

Report on	Arts Council of Northern Ireland Survey on Arts and Culture engagement levels during COVID-19 Pandemic
Date of Meeting	Thursday 14 th January 2021
Reporting Officer	Tony McCance, Head of Culture & Arts
Contact Officer	Tony McCance, Head of Culture & Arts

Is this report restricted for confidential business? If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	Yes	
	No	X

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To provide members with the findings of research commissioned by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland that demonstrate levels of Arts and Culture engagement in Northern Ireland during Covid-19 Pandemic
2.0	Background
2.1	The Arts Council of Northern Ireland commissioned Social Market Research (SMR) in October 2020 to undertake a survey to establish the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the consumption of the Arts in Northern Ireland.
2.2	The survey captured the opinions of more than 1,000 people from a broad range of ages and backgrounds to gain an understanding of the extent to which engagement in the arts has enhanced education provision and supported mental health and wellbeing during the pandemic.
2.3	It is important to note that the research and survey undertaken represents a snapshot of views and opinions taken during the month of October 2020, and obviously at other times, the opinions and views expressed may have been different and influenced by the circumstances and Covid restrictions that would have been applicable at the specific time when the survey was carried out.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	The new survey commissioned by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland reveals the high numbers of people turning to the arts for solace and relief during the Covid-19 pandemic.
3.2	Responses showed that many are choosing to turn to books, crafting, playing a musical instrument, photography and painting, as a source of comfort and distraction, while more people than ever are switching to online sources to access concerts, theatre performances and classes.

<p>3.3</p> <p>3.4</p> <p>3.5</p>	<p>The report (see appendix 1) found that in the year prior to lockdown: 76% of respondents attended an Arts activity or event 24% had gone to a play or drama 76% had taken part in an arts related activity 51% stated that reading for pleasure was the most common activity</p> <p>Since lockdown: 60% participated in or viewed online Arts activity 31% stated that the Arts activity they took part in online or via social media were from Northern Ireland</p> <p>Interestingly, of those engaging with the Arts during lockdown, 13% did so for the first time.</p> <p>When respondents surveyed were asked as to the reasons for engaging with the Arts during lockdown:</p> <p>68% stated that it was for their personal enjoyment and well-being 33% stated that it was to satisfy their curiosity and to try something new 21% stated that it was a means of engaging with friends/family not in their household 15% stated that it was a resource for engaging their children and young people in their care 12% stated that it extended their social circle and 5% stated that it was a resource for engaging older people in their care</p> <p>In terms of likelihood of attending Arts events in an indoor space in specific circumstances: 64% stated they would, if masks were worn by staff and audience members 66% stated they would, if the venue adopted a rigorous cleaning regime 65% stated they would, if social distancing measures were strictly enforced 66% stated they would, if hand sanitisation was in place 54% stated they would, if ticket prices were reduced and 67% stated they would attend if there were fewer people in the venue</p>
<p>3.6</p>	<p>With regard to attitudes of those surveyed as to the impact of the Covid-19 lockdown on Arts attendance:</p> <p>55% agreed that “since lockdown, I’ve really missed the opportunity to go to cultural events and venues” 48% agreed that “since lockdown, I have a greater appreciation of the role the arts can play in my life” 34% stated that they “feel more inclined to get involved in the arts now there is an opportunity to do so online or via social media.”</p>
<p>4.0</p>	<p>Other Considerations</p>
<p>4.1</p>	<p>Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications</p>

	Financial: N/A
	Human: N/A
	Risk Management: N/A
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/A
	Rural Needs Implications: N/A
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	Members are asked to note the findings of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland survey on arts and culture engagement levels in Northern Ireland during the COVID-19 Pandemic
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix 1 - Survey to establish arts and culture engagement levels in Northern Ireland during the COVID-19 Pandemic