

December
2024

State of Dorset Leisure and Culture



Recent data reveals that 89% of adults engaged in the arts at least once in the past year, highlighting the widespread appeal and importance of cultural activities. Additionally, 67% of people visited a heritage site, and 33% visited a museum or gallery.¹⁶

While activity rates among Dorset's young people have improved over the last five years, nearly half are physically inactive and nearly a third are overweight. Physical activity is associated with reduced health risks and improved mental health.³

Big Numbers Box

£333m

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

73%

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, 2022/23

4 Regional gva (balanced) by industry in current prices, Table 3b, Office for National Statistics, 2022

5 BRES, Employees, 2022, ONS, 2015 to 2022

Box 2: Engagement & Economic Value

- Research has shown that Artsreach, a Dorset-based arts organisation, enhances public funding by an estimated 93%. This significant impact is largely due to the 'volunteer multiple,' which brings additional time, commitment, and expertise to arts administration in Dorset.⁶
- 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 £2.2m across 29 awards from Arts Council England for 2023/24.¹¹
- Employment in the Creative Industries in Dorset has also been growing - up by over 40% between 2015 and 2022.⁵
- 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.⁷
- Dorset Art Weeks is one of the longest-established art events in the country, having first started in 1992. This year saw over 260 venues featured, with activities and exhibitions celebrating fine art, craft, and making across the county.¹⁵



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

Box 3: Tourism

- Whilst Dorset has seen a strong recovery in post-pandemic tourism spending, it remains around 15% below 2019 figures.⁹
- Overseas visitor numbers have rebounded strongly since Covid with English attractions reporting an 80% increase in 2023.¹⁴
- Leisure and Culture Consumption Expenditure Per Head was £2,300 for Dorset in 2018.⁸
- Dorset was successful in round two of the Levelling Up Fund, securing over £19m for Weymouth Waterside Regeneration.¹⁰
- Dorset's Jurassic Coast, a World Heritage site, featured in the BBC documentary 'Attenborough and the Giant Sea Monster', telling of the discovery and excavation of a Pliosaurus skull. The skull is now on show at the Etches Collection museum in Kimmeridge.¹³

Sources

6 Artsreach

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, (Accessed 30/09/24)

12 <https://www.dorsetyouthfootballleague.co.uk/> (Accessed 30/09/24)

13 <https://www.theetchescollection.org/giant-sea-monster> (Accessed 02/10/24)

14 Visitor Attraction Trends in England 2023, Visit England (p.37)

15 <https://dorsetvisualarts.org/about-us/daw> and <https://dorsetvisualarts.org/about-us> (Accessed 02/10/24)

16 Participation in the arts, culture and heritage, Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 23/02/24