

## Taking Part 2008/09: Findings for the North West region

### **About the Taking Part survey**

Taking Part is a major, continuous survey of cultural and sport participation in England, commissioned by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in partnership with Arts Council England, Sport England, English Heritage and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council.

Every year it collects detailed information from adults in England (aged 16 and over) about their attendance at a wide variety of arts events, museums, galleries, libraries and heritage sites, and about their participation in creative activities and sport. The data is collected by BMRB Social Research in face-to-face interviews and the survey has been conducted since July 2005.

The sample size for Taking Part in 2008/09 in the North West region was 1,913 (national sample size 14,452).

### **About the region**

The North West region covers the counties of Cheshire, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Lancashire and Merseyside.

The 2001 census showed that the population of the North West region was 6,729,764. Mid year population estimates for 2008 were that the population of the region had increased to 5,408,400.

The North West is one of the least affluent English regions. 20% of its Super Output Areas were among the 10% most deprived nationally based on the 2007 Indices of Multiple Deprivation<sup>1</sup> and 8.6% of the working age population of the region were unemployed in 2008/09 (7.6% of the national working age population were unemployed in 2008/09)<sup>2</sup>.

There are 107 regularly funded organisations based in the North West region, including the Lowry Centre and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic.

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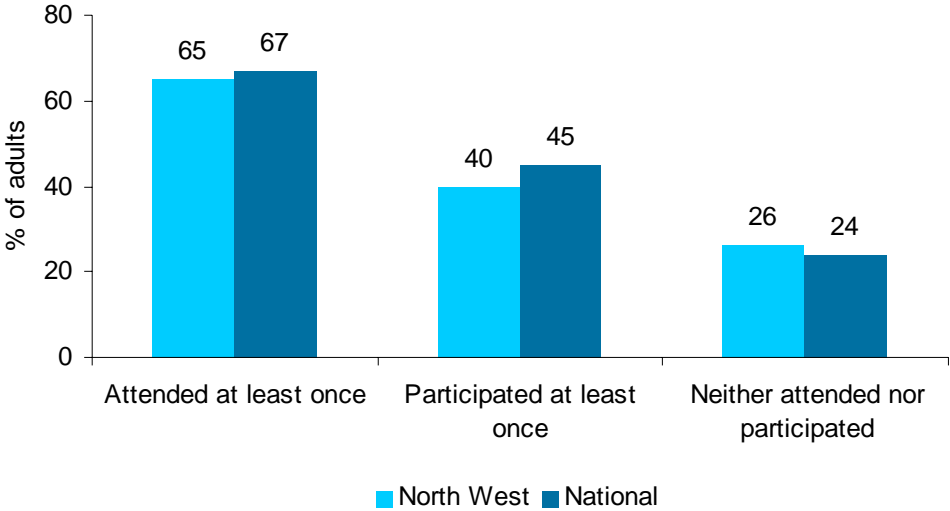
<sup>1</sup> Details of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation can be found on <http://www.communities.gov.uk/communities/neighbourhoodrenewal/deprivation/deprivation07/>

<sup>2</sup> ONS Annual Population Survey, October 2008 – September 2009, data available from [www.nomisweb.co.uk](http://www.nomisweb.co.uk).

### Attendance and participation in the arts

Levels of attendance and participation are lower in the North West than they are nationally. In 2008/09 65% of adults in the North West attended an arts event at least once and 40% participated in artistic activities at least once. 26% of adults in the North West neither attended nor participated.

Figure 1: Proportion of adults attending and participating in the arts in the last 12 months in the North West region, 2008/09



### Engaged three or more times

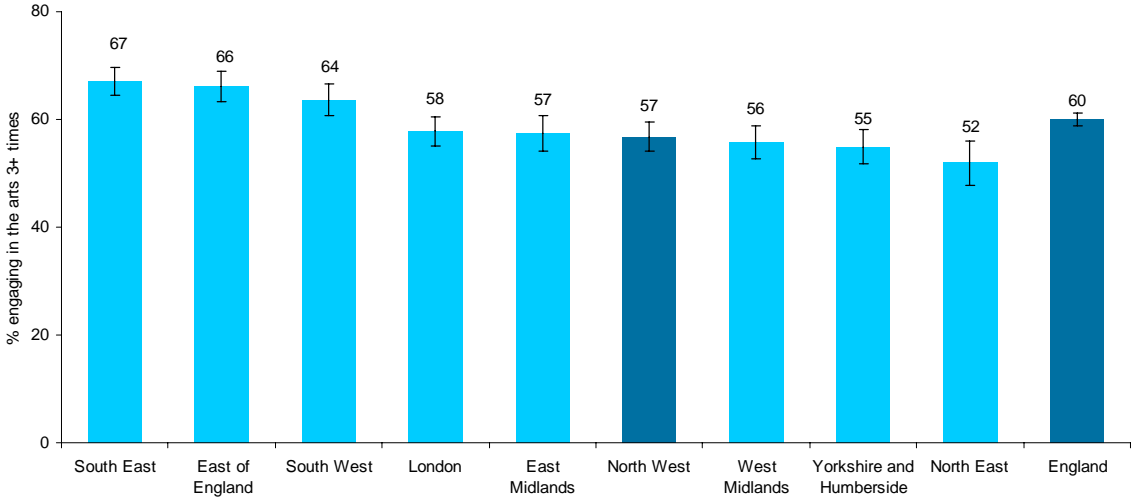
To assess overall performance, the Arts Council calculates the proportion of people who engage in the arts at least three times a year, whether it be through attending arts events, participating in arts activities, or a mixture of both<sup>3</sup>. In 2008/09, adults living in the North West were less likely to have engaged with the arts three or more times in the last 12 months. 57% of people living in the North West had engaged three or more times compared with 60% of people nationally.

When compared to other regions, the proportion of adults living in the North West who had engaged three or more times was significantly lower than that seen in the East, South East and South West. There was no statistically significant difference with the proportion seen in all other English regions. This is shown in the chart below. Detailed analysis of the reasons for these regional differences is beyond

<sup>3</sup> See page 3 for a list of the attendance activities included in this measure and page 4 for a list of participation activities included.

the scope of this briefing, but will be primarily influenced by the different social, economic and demographic characteristics of each region<sup>4</sup>.

Figure 2: Proportion of adults engaging in the arts three or more times in the last 12 months by English region, 2008/09

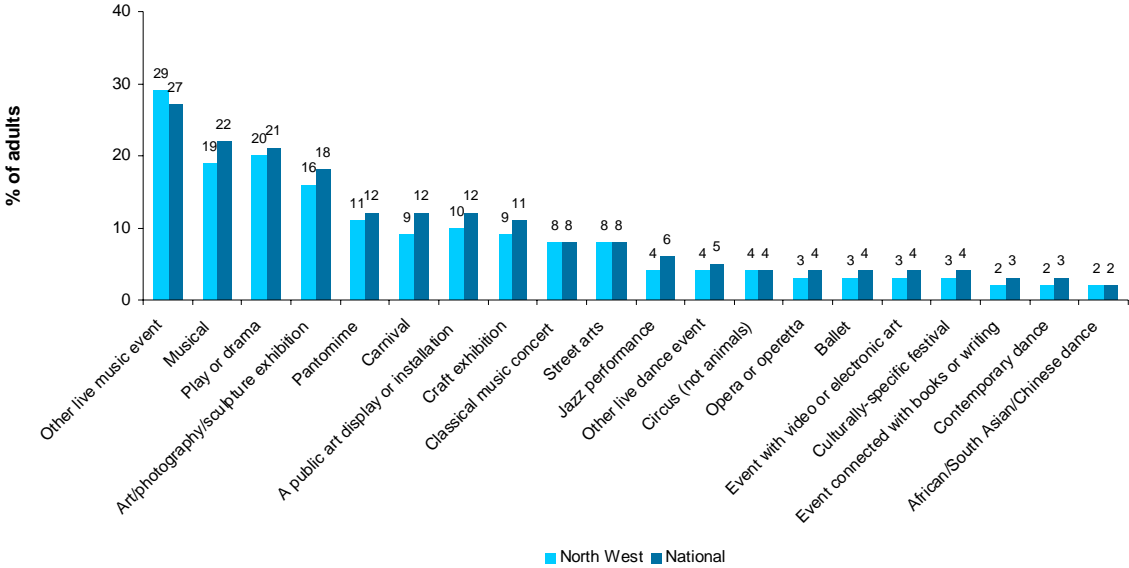


**Attendance by artform**

The chart below shows the proportion of adults in the North West and in England who had attended each of the artforms measured by Taking Part at least once during the last 12 months. Attendance at the majority of the artforms was lower in the North West than nationally. In line with national trends, other live music events (not classical or jazz, 29%), musicals (19%) and play or drama events (20%) had been attended by the highest proportion of people in the North West.

<sup>4</sup> Factors influencing engagement levels with the arts are discussed in more detail in [http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication\\_archive/from-indifference-to-enthusiasm-patterns-of-arts-attendance-in-england/](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication_archive/from-indifference-to-enthusiasm-patterns-of-arts-attendance-in-england/)

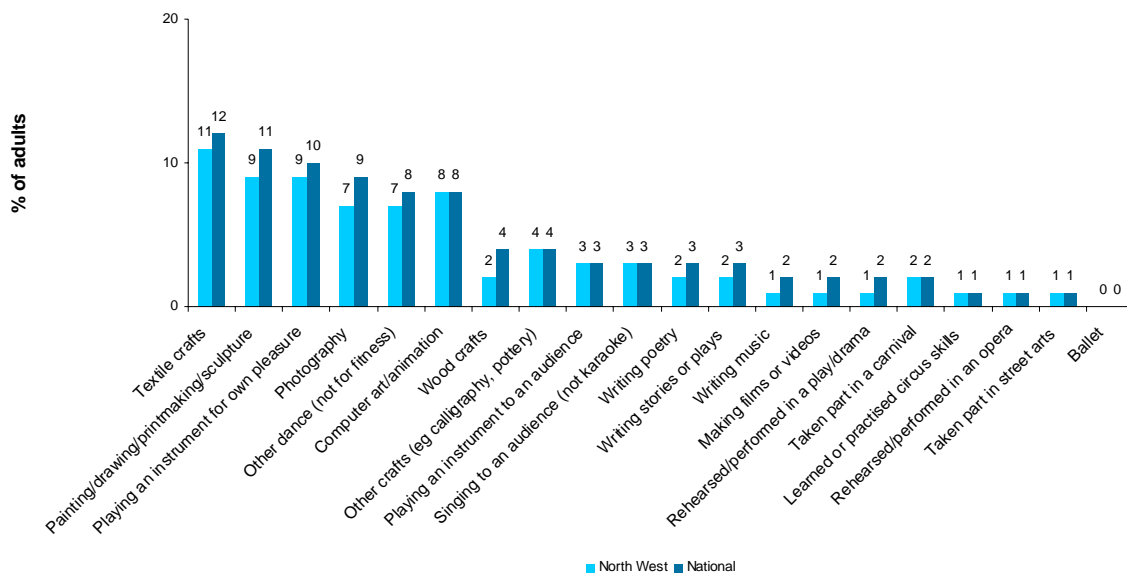
Figure 3: Attendance at arts events in the last 12 months by adults in England, 2008/09



**Participation by artform**

Taking Part also measures the proportion of adults in England who have participated in a range of artistic activities. As shown in the chart below, participation levels in the North West were lower than those seen nationally for most of the artistic activities. In line with national trends, textile crafts (11%), painting/drawing/printmaking/sculpture (9%) and playing an instrument for pleasure (9%) were the most popular forms of participation for respondents living in the North West.

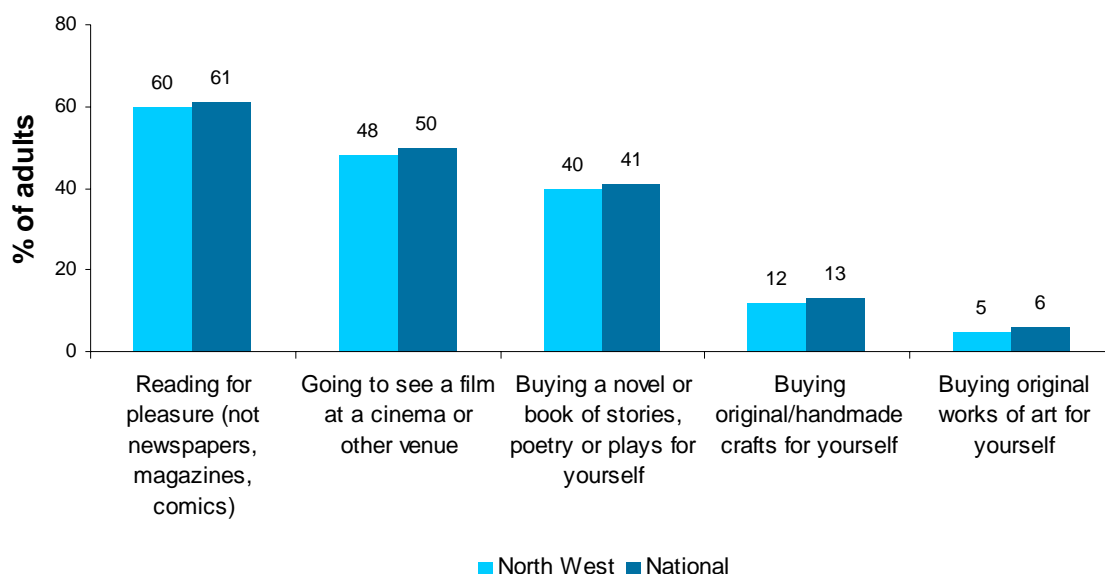
Figure 4: Participation in artistic activities in the last 12 months by adults in England, 2008/09



### Other leisure time activities

In addition to going to arts events and doing arts activities, Taking Part also collects information on a number of other forms of cultural engagement, as shown in the chart below. More than half the respondents in the North West reported reading for pleasure (60%) and almost half reported going to films (48%). Levels of engagement with these activities was similar in the North West and nationally.

Figure 5: Engagement in other leisure time activities in the last 12 months by adults in England, 2008/09

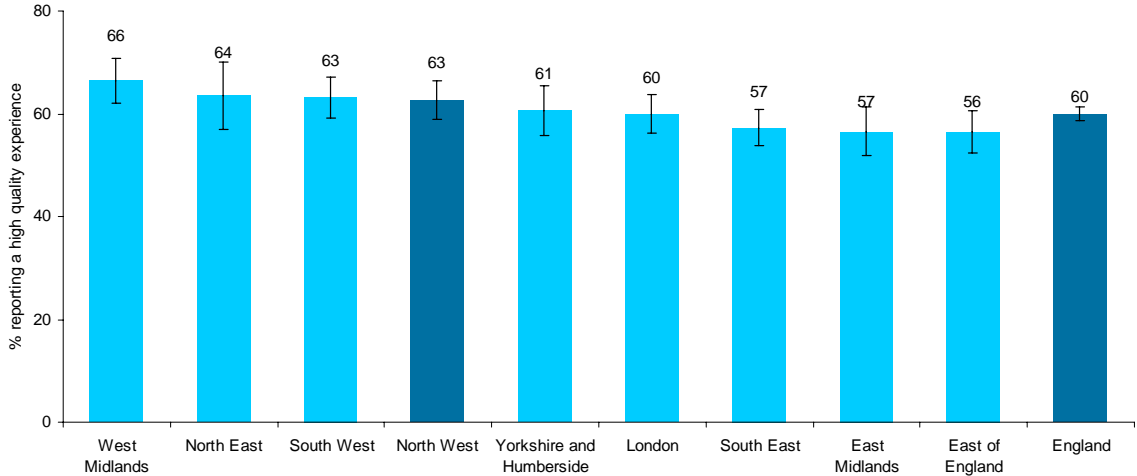


## Quality of experience

The Arts Council uses Taking Part data to provide an overall measure of the proportion of people rating their last arts experience as being of ‘high quality’. The Taking Part survey selects a random artform that a respondent has attended and asks a number of questions about their experience which are used to calculate the indicator of high quality. They are asked to rate their experience on a scale of 1 to 10, asked how likely they are to go again and asked whether they have recommended attending to a friend or family member<sup>5</sup>. The definition of a high quality arts experience is that respondents rate their enjoyment of it as seven or higher out of ten, say that they will definitely go again and that they have recommended attending it to a friend or family member.

Based on this definition, 63% of respondents living in the North West reported a high quality experience at their last attendance, compared with 60% nationally. This was significantly higher than the figure for the South East (57%) or East (56%) regions. There was no statistically significant difference with any other English region.

Figure 6: Proportion of arts attenders reporting a high quality experience at their most recent attendance, England, 2008/09



## Attitudinal data

A number of attitudinal questions were introduced into Taking Part in 2008/09. To ease the burden on respondents, they were asked of a quarter of respondents only. All questions were in the form of a set of statements and participants were

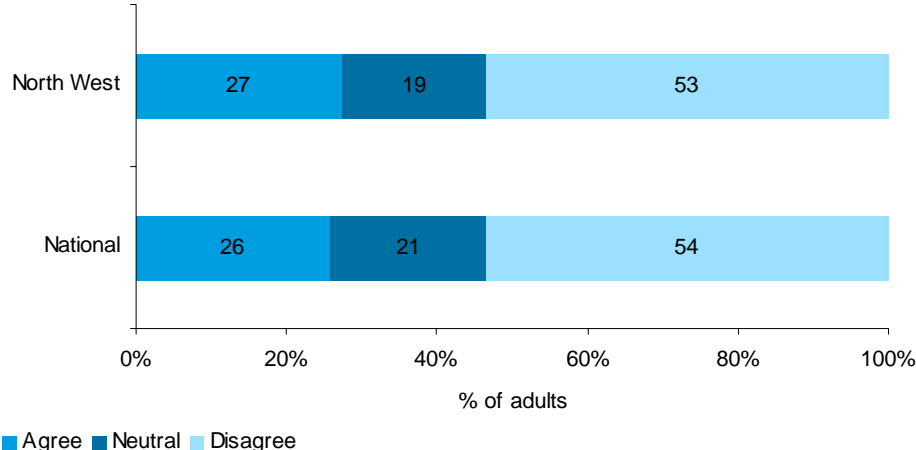
<sup>5</sup> The same questions are asked about a random participation experience but are not included within the indicator of high quality.

asked to indicate how strongly they agreed/disagreed with each one. Data from all questions was aggregated to combine those who agree or agree strongly, disagree or disagree strongly and those who were neutral, which refers to respondents saying either 'don't know' or 'neither agree nor disagree'.

***The arts are not for people like me***

The Arts Council uses this question as a proxy measure of the importance of psychological barriers to the arts (for example feelings of exclusion or that the arts opportunities on offer have little relevance or appeal). Levels of agreement with this statement are similar to the national level as shown in the graph below:

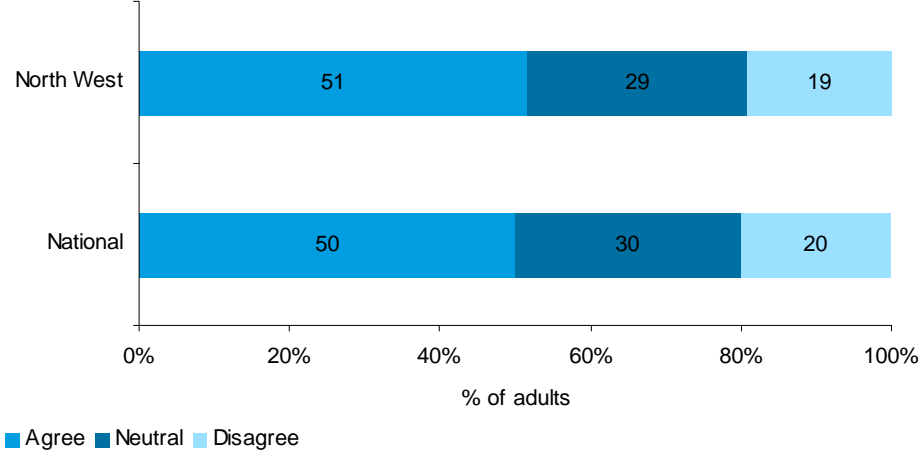
Figure 7: Responses to statement 'the arts are not for people like me' among adults in England, 2008/09



***There are lots of opportunities to get involved in the arts if I want***

The Arts Council uses this statement as a proxy measure of practical barriers to engagement with the arts such as limited access or lack of information about the opportunities available. As shown in the chart below, levels of agreement with this statement are similar to the national picture for respondents living in the North West.

Figure 8: Response to statement 'there are lots of opportunities to get involved in the arts if I want among adults in England, 2008/09





## **Finding out more**

### ***National data from Taking Part***

At a national level, Taking Part data can be used to look at the effect of demographic and socio-economic factors such as disability, ethnicity or income level on people's arts engagement patterns, their ratings of their experiences and their attitudes to the arts. Details of these are presented in the headline findings report for 2008/09: [http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication\\_archive/arts-engagement-england-200809](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication_archive/arts-engagement-england-200809)

### ***Arts engagement at a local authority level***

Data relating to arts engagement at a local authority level is collected by the Active People survey, as the sample size for Taking Part is too small to be broken down at this level. Data from the Active People survey is published by DCMS and is available here:

[http://www.culture.gov.uk/what\\_we\\_do/research\\_and\\_statistics/6230.aspx](http://www.culture.gov.uk/what_we_do/research_and_statistics/6230.aspx)

### ***Audience segmentation***

The Arts Council's segmentation of arts audiences was created based on Taking Part data from 2005/06 combined with lifestyle data from the Target Group Index survey. It divides the population into 13 segments based on their arts engagement patterns and gives details about the lifestyle and likely interests of each segment.

A breakdown of the region's population into the 13 segments (and further information about the segmentation) is available here:

<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/about-us/research/arts-based-segmentation-research/downloads/>

### ***Regularly funded organisations annual submission***

Regularly funded organisations are asked to complete an annual submission form including financial information and audience numbers. Data from the annual submission, including regional breakdowns, are available here:

<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/regular-funding-organisations/annual-submission/regularly-funded-organisations-statistics-2008-09/>