

September
2018

State of Dorset Leisure and Culture



Dorset County Council
for the Dorset Council area

In this bulletin Dorset refers to the Dorset Council area coming into effect 1st April 2019 unless stated otherwise

Participation in arts and culture makes communities feel safer and stronger, adds to health and wellbeing and reduces social isolation,¹ but funding cuts are a significant threat to culture and leisure activities, particularly in the third sector.

Cultural and recreational activities can help people access the natural environment through healthy lifestyles. Sport is evidenced to result in significant savings to health costs and yet there are concerns that many of Dorset's young people are physically inactive.

Big Numbers Box

£425m

Value of creative industries to the Dorset LEP area

62%

Of Dorset's adults are overweight³

43%

Of older people say the accessibility of venues is important

76%

Of older people say that arts & culture is important to making them feel happy

4x

Return on investment: £1 invested in the Arts Development Company secures £4 of external investment

£1m

Estimated annual boost to the local economy from the Ironman Weymouth event

Box 1: Health and wellbeing value

- Arts and cultural intervention can have a positive impact on specific health conditions such as dementia, Parkinson's and depression.¹ More generally, 60% of older people say that arts and culture is important in making them feel healthy.²
- Levels of wellbeing are generally reported to be higher amongst those with higher arts and culture engagement.¹
- Students who study art subjects are more employable and more likely to stay in employment than graduates from other disciplines and children from low income families who take part in arts at school are three times more likely to get a degree.¹
- Nearly half of older people (43%) say that accessibility is an important factor when they choose arts venues to attend.²
- Overall 76% of people aged 65+ say that arts & culture is important to making them feel happy. And nearly as many (69%) say that arts and culture is important in improving their overall quality of life.²



Sources

1 Create, Arts Council England, December 2015

2 <http://www.comresglobal.com/polls/arts-council-england-older-people-poll/> [Accessed 03/07/18]

3 <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/physical-activity>

Box 2: Engagement & Economic Value

- Adult engagement with the arts is highest in the South West and growing. 60% of people in the SW prefer to engage with the arts in person rather than online, compared to 54% nationally.⁴
- Last year 39% of people in the SW attended a live music event compared to 31% nationally. Carnivals are also very popular in the SW, with 19% of people saying they attended one in the last year, compared to only 10% nationally.⁴
- 33% of adults in the SW had used a public library service at least once in 2016/17. This is a decline on 6 years ago when it was 39%, and slightly below the national average.⁴
- The value of Creative Industries is about £425m pa in the Dorset LEP area.⁵ GVA of the Creative Industries increased by 3.6% between 2014 & 2015 in the UK.⁶
- The number of businesses in the Creative Industries in Dorset has been growing rapidly. Between 2010 and 2017 there has been a 27% increase, compared to 8% for all industries.⁷
- The Creative Economy has grown by a quarter since 2010, at a rate faster than the whole of the UK economy, which grew 17.4%⁶
- For every £1 invested in the Arts Development Company by the council there is a return of £4 secured in external investment into the area.⁸

60% of people prefer to engage with the arts in person



What are we doing about it?

Leisure centres provide affordable access to exercise classes, gym equipment, sports facilities and swimming. There are currently 9 in Dorset, overseen by local authorities, with many more operating independently. By using public money in this way, demand for expensive health interventions can reduce as the public stay fit and healthy both physically and mentally.

The councils in Dorset support local sports clubs through providing advice such as how to set up a club, fund it, and train staff. Sometimes grants are available to cover some of the costs.

The council supports local events such as the IRONMAN triathlon which came to Weymouth in 2016 and 2017 with plans for an event in 2018. Over the year, visits to Dorset by the entrants and their supporters adds more than £1million to the local economy.

Community facilities such as skate parks and public green spaces, which may have outdoor gym equipment, are other examples of councils providing leisure facilities for public use.

The council recognises the benefits that arts and culture bring to people, including improved health and wellbeing, as well as economic gains. The council supports the arts and culture by providing free access to books, learning and local history via libraries and also financial support for the Arts Development Company. Work is currently taking place on a three year business and creative industries growth project with the Dorset Growth Hub called Culture+. This has been funded by the EU with a further £482,000 from Arts Council England.

Sources

4 Taking Part 2016/17: South West, Arts Council England

5 aGVA dataset from Annual Business Survey 2014, ONS

6 DCMS Sectors Economic Estimates, August 2016, Department for Culture, Media and Sport

7 UK Businesses 2017, Local Units, ONS, 2015

8 The Arts Development Company