

Statistical bulletin:

## **2016/17 Arts Council of Northern Ireland, Annual Funding Survey Results**

Part of the Arts Council's research programme aims to provide data on activity funded through the Annual Funding Programme. This helps to demonstrate the results of our significant investment in a core group of arts organisations and contributes to increasing the knowledge and understanding of the value of this investment.

These statistics detail findings from the 2016/17 Annual Funding Survey which was completed by 107 arts organisations. These organisations received £13.92m under its Annual Funding Programme.

As with last year, the data is presented in the form of an [interactive dashboard](#) to make it easier to analyse. Each of the four excel spreadsheets can be interrogated by selecting the desired criteria in the drop-down box at the top of the page.

### **Some Key Findings**

- The proportion of artists employed on a contract or freelance basis rose by 5% between 2016/17 and 2017/18 reflecting a shift in employment patterns to more short-term / temporary arrangements. Whilst this can offer greater flexibility, it often doesn't provide the security a permanent, full-time position would and reflects the need for arts organisations to keep labour costs to a minimum as funding income falls.
- Small arts organisations (those with a total income of less than £200k) drew a far lower proportion of their total income from earned sources and were more dependent on regular funding from ACNI than the overall portfolio.
- Over half of all activities delivered that year were conducted in the 20% most deprived Super Output Areas, with 1 in 10 activities taking place in rural locations. Small organisations delivered the

largest proportion of work in rural areas (21%), an increase of 8 percentage points compared to the previous year.

- The number of relaxed performances staged by funded clients has increased significantly compared to previous years. This has enabled more disabled people to access the arts, in particular theatre based work, via modified shows performed in less formal environments.
- Participation remains the single largest form of engagement delivered by annually funded organisations, comprising 85% of activity in 2016/17. This form of activity enables people of all ages to explore personal creativity and work collaboratively with other individuals contributing positively towards broader societal objectives relating to reconciliation, regeneration and social cohesion.

## **Background on data**

In a number of instances it has been necessary to exclude extreme responses to ensure trends displayed are an accurate reflection of the portfolio. Referred to as outliers, these figures have been removed as they tend to obscure trends.

A variety of methods are used by clients to record audiences and participant levels, some of which are more reliable than others. To reduce associated error, organisations are asked to report data as either 'actual' or 'estimated'; depending on the confidence they have in the data. Both fields are shown in this release.

It is particularly difficult to estimate attendances at non-ticketed events such as carnivals given the nature of the work delivered. This release includes data provided by a number of carnival organisations which together make a substantial contribution to total estimated attendances. Subsidy per attendance is calculated using actual and estimated attendances combined.

This is the third year this survey has been run, allowing data received to be cross-checked with responses received over the last two previous years. In a change to the survey, organisations were asked to comment on any unexplained or large year-on-year changes in engagement levels. This helped to validate the data received. Any unexplained, large scale variances were checked directly with the organisations concerned.