

Arts Council of Northern Ireland

10-Year Strategic Plan for the Arts, 2024-34

EQIA Equality Impact Assessment

January 2024



Equality Impact Assessment 2024

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Introduction

Section 75 Legislation

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities, in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between specific identified individuals and groups, namely:

- between persons of different religious belief;
- between persons of different political opinion;
- between persons of different racial groups;
- between persons of different age;
- between persons of different marital status;
- between persons of different sexual orientation;
- between men and women generally;
- between persons with a disability and persons without; and
- between persons with dependants and persons without.

In addition, and without prejudice to these obligations, The Executive Office (TEO) is also committed to having due regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group.

The legislation requires public authorities to conduct an equality impact assessment (EQIA) where proposed legislation or policy is likely to have a significant impact on equality of opportunity and/or good relations. An EQIA is a thorough and systematic analysis of a policy to determine the extent of differential impact upon the relevant groups and in turn whether that impact is adverse.

Purpose

The purpose of this EQIA to detail how the Arts Council's Strategy in Northern Ireland (2024-2034) will provide a basis to address the inequalities experienced by Section 75 groups in respect of investment in the Arts. ACNI has developed this EQIA to provide an opportunity to comment on the impact of the draft 10-year Strategy on equality of opportunity and good relations for key target groups.

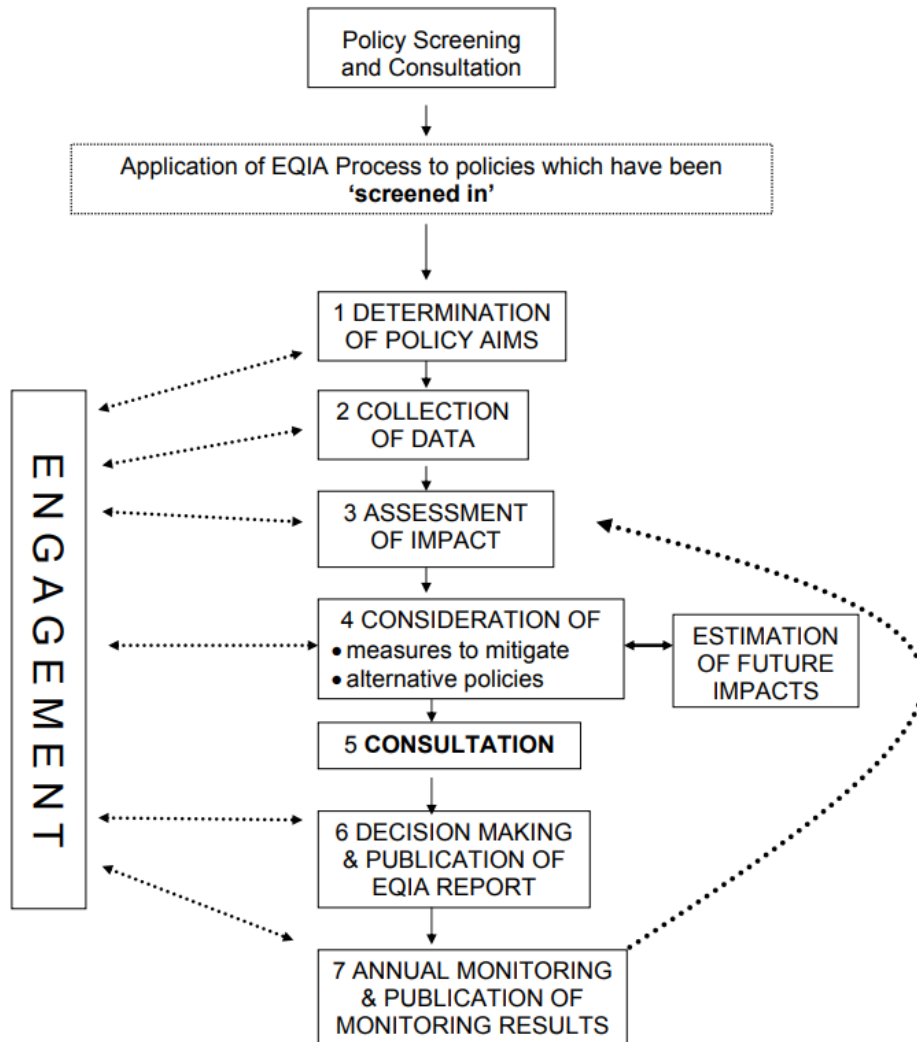
Approach

The development of the EQIA was aligned to the Equality Commission's Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment¹ and associated short guide material. It was also informed through an extensive consultation phase with the Arts sector and other key stakeholders at the outset of the development of the Strategy. This was to ensure that the valuable information on sources of data / information / advice conveyed could help inform/support the delivery of the EQIA in the longer term.

¹ [S75Advice-ScreeningEQIA.pdf \(equalityni.org\)](#)

The EQIA Process Flow Chart (Figure i) from the Equality Commission’s Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment replicated in the below schematic was the reference point for the implementation of this EQIA.

Figure i: EQIA Process Flow Chart



In effect the process entails seven steps to the process from start to finish. This document integrates the findings from the first four steps which have been consolidated into this draft EQIA Report to be used within the formal consultation phase in Step 5.

ACNI will report on the results of the consultation in the final EQIA Report, which will include suggested amendments and/or recommendations arising as a result of the consultation process.

On completion of the final EQIA report, a system will be established to monitor the Section 75 impact of the policy on an ongoing basis. The process stipulates that the results of this ongoing monitoring must be reviewed on an annual basis.

Per the schematic, the link between monitoring and assessment of impact is positioned as an ongoing and dynamic relationship. As such this EQIA is not a ‘point in time’ analysis but the first stage in an

ongoing and evolving focus on the inequalities that may be experienced by Section 75 groups in respect of investment in and access to the Arts in Northern Ireland.

STEP 1: Defining the Aims of the Policy

The policy being reviewed is the Northern Ireland Arts Council's Strategy 2024-2034². The strategy outlines the importance of public investment in supporting artists in their professional development and in creating pathways to enable everyone to access the arts. Moreover, it aims to provide opportunities to showcase the value of the arts to society and beyond; and ultimately enhance Northern Ireland's attractiveness as a place to live, work and visit in the years ahead. The Strategy highlights the importance of investing in maintaining existing arts infrastructure whilst acknowledging the current challenging funding environment and no Executive in place.

The draft Strategy aims to set out a long-term vision for high quality and accessible arts provision across the region. The vision for the draft Strategy is:

A society where all people can experience a thriving arts sector that is recognised as essential to creativity, wellbeing and social and economic prosperity.

The Strategy acknowledges that the vision is a collective effort and support of artists, cultural organisations, policymakers, and society in general. The document focuses on the strategic outcomes and priorities that ACNI want to achieve, with some basic information on areas of activity over the next ten years, and how we will track our progress.

Detailed three-year organisational business plans will be published and reviewed annually. They will provide much more detail, as will a detailed monitoring and evaluation plan.

OUTCOMES

The Strategy outlines a set of outcomes for the art sector, and a set of outcomes that the sector then delivers as a result for society. The outcomes overlap and are reliant on one another. For more details, please see Tables A and B.

ARTS SECTOR

A more financially stable arts sector.

A sector that develops and looks after its people and is more inclusive.

A sector that is better supported to develop through experimentation and innovation.

SOCIETY

A sector that contributes to social and economic benefits and cares about the environment.

People from all backgrounds can enjoy arts experiences.

A sector that is more valued across society and government.

² Insert strategy hyperlink

Under each outcome area, there are sets of priorities that, if delivered, it is hoped they will directly influence the achievement of that outcome:

Table A: Outcomes for the arts sector

Outcome 1: A more financially stable arts sector.	Outcome 2: A sector that develops, looks after its people, and is more inclusive.	Outcome 3: A sector that is better supported to develop through experimentation and innovation.
<p>1. We will pursue an approach to investment in the arts that is long term and outcomes based.</p> <p>2. We will generate more income for the arts.</p>	<p>3. We will create the conditions to grow artistic talent and develop the wider arts workforce.</p> <p>4. We will ensure that the arts sector in Northern Ireland is inclusive and reflects society.</p>	<p>5. We will enable innovation and artistic risk taking in the arts sector.</p>

Table B: Outcomes for society

Outcome 4: A sector that contributes to social and economic benefits and cares about the environment	Outcome 5: More people from all backgrounds can enjoy arts experiences.	Outcome 6: A sector that is more valued across society and government.
<p>6. We will support arts projects that address contemporary societal challenges.</p> <p>7. We will support the sector and act as a catalyst to drive awareness, engagement and positive change in response to climate change.</p>	<p>8. We will invest in the arts sector to deepen, widen and diversify audiences and participants.</p>	<p>9. We will work in partnership to demonstrate to policy makers, decision makers and peoples in Northern Ireland the positive impact of the arts.</p> <p>10. We will work as an effective and efficient organisation.</p>

Although it is an ACNI strategy, goals cannot be achieved alone. It is planned to work with the arts sector, as partners to deliver the outcomes outlined above in tables 1 and 2. An outcomes-based approach has been adopted to help ACNI advocate for the arts and share its impact across government. The Strategic Plan aligns to several existing strategies – some of which include:

- **Draft PfG**
No Executive or government so no PfG – ‘where everyone can reach their potential’
[Programme for Government \(PfG\) 2021 | Northern Ireland Executive](#)
- **Northern Ireland Civil Service mission**
People. Planet. Prosperity is our concept for a new era of transformation over the next 25 years, providing a clear path to [#OurGiantAmbition](#) for a thriving, inclusive, sustainable economy.
<https://www.nibureau.com/people-planet-prosperity-our-giant-ambition>
<https://www.nibureau.com/sites/nibureau/files/media-files/A5PEOPLEPLANETPROSPERITY.pdf>
- **Department for Communities - Building Inclusive Communities**
[Department for Communities Building Inclusive Communities Strategy 2020-2025 | Department for Communities \(communities-ni.gov.uk\)](#)
- **Arts Council of Northern Ireland Strategy (2018-2023)**
[Our Strategy | Arts Council NI \(artscouncil-ni.org\)](#)
- **10-year vision for Communities Arts and Heritage**
[Culture, Arts and Heritage: A Way Forward | Department for Communities \(communities-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

STEP 2A: Collection of Data

Data has been collected across a wide range of different sources to inform the objectives within ACNI’s Strategy in Northern Ireland over the next ten years. This has included data at a population level with a targeted examination of data across all Section 75 groups, drawing on official and internal ACNI sources, including:

- Census 2021
- Continuous Household Survey, CHS (2022/23)
- General Population Survey 2023 (GPS)
- ACNI’s Annual Funding Survey, AFS (2018-2023)
- Support for Individual Artists, SIAP (2018-2023)
- Lottery project funding (2023)
- ACNI Small grants (2023)
- Good Work Review, Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre (February 2023)

It should be noted that this list of data sources are the only ones that provide detail on Section 75 groups and only in reference to the arts sector. Census 2021 is the exception to this as it gives a detailed picture of Northern Ireland on census day, 21 March 2021 of demography, religious belief, ethnicity and long-term illness and disability.

The CHS is a Northern Ireland wide household survey administered by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). Data from this survey is used for various purposes including monitoring DfC’s Public Service Agreement targets as well as helping to inform policy making, for equality

monitoring. Data is collected by conducting interviews face to face, and the interviews are spread equally over the 12 months from April to March. It provides an information on how the adult population engage with the arts for the following S75 groups: gender, age, religious background, marital status, disability and dependants.

The GPS has been one of ACNI's key tools (since 2004) to gather data about how the public engages with the arts. The survey covers topics on attendance, participation and attitudes. Data is used to inform a range of business, performance measurement and research needs, facilitating analysis and synthesis by key variables such as age, gender, social class and disabilities. The 2023 survey is based on 1,015 interviews with the Northern Ireland general public aged 18+. The survey was conducted using an online panel methodology with results weighted to be representative of the NI adult population.

Organisations in receipt of funding from the Annual Funding Programme (AFP) complete an annual survey known as the Annual Funding Survey (AFS) detailing information on their finances, workforce composition and activity. Data analysed from this survey provides a detailed quantitative picture of output across the publicly subsidised arts sector, relating to the work of touring companies, receiving and producing companies, venues, galleries, community arts, disability arts and umbrella organisations. It also helps to identify arts activities delivered by clients that are specifically targeted at Section 75 groups.

ACNI are continually working to further improve data collection through the AFS. However, it should be noted that it is a self-reporting tool, often completed by one person within the arts organisation. Therefore, unless the organisation itself asks staff about Section 75 categories or has the operational systems embedded within their organisation to collect this, the information provided is based on assumption/perception from the person responsible for reporting to ACNI.

The aim of the overall Support for Individual Artists Programme (SIAP) is to support artists across all disciplines to create work and develop their practice. Artists of all disciplines and in all types of working practice, who have made a contribution to artistic activities in Northern Ireland for a minimum of one year within the last five years, can apply to SIAP. As part of their application, ACNI captures Section 75 data per individual to help us understand patterns and identify any gaps in who is accessing our funding. The Section 75 template for gathering applicant information was updated for SIAP 2022/23 with key principles such as 'not recorded above please add here' to offer applicants the opportunity to self-describe and some new categories within fields e.g. cohabiting. This is being used for SIAP and individual grants going forward and is being considered for the Annual Funding Programme and organisational applicants from 2023/24.

ACNI are continually reviewing and updating our data collection systems to capture equality information more accurately. Consultation has taken place with a range of public bodies on how they collect data in line with Equality Commission NI. As a result, we removed 'other' and called it 'not listed, please specify' to give everyone an option to self-identity under equality characteristics as well as amending any categories that were outdated. There is an annual submission to the Equality Commission providing detail on our activities in relation to providing services to different Section 75 groups.

Moreover, an audit of inequalities report is carried out to provide an overview of the information collected for each Section 75 category over the last five years. The most recent review covers period 2017-2022. Analysis of this data helps to identify any gaps in data collection across each of the nine categories.

Lottery Project Funding and Small Grants are programmes to assist arts organisations to deliver arts projects which contribute to the growth of arts in the community for new and existing audiences. It supports activities which benefit the people of Northern Ireland or that help arts organisations carry out their work. Both represent £2.25m and £375,000 of ACNI's resource allocation in 2023/243 respectively.

The Good Work Review is the first examination of job quality across the entire creative industries. The Review is based on 40 separate indicators, from evidence submitted by 120 organisations, and focuses on issues including fair pay, flexible working, paid overtime and employee representation. Part of this process has resulted in the development of a quantitative baseline of job quality in the Creative Industries. This includes information on equality opportunities policy, gender, ethnicity, disability and social class representation. Whilst this information is not arts sector focussed it remains an important indicator for the sector as arts activities/services are woven throughout the Creative Industries.

It should be noted that whilst focus is on Section 75 groups, ACNI also acknowledge other underrepresented groups, particularly in terms of social class. According to the Good Review: quantitative baseline of job quality in Creative Industries, just one in four jobs in the Creative Industries were held by people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, meaning that class-based exclusion is more pronounced in the Creative Industries than any other part of the UK economy. The share of the workforce from low socio-economic backgrounds has declined over the past five years, reflecting trends across all industries as the labour market continues to transition away from manual and towards professional occupations. There are substantial class-based disparities evident in all Creative sub-sectors, except for Crafts.

Since October 2023, ACNI have introduced a survey as part of SIAP to collect this information for artists working within the sector.

The strategy was informed by extensive engagement⁴. Fourteen sessions were delivered by an independent service provider (Ruth Flood Associates) and the Director of Strategic Development (ACNI) and ran from 17 July 2023 to 10 September 2023 with some sessions delivered face to face across various locations in Northern Ireland and some offered online. The remaining sessions were delivered by the Director of Strategic Development (ACNI) in partnership with resource organisations such as Community Arts Partnership (CAP), Arts & Business (A&B NI) Thrive, Craft NI, etc. Engagement was sought across individual artists and organisations, in a range of locations across urban and more rural locations and with as wide a range of art forms as possible. The ACNI Strategic Development team also made significant effort to reach and engage with typically under-represented groups as part of this process.

In total, there were 262 attendants across the 24 engagement sessions. In a few cases, people participated in more than one workshop representing themselves as artists or another organisation. Feedback was gathered after each workshop so the Strategic Development team could continue to improve upon the effectiveness of the sessions.

³ [ACNI-Business-Plan-2023-v5.pdf \(s3-assets.com\)](#)

⁴ [Insert feedback report link](#)

STEP 2B: Consideration of Available Data and Research

Religious Belief

Census 2021 collected information on religious background. Table 1 shows the religious breakdown of the usually resident population in Northern Ireland. There are 805,151 who identify as Catholic, representing the majority at 42.3%. Whilst not wholly accurate, combining Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Church of Ireland and Methodist Church in Ireland gives an indication of the proportion of the population with a Protestant belief at 580,619 (30.5%).

Table 1: Census 2021 Religious Belief

Religion	Residents (no.)	Residents (%)
Catholic	805,151	42.3
Presbyterian Church in Ireland	316,103	16.6
Church of Ireland	219,788	11.5
Methodist Church in Ireland	44,728	2.4
Other Christian (including Christian related)	130,377	6.9
Other religions	25,519	1.3
No religion	330,983	17.4
Religion not stated	30,529	1.6
All usual residents	1,903,178	100.0

The AFS collects religious belief information for all staff (full time, part time permanent, contract and Board members) working within organisations receiving funding through ACNI's Annual Funding Programme (AFP).

Table 2 reveals the religious belief for all staff working in ACNI's annual funding portfolio, which includes full-time and part-time staff working in permanent, contractual roles, as well as Board members. There was a significant proportion of staff who did not reveal their religious affiliation. This is reflected in the high numbers in the 'prefer not to say' and 'not known' categories for 'All Staff', where the percentage of those in both categories combined is 77% in 2020/21 and almost 78% in 2021/22 and 80% in 2022/23.

For those respondents that did indicate their religion, 50% (710) identified as Catholic and 24% (336) as Protestant in 2022/23, representing a similar proportion to the previous year at 55% (660) and 26% (318) respectively. Those of 'Other Religious Faith' represent 6% in both 2020/21 and 2021/22 and 3% in 2022/23. 'No Religious Faith' is similar in 2020/21 and 2021/22 at 12% and 13% respectively. In 2022/23 the proportion of staff with 'No Religious Faith' increases to 20%.

Table 2: Religious Faith of all staff, AFS (2020-2022)

Religious Faith	2020/21 (n=97)	2021/22 (n=97)	2022/23 (n=95)	2020/21 (%)	2021/22 (%)	2022/23 (%)
Catholic	684	660	710	55	55	50

Protestant	337	318	336	27	26	24
Buddhist	0	0	6	0	0	0
Hindu	0	0	4	0	0	0
Islam/Muslim	0	0	11	0	0	1
Jewish	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sikh	3	3	5	0	0	0
Other Religious Faith	73	72	49	6	6	3
No Religious Faith	154	153	289	12	13	20
Religious faith not listed specify here	0	0	6	0	0	0
Prefer not to say	208	220	519			
Not known	4,079	3,997	5,090			
Total	5,538	5,423	7,025	100	100	100

Note: The percentages presented in this table exclude 'prefer not to say' and 'not known' categories in order to provide a more accurate representation of the remaining categories. All staff refers to full-time, part-time, permanent, contract and Board members.

Table 3 provides the religious profile of approved applicants to SIAP. A significant proportion of applicants (39%) in the last 5 years have indicated that they have no religion i.e. replied 'None', with 24% and 11% indicating they are from Catholic and Protestant backgrounds respectively.

Also notable is the number of respondents who replied 'Prefer not to say' at 251 (9%), 'Not answered' at 187 (7%). This level of non-response and/or indicating no religion, is not dissimilar to the Annual Funding Survey results (which collects employment information across arts organisations in NI), as outlined above.

Specifically for the most recent year, 2022/23 data reveal the following breakdown for 'Religion' for staff. The same trend is revealed whereby a large proportion of artists i.e. 45%, stipulated 'None' in their response and 8% did not answer this question; as opposed to 16% who identified as Catholic and 10% as Protestant.

It is worth highlighting that in 2018/19 Catholics represented 25% of all applicants who indicated their religion and protestants represented 17%, compared to 2022/23 where Catholics represented 16% of all applicants (significant change of 9%) and protestants 10% (another significant decline of 7%). Whilst this is a decline in both Catholic and Protestant artists, the gap between the two religions has narrowed compared to previous years.

Table 3: Approved SIAP applications by religious profile, 2018-2023

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Total (n)	Total (%)
Catholic	65	96	65	354	57	637	24
Protestant	44	52	30	140	36	302	11
Islam/Muslim	-		1	2		3	0
Buddhist	4	3	4	12	5	28	1
Jewish	1	1	21	2	2	27	1
None	128	148	108	514	164	1062	39
Not answered	7	12	35	103	30	187	7
Hindu	-	1		3		4	0
Other	16	29	17	111		173	6
Not listed					16	16	1
Prefer not to say				196	55	251	9
Total	265	342	290	1437	365	2699	100

Political Opinion

To date, there has been no suggestion that any political grouping suffers any adverse impact in accessing and participating in the arts in Northern Ireland. There is no evidence from any monitoring returns of a discernible impact with regards to political opinion.

There has been an historical tendency for voting preferences in Northern Ireland to closely reflect the religious affiliations of the population. This implies that those issues and differentials identified in relation to persons of different religion may also impact on persons of different political opinion. Although this is not always the case and is not an accurate conclusion to draw upon. Furthermore, there is a lack of data on political opinions within the workforce of arts organisations, as well as and those who engage with the arts.

The information is not collected through ACNI's AFS but is collected through SIAP.

The SIAP monitoring information provides an indication of trends in political opinion across applications. Table 4 below provides the number of approved applications to SIAP over a five-year period from 2018/19 to 2022/23 by political opinion.

Between 2018/19 and 2022/23, there were a total of 2,699 approved applications with the largest proportion taking place in 2021/22 (1437). Most artists applying over the five-year period (1,483) stated their political opinion to be 'other' at 1017 (38%) followed by 'prefer not to say' at 651 (24%)

and Nationalist at 600 (22%). Only 108 reported that they were Unionist (4%) and 194 (7%) did not answer. 2022/23 was the first year 'Apolitical' category was collected, representing 94 (3%) of artists.

Table 4: SIAP approved applications by political opinion, 2018-2023

Year	Nationalist	Not Answered	Other	Unionist	Prefer not to say	Apolitical	Not listed	Total	Total (%)
2018-19	49	8	186	22	0	0	0	265	10
2019-20	91	12	219	20	0	0	0	342	13
2020-21	53	69	110	12	46	0	0	290	11
2021-22	331	74	502	41	489	0	0	1437	53
2022-23	76	31	0	13	116	94	35	365	14
Total	600	194	1017	108	651	94	35	2699	
Total %	22	7	38	4	24	3	1	100	100

Table 5 below provides the percentage of approved applications to SIAP by political opinion between 2018/19 and 2022/23. The largest proportion of applicants identify with 'other' political opinion in each of the five years to date with the exception of 2022/23. This is perhaps as a result of the addition of a new category of 'apolitical'.

Looking at 2022/23 specifically, the data shows that no artists answered 'other' to which political party they supported. Instead, 26% indicated 'apolitical' and 10% selected 'not listed' which is another new category introduced in 2022/23. There were 32% who chose 'prefer not to say', a similar proportion to the previous year at 34% (in 2021/22). Only 21% and 4% of artists supported Nationalist and Unionist parties respectively.

In 2018/19 Unionists represented 8% of all approved applications which has fallen to 4% in 2022/23; whereas Nationalists at 18% in 2018/19 has risen to 21% in 2022/23. This is a slightly different trend to that of the religious profile where the gap appeared to be narrowing between those who indicated their religious affiliation was Catholic and Protestant. Interestingly this data illustrates that the gap between Nationalist and Unionist political opinion has remained broadly the same which indicates perhaps that religion is having less of an influence over political opinion as it has done so in the past.

Table 5: SIAP approved applications by political opinion, 2018-2023

Year	Nationalist (%)	Not Answered (%)	Other (%)	Unionist (%)	Prefer not to say (%)	Apolitical (%)	Not listed (%)	Total (%)
2018-19	18	3	70	8	0	0	0	100
2019-20	27	4	64	6	0	0	0	100
2020-21	18	24	38	4	16	0	0	100
2021-22	23	5	35	3	34	0	0	100
2022-23	21	8	0	4	32	26	10	100

Racial Group

The Good Work Review: quantitative baseline of job quality in the Creative Industries report reveals that at surface-level, a slightly higher share of the Creative workforce are Black, Asian or other Minority Ethnic origin. This potentially reflects both the concentration of the Creative Industries in ethnically-diverse urban centres (particularly London) and the dominance of the IT sub-sector, which employs a greater share of workers from ethnic minority backgrounds. In contrast, there is significant under-representation of racially diverse talent in most other Creative sub-sectors, particularly: Craft; Music, performing and visual arts; and Museums, galleries and libraries.

Table 6 presents the ethnic background of full-time and part-time, permanent and contract staff working in the arts sector. There is a significant proportion of the information returned that are 'unspecified or uncollected' or 'not known' therefore the percentages in the table exclude these categories to provide a more accurate breakdown of ethnicity.

The majority of staff working in ACNI's annually funded organisations are white. Out of those who indicated ethnicity, 95% are white at 3,028 in 2021/22 and 3,754 in 2022/23.

The minority ethnic community in NI is proportionally much smaller than the rest of the UK. There were a total of 295 members of staff from a minority ethnic background in 2022/23. Excluding those where the information was unspecified, uncollected or not known, this accounts for 4% of all staff. This is a similar proportion to that of the most recent NI Census in 2021.

Of note at an overall workforce level were increases in representation of mixed ethnic groups (36%), Black Africans (13%) and Arabs (9%) as a proportion of the minority ethnic population.

Only two members of staff within the annual portfolio of arts organisations indicated they were from an Irish Traveller background in 2022/23.

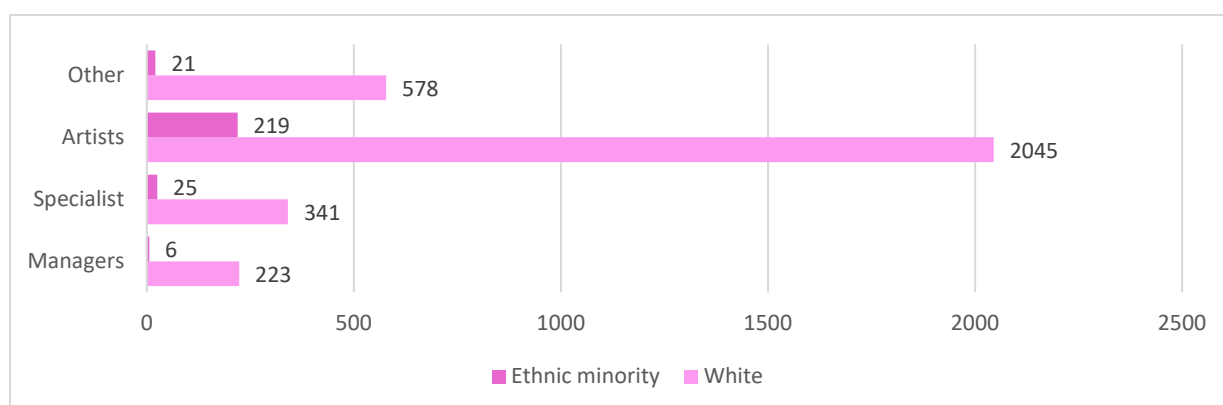
Table 6: Ethnicity of All Staff (AFS), 2020-2023

Ethnicity	2020/21 (n=97)	2021/22 (n=97)	2022/23 (n=95)	2020/21 (%)	2021/22 (%)	2022/23 (%)
White	3,260	3,028	3,754	95	95	93
Irish Traveller	0	0	2	0	0	0
Roma	0	0	3	0	0	0
Chinese	9	7	19	0	0	0
Indian	23	20	34	1	1	1
Pakistani	3	3	8	0	0	0
Bangladeshi	1	1	1	0	0	0
Other Asian	5	5	0	0	0	0
Asian not listed, please specify here	0	0	8	0	0	0
Black Caribbean	10	10	13	0	0	0
Black African	19	20	37	1	1	1
Black Other	7	6	0	0	0	0
Black not listed, please specify here	0	0	6	0	0	0
Arab	0	0	26	0	0	1
Filipino	0	0	2	0	0	0
Mixed Ethnic Group	38	34	107	1	1	3
Other Ethnic Group	7	7	10	0	0	0
Ethnic group not listed	37	35	19	1	1	0
Unspecified or Uncollected	2,103	2,064	1,492			
Not known	0	225	1,484			
Total	5,522	5,465	7,025	100	100	100

Note: The percentages presented in this table exclude 'prefer not to say' and 'not known' categories in order to provide a more accurate representation of the remaining categories. All staff refers to full-time, part-time, permanent, contract and Board members.

There were increases in ethnic minority representation across all four employment classifications with the greatest relating to artists which increased from 8 percentage points to 11 percentage points. The majority of representation across Managers, Specialist roles, Artists and Other roles is still white.

Figure 1: Ethnicity, permanent and contract full time and part time, AFS (2023)



Note: Figure does not include ethnicity information of board members within arts organisations

There has been representation in approved SIAP applications across all ethnicities between 2018 and 2023, albeit very small in some cases. The majority of applications to the programme have been from a white ethnic background, accounting for around 90% on average (table 7).

Table 7: Number of approved SIAP applications by ethnic group

Ethnic Group	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Total	Total (%)
White	241	310	256	1312	301	2420	90
Black African	0	0	0	4	1	5	0
Black Caribbean	0	1	0	3	3	7	0
Chinese	1	2	0	0	1	4	0
Indian	1	0	0	1	1	3	0
Mixed ethnic	4	6	7	33	12	62	2
Other Asian	2		1	5	0	8	0
Other	4	2	3	13	0	22	1
Not answered	12	21	19	24	35	111	4
Irish Traveller	0	0	0	2	0	2	0
Other Black	0	0	0	2	0	2	0
Pakistani	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
Not listed	0	0	0	0	5	5	0

Prefer not to say	0	0	4	37	6	47	2
Total	265	342	290	1437	365	2699	100

In 2022/23, 3% of approved applications had a mixed ethnic background and 10% of applicants did not reveal their ethnicity and 2% preferred not to say (table 8).

Table 8: Approved SIAP applications by ethnic group (%) 2018-2023

Ethnic Group	2018/19 (%)	2019/20 (%)	2020/21 (%)	2021/22 (%)	2022/23 (%)
White	91	91	88	91	82
Black African	0	0	0	0	0
Black Caribbean	0	0	0	0	1
Chinese	0	1	0	0	0
Indian	0	0	0	0	0
Mixed ethnic	2	2	2	2	3
Other Asian	1	0	0	0	0
Other	2	1	1	1	0
Not answered	5	6	7	2	10
Irish Traveller	0	0	0	0	0
Other Black	0	0	0	0	0
Pakistani	0	0	0	0	0
Not listed	0	0	0	0	1
Prefer not to say	0	0	1	3	2
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Table 9 provides Census 2021 estimates that classify usual residents in Northern Ireland by ethnic group. Note: In the following analysis the label 'minority ethnic group' is used. This relates to all persons who have an ethnicity classification other than the 'White' option.

In 2021 the number of people with a white ethnic group was 1,837,600 (96.6% of the population). Conversely, the total number of people with a minority ethnic group stood at 65,600 people (3.4% of the population and an increase of 1.6% on the 2011 Census). Within this latter classification, the largest groups were Mixed Ethnicities (14,400), Black (11,000), Indian (9,900), Chinese (9,500), and Filipino (4,500). Irish Traveller, Arab, Pakistani and Roma ethnicities also each constituted 1,500 people or more.

Table 9: Ethnic group of all usual residents in Northern Ireland, Census 2021

Ethnic Group	All usual residents	
	No.	%
White	1,837,575	96.6
Irish traveller	2,609	0.1
Roma	1,529	0.1
Indian	9,881	0.5
Chinese	9,49	0.5
Filipino	4,451	0.2
Pakistani	1,596	0.1
Arab	1,817	0.1
Other Asian	5,244	0.3
Black African	8,069	0.4
Black other	2,963	0.2
Mixed	14,382	0.8
Other ethnicities	3,568	0.2
Total	1,903,179	100.0

Research shows that there are a number of barriers that impede take-up and participation by minority ethnic people in the arts including language, social barriers and perceived irrelevance to own culture (ACNI, 2005). These barriers for minority ethnic artists still exist today, along with the fear that they will not be afforded the same opportunities as white artists. However, there is no definitive evidence to conclude that applications for funding from minority ethnic groups are rejected based on their ethnicity.

ACNI's Minority Ethnic (ME) Deliberative Forum has provided an opportunity for artists and other stakeholders to raise any concerns facing artists with a minority ethnic background. The Forum was established to help provide insights on issues relevant for these communities whilst informing ACNI's strategy and policies within this area.

The Forum was helpful in shaping and championing a dedicated Minority Ethnic Artists' programme. The Minority Ethnic Artists Mentoring Residency Programme was launched in 2020/21 and now has been mainstreamed into one of ACNI's key annual funding programmes for individual artists (SIAP).

Age

On census day, there were 365,200 children (aged 0 to 14) or 19% of the population. Those aged 65 and over represented 17% (326,500) of the population. The remaining 64% of the population, or 1,211,400 people, were aged between 15 and 64 years (table 10).

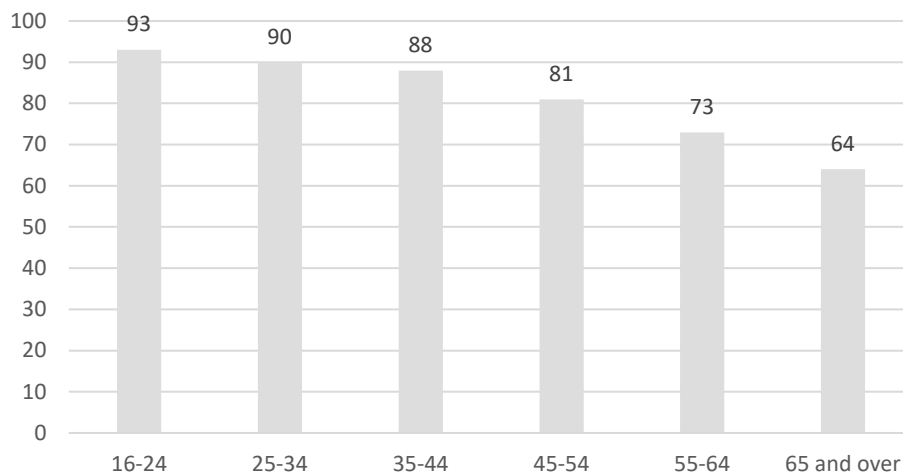
Table 10: Census 2021 population by age band

Five-year age bands	Residents (no.)	Residents (%)
0-4	113,820	6.0
5-9	124,475	6.5
10-14	126,918	6.7
15-19	113,203	5.9
20-24	111,386	5.9
25-29	116,409	6.1
30-34	126,050	6.6
35-39	127,313	6.7

40-44	122,163	6.4
45-49	121,670	6.4
50-54	130,967	6.9
55-59	129,276	6.8
60-64	113,049	5.9
65-69	93,464	4.9
70-74	83,467	4.4
75-79	66,377	3.5
80-84	43,776	2.3
85-89	25,879	1.4
90+	13,512	0.7
All usual residents	1,903,174	100.0

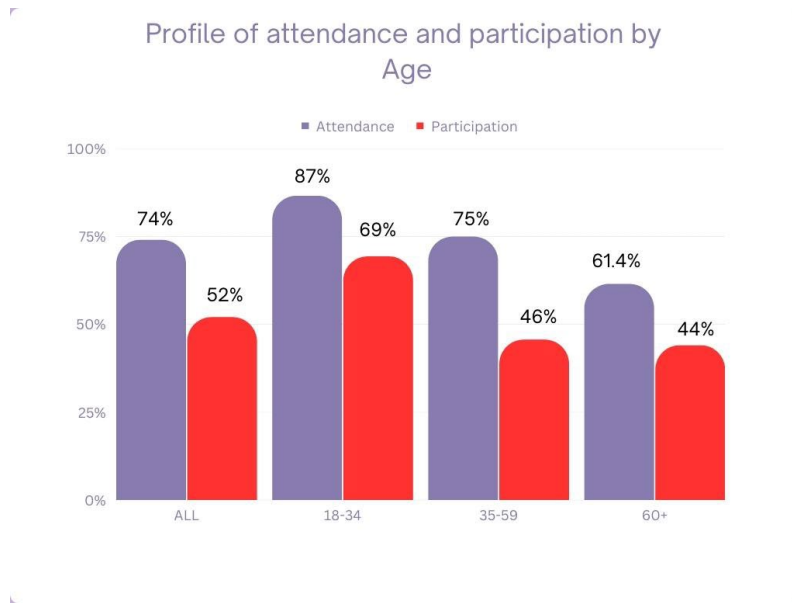
The proportions of adults who engaged with culture and the arts generally decreased as age group increased, particularly beyond the 35-44 years age group (figure 2). Also, the trend was similar to that for attending arts events, engagement rates tended to drop as age increased.

Figure 2: Engagement in culture and arts 2022/23



A similar trend is reflected in the attendance and participation data collected through the General Population Survey (GPS) in 2023 (figure 3). Attendance and participation are highest amongst 18-34 year olds at 87% and 69% respectively, followed by those ages 35-59 at 75% and 46% respectively. Those aged 60+ had the lowest attendance and participation rates at 61% and 44% respectively.

Figure 3: Attendance and participation at arts events by age group, GPS (2023)



The pandemic resulted in less people entering the workforce in the arts in 2020/21. This has changed in recent years as staff numbers have increased in 2021/22 from 5,430 to 7,025 in 2022/23.

The make-up of the workforce remains broadly the same with those employed in management capacities tending to be older and those employed as artists to be slightly younger. Excluding board members, those aged 25-34 comprised the largest proportion of the overall workforce at 29% (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Age, permanent and contract full time and part time (AFS, 2023)



Note: Figure does not include ethnicity information of board members within arts organisations

Staff members' who have chosen 'prefer not to say' or 'not known' have been excluded from the percentage analysis in Table 11.

The AFS shows that the majority of staff working in the arts sector (who provided details of their age) in 2020/21 and 2021/22 were aged 35-44 at 1,062 and 965 respectively, comprising of approximately 28% and 27% respectively of the total workforce (table 11). The proportion remains similar in 2022/23 at 1,125 (26%). Those aged 25-34 are the next largest category accounting for approximately 25% in 2020/21 and 23% in 2021/22 and 26% in 2022/23 of all staff. This indicates perhaps that a younger cohort of people are choosing to enter the arts sector as a career choice.

Table 11: All staff age profile (AFS) 2020-2023

Age	2020/21 (n=97)	2021/22 (n=97)	2022/23 (n=95)	2020/21 (%)	2021/22 (%)	2022/23 (%)
0-15	9	9	0	0	0	0
16-24	310	298	458	8	8	11
25-34	925	827	1,130	25	23	26
35-44	1,062	965	1,125	28	27	26
45-54	790	750	872	21	21	20
55-64	509	500	544	14	14	13
65+	162	178	211	4	5	5
Prefer Not To Say	34	29	272			
Not known	1,722	1,874	2,413			
Total	5,523	5,430	7,025	100	100	100
Total	5,522	5,465	7,025	100	100	100

Note: The percentages presented in this table exclude 'prefer not to say' and 'not known' categories in order to provide a more accurate representation of the remaining categories. All staff refers to full-time, part-time, permanent, contract and Board members.

According to SIAP data, there has been an uptake in applicants across all age categories in the last 5 years (see table 12 below). However, as the data fields have changed between the first four years of the period, it is more difficult to compare the results.

Table 12: Approved SIAP applications by age group, 2018-2022

Year	<16	16 -< 25	26 -< 49	50 -< 65	65+	Not Answered/ prefer not to say	Total
2018/19		26	169	54	9	7	265
2019/20		33	222	68	7	12	342

2020/21	2	37	181	49	10	11	290
2021/22	3	161	970	237	30	36	1437
Total	5	257	1542	408	56	66	2334
Total %	0	11	66	17	2	3	100

Between 2018/19 and 2019/20 there are very similar characteristics; suggesting that there was a trend in age of SIAP applicants; clearly peaking in the 26-49 category.

Despite no direct comparison with previous years, it is notable that there is a greater proportion of applicants are aged 25-34 than those in the categories 35-44 and 45-54 in 2022/23. The additional age breakdowns collected between ages 26 – 49 in 2022/23 compared to preceding years has potentially hidden a cohort of younger applicants with the number of applicants in 2022/23 aged 25-34 being greater than the next two age categories. It could be that there is a greater number of younger applicants than older applicants. This can only be determined as the new data fields are collected in subsequent years and identifies 2022/23 as an outlier or if there are any inequalities present for older applicants.

Table 13: Approved SIAP applications by age group, 2022/23

Age group	2022/23
16-24	13
25-34	109
35-44	94
45-54	61
55-64	41
65+	18
Not answered	25
Prefer not to say	4
Total	365

Marital Status

The 2022/23 CHS indicates that 79% of adults who were married engaged with the arts, followed by those who were single at 78%, separated/divorced at 73% and widowed at 55%. This trend is closely followed in attendance at arts events in the same year. Participation is slightly different with a higher proportion of adults who are widowed at 34%, followed by single at 29%, married at 27% and separated/divorced at 26%.

We can also observe the trends in marital status from ACNI’s SIAP for individual artists, providing a slightly different perspective (table 14).

The largest number of approved applications were made in 2021/22 at 1437 with the largest proportion coming from single/unmarried artists at 744 (52%), followed by those who are married at 469 (33%). This has typically been the trend over the last 5 years, the most significant proportion of applicants have been unmarried, who make up on average 50% of approved applications and those who are married which represent an average of 33% of all approved applications over the trend period.

Remaining approved applications came from artists who did not answer or preferred not to say their marital status, divorced, separated, cohabiting/living with a partner and widowed. These groups represented the smallest proportion of total approved applications, accounting for 9%, 3%, 3%, 2% and 1% on average respectively.

Table 14: Approved SIAP applications by marital status, 2018-2023

	Divorced	Married	Not Answered/ prefer not to say	Separated	Single/ Unmarried	Widowed	Co-habiting/ living with a partner	Civil partnership	Total
2018/19	9	95	10	6	141	4			265
2019/20	10	127	13	6	185	1			342
2020/21	9	94	40	11	134	2			290
2021/22	47	469	123	46	744	8			1437
2022/23	10	111	47	5	131	2	55	4	365
Total	85	896	233	74	1335	17	55	4	2695
Total %	3	33	9	3	50	1	2	0	100

Sexual Orientation

The NI Census 2021 stated that over 2% of the NI population reported that they were Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual or other. Almost 5% preferred not to say and 3.3% did not answer. The NI Census did not capture gender identity. We have reported in more detail and comparison to the population should be treated with caution as the categories used differ.

According to 2022/23 AFS data, almost 73% (1859) of the workforce within arts organisations described their sexual orientation as heterosexual/straight and almost 27% (678) as LGBTQIA+ (including prefer to describe myself in another way and excluding ‘unknown’ and ‘prefer not to say’ from this category).

Interestingly, there have been several categories that have more than doubled between 2021/22 and 2022/23 in the number of staff identifying as bisexual (increasing from 28 to 63), gay woman/lesbian

(increasing from 54 to 125) and pansexual (increasing from 3 to 7). Although they remain similar proportions of total approved applications (table 15).

ACNI’s annually funded organisations are involved or in collaboration with LGBTQIA+ organisations, representing 22% of all arts activities, suggesting a high degree of inclusivity and involvement within the arts.

Table 15: Arts sector staff by sexual orientation (AFS), 2020-2023

Sexual orientation	2020/21 (n=97)	2021/22 (n=97)	2022/23 (n=95)	2020/21 (%)	2021/22 (%)	2022/23 (%)
Bisexual	28	28	63	2	2	2
Gay Man	64	65	104	4	4	4
Gay Woman / Lesbian	55	54	125	3	3	5
Heterosexual / Straight	1,294	1,244	1,859	76	74	73
Queer	51	51	57	3	3	2
Pansexual	3	3	7	0	0	0
Prefer to describe myself in another way	215	225	322	13	13	13
Prefer not to say	42	53	71			
Not known	3,776	3,690	4,417			
Total	5,528	5,413	7,025	100	100	100

Categories are consistent with practice guidance used by the Northern Ireland charity Outburst Queer Arts Festival.

Note: The percentages presented in this table exclude ‘prefer not to say’ and ‘not known’ categories in order to provide a more accurate representation of the remaining categories. All staff refers to full-time, part-time, permanent, contract and Board members.

In line with recommendations made by the LGBTQIA+ community ACNI has been making changes to the way sexual orientation is monitored. As a result, the fields have been evolving over the 5 year period; leaving comparable trend analysis more challenging. However, SIAP applications from individuals identifying as Bisexual and Gay, either men or women, has been fairly consistent over the 5-year period at 6% and 4% on average respectively. The majority response also remains to be the number of applicants identifying as heterosexual at 72% of approved applications over the trend period (table 16).

There is still a significant proportion in 2022/23 of those who have chosen ‘not answered’ at 9% and ‘prefer not say’ at 14% regarding their sexual orientation.

Table 16: Approved SIAP applications by sexual orientation, 2018-2023

Year	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Total	Total %
Bisexual	18	30	17	76	30	171	6
Gay	14	16	9	44	13	96	4

Heterosexual	217	273	204	1055	199	1948	72
Lesbian	5	3	4	19	5	36	1
Not Answered	11	20	35	27	36	129	5
Other			1	14		15	1
Pansexual			4	21	10	35	1
Prefer not to say			12	152	50	214	8
Prefer to self describe			1			1	0
Queer			3	29	21	53	2
Not listed					1	1	0
Total	265	342	290	1437	365	2699	100

Men and Women Generally

Census 2021 data (table 17) shows that the usually resident population was approximately 1,903,100 people, comprising of 967,000 (50.8%) females and 936,200 (49.2%) males. This means that for every 100 women there were 97 men.

Table 17: Census 2021 Sex

	Residents (no.)	Residents (%)
Female	967,043	51
Male	936,132	49
All usual residents	1,903,175	100

According to the 2022/23 CHS, over three quarters of adults (77%) had engaged with the arts within the previous year, with over one quarter of adults (28%) participating in arts activities and just over seven out of ten adults (71%) attending an arts event.

Females were more likely to have engaged with the arts compared with males (79% and 74% respectively).

The Good Review: a quantitative baseline of job quality in the Creative Industries report reveals how women are significantly under-represented in the Creative Industries, comprising 37% of the workforce – amongst the lowest levels of representation in service industries and with no improvement in the gender balance over the past five years. There is substantial variation between Creative sub-sectors. Female representation is particularly poor in IT, Architecture and Screen, but women make-up 60% of the workforce in Museums, galleries and libraries which is a similar representation to the data presented below from ACNI's AFS and SIAP.

For the last three years, the AFS has been collecting gender identity information from ACNI's regularly funded organisations using new categories including woman (inclusive of cis and transgender women),

man (inclusive of cis and transgender men), non-binary (including androgyne), prefer to describe myself in another way and prefer not to say and not known.

The data presented in table 18 below and shows a balanced picture of staff identifying as women and men at 2,839 (39%) and 2,823 (39%) respectively in 2022/23.

In 2020/21, a significant proportion of staff members' gender identity was unknown at 18% which has since fallen to 16% in 2022/23. This is perhaps due to the increase in those who preferred not to say which currently sits at 5%.

Table 18: All staff by gender identity (AFS), 2020-2022

Gender identity	2020/21 (n=97)	2021/22 (n=97)	2022/23 (n=95)	2020/21 (%)	2021/22 (%)	2022/23 (%)
Woman (including cis and trans women)	2,380	2,873	2,839	43	53	39
Man (including cis and trans men)	2,132	2,489	2,823	39	46	39
Non-Binary (including androgyne)	30	39	55	1	1	1
Agender	0	0	1	0	0	0
Gender fluid	0	0	1	0	0	0
Prefer to describe myself in an other way	0	0	1	0	0	0
Prefer not to say	17	6	356	0	0	5
Not known	974	7	1,121	18	0	16
Total	5,533	5,414	7,197	100	100	100

Note: The percentages presented in this table exclude 'prefer not to say' and 'not known' categories in order to provide a more accurate representation of the remaining categories. All staff refers to full-time, part-time, permanent, contract and Board members.

Changes in the collection of SIAP gender data have made direct comparison with data sets collected prior to 2021/22 difficult with changes occurring in 2020/21 in response to lobbying by LGBTQIA+ organisations.

The incorporation of transgender applicants into their current gender profile is not possible to separate. Instead, comparison will not be like-for-like between these two different data sets and therefore have been excluded from table 19.

Focussing on the last two years, there is an increasing trend of people identifying as female from 38% to 46% in 2021/22 and 2022/23 respectively. Whereas there is a decreasing trend of male over the same period from 53% to 35%. The increasing non-response rate, from 3% to 9% over the last two years and broadening of categories will, in part, account for these changes. However, it will remain

uncertain if there are any changes to distribution between these categories until a set of fields has been in place for a couple of years.

Table 19: Approved SIAP applications by gender, 2018-2023

Year	2021/22 (n)	2022/23 (n)	2021/22	2022/23
Agender	5	3	0%	1%
Female (cisgender & transgender)	541	169	38%	46%
Male (cisgender & transgender)	767	126	53%	35%
Non-binary	17	8	1%	2%
Not answered	46	32	3%	9%
Prefer not to say	47	18	3%	5%
Gender fluid	14	6	1%	2%
Not listed		3	0%	1%
Total	1437	365	100%	100%

Disability

The Arts Council NI adopts the social model of disability in its approach to collecting and monitoring disability data. The means we define disability because of social barriers, rather than an individual impairment or condition. We typically report using the categories d/deaf, neurodiverse and disabled. Therefore, analysing Arts Council data against population data isn't strictly comparable, but is still useful.

Census 2021 provides an overview of those with a limiting long-term health problem or disability in Northern Ireland. Table 20 shows that one person in four (24.3% or 463,000 people) had a limiting long-term health problem or disability, 40% of which were aged 65 or more (185,300 people). In total, 1.44 million people (75.7%) indicated they did not have a limiting long-term health problem or disability. The number of people with a limiting long-term health problem or disability increased from the 2011 to 2021 Census. The increase, from 374,600 people in 2011 to 463,000 people in 2021 (an increase of 23.6%), is likely to be driven partly by NI's ageing population.

Table 20: Limiting long-term health problem or disability (2011 and 2021 Census)

Limiting long-term health problem or disability	Census 2011	Percentage	Census 2021	Census 2021
Not limited	1,436,200	79.3%	1,440,200	75.7%
Limited	374,600	20.7%	463,000	24.3%
Limited a little	159,400	8.8%	245,100	12.9%
Limited a lot	215,200	11.9%	218,000	11.5%
All people	1,810,900	100.0%	1,903,200	100.0%

The [Disability Employment Gap in NI](#) examines the disability employment gap in NI in the context of the UK. In 2020 the employment rate for people with disabilities was 38.1%, the employment rate for people without disabilities was 80.3%. Therefore, the employment rate gap was 42.4 percentage points (pps). Compared to the rest of the UK (27.9pps), the NI disability employment gap has been consistently higher.

According to the 2022/23 CHS adults with a disability were less likely to have engaged with culture and the arts compared to those without a disability (71% and 84% respectively). Moreover, adults who do not have a disability were more likely to engage in the arts (81%) than adults with a disability (67%). Also, adults with a disability were less likely to attend an art event than adults without a disability (57% and 77% respectively).

Disabled people are under-represented in the Creative Industries (Good Work Review: quantitative baseline of job quality in the Creative Industries) – comprising 13% of the sector’s workforce compared to 16% across all industries. The proportion of the workforce which have a disability has been on an upward trajectory over the past five years – across the economy and in the Creative Industries. Within the sector, disabled people are particularly under-represented in: Advertising and marketing; Architecture; Design; and IT & software, where less than one in ten jobs are filled by people with a disability.

Data collected through the AFS over the last few years reveals that there is a significant proportion of the arts workforce by disability that is not known at over 50% and therefore has been excluded from table 21. The ‘prefer not to say’ category has also been excluded from the analysis.

There are significantly more non-disabled artists than disabled at 2094 (82%), 1837 (80%) and 2,917 (85%) in 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 respectively. However, it is encouraging that the number of staff who identify as having a disability has followed an upward trend to 2022/23. Although it is important to note, this is perhaps not an actual increase in the number of disabled artists joining the workforce but instead reflecting a willingness to share the information with ACNI about their disability.

Table 21: Arts staff by disability (AFS) 2020-2022

Disability	2020/21 (n=97)	2021/22 (n=97)	2022/23 (n=95)	2020/21 (%)	2021/22 (%)	2022/23 (%)
Disabled	188	192	244	7	8	7
Non-disabled	2,094	1,837	2,917	82	80	85
Prefer not to say	266	263	286	10	11	8
Not known	2,967	3,098	3,578			
Total	5,515	5,390	7,025	100	100	100

Note: The percentages presented in this table exclude 'prefer not to say' and 'not known' categories in order to provide a more accurate representation of the remaining categories. All staff refers to full-time, part-time, permanent, contract and Board members.

The proportion of disabled artists applying for individual support has shown a broadly upward/stable trend over the last 5 years (table 22). Over this period, approved applications represented 10% disabled, 83% non-disabled, 5% not answered and 3% who chose 'prefer not to say'.

The level of applications by this group is encouraging and may in part be due to the targeting of disabled artists by art-form officers. Moreover, ACNI have an MoU with University of Atypical to ensure that disabled artists have increased access and support to funding opportunities.

Table 22: Approved SIAP applications by disability, 2018-2023

Disability	Yes	No	Not answered	Prefer not to say	Total	Total (%)
2018/19	23	233	9		265	10
2019/20	29	300	13		342	13
2020/21	29	232	22	7	290	11
2021/22	126	1218	45	48	1437	53
2022/23	57	250	36	22	365	14
Total	264	2233	125	77	2699	
Total %	10	83	5	3	100	100

Dependents

There is less information to inform the impact of dependants on engagement in the arts. According to the CHS, in 2022/23 adults with dependants were less likely to participate in an art activity compared to those without dependants (26% and 30% respectively).

The AFS does not currently collect information from the arts sector on dependents.

Table 23 shows that the number of SIAP applicants with dependents has remained fairly consistent over the 5-year period. The majority of artists do not have dependants, representing approximately 63% on average between 2018/19 and 2022/23, compared to 31% on average for those with dependants. Only a small proportion of applicants did not answer, accounting for 6% on average over the trend period.

Table 23: Approved SIAP applications by dependants, 2016-2021

Dependants	Yes	No	Not answered	Total	Total %
2018/19	80	175	10	265	10
2019/20	110	217	15	342	13
2020/21	82	187	21	290	11
2021/22	486	896	55	1437	53
2022/23	90	218	57	365	14
Total	848	1693	158	2699	
Total %	31	63	6	100	100

The 2021 Census notes that the number of households with dependent children represents 16% of all households and that 12% of residents provide unpaid care.

General population attendance and participation in the arts

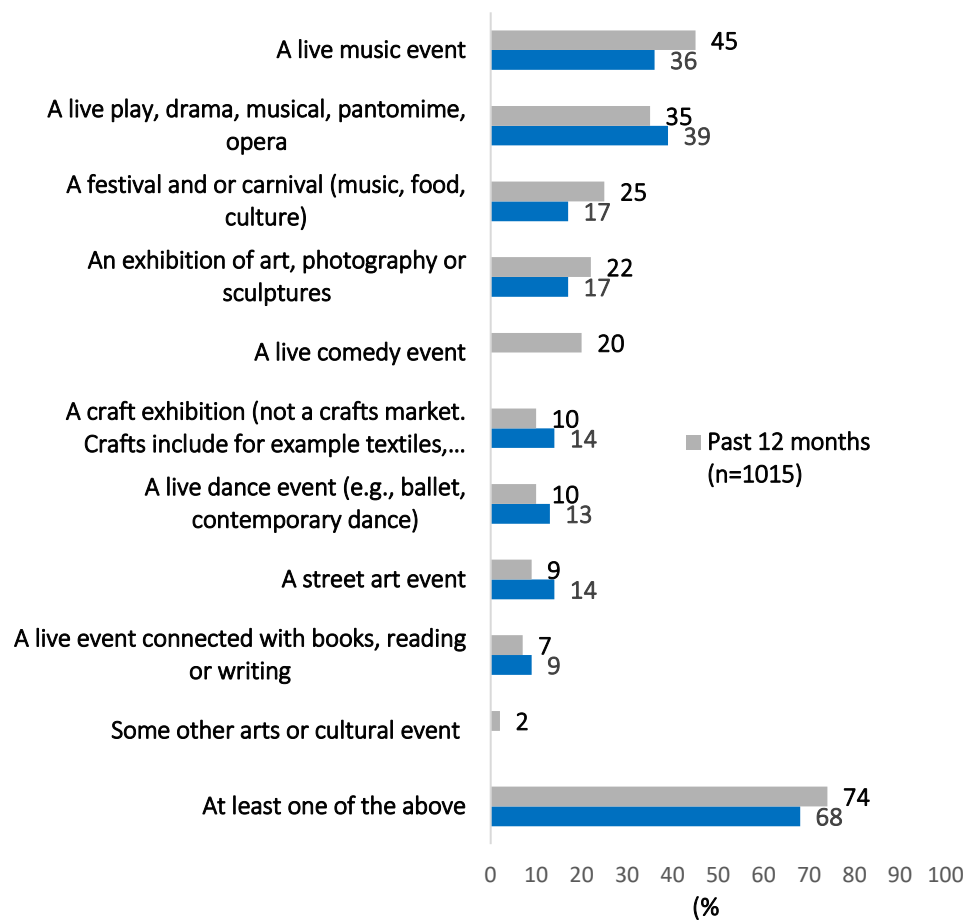
In ACNI's General Population Survey (GPS), respondents were asked if, in the past 12 months, they had been to different arts activities or events as a member of the audience or as a visitor.

Figure A shows that in the past 12 months, 74% of respondents said they had been a member of an audience or a visitor to at least one of the events / activities listed, with those groups more likely to have been a member of an audience or a visitor to at least one of the events / activities listed:

- Those in younger age groups (18-34, 87%; 35-59, 75%; 60+, 61%),
- Those in higher social classes (ABC1, 81%; C2DE, 69%),
- Those with dependents (80% vs. 70%),

- Those with a higher level of educational attainment ('low', 66%; 'medium', 74%; 'high', 79%).

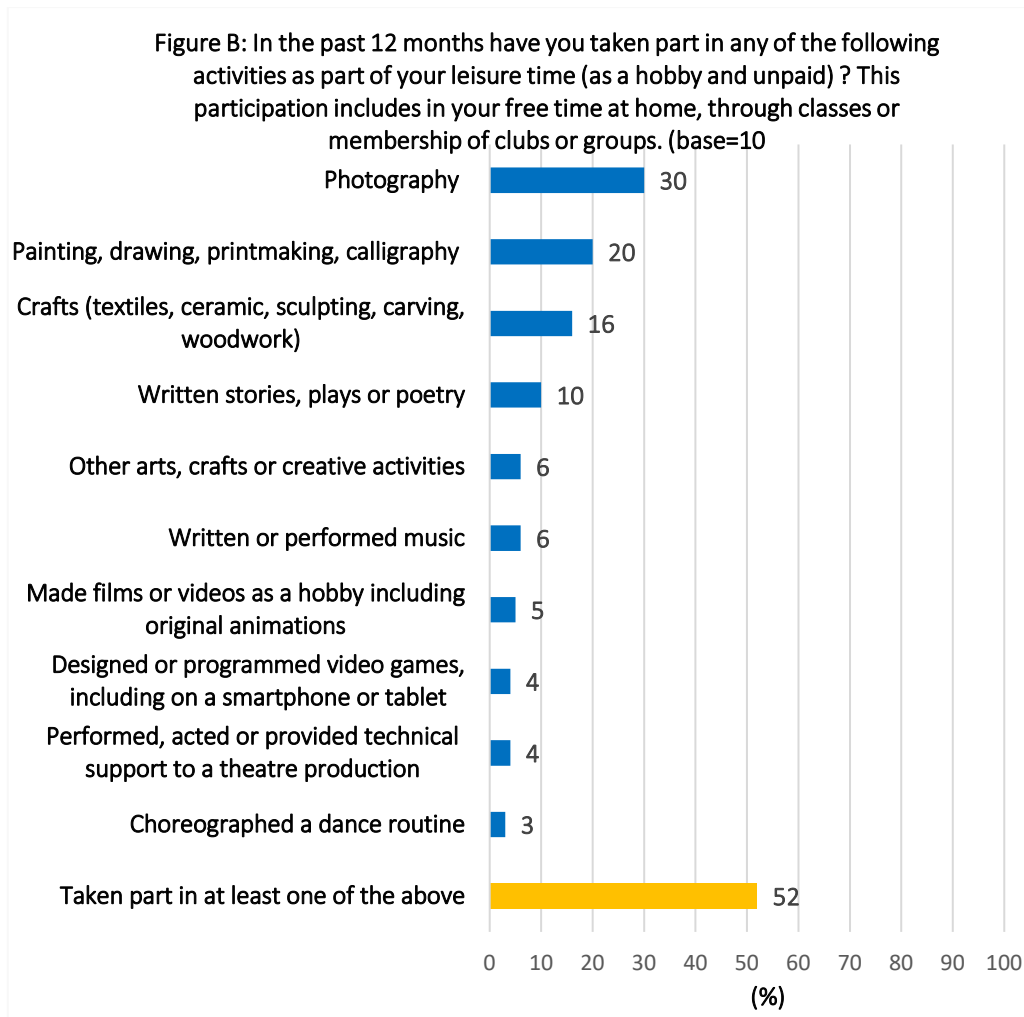
Figure A: Which, if any, of the following have you been to, either as a member of the audience or as a visitor, within the past 12 months?



Respondents were asked if they had taken part in a range of arts related activities in the past year as part of their leisure time (as a hobby and unpaid).

Figure B shows that 52% of respondents indicated taking part in at least one of the events / activities listed, with groups significantly more likely to have done so including:

- Younger respondents (18-34, 69%; 35-59, 46%; 60+, 44%),
- Those in higher social classes (ABC1, 58%; C2DE, 47%),
- Those with a disability (58%) compared with non-disabled respondents (51%),
- Those describing their community background as 'none' (catholic, 53%; protestant, 45%; other, 45%; none, 64%),
- Those with a higher level of educational attainment ('low', 37%; 'medium', 44%; 'high', 66%),
- LGBTQ+ respondents (65%) compared with heterosexual respondents (51%).



Summary of Evidence

From a review of the above sources of data/information there would be appear to be limited information / data gaps in respect of the equality grounds of political opinion, religious belief and marital status. The evidence in respect of the other six equality groups is summarised below

Section 75 category	Evidence of Inequalities
Religious belief	Although the data reveals that there are fewer Protestants working in the sector and fewer Protestant artists applying for support, there is no indication of any inequality in access to the arts due to religion. It should be noted that due to the contentious nature of the subject a high proportion of respondents chose not to specify this information. Therefore, it is impossible to determine a more accurate breakdown by religious belief. Moreover, Census 2021 indicates that

	<p>there is a greater proportion of the population who identify as Catholic at over 42% compared to Protestant at 30% reflecting the trend within the AFS.</p> <p>ACNI encourage applications from artists across all religious beliefs and have specific targeting measures in place to ensure that there is equal opportunity for all artists to apply to the funding programme of their choice.</p>
Political opinion	<p>As with religious belief this is a contentious topic and would explain why any arts specific source has a high proportion of 'other' responses. However due to historic circumstances we can correlate religious belief with political opinion and determine that there is no evidence for any inequality in arts provision by political opinion.</p>
Racial group	<p>NI has a much smaller minority ethnic community when compared to the rest of the UK and this is reflected in the proportion of respondents working in the arts sector and artists applying for our support. The size of the sample makes it difficult to determine trends, but there is no evidence of any inequality in accessing the arts, or selection for independent artist grants.</p> <p>In fact, ACNI's new Ethnic Minority Mentoring and Residencies Programme specifically targeting artists from the global majority was so successful as a pilot in 2020/1 that it was mainstreamed into SIAP as an ongoing funding opportunity.</p> <p>AFS data also indicates that almost 18% of programme activities were targeted at ethnic minority groups in 2022/23.</p>
Age	<p>Young people have considerably higher attendance and participation in the arts than any other age group, and older people have lower attendance and participation. ACNI recognise both these age groups in their targeted programme recognising the formative influence of the arts on young people and the wellbeing benefits observed with older people.</p> <p>The AFS shows that over 23% of programme activity was targeted at older people in 2022/23.</p> <p>ACNI's Arts and Older People Programme has been a conduit to increase attendance of the older generation in the arts in order to combat loneliness, increase self-confidence and ensure it contributes towards their wellbeing. This</p>

	<p>is illustrated by the findings of the ARK (2019) research and the benefits the programme brought to the older generation.</p>
<p>Marital status</p>	<p>The 2022/23 CHS indicates that 79% of adults who were married engaged with the arts, followed by those who were single at 78%, separated/divorced at 73% and widowed at 55%. This trend is closely followed in attendance at arts events in the same year. Participation is slightly different with a higher proportion of adults who are widowed at 34%, followed by single at 29%, married at 27% and separated/divorced at 26%.</p> <p>The largest number of approved applications were made in 2021/22 at 1437 with the largest proportion coming from single/unmarried artists at 744 (52%), followed by those who are married at 469 (33%). This has typically been the trend over the last 5 years, the most significant proportion of applicants have been unmarried, who make up on average 50% of approved applications and those who are married which represent an average of 33% of all approved applications over the trend period.</p> <p>There does not seem to be any impediment to working in the art sector for any marital status, although anecdotal evidence would suggest that family commitments/childcare could sometimes present a barriers in attendance and participation.</p>
<p>Sexual orientation</p>	<p>According to 2022/23 AFS data, almost 73% (1859) of the workforce within arts organisations described their sexual orientation as heterosexual/straight and almost 27% (678) as LGBTQIA+.</p> <p>There is no evidence to suggest that there is any inequality in accessing the arts depending on sexual orientation across all of ACNI's funding programmes. Typically, the majority of artists identify as heterosexual, however it is important to highlight that 22% of programme activity was targeted at the LGBTQIA+ community in 2022/23 by AFP clients.</p>
<p>Men and women generally</p>	<p>For the last three years, the AFS has been collecting gender identity information from ACNI's regularly funded organisations using new categories including woman (inclusive of cis and transgender women), man (inclusive of cis and transgender men), non-binary (including androgyne), prefer to describe myself in another way and prefer not to say and not known.</p>

	<p>The workforce in the arts is typically characterised as having a slightly greater proportion of females to males working in the sector.</p> <p>However, the AFS has revealed, for the first time, a more balanced picture of staff identifying as women and men at 2,839 (39%) and 2,823 (39%) respectively in 2022/23.</p> <p>According to the 2022/23 CHS, over three quarters of adults (77%) had engaged with the arts within the previous year, with over one quarter of adults (28%) participating in arts activities and just over seven out of ten adults (71%) attending an arts event.</p> <p>Females were more likely to have engaged with the arts compared with males (79% and 74% respectively).</p>
<p>Disability</p>	<p>According to the 2022/23 CHS adults with a disability were less likely to have engaged with culture and the arts compared to those without a disability (71% and 84% respectively). Moreover, adults who do not have a disability were more likely to engage in the arts (81%) than adults with a disability (67%). Also, adults with a disability were less likely to attend an art event than adults without a disability (57% and 77% respectively).</p> <p>According to the AFS, there is significantly more non-disabled artists than disabled at 2,094 (82%), 1,837 (80%) and 2,917 (85%) in 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 respectively. However, it is encouraging that the number of staff who identify as having a disability has followed an upward trend to 2022/23. Although it is important to note, this is perhaps not an actual increase in the number of disabled artists joining the workforce but instead reflecting a willingness to share the information with ACNI about their disability.</p> <p>Disability negatively affects attendance of arts events, although the extent of this barrier has been decreasing over the last 5 years. Employment within the sector is available to those with a disability and grants are available showing that the sector is supportive of those with disability.</p> <p>The ongoing support of the Disability Charter Mark and supporting accessibility costs within ACNI's funding programmes (to help organisations provide greater access to the arts for disabled people), as well as the dedicated disability action plan show our commitment to addressing any existing inequality.</p>

<p>Dependants</p>	<p>There is less information to inform the impact of dependants on engagement in the arts. According to the CHS, in 2022/23 adults with dependants were less likely to participate in an art activity compared to those without dependants (26% and 30% respectively).</p> <p>The AFS does not currently collect information from the arts sector on dependents.</p> <p>The number of SIAP applicants with dependants has remained fairly consistent over the last 5-year period. The majority of artists do not have dependants, representing approximately 63% on average between 2018/19 and 2022/23, compared to 31% on average for those with dependants. Only a small proportion of applicants did not answer, accounting for 6% on average over the trend period.</p>

STEP 3: Assessment of Impacts

The next stage of the EQIA process is to assess whether the proposed Strategy 2024-2034 may have a differential impact on people in one or more of the Section 75 groups, and then to determine the extent of differential impact and whether that impact is adverse. This section sets out conclusions based on a review of the data included in the previous section.

The quantitative and qualitative evidence set out in Step 2B establishes a comprehensive and inclusive foundation for reflecting on key inequalities that may be of potential relevance to ACNI’s Strategy, thereby determining whether there are particular Section 75 groups that may be differentially impacted by the proposed Strategy.

It must be borne in mind that any potential inequalities cited in Step 2B may lie beyond the scope of the Strategy itself - but at the same time their continued significance in the wider context of NI society should not be disregarded.

At this stage of implementation there is little evidence to suggest that the desired outcomes contained within the draft Strategy 2024-34 per se are likely to have a significant adverse impact on people of different religious belief, political opinion, ethnic origin, age, marital status, sexual orientation or sex/gender/sexual identity or on people with a disability or people without, or finally, people with dependants or people without.

However, it would be naïve to proceed on this basis without a full consultation process in order to establish whether any inequalities may or may not be adversely affected or ameliorated by the Strategy.

STEP 4: Mitigations and Alternative Options

The EQIA process requires that, if it is decided that the policy may have an adverse impact on people in one or more of the Section 75 groups, then the authority must consider alternative policies and measures which might mitigate the adverse impact⁵. This section of the report therefore looks at whether additional measures need to be put in place to minimise the negative impact of any proposals included within the Strategy.

This stage of the EQIA considers positive ways in which ACNI's Strategy will aspire to ameliorate any inequalities, thereby 'lessening the severity of the adverse impact' on relevant equality category/categories. Or which better promote equality of opportunity for the relevant equality category/ categories.

In this regard it should be noted that ACNI's Strategy is a long-term framework to help address key issues in the arts sector in Northern Ireland, including standstill funding, short-term funding cycles and increasing access to the arts for all in society.

The Strategy focuses on the strategic outcomes and priorities that ACNI want to achieve, with some basic information on areas of activity over the next ten years, and how progress will be tracked.

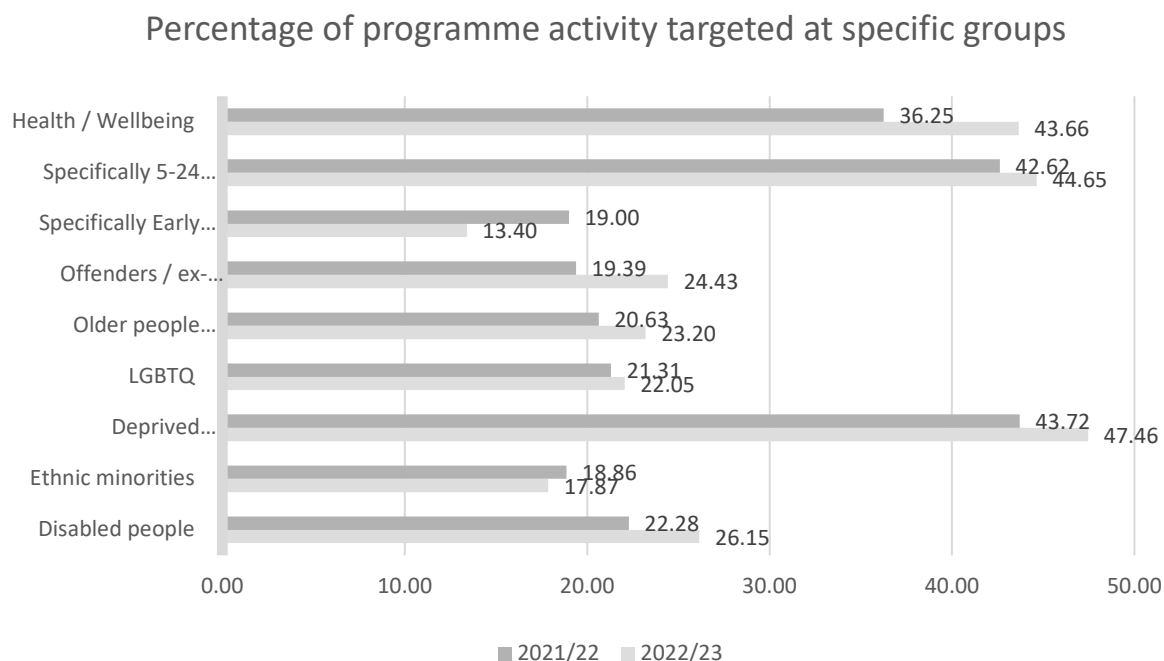
Detailed three-year organisational business plans will be published and reviewed annually. They will provide much more detail, as will a detailed monitoring and evaluation plan.

ACNI are constantly working to improve equality data collection. Through the information that is available, evidenced in this document, it has been able to mitigate against adverse impacts on particular Section 75 groups. Details of group targeting are provided in the following section below.

⁵ [www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/Public%20Authorities/EQIA-PracticalGuidance\(2005\).pdf](http://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/Public%20Authorities/EQIA-PracticalGuidance(2005).pdf)

Group Targeting of AFS Organisations' Programmes

ACNI's AFS organisations target a proportion of their programmes towards certain Section 75 groups. The chart below shows the average percentage of organisations' programmes targeted at these groups:



Seven of the 9 specified groups were targeted to a greater extent compared to the previous year. The percentage of programme activity targeted at 'early years' fell by around 6% year-on-year.

Conversely, there was significantly more activity targeted at health/wellbeing, offenders/ex-offenders, deprived neighbourhoods and disabled people.

Accessibility

AFP organisations employ a range of accessibility methods, to create more inclusive spaces for disabled and neurodivergent people (table A).

Physical access methods, in the form of 'wheelchair access' and 'accessible toilets' were reported as provided 'all of the time' by over half of the portfolio. Conversely, communication methods, including captioning and audio-description were only provided by organisations 'some of the time'.

Table A: Accessibility by type and use

Method	Type	Some of the time (%)	Most of the time (%)	All of the time (%)
Communications	Braille	5	1	1
	Large print	16	5	8
	Induction loop	11	8	6
	Captioning	26	4	0
	Audio Description	16	6	0
	BSL interpreter	19	2	0
	ISL interpreter	7	1	0
Physical	Wheelchair access	12	24	53
	Accessible toilets	8	21	56
	Lifts	7	21	41
Navigation	Signage	14	22	36
	Maps	15	18	17
Activity	Relaxed performances	27	13	5
	Dementia friendly	31	8	2
	Multisensory workshops	29	5	1

ACNI recognises that there are barriers for certain groups within society to attend and participate in the arts. Support for accessibility costs has been included within its portfolio of funding programmes to provide financial support to arts projects where delivery requires the needs of certain Section 75 groups to be met. An uncapped allowance is provided for individuals to cover personal assistance and costs associated with disabilities.

Awareness of the option of accessibility costs could be raised further to all ACNI clients. Importantly, it covers costs for captioning and audio-description therefore it is hoped that organisations can offer these services more frequently to audiences and participants.

Group targeting of Lottery Project Funding Programme

The Lottery Project Funding Programme supports activities which benefit the people of Northern Ireland or that help arts organisations carry out their work. Its current resource allocation is worth £2.25m (2023/24).

As part of the monitoring process of the programme, organisations must provide an indication of who will benefit as a result of their activities. The tables below outline the beneficiaries by Section 75 group. The ‘unable to specify’ and ‘not answered’ categories have been excluded from the analysis to provide a better indication of the beneficiary groups.

When interpreting the lottery project monitoring results, it is important to note that the monitoring form requests that organisations complete this as follows: for each question the main group to benefit means: “comprises more than 60% of that group”.

There were 66 organisations funded through the Lottery Project Funding Programme in 2022/23.

The following table for religion indicates that 75% of organisations who received lottery project funding were targeting ‘both Catholic and Protestant’ groups, with 10% targeting both Catholic and Protestant groups individually and 5% ‘other belief’ groups.

Religion	2022/23	Total (%)
Catholic	2	10
Protestant	2	10
Both Catholic & Protestant	15	75
Other belief	1	5
Unable to specify	39	
Not answered	7	
Total	66	100

For Political opinion, there was an even split of beneficiaries at 38% for Nationalist and Unionist with 25% targeted at ‘other’.

Political opinion	2022/23	Total (%)
Nationalist	3	38
Unionist	3	38
Other	2	25
Unable to specify	49	

Not answered	9	
Total	66	100

The majority of targeting was aimed at 'white' groups with the remaining 13% aimed at mixed ethnic groups.

Ethnicity	2022/23	Total (%)
White	28	88
Mixed ethnic group	4	13
Unable to specify	28	
Not answered	6	
Total	66	100

The main beneficiaries in terms of sexuality were heterosexual groups at 80% with an even split between bisexual and gay at 10% each.

Sexuality	2022/23	Total (%)
Bisexual	1	10
Gay	1	10
Heterosexual	8	80
Unable to specify	49	
Not answered	7	
Total	66	100

Targeting was primarily aimed at 'both men and women' groups at 89%, with 5% aimed at both women and transgendered groups and 2% at men groups.

Gender	2022/23	Total (%)
Men	1	2
Women	2	5
Both men and women	39	89

Transgendered	2	5
Unable to specify	8	
Not answered	14	
Total	66	100

Age group 26-50 were the main beneficiaries at 36%, closely followed by <16 age group at 32%.

Age	2022/23	Total (%)
<16	9	32
16-25	7	25
26-50	10	36
50-65	2	7
Unable to specify	33	
Not answered	5	
Total	66	100

It was the 'unmarried' groups (83%) that were the primary beneficiaries with 'married' representing 17% of the beneficiaries.

Marriage	2022/23	Total (%)
Married	2	17
Unmarried	10	83
Unable to specify	44	
Not answered	10	
Total	66	100

People with and without a disability were the main beneficiaries at 72%. People without a disability were 26% and people with a disability were 3%.

Disability	2022/23	Total (%)
People with a disability	1	3
People with & without a disability	28	72
People without a disability	10	26
Unable to specify	15	
Not answered	12	
Total	66	100

For dependants, the main beneficiaries were identified as ‘people with and without dependants’ at 63%, followed by those without at 35% and those with at 2%.

Dependants	2022/23	Total (%)
People with dependants	1	2
People without dependants	15	35
People with & without dependants	27	63
Unable to specify	16	
Not answered	7	
Total	66	100

Group targeting of Small Grants Programme

ACNI’s Small Grants Programme also supports activities which benefit the people of Northern Ireland or that help arts organisations carry out their work. Its current resource allocation is worth £375,000.

The tables below outline the beneficiaries by Section 75 group. The ‘unable to specify’ and ‘not answered’ categories have been excluded from the analysis to provide a better indication of the beneficiary groups.

Similarly, to the lottery monitoring results, the small grants programme monitoring form also requests that applicants complete this as follows: for each question the main group to benefit means: “comprises more than 60% of that group”.

There were 110 organisations funded through the Small Grants Programme in 2022/23.

The following table for religion indicates that 83% of organisations who received small grants funding were targeting ‘both Catholic and Protestant’ groups, with 12% targeting Protestant groups and 3% Catholic groups and 2% ‘other belief’ groups.

Religion	2022/23	Total (%)
Catholic	2	3
Protestant	8	12
Both Catholic & Protestant	54	83
Other belief	1	2
Unable to specify	39	
Not answered	6	
Total	110	100

For Political opinion, the majority of beneficiaries at 60% were Unionist, followed by Nationalist at 33% with 7% targeted at ‘other’.

Political opinion	2022/23	Total (%)
Nationalist	5	33
Unionist	9	60
Other	1	7
Unable to specify	79	
Not answered	16	
Total	110	100

The majority of targeting was aimed at ‘white’ groups at 93% with the remaining 6% aimed at mixed ethnic groups and 1% at Black African groups.

Ethnicity	2022/23	Total (%)
White	66	93
Mixed ethnic group	4	6

Black African	1	1
Unable to specify	31	
Not answered	8	
Total	110	100

Age group <16 were the main beneficiaries at 29%, closely followed by 26-50 age group at 26%. The lowest proportion of beneficiaries were 65+ groups at 7%.

Age	2022/23	Total (%)
<16	20	29
16-25	14	21
26-50	18	26
50-65	11	16
65+	5	7
Unable to specify	40	
Not answered	2	
Total	110	100

The main beneficiaries in terms of sexuality were heterosexual groups at 95% with the remaining 5% gay.

Sexuality	2022/23	Total (%)
Bisexual		0
Gay	1	5
Heterosexual	21	95
Unable to specify	79	
Not answered	9	
Total	110	100

Targeting was primarily aimed at ‘both men and women’ groups at 85%, with 10% aimed at women and 2% at men and transgendered groups.

Gender	2022/23	Total (%)
Men	2	2
Women	8	10
Both men and women	69	85
Transgendered	2	2
Unable to specify	10	
Not answered	19	
Total	110	100

It was the ‘unmarried’ groups (65%) that were the primary beneficiaries with ‘married’ representing 32% of the beneficiaries and widowed groups 3%.

Marriage	2022/23	Total (%)
Married	11	32
Unmarried	22	65
Widowed	1	3
Unable to specify	65	
Not answered	11	
Total	110	100

People with and without a disability were the main beneficiaries at 76%. People without a disability were 19% and people with a disability were 5%.

Disability	2022/23	Total (%)
People with a disability	4	5
People with & without a disability	56	76
People without a disability	14	19

Unable to specify	27	
Not answered	9	
Total	110	100

For dependants, the main beneficiaries were identified as 'people with and without dependants' at 65%, followed by those without at 29% and those with at 6%.

Dependants	2022/23	Total (%)
People with dependants	4	6
People without dependants	20	29
People with & without dependants	45	65
Unable to specify	22	
Not answered	19	
Total	110	100

Rural proofing

All of ACNI's funding programmes are open regionally and are not place-based. We have no control over where artists live or where arts organisations base themselves, however it is important to us to monitor activities delivered by location to ensure it reaches beyond urban centres. We know that many of our funded arts organisations are based in urban areas and deliver activities within rural communities. Local Authorities play key a role in the arts in their areas and there are other local activities that will not be accounted for in table B as we are focused on our investment only for the purposes of this analysis.

Table B: Percentage of awards for ACNI funded organisations and individual artists by Local Authority

LA	2021 NISRA population estimate	% population	% organisation awards by LA (2022/23)	% artists awards by LA (2022/23)
Belfast	345,006	18.11%	45%	57%
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon BC	219,127	11.51%	7%	6%
Newry Mourne & Down	182,345	9.57%	6%	7%

Ards & North Down	163,827	8.60%	4%	7%
Derry City Council & Strabane District Council	150,834	7.92%	17%	8%
Mid-Ulster	150,598	7.91%	5%	2%
Lisburn & Castlereagh	149,272	7.84%	3%	2%
Antrim & Newtownabbey	145,852	7.66%	2%	3%
Causeway Coast & Glens	141,664	7.44%	4%	3%
Mid & East Antrim	139,127	7.30%	1%	3%
Fermanagh & Omagh	116,926	6.14%	6%	3%
Total	1,904,578	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

The majority of organisations ACNI invest in are based in Belfast at 45% (233 organisations). Derry City Council & Strabane District Council based organisations represent 17% (85 organisations) of organisations we invest in (but 7.2% of people live there). The area with the least organisations we invest in is Mid and East Antrim (1% - 5 organisations), followed by Antrim and Newtownabbey (2%) and Lisburn and Castlereagh (3%)

With regards to artists, the top percentage of accepted applications are located within Belfast at 57% (215 artists), Derry City Council & Strabane District Council at 8% (30), Ards and North Down at 7% (26 artists) and Newry, Mourne and Down at 7% (26 artists).

The Arts Council are aware of the issues facing rural communities and the need for further development of the arts in these areas. This was explored in Annabel Jackson's 'Research into a Deliberative Forum: Report for the Arts Council of Northern Ireland' (Feb 2020). Jackson highlighted that the arts in rural areas tend to be more traditional, as opposed to contemporary arts, which are largely found in urban areas. Understanding this and the need to increase access and participation in the arts in rural areas in Northern Ireland, ACNI developed a Rural Arts Deliberative Forum (DF).

The aim of the DF was to provide a voice for the rural arts community and provide insights on issues relevant for rural communities whilst informing ACNI's strategy and policies within this area. The Forum played an important role in the development of a dedicated Rural Engagement Arts Programme (REAP). Launched in 2022, the programme was to provide an integrated, cohesive approach to the needs of local rural communities as they recovered from the impacts of the global Covid-19 pandemic, recognising the specific and ongoing issues they faced as a result.

The overarching theme of the programme is to tackle isolation and loneliness and promote social inclusion and wellbeing through participation in the arts in rural areas.

STEP 5: Consultation

The next stage of the EQIA process involves formal consultation with interested parties to obtain:

- views on the assessment of impacts (Step 4 above);
- any further information which could be useful in assessing the impacts;
- comments and suggestions on the mitigating measures (Step 5 above)

- comments and suggestions with regard to the consultation process.

The scoping work to develop the draft Strategy for the Arts, 2024-2034 has involved a review of ACNI's preceding strategy and an extensive process of engagement⁶. This engagement encompassed community organisations; business and industry organisations and representative bodies; Government departments; and Local Authorities and their representative organisations.

The strategy itself and this EQIA will now be subject to a further engagement and public consultation process, commencing on 12th January 2024. The purpose of which is to gauge public opinion as to whether the assessment of infrastructure needs and priorities going forward in the draft Strategy is sound.

The results of the consultation will be used to inform a final Strategy for the Arts, that will be prepared for consideration/approval by ACNI's sponsoring Department for Communities which in turn will provide the basis for the development of annual business plans, as well as dedicated equality and disability action plans - all of which will be geared to the attainment of the vision:

A society where all people can experience a thriving arts sector that is recognised as essential to creativity, wellbeing and social and economic prosperity.

You can respond to this consultation online through our survey on Citizen Space, [Public consultation on the ACNI new ten-year strategy \(2024 to 2034\) - NI Direct - Citizen Space](#)

An easy read version of the consultation document will be available online and if you need documents to be provided in an alternative format, please let us know. Responses to this consultation are invited until 11.59pm on 5th April 2024.

Written responses can be sent to us by e-mail at: strategy@artscouncil-ni.org or by post at:

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⁶ [Insert hyperlink to feedback report](#)

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