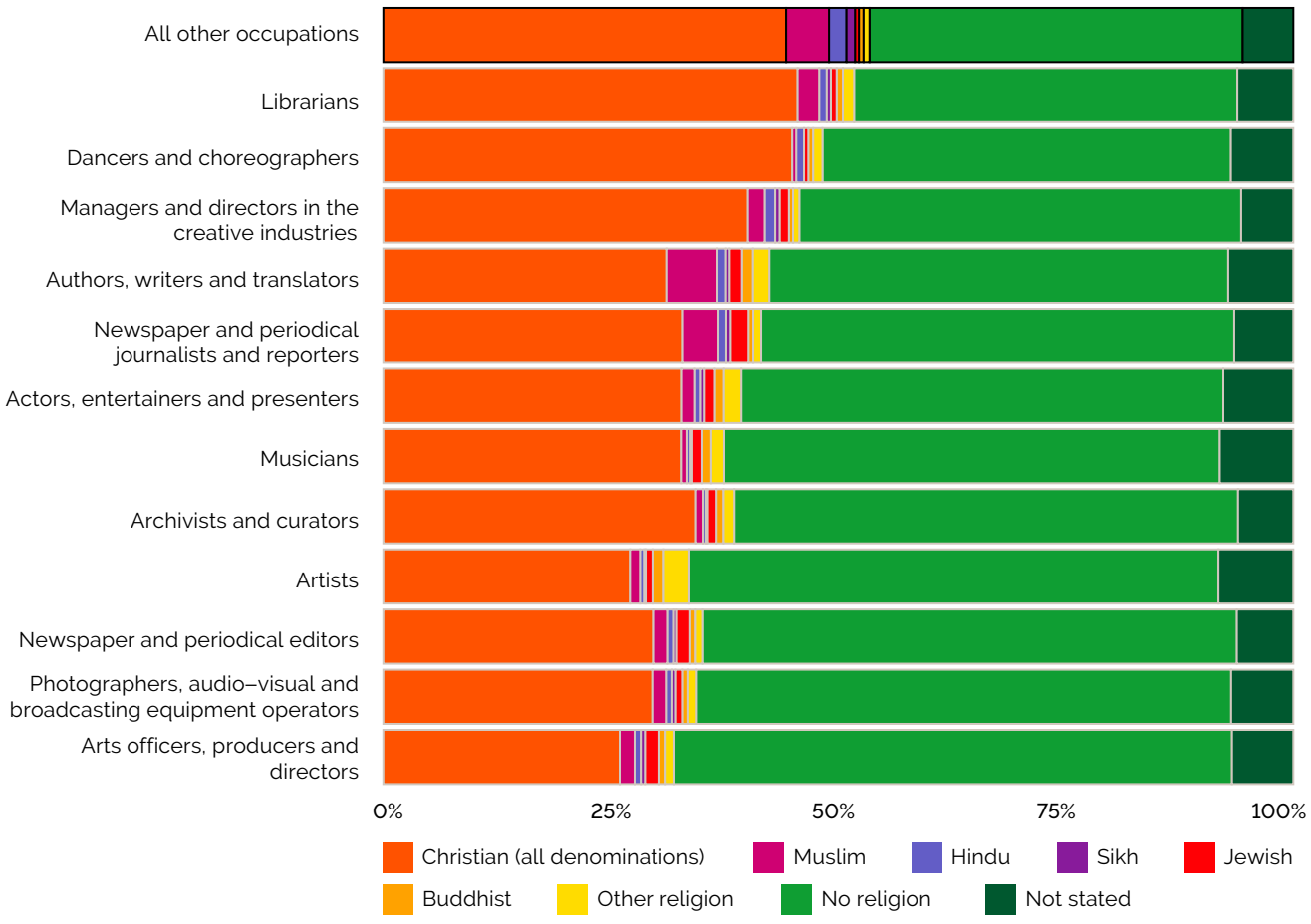
Three arts, culture and heritage occupations had smaller fractions of disabled people than the rest of the workforce: dancers and choreographers; arts officers, producers and directors; and managers and directors in the creative industries.

For dancers and choreographers, the difference was significant, with 7.9% disabled compared with 9.5% in the remainder of the workforce; for the other two occupational groups, the differences were much smaller.

The other nine arts, culture and heritage occupations had larger fractions of disabled people; for some of these occupational groups, the differences were very large. Of artists, 18.6% were disabled, as were 15.1% of authors, writers and translators and 14.4% of librarians.

We next analyse rates of religion in the arts, where quantitative analysis has previously been very limited.

Figure 25. Arts, culture and heritage occupations by religion, Census 2021 (England and Wales)



Source: Office for National Statistics (2023): Diversity in the Labour Market.

Figure 25 shows the percentages of people's reported religious affiliations in arts, culture and heritage occupations in England and Wales. Occupations are ordered from those with the smallest fractions of people who report no religion at the top, to those with the largest fractions of people who report no religion at the bottom.

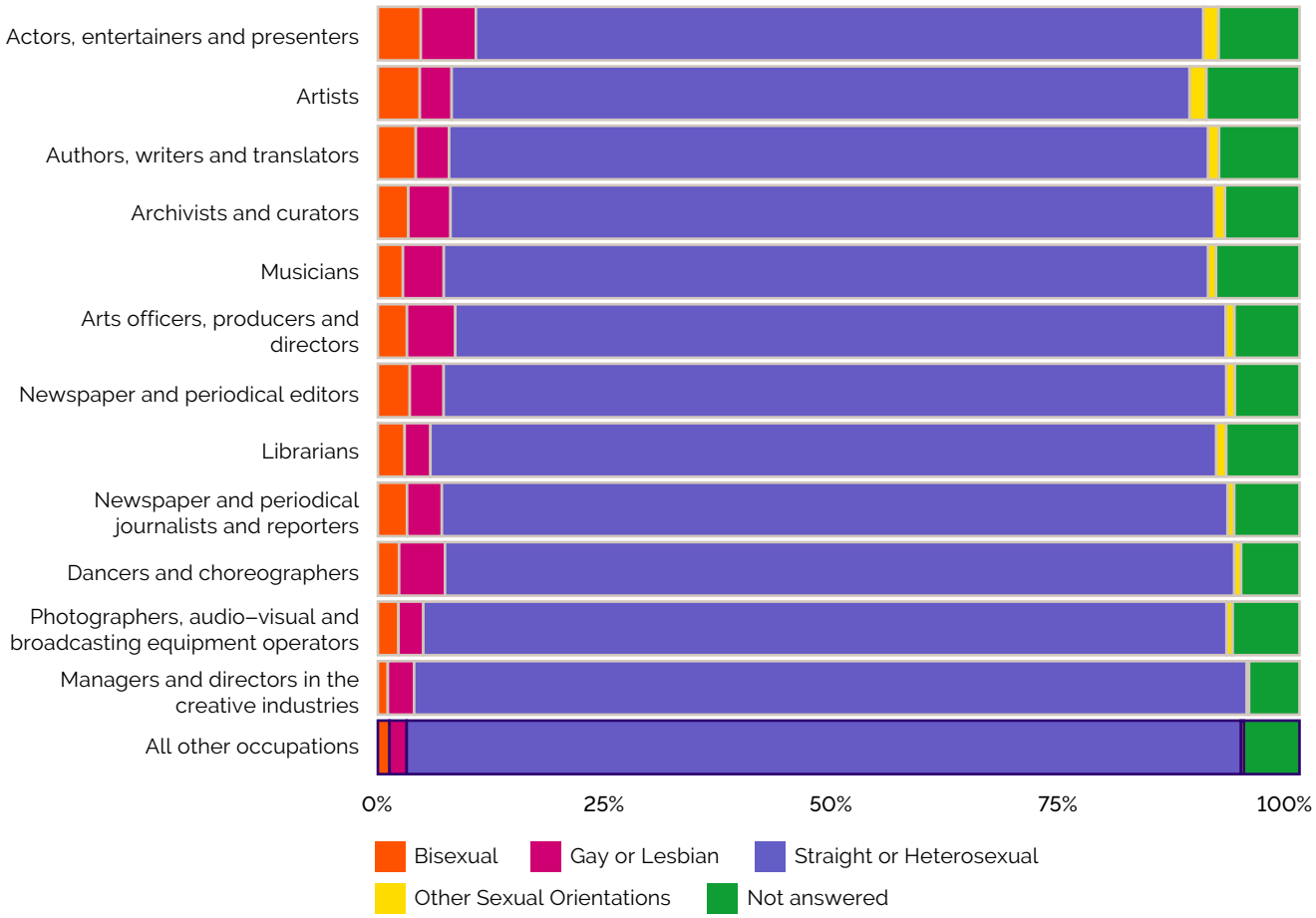
Every arts, culture and heritage occupation had a larger fraction of people who reported no religion than the rest of the workforce, with an overall figure of 54% compared with 41% in the remainder of the workforce. People in arts, culture and heritage occupations were also more likely to have not answered the question: 6.9% compared with 5.6% in the general workforce. All religious affiliations were underrepresented among people working in arts, culture and heritage occupations, except for people who reported that they were Buddhist or Jewish, the two affiliations with the smallest number of people.

As with the other characteristics described, there were again some large variations in the religious affiliations of different arts, culture and heritage occupations. 42% of librarians reported no religion, just 1% more than the remainder of the overall workforce. By contrast, 9 out of the 12 arts, culture and heritage occupations had more than 50% of people reporting no religion; for arts officers, producers and directors, the figure was 61%.

The low representation of the second and third largest religious affiliations, Muslim and Hindu, is particularly noteworthy. The fraction of Hindus was smaller in every arts, culture and heritage occupation than in the overall workforce; there was a slightly larger fraction of Muslims among writers than in the overall workforce, but for every other arts, culture and heritage occupation, Muslims were particularly poorly represented. Recent research has highlighted the importance of minority religious participation in these occupations (Warren, 2022), and this analysis demonstrates the scale of the imbalance. The supplementary online materials to this report show how religious affiliation interacts with other key variables, including age and ethnic group.

Finally, we move to the analysis of sexuality. While we are not aware of any quantitative research on sexuality in arts, culture and heritage occupations, significant research demonstrates that sexuality is an important dimension of inequality in male-dominated workplaces (eg Wright, 2016). Given that several arts, culture and heritage occupations have large majorities of men, it is important to understand how sexuality differs across these occupations and whether there are any broader differences from the general workforce.

Figure 26. Arts, culture and heritage occupations by sexuality, Census 2021 (England and Wales)



Source: Office for National Statistics (2023): Diversity in the Labour Market.

Figure 26 shows the percentages of people's reported sexual orientations in arts, culture and heritage occupations in England and Wales. Occupations are ordered from those with the smallest fractions of people who responded that they were heterosexual or straight at the top, to those with the largest fractions of people who responded that they were heterosexual or straight at the bottom.

People working in arts, culture and heritage occupations were overall less likely to report being heterosexual or straight than people in the rest of the workforce: every arts, culture and heritage occupation had a smaller percentage of people reporting being heterosexual or straight (84%) than the rest of the workforce (91%). All other responses were more common among arts, culture and heritage occupations than the general workforce: bisexual (3.1% versus 1.3%), gay or lesbian (4% versus 1.9%), other sexual orientations (0.9% versus 0.3%) and people who did not answer the question (7.7% versus 6%).

There were differences between occupational groups. Actors, entertainers and presenters were the least likely to be heterosexual or straight (79%), and the most likely to be either gay or lesbian (7.9%) or bisexual (4.6%). Managers and directors in the creative industries were about as likely to be heterosexual or straight as the rest of the workforce (90%), but more likely to be gay or lesbian (2.8%); however, the key difference is that people in these occupations were more likely to have answered the question in the first place.

There does not seem to be a relationship between the percentages of men and women and of different sexual orientations, in contrast with literature that shows that male-dominated workforces tend to have larger percentages of straight people. Actors, entertainers and presenters, the occupational group with the smallest percentage of straight people, was also the group closest to equal representation of men and women.

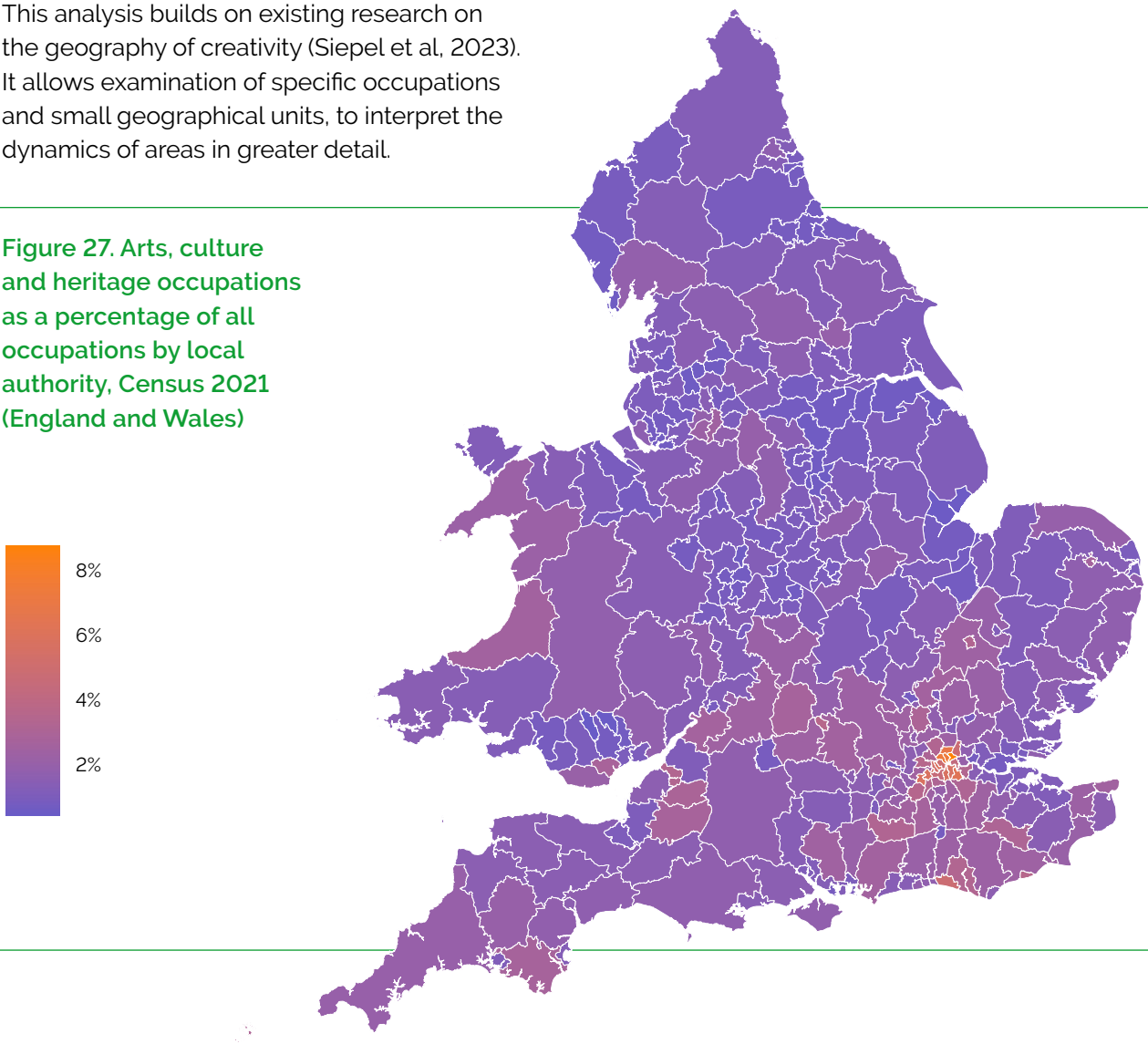
Overall, we have shown that there are significant variations across arts, culture and heritage occupations. No single occupation was marked out as the primary site of inequality, with over- or under-representations in every single group. Instead, we see occupations that differed substantially from the overall workforce in some ways and were very similar in others.

4.2: The geography of the arts, culture and heritage workforces: England and Wales

The volume of data available in the 2021 Census also allows us to analyse geographic differences in the arts, culture and heritage workforces. In this section, we draw attention to the people working in arts, culture and heritage occupations in each local authority, as a percentage of the number of people in any job. In this analysis, we omit the City of London and the Isles of Scilly, both of which have very small populations.

This analysis builds on existing research on the geography of creativity (Siepel et al, 2023). It allows examination of specific occupations and small geographical units, to interpret the dynamics of areas in greater detail.

Figure 27. Arts, culture and heritage occupations as a percentage of all occupations by local authority, Census 2021 (England and Wales)



Sources: Office for National Statistics (2023). Occupations of those in employment, by local area, working pattern, employment status and disability status, England and Wales, Census 2021. Office for National Statistics licensed under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right 2022.

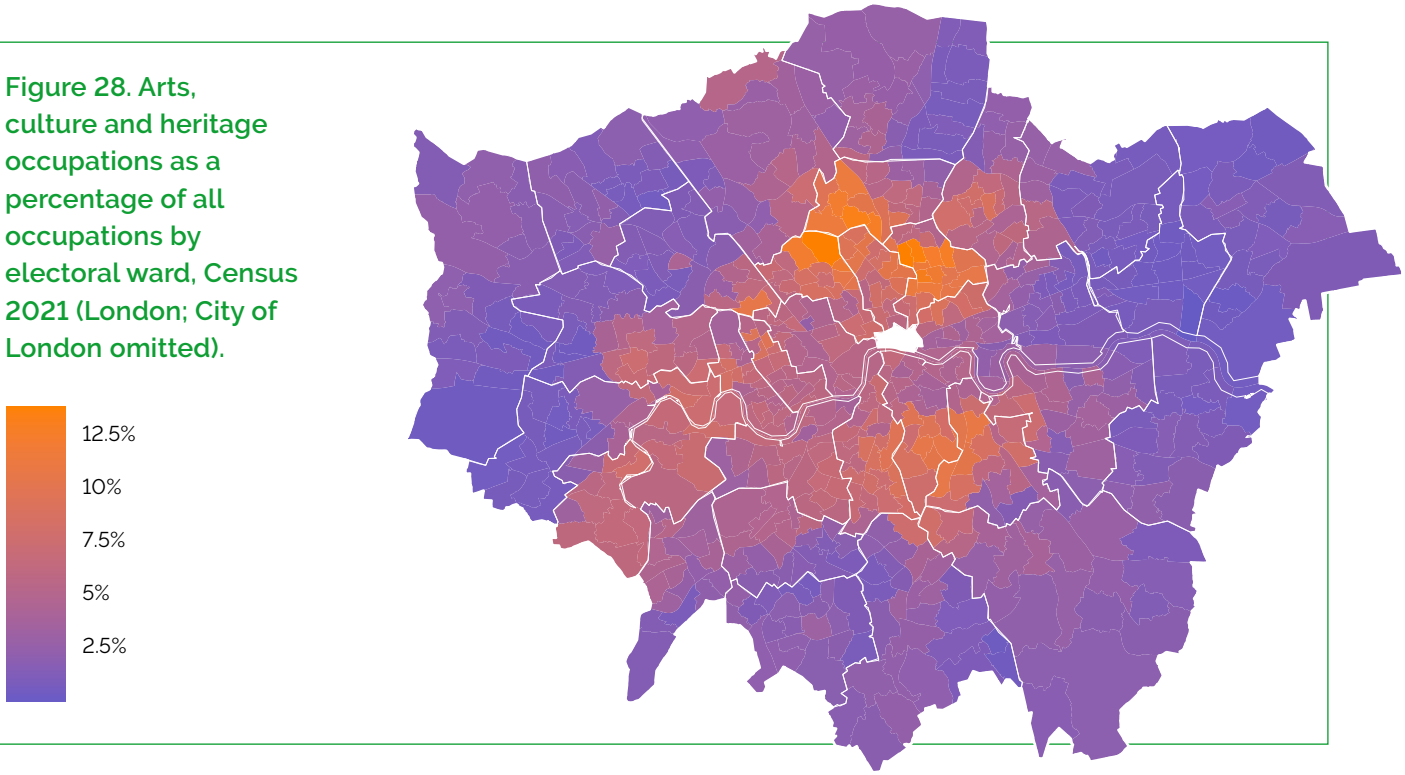
Figure 27 shows the spatial distribution of employment in arts, culture and heritage occupations. The local authority with the largest percentage of people in these occupations was Hackney, with 8.6% of all people employed in the arts; it was followed by Islington, Camden (both 7.3%) and Haringey (6.8%). The 10 local authorities with the largest fractions of people in arts, culture and heritage occupations were all in London.

The local authority outside of London with the largest percentage of people employed in the arts was Brighton and Hove, in 12th place with 4.7%. In the median local authority (Bromsgrove and the Forest of Dean), 1.3% of people in employment reported working in an arts, culture and heritage occupation.

However, given that the demographics of individual occupations within the arts, culture and heritage sectors vary significantly, we would also expect differences in the geographical distributions of these occupations. For this reason, we have produced online maps that allow interrogation of each occupation across all of England and Wales.

The intensity of activity in London raises questions about more precise geographical analysis. While there were clear differences between London boroughs, it does not follow that between-borough differences are the most important ones; it may also be that concentrated activity occurs across local authority borders. For this reason, we introduce Figure 28, which shows the percentages of people working in arts, culture and heritage occupations by electoral ward. This is based on a less fine-grained classification, comprising artistic, literary and media occupations, media professionals, and librarians and related professionals. This omits managers and directors in the creative industries. The detail included in Figure 28 is extended in online maps that cover the whole of England and Wales.

Figure 28. Arts, culture and heritage occupations as a percentage of all occupations by electoral ward, Census 2021 (London; City of London omitted).



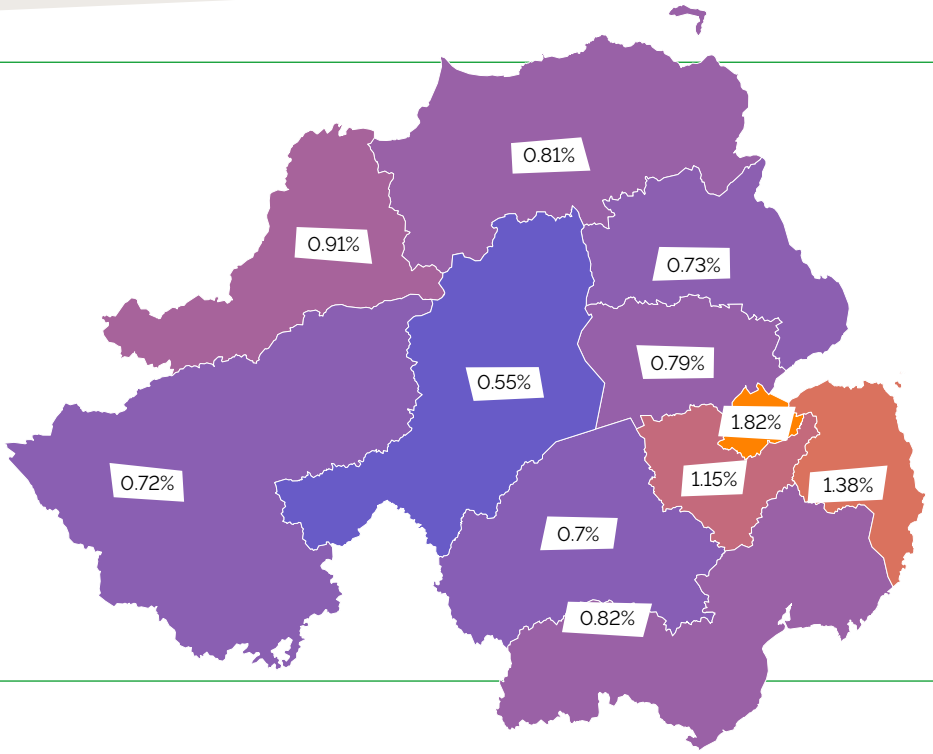
Sources: Office for National Statistics Custom Dataset feature. Specification: All usual residents; Electoral wards and divisions; England and Wales; Occupation (current): 105 categories. Office for National Statistics licensed under the Open Government Licence v.3.0. Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right 2022.

Different London boroughs were reflected in the different electoral wards with the largest fractions of people in art, culture and heritage. The two wards with the joint-largest fraction were Highgate, in Camden, and Clissold, in Hackney: in both cases, the figure was 13%. Stoke Newington, in third place, is also in Hackney; in fourth place was Crouch End, which is in Haringey. Overall, 24 electoral wards had 10% of their working population in arts, culture and heritage occupations, all of which were in London. Overall, 94 of the 100 electoral wards with the largest fractions of people in arts, culture and heritage occupations were in London.

4.3: The geography of the arts, culture and heritage workforces: Northern Ireland

As explained in the previous section, census data is organised separately in England and Wales and in Northern Ireland. Data about employment in arts, culture and heritage occupations in Northern Ireland is available at the same level of precision as is available at the electoral ward level in England and Wales.

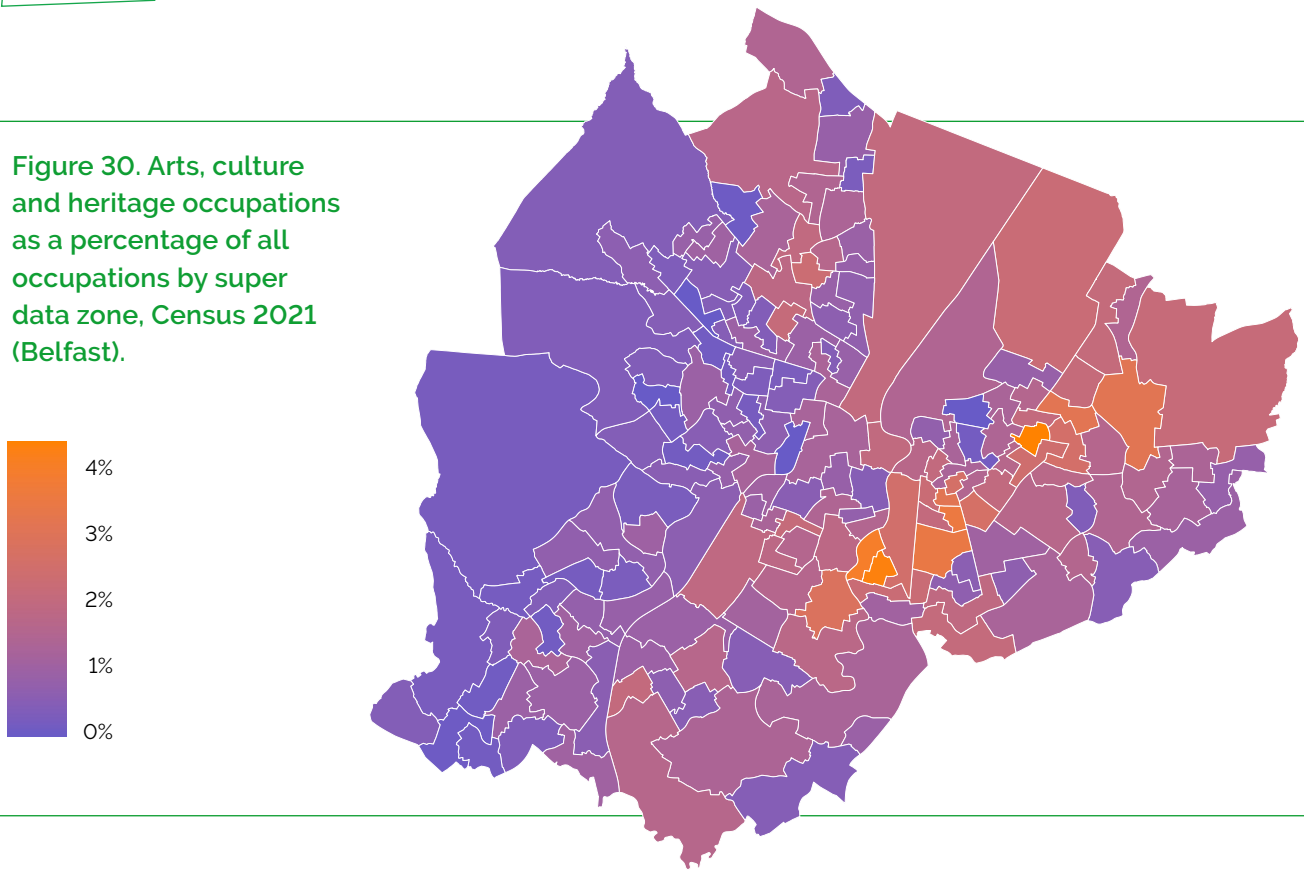
Figure 29. Arts, culture and heritage occupations as a percentage of all occupations by local authority, Census 2021 (Northern Ireland)



Source: NISRA Custom Table feature. Specification: People; Local Government District 2014; Northern Ireland; Occupation. Contains Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0.

As shown in Figure 29, the local government district in Northern Ireland with the largest fraction of employed people working in arts, culture and heritage occupations was Belfast, with 1.82%. For context, this puts Belfast between the 88th and 89th (of 330) ranked local authorities in England. The local government districts with the next-largest fractions of people working in arts, culture and heritage occupations were Ards and North Down and Lisburn and Castlereagh. The other eight local government districts each had less than 1% of workers in these occupations.

Figure 30. Arts, culture and heritage occupations as a percentage of all occupations by super data zone, Census 2021 (Belfast).



Source: NISRA Custom Table feature. Specification: People; Census 2021 Super Data Zone 2014; Northern Ireland; Occupation. Contains Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0.

Figure 30 examines Belfast in more detail, showing the percentage of employed people in each super data zone that reported working in arts, culture and heritage occupations. A super data zone is an administrative unit containing around 900 households, and so this map is significantly more detailed than the map of local government districts.

There were three super data zones in which more than 4% of employed people reported working in arts, culture and heritage occupations: Titanic K, Botanic W and Botanic T. These were followed by Lisnasharragh D and Lisnasharragh F, both of which had more than 3.5%. As with London, the areas with the largest fractions of people in arts, culture and heritage occupations were not immediately adjacent to one another; while the Botanic super data zones were, the Titanic super data zone was closer to areas with much lower employment in these occupations.

5 Conclusion

To support policy development, the arts, culture and heritage sectors require high-quality data about their workforces and audiences, analogous to data about supply and demand that would be expected in other industries. This report has presented the latest evidence on the audiences and workforces for the arts, culture and heritage sectors in the UK. It also offers a supplementary online interactive map to allow policymakers to dive deeper into the data and analysis. Now that we have established a clear set of baseline data that will be monitored over several years, policymakers will be able to identify and reflect on the effectiveness of any interventions or programmes that they introduce.

The data on consumption and participation in this report shows the UK's rich cultural life. It also shows the path of recovery for in-person cultural consumption since the end of pandemic restrictions in 2020/2021. At the same time, our analysis develops what is already well established by the existing academic literature: patterns of cultural consumption are deeply unequal. Around 30% of people had not attended any of the activities measured in the "attendance" category, and 38% of people had not visited any of the types of heritage site listed. The inequalities in consumption associated with gender, race and ethnicity, social class, and disability offer an ongoing challenge to policymakers concerned that the arts, culture and heritage sectors do not attract the full range of the UK's population. There is a huge potential audience, particularly for those art forms currently attracting the smallest proportions of the population. The scale of the changes during the period analysed illustrates the significant transformations that the Covid-19 pandemic caused for the sectors, and it is important to continue to monitor this data to understand how it may change further.

These issues are also present for the arts, culture and heritage workforces. The analysis of both Labour Force Survey (LFS) and 2021 Census data emphasises the longstanding inequalities that characterise cultural production in the UK. The data from the LFS reinforces the "stickiness" of workforce inequalities as the sectors face post-pandemic and cost-of-living crises. At the same time, the data from the 2021 Census highlights the differences between arts, culture and heritage occupations and all other occupations, showing, for example, that almost all arts occupations had lower representations of Black and Asian people than the general workforce.

Census data has allowed the analysis to, for the first time, reflect under-researched areas including religion (see Warren, 2022 on the need for more research on minority religious groups), as well as adding detail to areas where quantitative data was previously scarce, such as sexuality. The 2021 Census contains further detailed information, not reported here, that can be of great value for policymakers. For the arts, culture and heritage sectors, the local-level data demonstrates precise geographical dynamics, while the interactions between demographics paint a more detailed picture of the make-up of the sectors. Other sectors can make use of analysis of the same data sources that focus on different occupations.

As our mapping of the workforce shows, cultural employment has not been dispersed evenly around the UK. For example, London is still the central hub for arts, culture and heritage workers. As our analysis of engagement shows, the types of cultural activity that tend to achieve a proportionally higher share of overall arts funding have been attracting highly unequal audiences. We have also demonstrated that participation in culture has been largely even between disabled people and people who are not disabled, and that all occupations in the arts, culture and heritage sectors have had larger fractions of LGBTQ+ people than the general workforce.

Looking at the longstanding nature of consumption and production inequalities, and the fact that this analysis deepens and reinforces findings from the existing literature, demonstrates that business as usual for the sector will not be an effective response. This research suggests what is most pressing for policy responses, in the context of a developing funding crisis for the arts, culture and heritage sectors.

This is not to dismiss the good practice currently being seen in policy development, where many interventions have been designing alternatives to overcome structural barriers in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion across the arts, culture and heritage sectors. In the wider policy landscape, we are also seeing an increasing focus on culture: including the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's creative industries sector vision aiming for more jobs, gross value added growth, sustainable careers and contributions to local places; the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' plans for culture to play a substantive role in regenerating towns and cities; devolved governments aim for culture to underpin sustainable growth and community development; and arts policies' focus on broadening audiences and workforces.

If the resulting policy interventions are to succeed, they will need to be ambitious and visionary. There are reasons for both caution and celebration. Yet, as our data and analysis show, many challenges face the cultural sector in the coming years.

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Data statement

All Participation Survey and Labour Force Survey data sets 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 corresponding author's account at the UK Data Service. The authors remain responsible for any errors or omissions in the analysis.

The Census 2021 data used in this report is freely available via the links above.

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 the pattern where censuses take place every 10 years. In Scotland, the census was delayed by a year due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

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

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

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.

Cultural value is a broad term that reflects attempts to understand the overall value of culture: why culture matters and what its impacts are. A significant report on cultural value was published by the Arts and Humanities Research Council in 2016 (Crossick & Kaszynska 2016), and the Centre for Cultural Value, based at the University of Leeds, was set up in 2019.

The **economic impact of culture** reflects the different ways that culture contributes to an economy, such as through the revenue produced by cultural activities, gross value added and spillover effects. Significant research has gone into estimating the economic impact of culture.

An **electoral ward** is an area represented by one or more councillors. They have average populations of 5,500, but populations sizes vary significantly.

Gross value added is a measure of the economic contribution of a sector and can be defined as revenue net of subsidies and taxes. It can be measured per worker, per hour or overall.

Intangible heritage is heritage other than heritage property, such as buildings and historic places. Examples of intangible heritage include customs, traditions and language.

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 population of a local authority is around 170,000.

The **social impact of culture** reflects the different ways that culture contributes to individuals and society in non-economic ways. Examples include through the effects on people's well-being and the promotion of pro-social behaviour.

Soft power is the diplomatic ability to affect preferences, whether individuals' or nations', through attraction rather than military or other forms of coercion.

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 where it is unlikely that the difference may be due to survey sampling, rather than due to genuine differences in the population. All references to statistically significant differences are at the 95% level.

A **super data zone** is a spatial unit in Northern Ireland. Each super data zone has on average 900 households.

A **survey** is a data collection method, in which a sample of people are 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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