

December
2023

State of Dorset Leisure and Culture



Participation in arts and culture makes communities feel safer and stronger, adds to health and wellbeing and reduces social isolation¹, 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. Engaging in sport has been shown to lead to substantial savings in health costs. A concerning trend is evident among Dorset's young people, with a significant proportion being physically inactive. Alarming, nearly one in six young people in Dorset are now classified as obese, marking the highest figure on record.³

Big Numbers Box

£51m

Value of the arts and entertainment sectors to the Dorset economy⁴

£1.8m

Funding rec'd from Arts Council England 2023/24

76%

Of older people say that arts & culture helps them feel happy

65%

Of Dorset's adults are overweight³

3,000

Young people play in the Dorset Youth Football League

74%

Of Dorset's adults are physically active³

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 depression¹. The BSO and arts in hospital partnership saw the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra performing live to patients living with dementia to increase their wellbeing. The project found that dementia patients benefitted through fewer falls, reduced medication, and reduced hospital stays⁷.
- Nearly half of older people (43%) say that accessibility is an important factor when they choose arts venues to attend².
- 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 life².

76% of older people say arts & culture makes them feel happy



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 PHE Public Health Outcome (PHOF) Indicators, 2021/22

4 Regional gva (balanced) by industry in current prices, Office for National Statistics, 2020

Box 2: Engagement & Economic Value

- Research has revealed that the economic impact of Dorset based arts organisation, Artsreach adds to public funding by an estimated 93%, particularly through the 'volunteer multiple' which adds time, commitment and expertise to arts administration in Dorset.
- There are 11 competitive youth football leagues operating across Dorset. Five leagues for girls and six mixed leagues from Under 12 to under 16s. There are also hundreds of youngsters playing in non-competitive leagues from under 7 through to under 11.¹²
- Dorset was awarded just under £1.8m across 22 awards from Arts Council England for 2022/23.¹¹
- Employment in the Creative Industries in Dorset has also been growing - up by a third in the last 7 years.⁵
- The number of businesses in the Creative Industries in Dorset has grown faster than the rest of the economy. In the last 10 years there has been a 21% increase, compared to 12% for all industries.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 area⁷.



Every £1 spent locally is matched four times over in external benefit to Dorset

Box 3: Levelling Up

- Whilst Dorset has seen a strong recovery in post-pandemic tourism spending, it remains around 15% below 2019 figures.⁹
- Leisure and Culture Consumption Expenditure Per Head was £2,300 for Dorset in 2018.⁸
- Tourism is important to Dorset's economy as it supports many seasonal jobs. However, the vulnerability to changing weather patterns and fluctuations in tourist numbers can create economic uncertainty. Therefore, increasing resilience involves diversifying the local economy by attracting a variety of new businesses to the area.
- 'Levelling Up' is a government programme to equally distribute opportunity and redress locality-based inequality. Culture, heritage and sport have been recognised as one of the priorities.
- Dorset was successful in round two of the Levelling Up Fund, securing over £19m for Weymouth Waterside Regeneration.¹⁰

Sources

- 5 BRES, Employees, 2022, ONS, 2015 to 2022
- 6 UK Businesses 2023, Local Units, ONS, 2013 to 2023
- 7 The Arts Development Company
- 8 Regional Household Final Consumption Expenditure (Experimental statistics), ONS, 2018
- 9 The Economic Impact of Dorset's Visitor Economy 2022, The South West Research Co Ltd
- 10 Levelling Up Round Two Successful Bids, The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
- 11 National Investment Dashboard, Arts council England, 17/12/23
- 12 <https://www.dorsetyouthfootballleague.co.uk/> (Accessed 02/01/24)