

Engagement in culture, arts and sport by adults in Northern Ireland

Findings from the Continuous Household Survey 2020/21

Annual publication

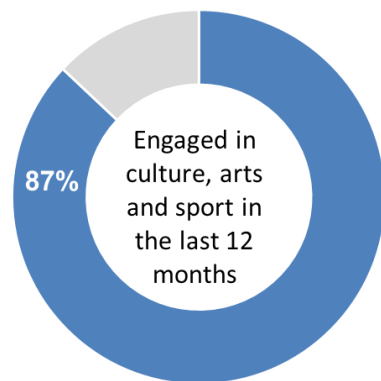
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Main stories

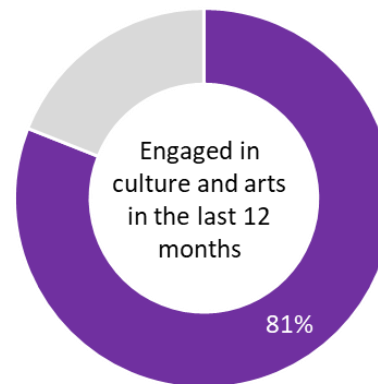
- In 2020/21, almost nine out of every ten adults (87%) had engaged in some way with culture, arts and sport.
- Over four out of five adults (81%) had engaged in culture and arts in 2020/21.
- Almost three out of five adults (59%) had participated in sport (excluding walking) in 2020/21.
- Over a quarter (28%) of adults had used the public library service at least once within the last 12 months.
- In 2020/21, almost three quarters (74%) had walked for recreation within the previous year.

Engaged in culture, arts and sport



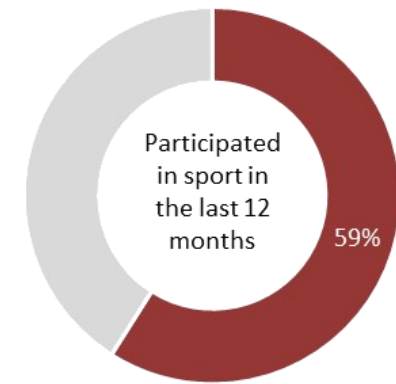
In 2020/21, 87% of adults engaged in culture, arts and sport.

Engaged in culture and arts



Just over four out five adults (81%) had engaged in culture and arts in 2020/21.

Participated in sport



Almost three out of five adults (59%) had participated in sport in 2020/21.

Note: Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, data collection for the 2020/21 survey moved from face-to-face interviewing to telephone mode with a reduction in the number of questions. The results from the CHS 2020/21 are not directly comparable to previous years due to the significant changes to the survey in terms of methodology and content. The output from the survey, in terms of the range and depth of topics covered, has been reduced from that of previous years, with the subsequent capacity for detailed analysis constrained.

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Introduction

Among other policy areas, the Department for Communities (DfC) is the lead department for arts and creativity, museums, libraries, public records and sports. This bulletin provides headline analysis on these areas.

Engagement in culture, arts and sport includes:

- Participation in sport
- Engagement in the arts (includes both arts participation and arts attendance)
- Usage of the public library service
- Visits to museums and science centres
- Visits to the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland

Note: Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, data collection for the 2020/21 survey moved from face-to-face interviewing to telephone mode with a reduction in the number of questions. The results from the CHS 2020/21 are not directly comparable to previous years due to the significant changes to the survey in terms of methodology and content. The output from the survey, in terms of the range and depth of topics covered, has been reduced from that of previous years, with the subsequent capacity for detailed analysis constrained. More information is available on the [NISRA website](#).

This report presents the findings from the 2020/21 Continuous Household Survey (CHS) in relation to engagement with culture, arts and sport in Northern Ireland. These findings are used to inform the development, monitoring and evaluation of policy. More information relating to the CHS, methodology, definitions and the interpretation of the figures can be found in the [Definitions and technical notes](#) section. Data tables are available in [Excel](#) and [ODS format](#). The questions that were asked in the CHS 2020/21 are available [here](#).

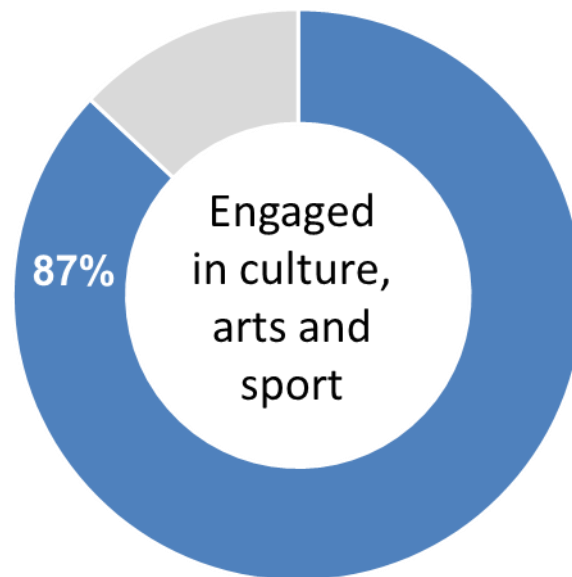
Engagement in culture, arts and sport

Continuous Household Survey 2020/21



Arts

Arts engagement
77%



Sports

Sports participation
59%



Libraries

Used the public library service
28%



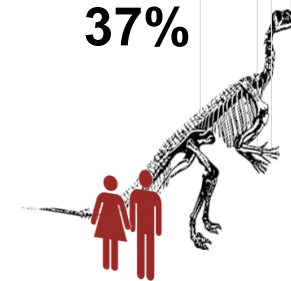
PRONI

Used PRONI services
8%



Museums

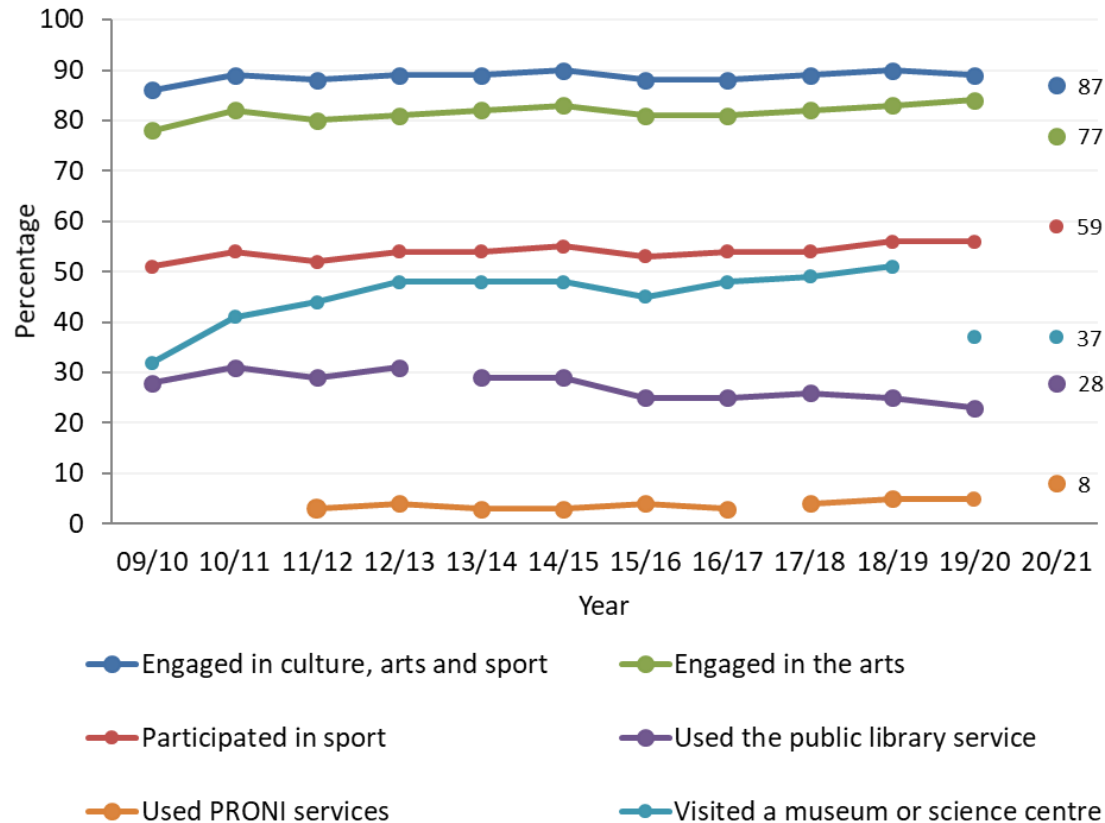
Visited a museum or science centre
37%



Culture, arts and sport

Engagement with culture, arts and sport is defined as engaging in the arts, using the public library service, visiting museums or science centres, visiting PRONI or participating in sport.

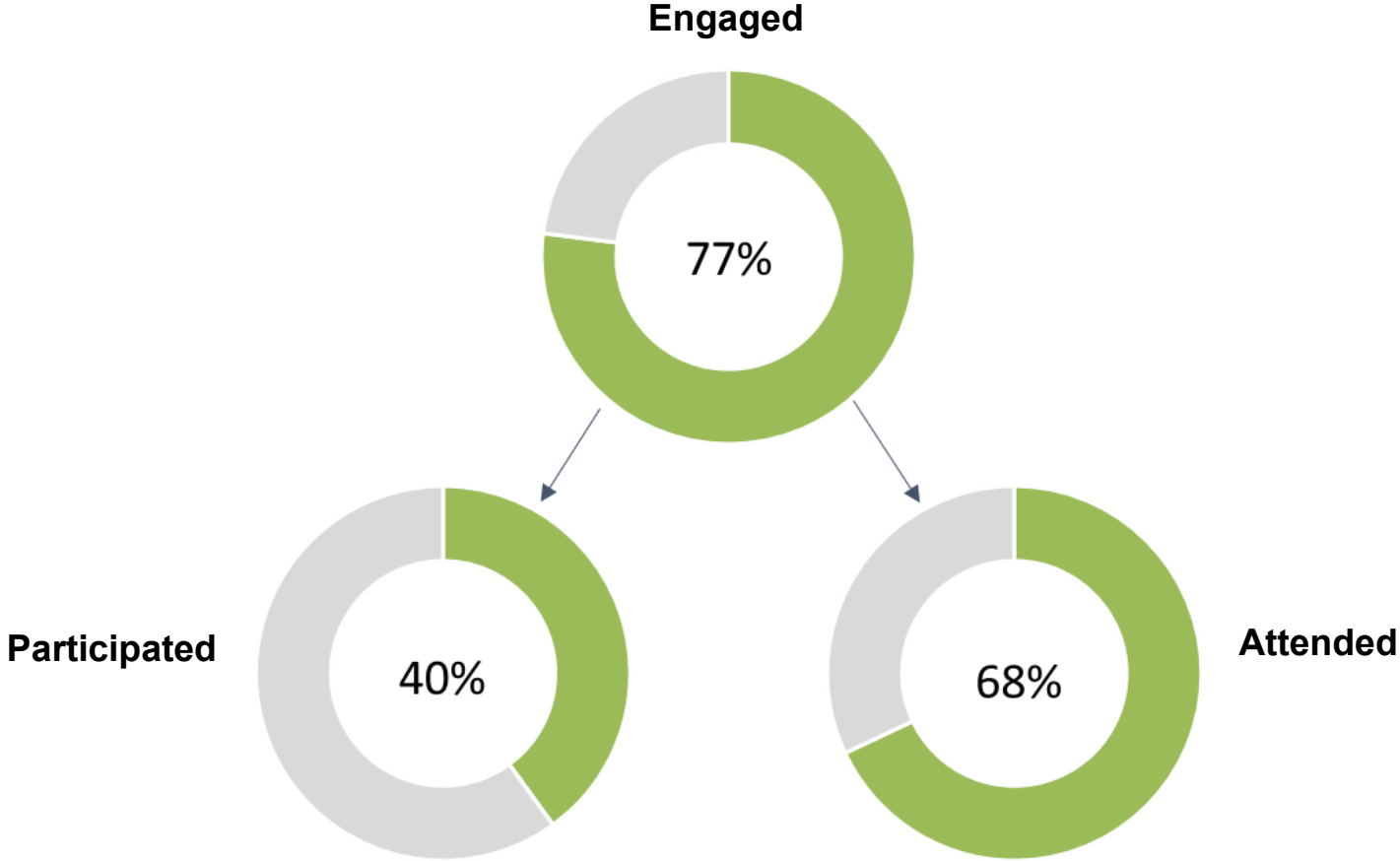
In 2020/21, almost nine out of every ten adults (87%) had engaged in some way with culture, arts and sport.



The results from the CHS 2020/21 are not directly comparable to previous years due to the significant changes to the survey in terms of methodology and content.

Note: In 2019/20, the questions on visits to museums were revised to include a question to estimate the length of time from the last visit to a museum. As a result of the inclusion of this question, figures for visits to museums in 2019/20 are not comparable with previous years. Although this is one element of the overall culture, arts and sport engagement rate, the impact of the change is lessened by the fact that the majority of those who visit museums also engage in some other way with culture, arts and sport.

Arts



In 2020/21, over three quarters of adults (77%) had engaged with the arts within the previous year.

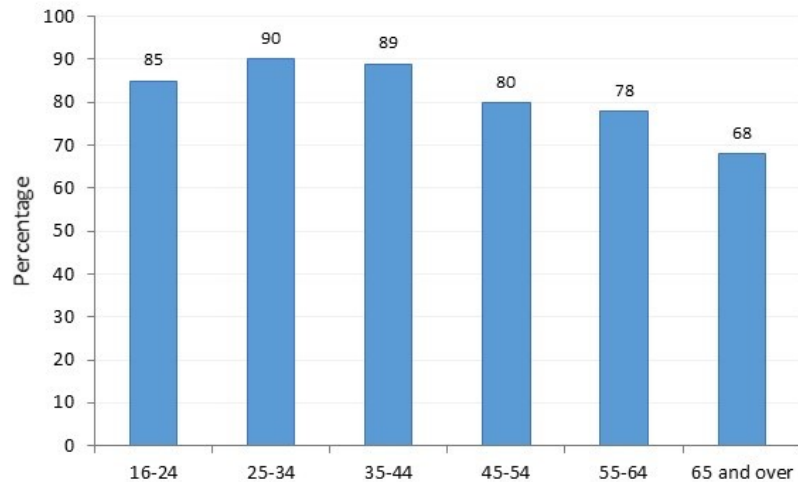
Two fifths of adults (40%) participated in arts activities within the last 12 months, while over two thirds of adults (68%) had attended an arts event.

Engagement in culture and arts

In 2020/21, over four-fifths of adults in Northern Ireland (81%) had engaged with culture and the arts at least once within the previous year.

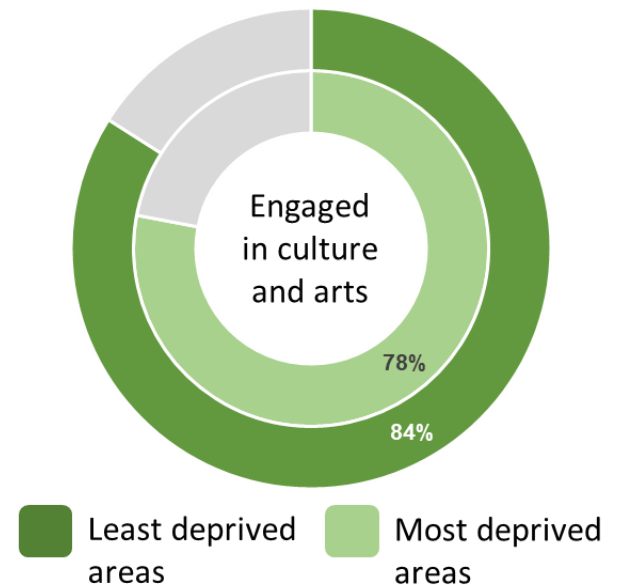
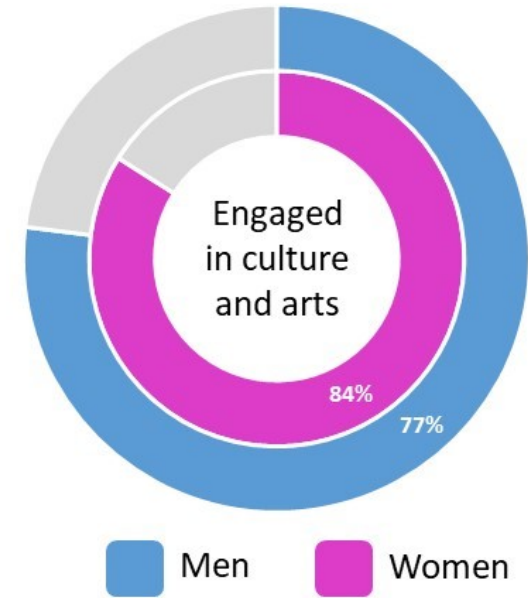
Women were more likely to have engaged with culture and arts activities within the last year than men (84% and 77% respectively). The proportions of adults who engaged with culture and the arts generally decreased as age group increased, particularly beyond the 35-44 years age group.

Engaged in culture and arts by age group



Those with dependents were more likely to have engaged with culture and the arts within the previous year, with 83% having engaged, compared to 78% of those with no dependents.

Adults living in the least deprived areas were more likely to have engaged in culture and arts than those living in the most deprived areas (84% and 78% respectively). However there was no significant difference in engagement rates between adults living in urban and rural areas (81% and 79% respectively).



Arts

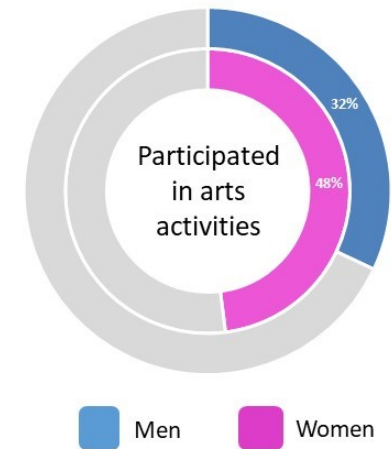
Participation in arts activities

In 2020/21, two-fifths of adults (40%) participated in an arts activity at least once within the previous year.

A higher proportion of females than males participated in arts activities in 2020/21 (48% and 32% respectively). In addition, relatively more adults from the Protestant community (42%) participated in an arts activity at least once within the previous year than those from the Catholic community (34%).

In 2020/21, a similar proportion of adults with dependants participated in arts activities as those with no dependants (39% and 41% respectively).

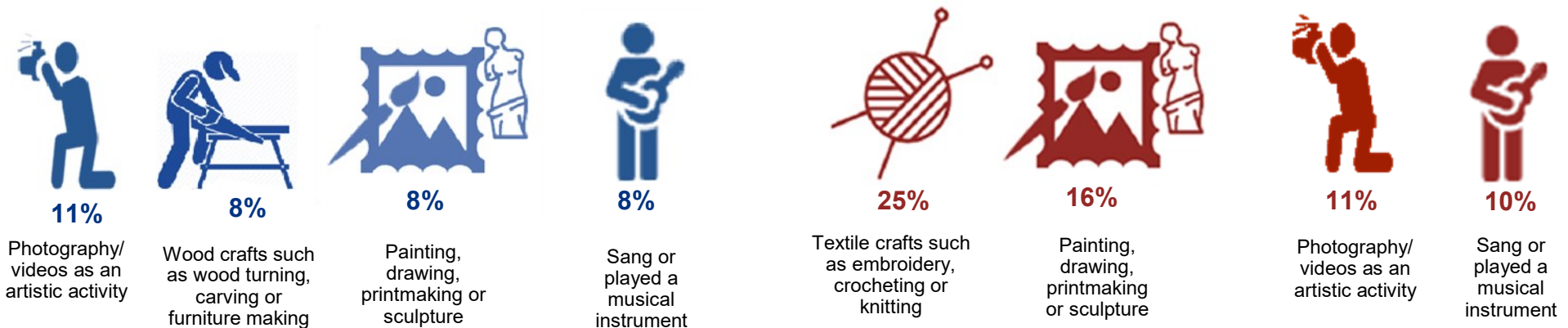
There were no significant differences in engagement rates between adults living in most deprived and least deprived areas (39% and 42% respectively) nor those living in urban and rural areas (40% and 39% respectively).



Types of arts activities

The four most popular arts activities that adults participated in within the previous year were: ‘Textile crafts such as embroidery, crocheting or knitting’ (14%), ‘Painting, drawing, printmaking or sculpture’ (12%), ‘Took photographs or made films or videos as an artistic activity’ (11%) and ‘Sang or played a musical instrument to an audience or rehearsed for performance (9%)’.

When analysed by gender the four most popular were:



Arts

Attendance at arts events

In 2020/21, over two-thirds of all adults (68%) had attended at least one arts event over the previous year.

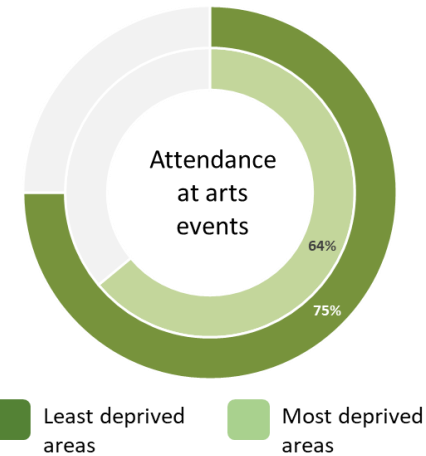
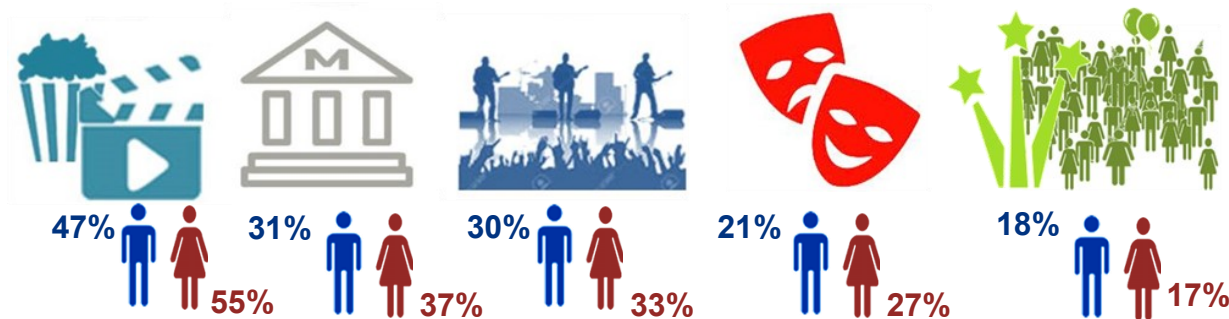
More women than men (71% and 65% respectively) had attended an arts event. There is a relationship between arts attendance and age, with attendance generally decreasing as age increases.

Adults who lived in the least deprived areas were more likely to have attended an arts event (75%) than those who live in the most deprived areas (64%). Also those adults who lived in urban areas were more likely to have attended an arts event than those who lived in rural areas (70% compared to 65%).

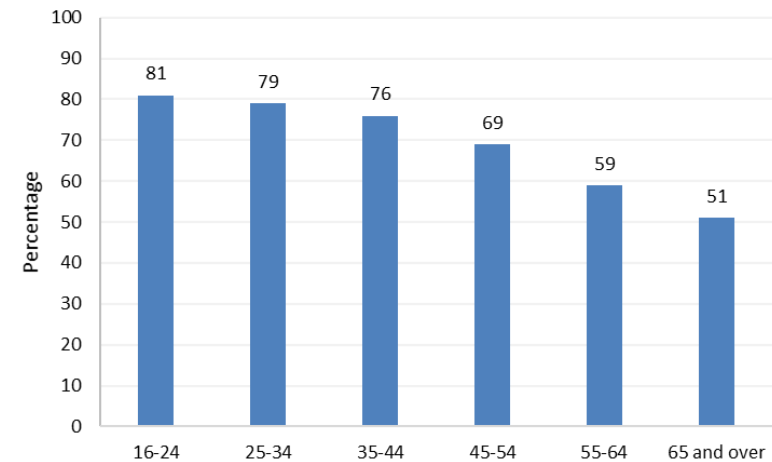
When adults who only attend a cinema are excluded from the analysis attendance at arts events reduces to 58%.

Types of arts events

The most popular arts events attended by adults over the last year were 'Film at cinema or other venue' (52%), 'Visited a National or Local Museum' (34%) 'A live music performance' (32%), 'A play, drama other theatre performance' (24%), and 'An arts or community festival' (17%). The same five events were analysed by gender:



Attendance at arts events by age



Arts

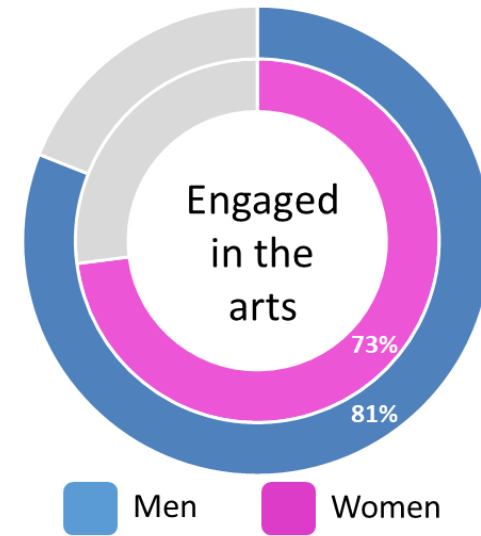
Engagement in the arts

In 2020/21, over three-quarters (77%) of all adults in Northern Ireland engaged with the arts, i.e. either participated in arts activities or attended arts events.

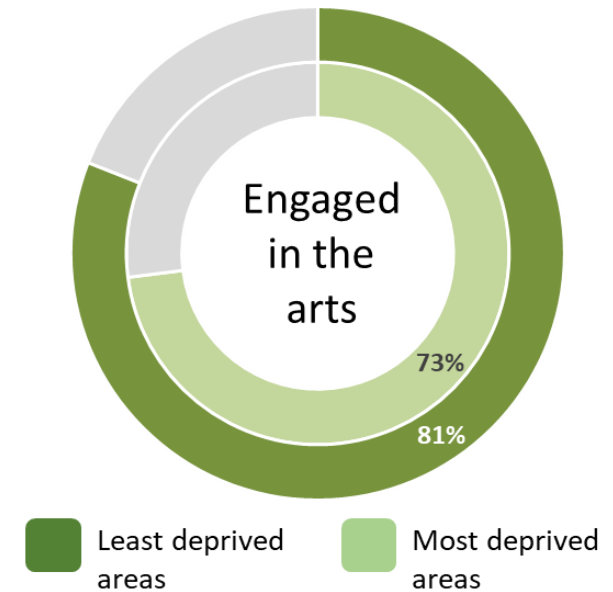
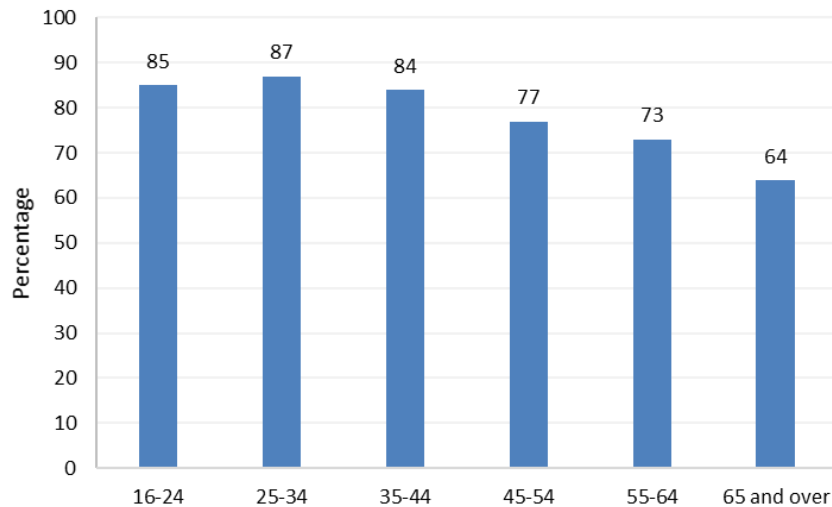
Females were more likely to have engaged with the arts compared with males (81% and 73%). Regarding age, the trend was similar to that for attending arts events, engagement rates tended to drop as age increased from age 35 onwards.

Similar proportions of Catholics (75%) and Protestants (74%) engaged with the arts.

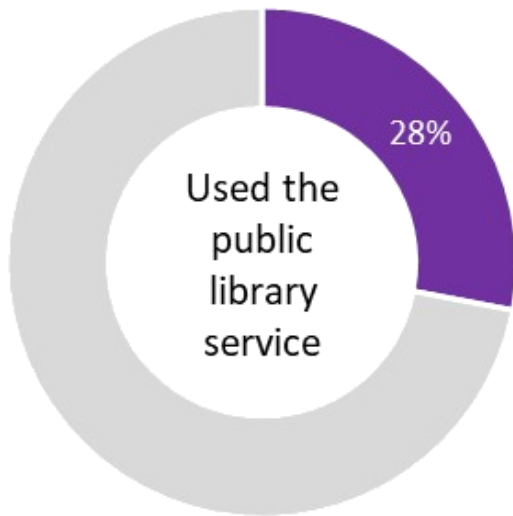
Adults who lived in the least deprived areas (81%) were more likely to have engaged with the arts in the previous year than those who lived in the most deprived areas (73%).



Engagement in the arts by age



Libraries



Used the public library service

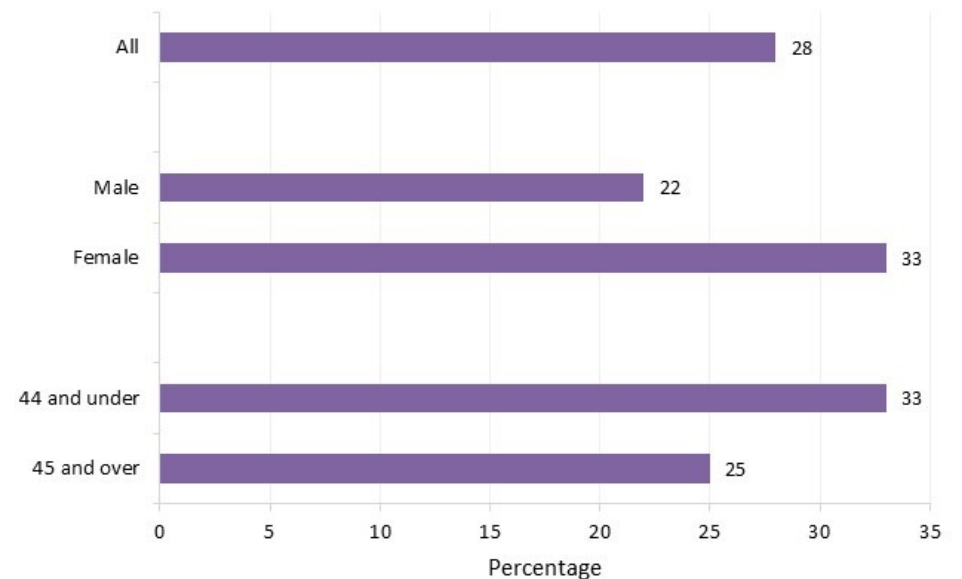
In 2020/21, over a quarter (28%) of adults had used the public library service at least once within the last 12 months.

Women were more likely to have used the public library service than men (33% and 22% respectively).

Those aged 45 and over (25%) were less likely to have used the public library service than those aged less than 45 (33%).

Adults with dependants (33%) were more likely to have used the public library service compared to those who do not (23%).

There were no differences in the use of public library services when comparing the least deprived with the most deprived areas or urban and rural areas.



Museums and science centres

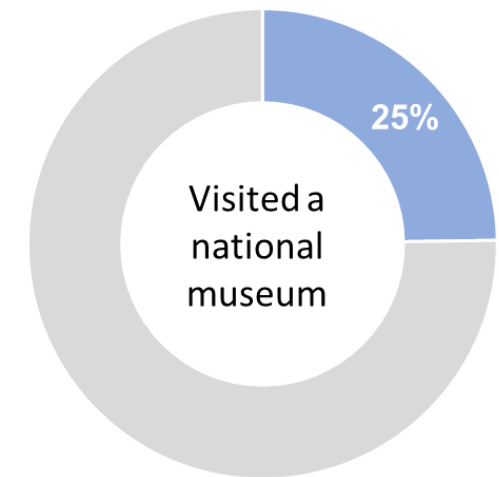
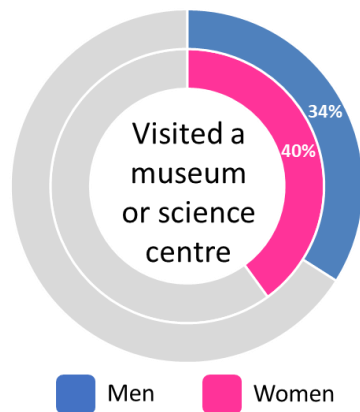
In 2020/21, 37% of adults had visited a museum or science centre within the last 12 months. A quarter of adults (25%) had visited a National Museum.

Women were found to be more likely to have visited a museum or science centre than men (40% and 34% respectively).

Those adults with dependants were more likely to have visited a museum or science centre in the past 12 months (42% and 32% respectively).

Those aged 45 and over (32%) were less likely to have visited a museum or science centre than those aged less than 45 (46%).

Adults who lived in the least deprived areas were more likely to have visited a museum or science centre (45%) than those who lived in the most deprived areas (31%). There was no significant difference between those adults who lived in rural and urban areas.



Museums and science centres

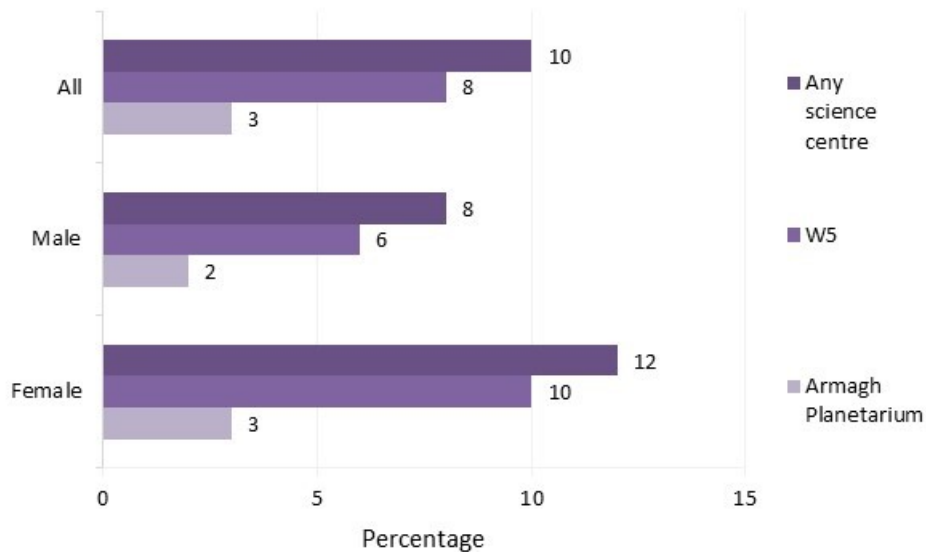
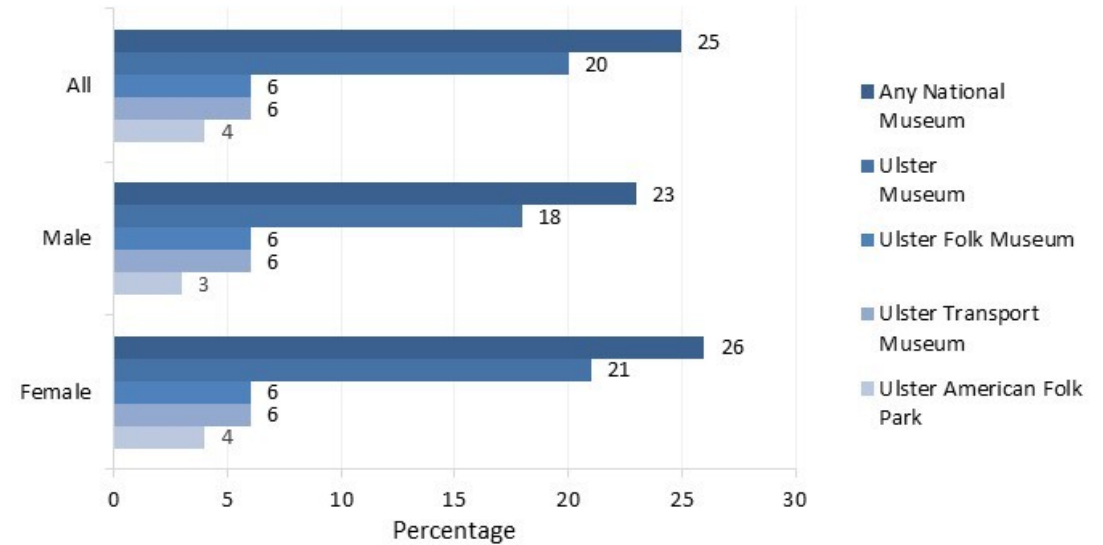
Visited a National Museums Northern Ireland museum

National Museums Northern Ireland (NMNI) has four museums across Northern Ireland. A quarter of all adults (25%) had been to a NMNI museum within the last year.

Those aged 45 and over (19%) were less likely to have visited a national museum than those aged less than 45 (33%).

Those adults with dependants were more likely to have visited a national museum in the past 12 months (30% and 20% respectively).

Adults living in the least deprived areas were more likely to have visited a national museum (35% compared to 19% for most deprived areas). Those in urban areas were also more likely to have visited a national museum (27% compared to 21% for rural areas).



Visits to science centres

One in every ten adults (10%) had visited a science centre at least once within the last year.

Women were more likely to have visited a science centre than men (12% and 8% respectively), as were those adults with dependants (15%) compared to those without dependents (6%).

Museums and science centres

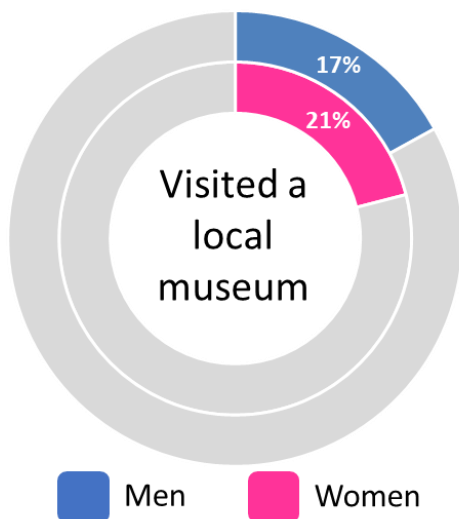
Visited a local museum

Almost a fifth of all adults (19%) in Northern Ireland had visited a local museum at least once within the last year.

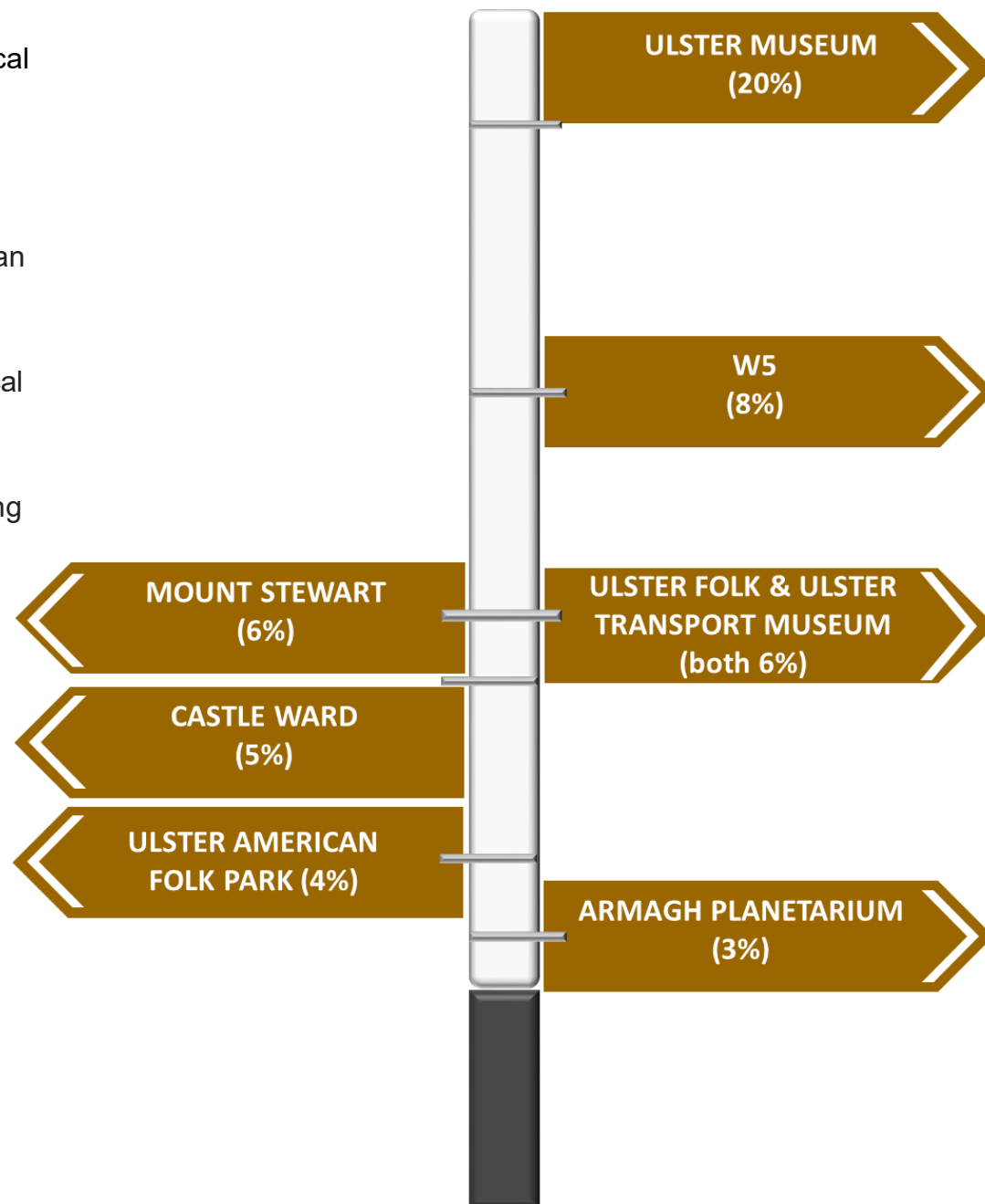
Women were more likely to have visited a local museum in the last year compared to men (21% and 17% respectively). There was no difference between those aged 45 and over and those aged less than 45 (both 19%).

Those adults with dependants were more likely to have visited a local museum in the past 12 months (21% and 17% respectively).

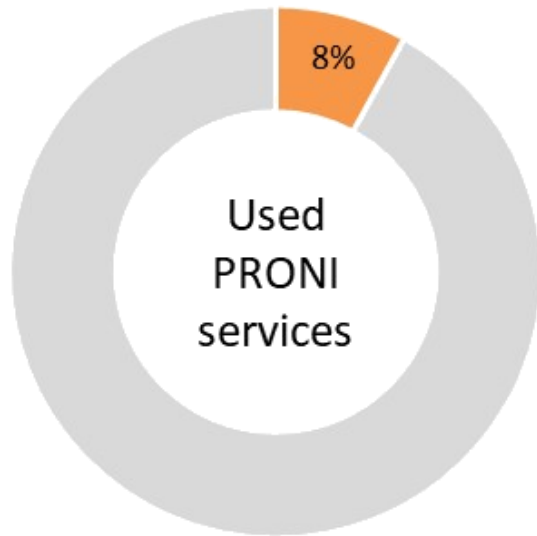
There were no differences in visiting local museums when comparing the least deprived with the most deprived areas or urban and rural areas.



Popular museums and science centres



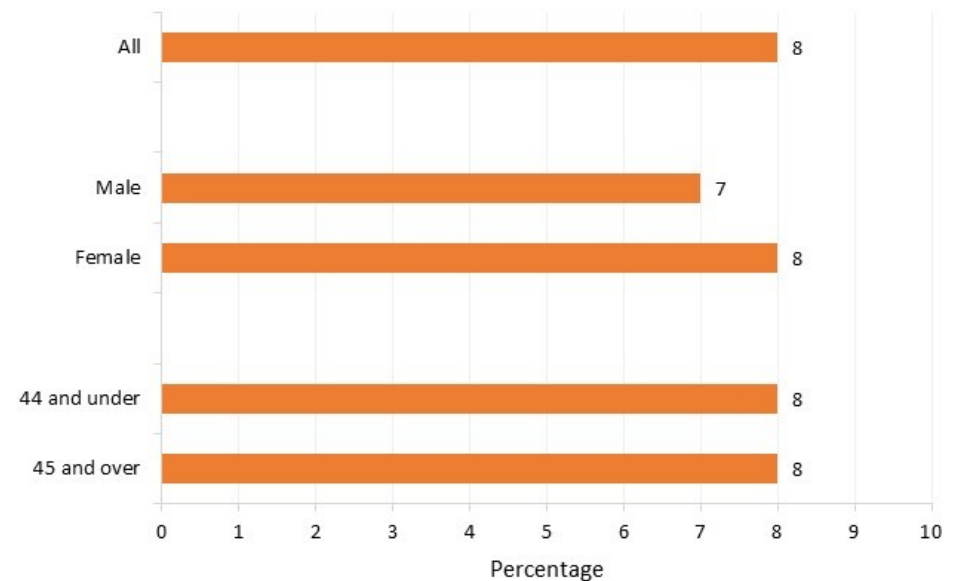
PRONI



In 2020/21, almost one in every ten adults (8%) had used PRONI services within the last 12 months. Use of PRONI services includes, in addition to visiting PRONI, the use of the PRONI website to access the online catalogue or other applications, contacting PRONI by email to request information and engaged with PRONI through social media or viewed a PRONI exhibition at another public building.

There was no difference in the use of PRONI services between those aged 45 and over and those aged less than 45 (both 8%).

There were no differences in the use of PRONI services for gender, for those adults with dependants or when comparing the least deprived with the most deprived areas or urban and rural areas.



Sport

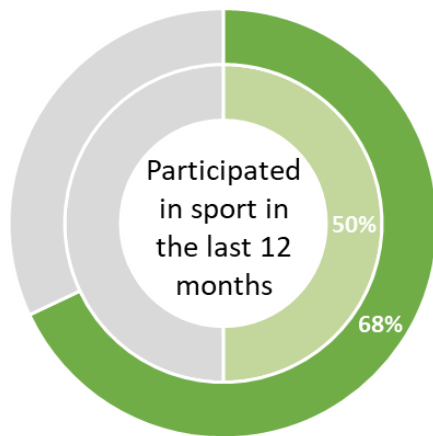
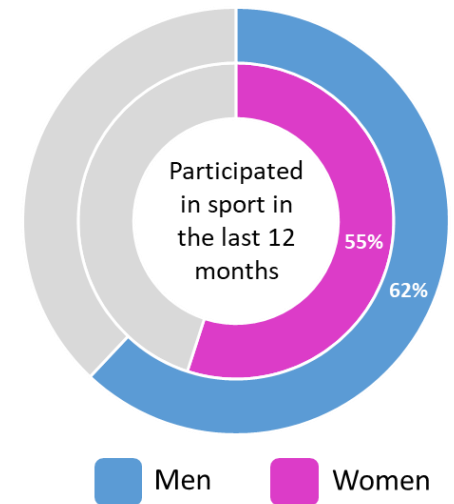
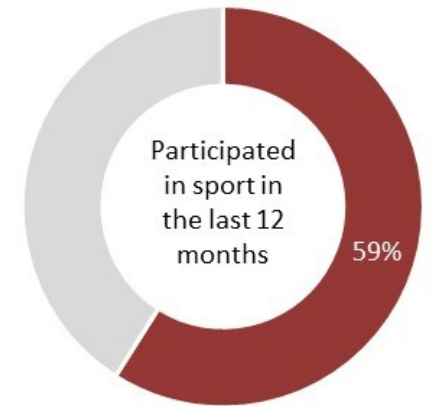
Almost three out of five adults (59%) had participated in sport at least once within the last year (excluding walking) in 2020/21.

Females were less likely to have taken part in sport at least once within the last year (55%) than males (62%).

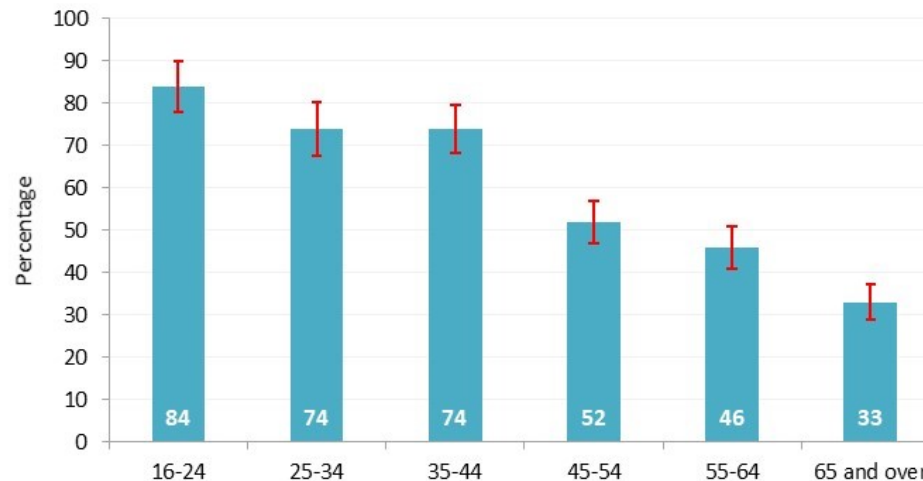
Adults living in the most deprived areas in Northern Ireland were less likely to have participated in sport within the previous year (50%) than those adults living in the least deprived areas (68%).

Sport participation declines with age among adults. Those aged 45 and over were less likely to have participated in any sport within the last year (42%) compared to younger adults aged 16-44 years (76%).

More detailed analysis of sport participation in the last year by age group shows that there is a difference in the sport participation rate for 16-24 year olds and those aged 25-34 years. There is no difference between 25-34 year olds and 35-44 year olds. From those aged 45 and over the participation rate in sport decreases with each subsequent age group to 33% of those aged 65 and over.

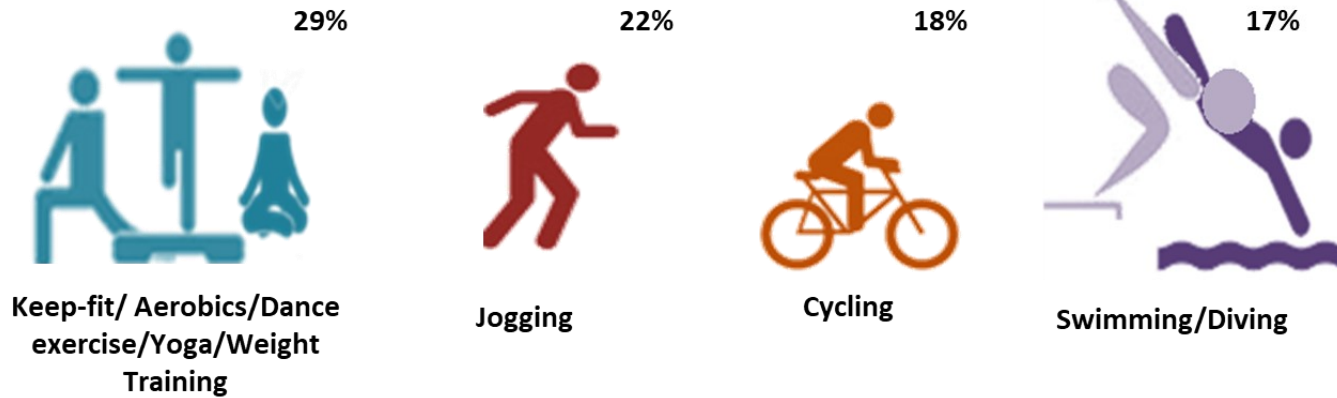


Most deprived Least deprived



Sport in the last year Upper and lower 95% confidence intervals

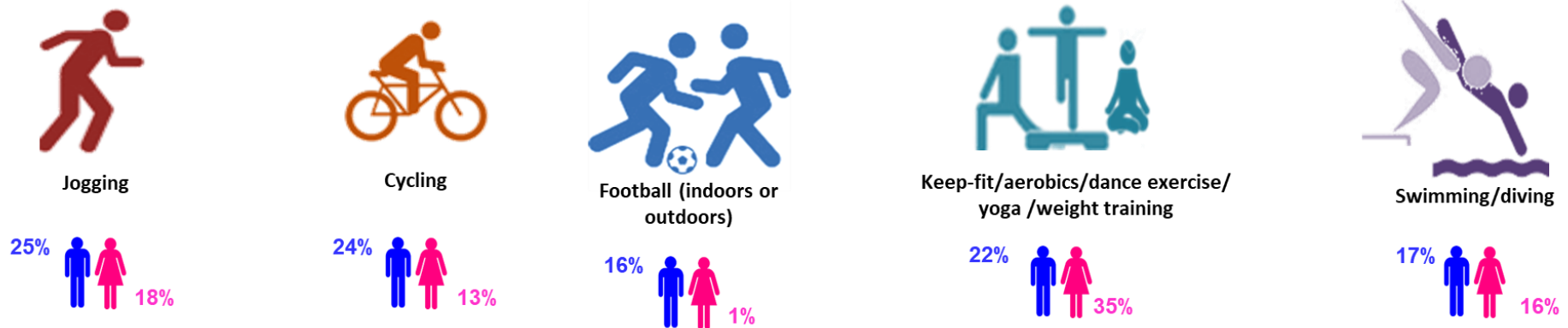
Most Popular Sports



Keep-fit, aerobics, dance exercise, yoga, weight training (29%) was the most popular sporting activity amongst adults within the previous year. Jogging (22%), cycling (18%) and swimming and diving (17%) were the next most popular sporting activities.

Sport preferences amongst males and females

There were differences in the types of sports males and females participated in within the last year. A higher proportion of males participated in most of the sports listed. Women were more likely than men to have participated in keep-fit, aerobics, dance exercise, yoga, weight training (35% compared to 22%). The sports where there were no significant differences between males and females included swimming or diving, gaelic games (football, hurling, camogie) and basketball or netball.



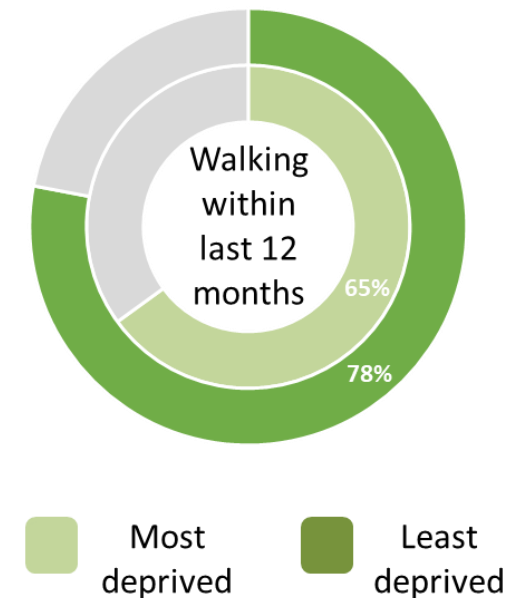
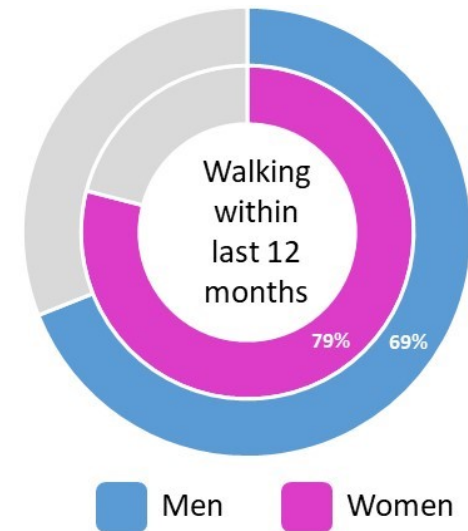
Walking for recreation

'Walking for recreation' is not included in the overall sport participation figures. Almost three-quarters of adults (74%) had walked for recreation within the previous year. In contrast to the demographic pattern seen with the overall sport participation rates, a higher proportion of females (79%) than males (69%) had walked for recreation.

Over a quarter of adults (28%) had not participated in sport but had walked for recreation within the previous year. As with the previous results a higher proportion of non-sport participating females (32%) had walked for recreation than non-sport participating males (24%). When considering age groups, there were no significant difference for the different age groups.

However, analysis by deprivation shows that relatively fewer adults living in the most deprived areas walked for recreation (65%) compared to those living in the least deprived areas (78%).

There was no significant differences in adults walking for recreation for those adults who had dependants compared to those who do not, and also for those adults living in urban areas compared to those living in rural areas.



Definitions and technical notes

Continuous Household Survey

The Continuous Household Survey is a Northern Ireland wide household survey administered by Central Survey Unit, Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. The sample for this survey consists of a systematic random sample of 9,000 addresses selected from the Land and Property Service's list of private addresses. The findings reported for 2020/21 are based on 1,885 respondents, aged 16 and over.

Note: Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, data collection for the 2020/21 survey moved from face-to-face interviewing to telephone mode with a reduction in the number of questions. The results from the CHS 2020/21 are not directly comparable to previous years due to the significant changes to the survey in terms of methodology and content. The output from the survey, in terms of the range and depth of topics covered, has been reduced from that of previous years, with the subsequent capacity for detailed analysis constrained. More information is available on the [NISRA website](#).

Weighting the Continuous Household Survey (CHS)

Analysis of the culture, arts and sport modules of the CHS have been weighted for non-response. A chi square goodness-of-fit test showed that the CHS sample was not representative of the population by age, sex and deprivation quintiles when compared with the 2020 Mid Year Population Estimates for Northern Ireland ([NISRA 25 June 2021](#)). As a result, separate weights were produced for age, sex, deprivation quintile and combinations of these variables. It should be noted that this is the first year that weights for deprivation quintiles have been produced.

Non-response weighting sometimes increases standard errors, although the impact tends to be fairly small, i.e. the adjustment may be less or greater than 1, but will generally be reasonably close to 1. In the case of the culture, arts and sport modules of the CHS, the values of the adjustment for all three weighting systems are so close to one, it is not necessary to take account of this in the calculation of standard error and confidence intervals.

While weighting for non-response (also called post-stratification) should reduce bias, it must be acknowledged that it will not eliminate bias. The reasons individuals choose to take part in surveys are complex and depend on lots of factors specific to the individual. As a result, the non-response biases in surveys are likely to be complex. Post-stratification works on the assumption that, by aligning the survey to the population along a small number of dimensions such as age, gender and MDM, many of these complex biases will reduce. However, it would be misleading to suggest that they will be eliminated.

Engaged in culture, arts and sport - Have done at least one of the following in the 12 months prior to the CHS:

- Participated in sport
- Engaged in the arts
- Used the public library service
- Visited a museum or science centre
- Used PRONI services

Engaged in culture and arts - Have done at least one of the following in the 12 months prior to the CHS:

- Engaged in the arts
- Used the public library service
- Visited a museum or science centre
- Used PRONI services

Sport participation - Participated in at least one of the following activities in the 12 months prior to the CHS:

- Football (indoors or outdoors)
- Gaelic games (football, hurling, camogie)
- Racket sports (tennis, badminton, squash)
- Basketball or netball
- Jogging
- Cycling for recreation
- Walking for recreation
- Bowls (indoor or outdoor) or tenpin bowling
- Swimming or diving
- Angling or fishing
- Keep fit/aerobics/yoga/dance exercise/weight training
- Snooker or pool
- Golf or pitch and putt
- Other

Arts engagement – Either participated in arts activities or attended arts events in the 12 months prior to the CHS.

Arts participation – Participated in at least one of the following arts activities in the 12 months prior to the CHS:

- Ballet or any other type of dance (traditional or modern but not keep fit)
- Sang or Played a musical instrument to an audience or rehearsed for a performance (not karaoke)
- Written music/songs (including creating music digitally)
- Rehearsed or performed in a play, a drama, or an opera
- Painting, drawing, printmaking or sculpture
- Took photographs or made films or videos as an artistic activity (not family or holiday snaps/videos)
- Used a computer to create original artworks or animation
- Textile crafts such as embroidery, crocheting or knitting
- Wood crafts such as wood turning, carving or furniture making

Arts attendance – Attended at least one of the following arts events in the 12 months prior to the CHS:

- Film at cinema or other venue
- Exhibition or collection of art, photography or sculpture or crafts
- Event connected with books or writing (such as poetry reading or storytelling)
- A circus or carnival
- An arts or community festival
- A play, drama other theatre performance (such as musical or pantomime)
- A live music performance (opera, classical, rock, pop, jazz, folk or world music)
- A live dance performance (ballet, Irish dance performance or other dance event)

Used the public library service – Used the public library service at least once in the 12 months prior to the CHS:

- visited a public library or mobile library
- used the Libraries NI website
- attended a library event outside a library
- used the Libraries NI website
- downloaded free eBooks/eMagazines/audiobooks

A National Museum - visited any of the following museums in the past 12 months

- Ulster Museum, Belfast
- Ulster Folk Museum, Cultra
- Ulster Transport Museum, Cultra
- Ulster American Folk Park, Omagh

A Local Museum - visited any of the following museums in the past 12 months

- | | | |
|---|--|---------------------------------|
| • Andrew Jackson & US Rangers Centre | • F E McWilliam Gallery and Studio | • Newry & Mourne Museum |
| • Ardress House | • Fermanagh County Museum | • North Down Museum |
| • Armagh County Museum | • Flame - The Gasworks Museum of Ireland | • Northern Ireland War Memorial |
| • Armagh Robinson Library | • Florence Court | • Police Museum |
| • Ballycastle Museum | • Garvagh Museum & Heritage Centre | • Royal Irish Fusiliers Museum |
| • Ballymoney Museum | • Green Lane Museum | • Royal Ulster Rifles Museum |
| • Barn Museum | • Hezlett House | • Sentry Hill |
| • Carrickfergus Museum | • Irish Linen Centre & Lisburn Museum | • Somme Museum |
| • Castle Ward | • Limavady Museum | • Springhill |
| • Coleraine Museum | • Linen Hall Library | • The Argory |
| • Craigavon Museum Services | • Mid Antrim Museum | • The Inniskillings Museum |
| • Down County Museum | • Milford House Collection | • Tower Museum |
| • Downpatrick & Co. Down Railway Museum | • Mount Stewart | • Whitehead Railway Museum |
| | • Museum at the Mill | |

Visited a museum or science centre – Visited a museum or science centre in Northern Ireland in the last 12 months prior to CHS:

- A National Museum

Or

- A Local Museum

Or

Which, if any, of the following science centres have you visited in the last 12 months?

- W5
- Armagh Planetarium

Used PRONI services – Have done one of the following in the 12 months prior to the CHS:

- Visited the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) to carry out personal research
- Visited PRONI for a talk/event or as part of an organised group
- Used the PRONI website to search the online catalogue or to use another application (e.g. Will Calendars, Valuation Revision Books, etc.)
- Contacted PRONI by email to request information
- Engaged with PRONI through social media, e.g. Facebook, YouTube, Flickr
- Viewed a PRONI exhibition at another public building, e.g. a library, museum or community centre
- Engaged with PRONI in some other way

Deprivation

The data have been analysed by whether respondents are living in the 20% most deprived Super Output Areas (SOAs) or in the 20% least deprived SOAs. This is estimated using the [Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017](#) which is a weighted combination of seven domains of deprivation. Rank 1 indicates the most deprived SOA, while rank 890 denotes the least deprived SOA.

Statistical significance in this report

Any statements in this report regarding differences between groups such as males and females, different age groups, religion, etc., are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. This means that we can be 95% confident that the differences between groups are actual differences and have not just arisen by chance. Both the base numbers and the sizes of the percentages have an effect on statistical significance. Therefore on occasion, a difference between two groups may be statistically significant while the same difference in percentage points between two other groups may not be statistically significant. The reason for this is because the larger the base numbers or the closer the percentages are to 0 or 100, the smaller the standard errors. This leads to increased precision of the estimates which increases the likelihood that the difference between the proportions is actually significant and did not just arise by chance.

Other notes

The following should be noted when interpreting figures and tables:

- Percentages less than 0.5% are denoted by '0' and where there are no responses, they are denoted by '-'.
- Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.
- Percentages may not add to 100% for questions where multiple responses are allowed.
- Detailed tabulations are not provided where the number of respondents is too small to allow meaningful analysis.
- The base number of responses to each question, which is shown in each table, is the unweighted count. The base may vary due to some respondents not answering certain questions.