OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALIGNMENT

Arts and cultural organisations and public sector commissioning

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Front cover image source: Family Creative workshop for In a Deep Dark Wood, by Gobbledegook in association with MOKO Dance at Dance City. Family Arts Festival 2013. Photographer Richard Kenworth.

Partners:

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FOREWORD

We already know that arts and culture make a huge difference to people's lives—contributing to individual and community well-being and helping people to overcome personal challenges and fulfil their potential.

This is increasingly understood by those working in health and social care. Many artists and cultural organisations are already working with service providers, delivering high quality opportunities to engage with culture. In doing so, they make happier and healthier communities. Arts and culture are essential to ensuring that all have quality of life.

However, it can sometimes be challenging for arts and cultural organisations to secure commissions—and commissioners can find it difficult to work effectively with the arts and cultural sector. This is why Arts Council England is investing in the Cultural Commissioning Programme, which is being delivered by a partnership led by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO).

We welcome this report as an important first step for Cultural Commissioning. While we know that arts and culture are crucially important and can make a real difference, this report helps all of us—in Arts Council England and in Government, in local authorities and the health sector, and in arts and cultural organisations —better understand those areas where the greatest impact can be made.

Sir Peter Bazalgette

Chair

Arts Council England

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Arts and cultural organisations—charities, social enterprises, for-profit organisations, museums and libraries—play a valuable role in addressing social challenges and delivering public services. The Cultural Commissioning Programme is a three year programme funded by Arts Council England to support the arts and cultural sector to collaborate with commissioners in the changing public service landscape. The programme is underpinned by this first research phase.

Scope of the research

Public sector commissioning aims to ensure that the services required by people with a specific need or in a particular area are available and designed to suit them. This research, conducted by NPC, maps the arts and cultural sector's experiences of public sector commissioning to date, examines the public service commissioning landscape and highlights opportunities for relationships between the sector and commissioners to be strengthened in the future. The focus is wider than how arts and cultural organisations can secure contracts and funding, considering also the role that arts and cultural activities can play in the design of effective public services.

By examining both provider and commissioner perspectives, this research identifies areas where the interests of arts and cultural organisations match those of commissioners. The report contains messages not only for arts and cultural organisations and commissioners, but also for organisations which can influence the way commissioning works such as ministers and civil servants, elected local officials and Arts Council England.

Methodology

The first phase involved a literature review, an online survey for arts and cultural organisations, data analysis and interviews with a range of organisations and commissioners.

Based on this, three areas where there is strong alignment between arts and cultural organisations and public sector commissioners were identified for in-depth research.

Phase two involved further interviews and desk-based research. The information has been collated into three 'baselines' detailing the commissioning situation in each of the focus areas.

The current picture

- Over 8,500 charitable arts and cultural organisations in England—6% of all registered charities—represent 8% of the voluntary sector's total income.
- A third of arts and cultural organisations' income comes from public sources
- Arts and cultural organisations which succeeded in securing contracts won on average one or two contracts a year and 85% surveyed said that all or some of their contracts were arts-specific briefs.
- The proportion of arts and cultural organisations receiving public funding is comparable to the voluntary sector as a whole by numbers—however they secure a third less in terms of contract value than the rest of the sector.

Value of arts and cultural activities

Arts and cultural interventions are asset based: working with individuals' strengths and abilities.

Evidence indicates that arts and cultural activities can offer a strong—and in some cases specific—contribution to achieving social outcomes. Arts and cultural organisations contribute to the design of effective services by helping people articulate their needs, and can also be effective in engaging and sustaining participants over a programme of activity. Arts and cultural activities respond to social problems, ranging from the care of older people to preventing crime. There is, however, a need for arts and cultural organisations to explain how their activity improves

outcomes, and to highlight the need for interventions to be of high quality if they are to achieve required outcomes.

The commissioner perspective

The delivery of public services is undergoing significant changes. Commissioners are working with a host of challenges: shrinking funds, rising need, new and complex payment structures, integrated commissioning models, and changes in regulation. Commissioners are therefore operating within constrained environments—lacking the freedom or confidence to innovate and pilot new approaches.

'I have seen arts and cultural activities deliver better outcomes than some medically focused therapies'

Sue Gallagher
Non-executive Director
NHS Lambeth

'Creative arts should be part of a jigsaw of possibilities for people'

Ian Smith
Commissioning Manager
Kirklees Council

However, commissioners who have seen the value of arts and cultural activities can be enthusiastic champions, and some aspects of the current commissioning context are potentially supportive to arts and cultural commissioning, for example the Social Value Act. Providers need to be seen as credible, effective organisations which understand the area in which they are hoping to work. Commissioners can play their role by making processes and opportunities as transparent and accessible as possible.

Assessing the potential of commissioning

Public sector commissioning is not appropriate for the whole arts and cultural sector. Engaging in commissioning can benefit the organisations involved but may also require compromise. While flexibility and working in partnership can help providers to successfully secure commissioned work, lack of information about opportunities and poor relationships with commissioners may frustrate efforts. Significant investment of time is required, with no guarantee of success.

Is commissioning appropriate for you?

Questions to consider

Mission

- Do you need public funding to deliver your mission?
- Is your mission aligned with the priorities of commissioners?
- Is there buy-in within the organisation (board members and staff)?

Capacity

- Do you have the resources to pursue the opportunity without detracting from your mission?
- If successful, do you have the capacity to deliver the service?
- Do you have a clear business model, including unit costs of delivery?

The opportunity

- Are there opportunities for you to solve commissioner problems?
- Do you have access to commissioners to tell them about your service? Do you know the right people?
- Are commissioners prepared to pay a fair price on fair terms for your service?

Chances of success

- Can you win the contract alone, or would you need to find a partner?
- If so, do you know who would be the most appropriate partner for your needs?
- What type of tender (eg, how competitive) do you have the capacity to win?
- Can you evidence your outcomes in the way that commissioners expect?

Yes to most questions?

Some adaptation may be necessary, but worth engaging with commissioning.

No to most questions?

Commissioning unlikely to be the right approach for you.

Measuring social value

Measuring the social value that activities deliver is crucial as commissioners have to justify their investments and demonstrate that the money spent gets results. Evidencing social value requires two distinct elements:

Service evaluation	**Research evidence**
Useful for learning or assessing success of intervention. Demonstrates progress and achievement of outcomes.	Evidence that a type of intervention has an impact on a social outcome (especially over the longer term).
These two elements can overlap: rigorous service evaluation can add to the body of research evidence.	

The level of evidence required varies by commissioner, but most arts and cultural organisations will need to draw on their own service evaluation to provide a track record for commissioners and also use robust research based on higher standards of evidence to demonstrate that the approach has been proved effective. Some arts and cultural organisations assess and evidence their work through a range of methods: tracking basic monitoring data, collecting participant feedback, collating case studies, making before and after assessments—sometimes through use of standardised tools—and in some instances following up over the long term.

Many of the evidence challenges organisations face are not unique to the sector. Some organisations have a defined outcomes framework to help select appropriate impact measurement practices. Commissioners need to ensure that the evidence standards they require of organisations are proportionate to the size of the contract and the outcomes sought. There are opportunities for commissioners to work with the arts and cultural sector to develop the right measures.

70% of survey respondents placed *being able to evidence* among their top three success factors for securing public funding.

Our mapping identified three focus areas—older people, mental health and well-being, and place-based commissioning—where significant opportunities for arts and cultural commissioning exist. For each we have explored the policy environment, level of commissioner interest, provider potential to add value, and the ability to evidence. Full details can be found in Appendix A of the full report.

Key messages for providers

You can be involved in delivering public services if you explain your work in a way which resonates with commissioners.

- Be bold in articulating the value of your work and use the strengths of arts and cultural approaches—that they are emotionally and intellectually engaging—to help commissioners see the value of the work.
- Talk the language of social outcomes, not arts and culture, and tell commissioners how you can help solve their problem—this may require some compromise of language and terminology.
- Understand the constraints—for example budgets and legal obligations—under which commissioners operate. Showing that you recognise these will help make you a credible partner to influence decisions.
- Provide commissioners with evidence of your reach and what you can achieve: how your work helps meet the outcomes commissioners seek. Draw on published research as well as your own evidence.
- Form relationships with commissioners where possible so that you can get involved with the commissioning process at an early stage, and help to design services.
- Partner with others to complement what you can offer, including organisations outside the arts and cultural sector. Partnerships can be hugely valuable but are time-consuming to establish and maintain.

- Commissioning may not suit every organisation, so be wary of becoming involved if you believe pursuing a commissioning process will derail your mission or be too cumbersome for your organisational capacity.

Key messages for commissioners

Arts and cultural organisations can help solve difficult problems, however they may not fit neatly into standard commissioning structures. If you can work with these organisations with a degree of flexibility, you'll be able to get more out of the relationship.

- The work of arts and cultural organisations is relevant across a range of outcomes and variety of beneficiaries—there are lots of areas where they could be valuable partners.
- You may find arts and cultural organisations can offer value in designing as well as delivering services—both through existing knowledge of individual and community needs, and through using creative approaches to help understand and articulate those needs.
- The procurement process for commissioning services needs to be realistic. Arts and cultural organisations may not be of a size or scale that can meet the requirements of complex tendering processes: bureaucratic commissioning processes could exclude organisations offering useful approaches.
- Evidence standards also need to be proportionate and realistic, recognising that prevention is often harder to measure.
- You are right to demand evidence that commissioned work delivers on priority outcomes, but where possible you should be open to dialogue about appropriate measurement before contract specifications are finalised. The challenges here are often not unique to the artistic or cultural intervention, but associated with the challenges of working with a specific beneficiary group.

Key messages for strategic influencers

- Many arts and cultural organisations depend heavily on arts-specific funding. As this reduces, the core capacity of organisations in the sector is at risk. Given the level of arts and cultural work which is orientated to social outcomes, policymakers should be concerned about this loss of capacity.
- The reality of budget cuts and rising needs gives commissioners a strong incentive to consider new solutions to difficult problems. Strategic leadership is needed to support commissioning and procurement professionals to engage with creative commissioning options while assessing and managing risks appropriately.
- The relatively low take-up amongst commissioners of arts and cultural activities to deliver social outcomes indicates a failure to grasp the benefits that arts and cultural organisations can bring.

For **Arts Council England** we have these recommendations:

- The collective voice of arts and cultural organisations is weak. Investing in the policy capacity of organisations will help them to articulate their role in society.
- Arts and cultural organisations will need ongoing training and support to position themselves to take advantage of commissioning opportunities—beyond the lifetime and scope of the Cultural Commissioning Programme.
- Evidence of what works is scattered and there are gaps. A central point of information, ideally accessible via Arts Council England, would help organisations to find the evidence they need to make their case. Funding of research would also help to fill gaps where needed.

These findings will inform the further strands of the Cultural Commissioning Programme's work, including advice, networking activities, training events and the collation of case studies.

Delivery of the Cultural Commissioning Programme is led by NCVO, working in partnership with NPC and NEF (New Economics Foundation), with contribution from Mission Models Money (MMM) in the programme set-up and research. The work of the programme is steered by an advisory group, chaired by Lord Bichard.

INTRODUCTION

About this report

This report forms part of the Cultural Commissioning Programme, a three-year programme grant-funded by Arts Council England, designed to understand the opportunities for arts and cultural organisations to engage with public sector commissioning and—where this is an appropriate option for organisations—support them to do so effectively. The programme does not advocate for arts and cultural organisations to engage with public sector commissioning, but rather encourages them to better understand opportunities, assess whether they are suitable, and, where appropriate, to engage effectively.

The report marks the culmination of an initial research and scoping phase. The findings from this phase are being used to inform the design of the Cultural Commissioning Programme's other strands of work, working directly with arts and cultural organisations, commissioners and policymakers. The programme recognises that it is not sufficient for arts and cultural organisations to become commission-ready. Commissioners also need to understand the potential of such organisations to help them achieve their strategic priorities, and other actors of strategic importance—including Arts Council England and policymakers—need to work to ensure that the system in which these actors are operating is conducive to collaboration.

There are therefore three audiences for this report: arts and cultural organisations; commissioners and procurement professionals; and strategic influencers. In the context of this report, 'strategic influencers' refers to high-level actors with the ability to steer and shape the system. These include: ministers and civil servants (through enacting policies and the production of procedural guidance); elected officials at the local level; bodies that influence commissioning in different sectors (such as the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE), NHS England and others in the health sector); and Arts Council England. In each chapter we have identified the important implications of the research findings for each of these audiences and presented them as key messages.

The focus of the scoping phase has been to understand where the opportunities are for arts and cultural organisations to get involved in public sector commissioning. The research was structured in two phases: a broad review of arts and cultural organisations' activities and experiences of commissioning, followed by detailed analysis of three areas identified as promising areas of alignment between arts and cultural organisations and commissioners. A summary of these three focus areas is presented in Appendix A, and insights have informed the report throughout.

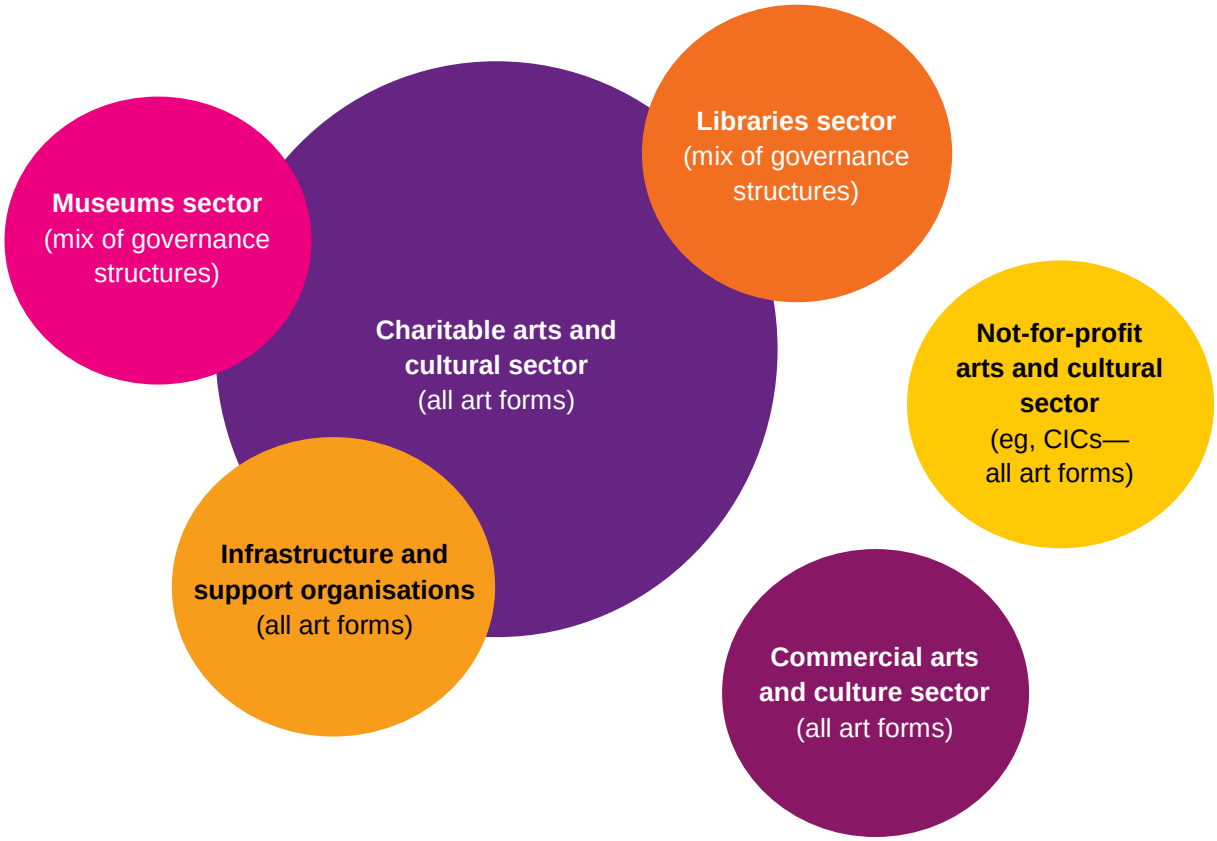
A further key aim for this research was to understand how arts and cultural organisations can best evidence their effectiveness to commissioners. This is discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

The landscape of the arts and cultural sector

The arts and cultural sector has been affected by cuts to Arts Council England's budget and to the budgets of local authority culture and leisure grants programmes (discussed further in Chapter 4). The arts and cultural sector is very diverse and made up of organisations ranging from very small programmes run by volunteers to major national institutions. Organisations in the arts and cultural sector practice a range of art forms, work with different kinds of beneficiaries, and use arts and cultural activities to achieve a range of social outcomes. While some organisations are more focused on social purpose and others on practice development, these two aims

often coexist within the same organisation. Organisations in the sector have a range of different governance forms—many are registered as charities, but there is also an important for-profit sector, and a number of organisations operate a social enterprise model (for example community interest companies). Museums and libraries are significant elements of the arts and cultural sector—again comprised of private and charitable organisations, but with a large number of organisations sitting within local authorities. This research has found that most of the themes and challenges identified cut across almost all organisations, regardless of governance type.

Figure 1: Elements of the arts and cultural sector
Note: not to scale.



Another important element of the arts and cultural sector is the infrastructure that supports it. This infrastructure includes: arts or cultural form-specific networks (such as the Independent Theatre Council and the Society of Chief Librarians); networks focused on areas of social outcome for arts interventions (such as the Arts in Health networks and the Arts Alliance for criminal justice); local or regional networks, which may be arts specific (such as regional museum and library networks) or may be available for all of the social sector (including local councils for voluntary service); and networks for other specific interest areas (such as the Voluntary Arts Network).

Introduction to public sector commissioning

Box 1: Terminology

In the artistic context, a 'commission' is a contract to produce a piece of artwork. This arts-specific definition of 'commissioning' has not formed part of this research process—but this similarity of terminology creates the risk of confusion.

Public sector commissioning is the process of ensuring that the services required by people with a specific need, or in a particular area, are available and suited to their needs. It has been defined as:

'The process of finding out about public needs, then designing and putting in place services that address those needs. In this context, it's a process undertaken by public bodies, like central government departments or local NHS bodies.'

NCVO, commissioning and procurement pages[1]

The current context of commissioning

The Local Government Association predicts that by 2020, councils will face a funding gap of £16.5bn, with more than 50% of budgets being taken up by social care services.[2] This scenario will put pressure on discretionary services such as grant funding to the arts and cultural sector.[*] Local authorities have been facing budget cuts over the past decade, but the scale of cuts following the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review presented a significant challenge, which is set to continue, with the announcement that local government budgets[†] will be reduced by 10% in 2015/2016.[‡]

As budgets shrink, commissioners need to demonstrate that available funds are being spent to generate the maximum benefit. This can make it difficult to fund pilot work and innovative approaches. Yet with needs steadily rising, commissioners need to think differently about investing their scarce resources, or risk the quality of services decreasing and declining outcomes for the people they exist to support.

Income to the voluntary sector from government fell by £1.3bn between 2010/2011 and 2011/2012.[3] Research by NPC in 2012 found that a third of voluntary sector organisations had experienced falls in government income, and 65% had closed services or expected to do so in the next year. However, many were positive about the ways they could adjust to these changes, with 80% saying they thought their organisation had become more resilient in response to cuts, or would be so in the future.[4] The arts and cultural sector is also affected by these trends as it overlaps with the voluntary sector (although it encompasses a much wider range of governance forms) and operates in the same context for public sector commissioning.

The changes occurring across national and local commissioning bodies represent a seismic shift in the way that public services are delivered, notably in the case of reforms to employment support, probation, health, and local authorities. In 2010, NHS Chief Executive Sir David Nicholson described the current health reforms as a change

[*] Not all arts and cultural funding is discretionary—libraries are a statutory service.

[†] This refers specifically to the Department for Communities and Local Government's local government resource budget (Resource DEL)—comprising its programme and administration budgets. See HM Treasury (2013) *Spending Round 2013*: pp. 10–11, Tables 1 and 2. For further explanation of budget classifications see Stephen, J. and Bouchal, P. (2013) *Whitehall Monitor no. 30: departmental budgets*. Institute for Government.

[‡] Osborne, G. *Spending Round 2013,* Statement to Parliament, 26 June 2013. This reduction is offset somewhat by other reforms, such as Council Tax freezes, meaning that at the time of the 2013 Spending Round, actual local government spending was predicted to reduce by around 2%.

management process so big *'you could probably see it from space'*.[5] Change is happening on a similarly significant scale in Welfare to Work, with the introduction of the Work Programme, and in offending and probation, with the Transforming Rehabilitation programme. Chapter 4 investigates the current themes in commissioning in more detail.

Priorities of key commissioning bodies

Table 1 summarises the direction of travel for commissioners in some of the key services and budgets that arts and cultural organisations might hope to work with.

Table 1: Spending areas and direction of travel

Spending area	Direction of travel
Justice	Transforming Rehabilitation: 21 contract package areas to deliver prison-based resettlement and rehabilitation, probation services and community-based rehabilitation of offenders. Begins 2014.
Employment	Work Programme: national Welfare to Work services provided under 18 contract package areas. Delivered by prime contractors supported by supply chains of specialist providers.
Health	Lots of health commissioning at a local level is now under the discretion of clinical commissioning groups. These operate as part of NHS England, which also handles commissioning at the national level. Public health budgets are held by local authorities.
Social care	Local authority social care budgets have been cut. Local authorities are moving from block contracting services to personal budgets, but at varied speeds and in different ways.
Schools	Driven by Ofsted and the need to demonstrate academic achievement. Some schools are funded by local authorities according to negotiated budgets, but academies and free schools are funded by the Department for Education on a per-pupil basis. The Pupil Premium provides schools with funding on a per-pupil basis to raise the attainment of those who are disadvantaged.[6]
Culture and leisure	Experiencing budget cuts in most places. Some local authorities are moving their cultural services out to independent trusts, with the expectation that these services will raise more income from other sources as a result, thereby enabling them to survive on reduced local authority funding. Other authorities are investigating sharing services, contracting other local authorities, and social enterprise and community management models.
Other local authority budgets	Almost all local authority budgets are being squeezed, but responses vary by location.

'Commissioning' refers to a range of practices, but it is most often used where public services are being purchased through contract arrangements. By some definitions, commissioning includes arrangements where services are obtained through grant agreements. In contract arrangements, the commissioned organisation has a legal obligation to deliver according to the contracted specification. Under a grant agreement, the funding authority has less ability to hold the commissioned organisation to account for delivery according to the specification. This research uncovered a broad spectrum of arrangements referred to as commissioning: this report focuses on public sector purchasers, and situates findings within the current political and funding context. Further discussion of public sector commissioning and the context in which arts and cultural organisations are operating when they seek to undertake commissioned work can be found in Chapter 4.

'Providers' refers to arts and cultural organisations which are currently delivering, or could prospectively deliver, public services on behalf of commissioners.

Methodology

This research was undertaken in two phases. The first phase looked at the landscape of the arts and cultural sector, focusing in particular on those organisations delivering commissioned work. The intention was to gain a broad picture of arts and cultural organisations' current involvement in commissioning, and to understand the areas of alignment between their activities and commissioners' priorities. This phase involved a literature review, interviews with a broad range of different arts and cultural organisations and commissioners, a survey, and analysis of financial data for charitable arts and cultural organisations. We used a 'heat mapping' approach to assess the level of activity in areas of potential alignment of interests between organisations in the arts and cultural sector and public sector commissioners. With input from Arts Council England and from the Cultural Commissioning Programme advisory group, this was narrowed down to three focus areas: older people, mental health and well-being, and place-based commissioning. In phase two we conducted more detailed research on these focus areas to understand the experiences of arts and cultural organisations being commissioned in those fields and to provide in-depth knowledge of the way that interactions between commissioners and providers play out on the ground. This phase involved further interviews and desk-based research. The information was collated into three 'baselines' detailing the commissioning situation in each of the focus areas. The focus area baselines are presented in Appendix A. This report presents information gathered through both phases of research. A more detailed methodology is presented in Appendix C.

Box 2: Selecting interviewees

In identifying interviewees, we aimed to cover a breadth of different perspectives. The voices reflected in this research represent the most engaged and advanced practitioners, from both commissioners and providers, giving a rich picture of where cultural commissioning is effective.

In particular we looked for commissioners who did not have a specific arts and cultural brief, but were happy to talk about opportunities for arts and cultural organisations within their remit. We found a number of enthusiasts in a range of roles, but struggled to secure conversations with those who were not already sympathetic to arts and cultural activities, and were often referred back to individuals in local authority culture and leisure departments. Our observation is that many commissioners have not considered the potential for arts and culture to help them deliver on their priorities, and while opportunities do exist, much work is still needed to open these up.

When it comes to representing the views of commissioners on the arts and cultural sector, we do not have survey data to give us a broad sense of commissioner opinions and little has been published by commissioners themselves. In this report we have presented the views of those commissioners we interviewed, and any views that provider organisations shared on the priorities or approach of their commissioners. We believe these findings are useful, but recognise the limitations of this approach in presenting a fully representative view of commissioner opinions.

1. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ARTS AND CULTURAL SECTOR

This chapter explores the nature of the arts and cultural sector, which is made up of more than 8,500 charitable arts and cultural organisations with a diverse range of incomes, sizes and charitable aims, in addition to a range of organisational forms. The degree to which these organisations are dependent on public funding also varies significantly but is comparable to the charitable sector as a whole. A high dependency on Arts Council England and local authorities leaves the arts and cultural sector exposed to public sector funding cuts, making it crucial for organisations to respond effectively to commissioning opportunities.

In this section we discuss:

- The make-up of the arts and cultural sector
- Arts and cultural organisations in the charity sector
- Art forms and cultural media
- Arts and cultural organisations, public funding and social outcomes
- Commissioned income in the charitable arts and cultural sector
- National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs)

Key messages

Providers

- Arts and cultural organisations have reasonable success in winning public funding. This is particularly true with granted income. Organisations that apply to a range of public sector funders are more likely to succeed than those who apply to just one or two.
- Matching outcome aims to those of public sector funders is important. The number of arts and cultural organisations currently pursuing social outcomes is greater than the number pursuing public funding. This gap may indicate an opportunity to increase the level of commissioned work delivered by arts and cultural organisations.

Commissioners

- A significant proportion of arts and cultural organisations pursue social outcomes and target particular beneficiary groups, and therefore may be delivering work which could be commissioned.
- A significant number of arts and culture providers already actively try to engage with commissioning, winning one or two contracts a year.[*]

[*] Organisations that are already interested in commissioning are more likely to have answered the survey, so this may not be representative of the wider sector.

Policymakers and Arts Council England

- Arts and cultural organisations are engaging with commissioning (but less than the voluntary sector). This could indicate room for growth, but it may also indicate that commissioning is more challenging for arts and cultural organisations.
- The majority of income from public sources (excluding Arts Council England) is earned income rather than voluntary (ie, more likely to be contracted income). However, there is a high dependency on arts and culture specific funding, and funding from local authority sources.
- Public funding for the arts, whether from Arts Council England as the most significant national body which operates as public funder of arts and culture, or from local government, has decreased in recent years. This means that the sector is somewhat vulnerable in its reliance on this funding.[*]

This report looks at the arts and cultural sector in England and its engagement with public funding and commissioning. Chapter 1 presents an overview of the sector as a whole based on information already available, including data on libraries from The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), and on Major Partner Museums (MPMs)[†] from Arts Council England, in addition to two new sources of data:

- The Cultural Commissioning Programme survey 2013, which was circulated to all types of arts and cultural organisations through infrastructure networks and Arts Council England's network. A total of 240 responses were analysed.[‡]

  The survey asked respondents about public funding (regardless of funding type), and included questions specifically about commissioned work. Throughout this report, when referring to data from this survey (which covers both grant and contract income) we use the term 'funder'. Aside from this, throughout the report we use the term 'commissioner' to apply generally to public bodies seeking to deliver public services through contract arrangements—although we acknowledge variation as to the detail of financial arrangements used for commissioned work.
- The NCVO Almanac provides an overview of the scope and changing nature of civil society, drawing on information from the financial accounts of UK charities. We have applied a filter to select only those organisations working in the arts and cultural sector in England (see Appendix C). The final filtered sample resulted in 8,525 organisations. By default, this sample excluded all commercial arts and cultural organisations, such as for-profit theatres, galleries, consultancies, CIC companies, and also museums and libraries that are part of local authorities.[§]

The NCVO sample only comprises charities. The survey sample includes a range of different types of arts and cultural organisations including museums, libraries (which are often not charitable), and other non-charitable organisations. On average, respondents to the survey were from larger organisations than those represented in the NCVO database.[**] The involvement of Arts Council England in distributing the survey has resulted in a high proportion of National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) in the sample (46% vs. 10% in the NCVO sample[††]). NPOs

[*] Other sources of funding do currently exist. DCMS provides funding for national museums, for example, as well as funding Arts Council England itself. The Heritage Lottery Fund also distributes lottery funding, whilst The Big Lottery Fund can fund arts and cultural initiatives that are in line with its priorities. Private foundations also provide an important source of funding for arts and culture, including the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and the Wolfson Foundation.

[†] Major Partner Museums are museums that receive funding from Arts Council England's Renaissance major grants programme.

[‡] This includes a sample of library and museum sample respondents (29). However, the sample is not big enough to be analysed on a stand-alone basis.

[§] Museums and libraries as stand-alone charities are included in the analysis.

[**] 'Medium' refers to organisations with incomes from £100,000 to £999,999 and 'small', under £100,000. For a detailed comparison between NPC and NCVO samples, please refer to Appendix C.

[††] See the methodology in Appendix C for further description of the sample differences.

are directly funded by Arts Council England through an open application process. Where relevant we have drawn on this distinction in the analysis. The survey was answered by a small sample of museums and libraries, but we do not have sufficient data to provide equivalent commentary on Major Partner Museums.

Key findings from these data sources are presented in this chapter.

The make-up of the arts and cultural sector

The arts and cultural sector is made up of a diverse range of organisations:

- Charitable arts and culture sector: 8,525 organisations with a total income of £2.9bn.
- Libraries sector: data from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy indicate that there are 3,184 public libraries in England with total expenditure of over £855m.
- Museums sector: it is estimated that there are about 2,500 museums (including galleries) in the UK, of which around 1,800 have been accredited.[7] There is no single data source on museum income.
- Other types of organisation which form an important part of the sector but for which we do not have an estimate of the number or total income. This includes infrastructure organisations, commercial arts and culture organisations, and not-for-profit arts and cultural organisations (aside from charities).[*]

While we recognise that charitable arts and cultural organisations do not give us a whole picture of the sector, they are nonetheless an important part of it, and the data we have available give a good insight into the experiences and perceptions of arts and cultural organisations regarding public sector commissioning.

Arts and cultural organisations in the charity sector

Arts and cultural organisations represent 6% of the charity sector by number and share similarities with the charity sector in organisation size and income distribution.

As Table 2 shows, there are over 8,500 charitable arts and cultural organisations in England, which is 6% of all registered charities. The charitable arts and cultural sector also employs 4% of charity sector employees and represents 8% of the charity sector's total income. Though a small part of the charity sector, it shares some important similarities. The majority of charitable arts and cultural organisations are small, as is the case with the charity sector as a whole where eight in every ten organisations have an income of less than £100,000.[8] A significant proportion of these are 'micro organisations', with an income under £10,000, though the proportion of micro organisations across the charity sector is even higher.

[*] See diagram on p9 of this report.

Table 2: Size of the charitable arts and cultural sector in comparison to the charity sector in England 2011/2012

	Charitable arts & cultural sector in England	Charity sector in England	Charitable arts & cultural sector as % of charity sector
Number of organisations	8,525	132,074	6%
Average org. income (mean)*	£335,724	£258,480	-
Average org. income (median)*	£17,529	£9,448	-
Proportion of small organisations (ie, < £100,000 income)	81%	84%	-
Proportion of micro organisations (ie,. < £10,000 income)	40%	51%	-
Workforce (no. of people)	28,295	653,000	4%
Total sector's income	£2.9bn†	£34.1bn	8%
Total sector's expenditure	£2.7bn	£33.2bn	8%
London as % of total income	57%	47%	-
London as % of total no. of orgs	23%	18%	-

Source: NCVO Almanac and NCVO analysis of charitable arts and cultural organisations.

A quarter of all charitable arts and cultural organisations are headquartered in London, and they receive around half the total income. This funding pattern has been identified in previous research,[9] and a similar pattern can be observed across the voluntary sector. This reflects the large number of major institutions located in London. There are some limitations to the data in question, however: many of the large and medium-sized organisations headquartered in London also operate regionally, and in practice this means that some of the income gets redistributed across other regions, for example through head office and branch structures.‡ Around a quarter of charitable arts and cultural organisations are headquartered in the South East, one in five are in the North and the rest (30%) are either in the Midlands or the South West.[10]

A range of art forms and cultural media

Providers use a mix of art forms with two in five identifying themselves in the survey as combined arts providers.

There is a wide variety of arts and cultural organisations in the voluntary sector. NCVO figures show that two in five organisations are music-related (Figure 2). However, if we analyse the organisations by income, we can see that theatre companies form a higher proportion (Figure 3). This data is based on charitable arts and cultural organisations and therefore under-represents libraries and museums which are often constituted as non-charitable bodies (discussed separately on the next page).

* Mean is the total sector's income divided by the number of organisations. The median is the middle value in the sample of 8,525 organisations sorted into ascending order. There is a small proportion of very large organisations with income of at least £10m and a large proportion of micro organisations which skew the mean and median values.

† This figure is also consistent with the Arts & Business figure of £3.1bn for total arts funding in England in 2011/2012. A comparable 2010/2011 figure is not available for England (UK only). (Arts & Business (2013) *Where is Private Investment to the Arts going? Private Investment in Culture Survey 2011/2012*.)

‡ This was supported by the Cultural Commissioning Programme survey results. Almost eight out of ten respondents represented either medium or large organisations. The majority who chose London and South East ticked at least one other location.

Figure 2: Art form breakdown by number of organisations

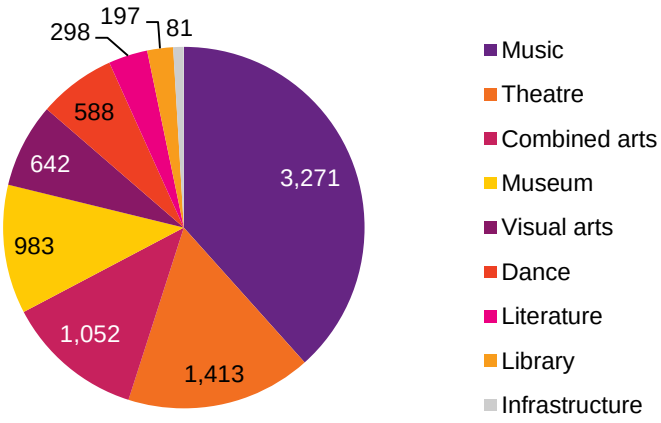
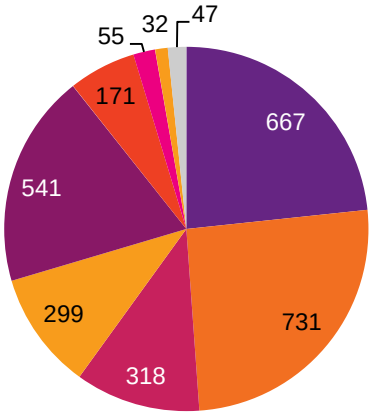


Figure 3: Art form breakdown by total income (£m)



Source: NCVO analysis of charitable arts and cultural organisations

Among respondents to the Cultural Commissioning Programme survey, two in five organisations identified themselves as practising combined art forms as opposed to a single form.[11] This proportion is much higher than that in the NCVO sample: it appears that while many organisations are registered as a single art form organisation, a high proportion identify themselves as combined (NPOs and non-NPOs alike).

Libraries

From the NCVO Almanac data, we know that almost 200 of the charitable arts and cultural organisations are libraries, with a total income of over £32m.

Libraries can take a range of organisational forms including those associated with academic and educational institutions, government and health bodies, industrial and commercial bodies. There is no integrated data source on all libraries, but the parts of the libraries sector most likely to engage with public sector commissioning are those provided as part of the statutory responsibility of local authorities, and libraries that operate as charitable organisations.

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance collects data on public libraries through an annual survey:[*] in 2012/2013 there were 3,184 public libraries, a figure which decreased by almost 2% from the previous year's total of 3,243 libraries. Total expenditure across those libraries was £855m, a decrease of 4.5% from the previous year's total of £890m. The busiest library in that year was the Norfolk & Norwich Millennium, with 1.3 million visits, and 1.2 million issues in that year.

Public libraries employ a total of 20,300 staff—a figure that has fallen by 20% over five years. In the same period the number of volunteers has more than doubled to almost 34,000.

[*] CIPFAstats Public Libraries data, with thanks to Ian Watson of the Society of Chief Librarians. See Appendix B for further breakdown of this data.

Museums

There is a range of different types of museum, and no single integrated data source for them.

From the NCVO Almanac data, we know that almost 1,000 charitable arts and cultural organisations are museums, with a total income of almost £300m in 2011/2012.

The Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) provides direct funding for 13 National Museums, and funds a further two museums (which do not have National Museum status) directly. Total DCMS funding to these museums totalled £338m in the financial year 2012/2013.[*] National Museums are exempt charities and are accountable to the Secretary of State as Principal Regulator.

Many museums are part of local authorities and this research has not uncovered any compiled data sources on them, so we do not know the income breakdown, nor the extent to which this part of the museums sector is already generating income from public sector commissioning.

Arts Council England funds a portfolio of Major Partner Museums.[†] The total income of this portfolio is £144m, of which a quarter is earned income, a quarter is local authority subsidy, and a fifth is other public subsidy(mostly from Arts Council England).[12]

Other museum types include university libraries, historic properties, heritage sites, National Trust properties, regimental museums and armouries:[13] these have not formed part of this research.

Arts and cultural organisations, public funding and social outcomes

A third of arts and cultural organisations' income comes from public sources.

The research looked at total public income—including both grants and contracted income—for two reasons. The first is that a broad range of practices can be referred to as 'commissioning' and although commissioning is usually thought of as contracted income, commissioners sometimes use grant arrangements, creating some grey areas. The second reason is that many local authorities seem to be moving from grant programmes to increased use of contracted work, and it is possible that current grant funding from public sources will be converted to contracted work in the future. It is therefore useful to understand the total profile of public funding before focusing specifically on earned income.

In both data sources—NCVO and the survey—public funding includes all income from government and its agencies, including local and national government, and Arts Council England.

Of 240 arts and cultural organisations surveyed for this research the majority pursued social outcomes in addition to artistic ones.[‡] The majority of respondents reported at least one social outcome—most often education, training, employment, community cohesion, or well-being—as being relevant to their own organisation (Figure 4). Mental health and physical health are also important outcomes. The outcomes map well onto the beneficiary groups targeted by these organisations—local communities, young people, older people and people with disabilities. This suggests that arts and cultural organisations care about and try to contribute to an improvement in social outcomes just like the rest of the voluntary sector.[§] The sample of organisations may include some

[*] See: https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/maintaining-world-leading-national-museums-and-galleries-and-supporting-the-museum-sector. The funding total was collated from individual annual accounts for 2012/2013 and refers to total grant-in-aid from DCMS.

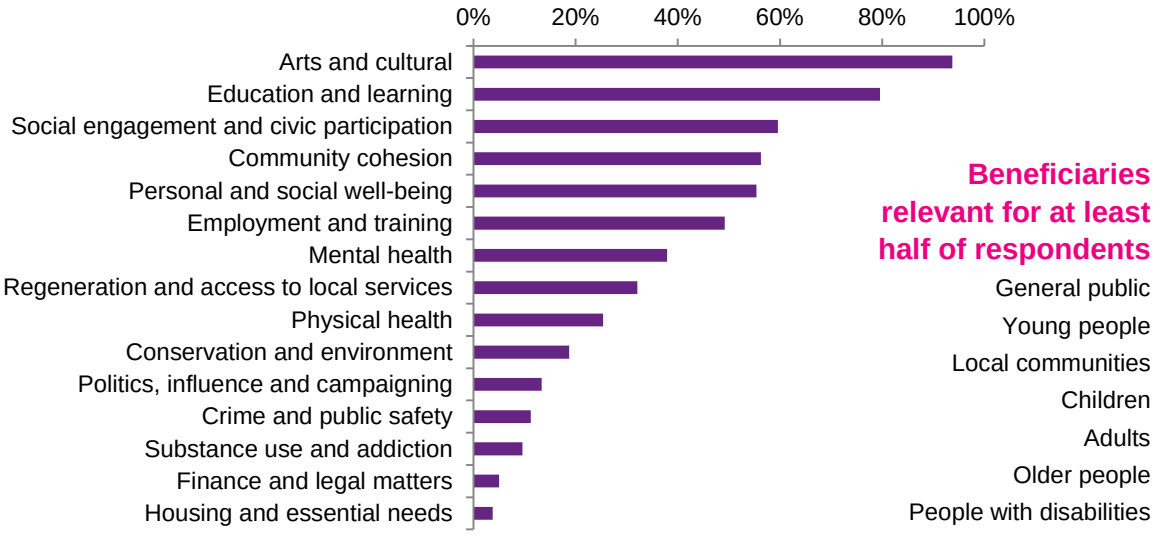
[†] See Arts Council England's website page 'Renaissance Major Partner Museums' for the full list.

[‡] The survey was distributed across approximately 30 networks (including Arts Council England's regional networks, the Bridge organisations, Museums Development Services and the Society of Chief Librarians). For more information on the survey distribution, please refer to Appendix C.

§ See discussion in Chapters 2 and 5.

selection bias as organisations more focused on social outcomes are most likely to answer a survey about commissioning.

Figure 4: Main outcomes and beneficiary groups of arts and cultural organisations



Source: Cultural Commissioning Programme survey 2013. Q7: *'What outcome area(s) are relevant to the work that you do?'* (multiple response question, N=240), and Q8: *'Who are your target beneficiaries?'* (multiple response question, N=240).

Level of public funding

As Table 3 shows, in 2011/2012, over half of arts and cultural organisations received public funding. The proportion of organisations succeeding in securing funding is comparable to the rest of the voluntary sector even when adjusted for Arts Council England's portion. The organisations that secured public funding applied to four different public funders over the year on average, in comparison to just two for those that did not.[14]

Table 3: Public funding in the charitable arts and cultural sector: comparison to the charity sector in England 2011/2012

	Arts & cultural sector in England (incl. Arts Council)	Arts & cultural sector in England (excl. Arts Council)	Voluntary sector in England
Publicly funded organisations as % of all organisations (excluding micro organisations)*	52%	44%	39%

Source: NCVO Almanac and NCVO analysis of charitable arts and cultural organisations

In addition, Table 4 shows that where arts and cultural organisations receive public funding, they receive a similar proportion of income from public sources (30% of total income) as the charity sector as a whole (35% of total income). However, because the average charitable arts and cultural organisation is bigger, in absolute terms it means that the arts and cultural sector received 11% more public funding per organisation in 2011/2012 (£101,000 for charitable arts and cultural organisations vs. £90,000 for charities) than in the overall sector.

* Micro organisations are those with annual income of less than £10,000 and they have been excluded here. Many do not have a full-time member of staff, let alone a fundraising officer. They form a very large proportion of the sector and hence tend to skew the averages.

Yet there are some notes of caution for the arts and cultural sector. If Arts Council England funding is excluded from data, public funding drops to 17% of sector income—meaning that a typical charitable arts and cultural organisation received over a third less public funding in 2011/2012 than a typical organisation in the charity sector (£57,000 vs. £90,000). This demonstrates the importance of arts-specific funding within the broader success in securing public funding among arts and cultural organisations. This is particularly the case among medium and large organisations where Arts Council England funding accounts for 13–14% of total income[*] (see Table 4).

This finding was also supported by the survey results. There was a stark difference between the top art funders (Arts Council England and local authorities' culture and leisure budgets) and the top non-art funders (Figure 5). Nine out of ten survey respondents that had managed to secure public funding had applied to Arts Council England, and six out of ten had applied to local authorities cultural and leisure budgets.[15] Just three out of ten applied to schools and further education, even though the education and learning outcome area was relevant to the majority of organisations in question (Figure 5). So while a high proportion of arts and cultural organisations say they pursue social outcomes, a far smaller proportion are applying to non-art public funders. This indicates that there may be significant work being undertaken by arts and cultural organisations which could be of interest to commissioners, but is not currently being commissioned.

Table 4: Public funding in the charitable arts and cultural sector in comparison to the charity sector in England

	Arts & cultural sector in England 2011/2012 (incl. Arts Council)	Arts & cultural sector in England 2011/2012 (excl. Arts Council)	Voluntary sector in England 2011/2012[†]
Public funding per organisation (average)	£100,711	£56,679	£90,366
Public income as % of total income	30%	17%	35%
- Small	16%	14%	17%
- Medium	30%	17%	29%
- Large	31%	17%	35%

Source: NCVO Almanac and NCVO analysis of charitable arts and cultural organisations

Sources of public funding

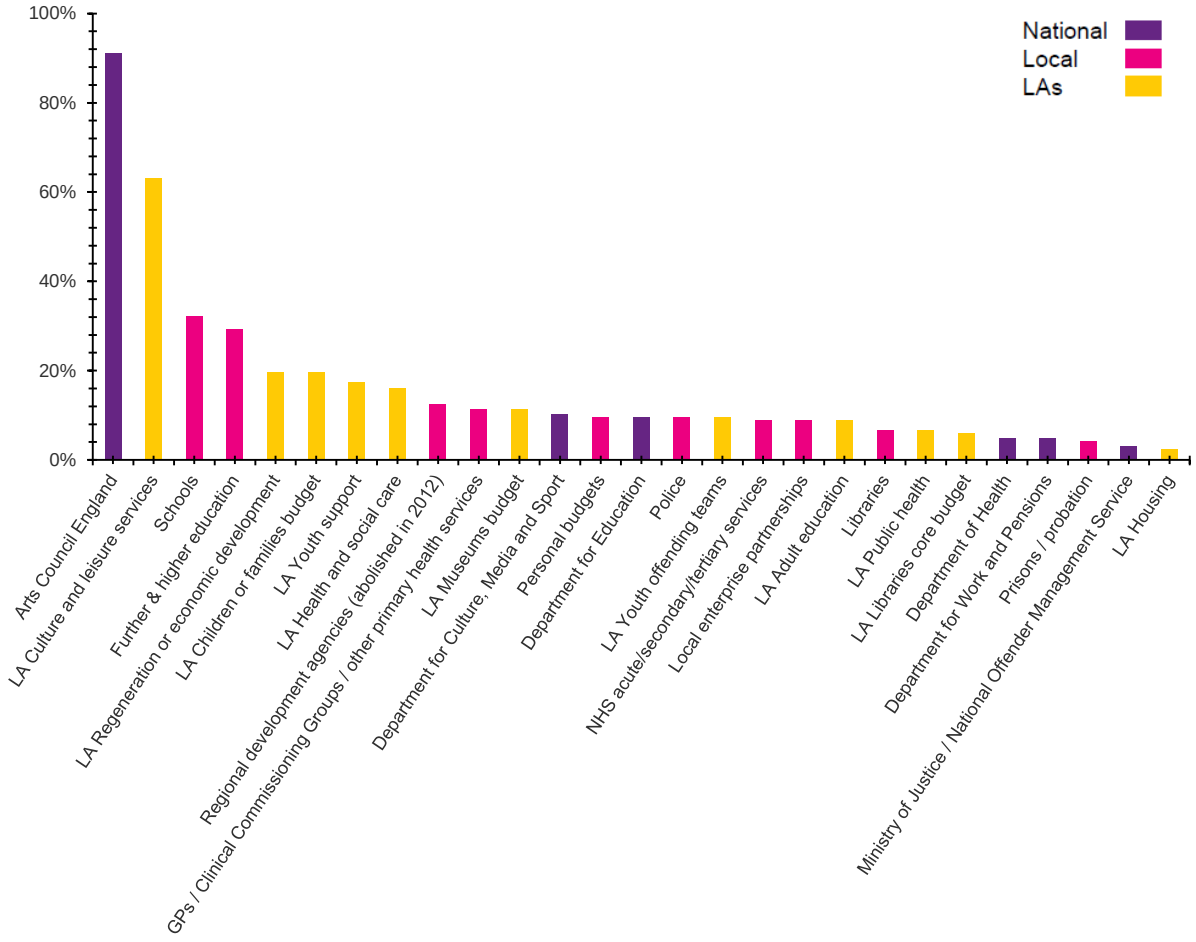
Another distinct feature was that non-art funders were mainly local authorities or other local organisations (Fig. 5). A high reliance on local funders is particularly worrying as local authority budgets are under pressure:[16] local government spending has been forecast to fall by 11.4% between 2010/2011 and 2015/2016[‡17].

[*] For 'medium' organisations, 30% of their funding is public funding which includes a proportion from Arts Council England. This figure drops to 17% if we exclude that proportion, meaning that the contribution from Arts Council England is 13%. For 'Large' organisations—inclusive figure 31%, exclusive figure 17%—the contribution from Arts Council England is therefore 14%.

[†] Figures for the breakdown of organisations into different sizes cover England and Wales because it was not possible to identify England-only figures—however this will not change the proportions.

[‡] The figure was quoted in NCVO Almanac 2010/2011. An equivalent figure was not quoted in the 2011/2012 report.

Figure 5: Public funding in the arts and cultural sector



Source: Cultural Commissioning Programme survey 2013. Q11: *'Have you applied for any statutory or public funding in the past 4 years (either as grants or contracts)?'*. If yes, Q12: *'Where did these opportunities come from?'* (multiple response, N=209).

A third of arts and cultural organisations' income comes from public funding, which is a similar proportion to the rest of the voluntary sector. However, survey respondents most often applied to Arts Council England, followed by local authorities' culture and leisure services, making the sector vulnerable to cuts in arts-specific funding.

Commissioned income in the charitable arts and cultural sector

Charitable arts and cultural organisations receive on average half the amount of commissioned income which organisations in the charity sector secure.

There is some ambiguity in identifying commissioned income from charity accounts due to a spectrum of funding arrangements being referred to as 'commissioned', and a lack of consistency in the way charity accounts classify income. From charitable accounts this is best identified as earned (rather than voluntary or granted) income from public sources. This definition gives a useful (although imperfect) estimate, and can be used to draw comparisons between the charitable arts and cultural sector, and the wider charity sector.

Earned income across the voluntary sector has increased by £9.8bn in the years from 2000/2001 to 2011/2012, an increase of 85%.[18] There are a number of factors driving this. Government policies have helped create the conditions for the sector to increase its involvement in service provision, as discussed in Chapter 4). Earned

income from government sources—'contracting' or 'commissioning'—has increased by 141% since 2000/01, and in 2011/2012 stood at £11.1bn in total. However, for the first time in many years, 2011/2012 saw a decline in statutory earned income of 7% from 2010/2011, in parallel with the overall fall in government funding of £1.3bn.[19]

Despite this, charitable arts and cultural organisations secured more government contracts in 2011/2012 than the year before[*]—£290m in earned income from public sources.[†] The exact proportion of organisations with public funding that includes contracts is unclear, but it currently ranges between 36–74% of all arts and cultural organisations with public funding.[‡] Interestingly, NCVO data suggests that the majority (60%) of income from the government, excluding income from Arts Council England, is earned as contracts rather than from grants or donations.[§] This echoes the trend we see across the voluntary sector.

Different arts and cultural organisations have come across these commissioning opportunities in different ways. Some have sought public funding out of necessity ('push' factors), whilst others have been drawn into the commissioning world as a part of their natural organisational evolution ('pull' factors). For example, Chris Goddard, a library service manager working in Plymouth, said that he got involved in commissioning because the library's core funding was in decline and he was looking for other income streams.[20] In other cases, these opportunities evolved from existing relationships with commissioners. We talk about this in more detail in Chapter 4.

However, while arts and culture are already part of the commissioning landscape, they win significantly less in terms of contract value than the rest of the sector. As shown in Table 5, in 2011/2012 public contracts as a percentage of total income stood at 10% for arts and cultural organisations, while for the rest of the sector it was almost 30%. The difference is particularly noticeable in medium and large organisations. In absolute terms this means that in 2011/2012, a typical non-arts organisation won twice as much in contract income as its arts and cultural counterpart.

Table 5: Public contracts in the charitable arts and cultural sector in comparison to the charity sector in England

	Arts & cultural sector in England 2011/2012	Voluntary sector in England 2011/2012
Public contracts per organisation (average)	£34,223	£72,374
Public contract income as % of total income	10%	28%
- Small	10%	13%
- Medium	11%	22%
- Large	10%	29%

Source: NCVO Almanac and NCVO analysis of charitable arts and cultural organisations

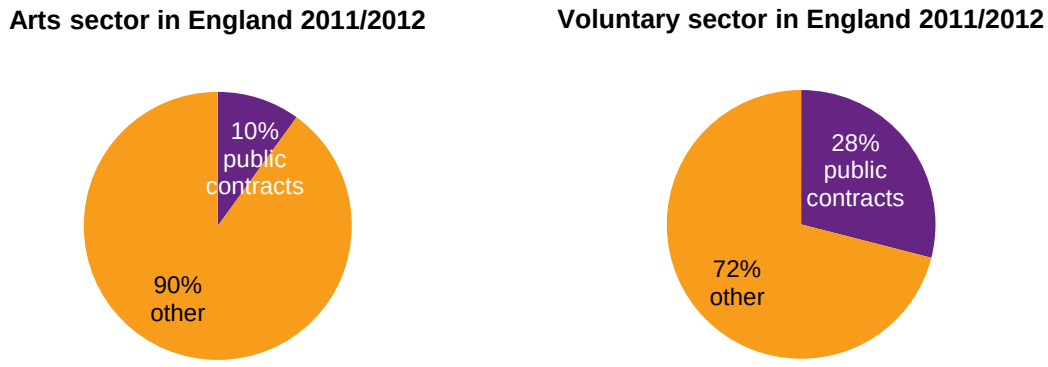
[*] For 2010/2011 the figure is £224.3m (in 2010/11 prices). In 2011/2012 prices the number is £232.2m (Source: NCVO Almanac).

[†] Figure reached by taking 10% (Table 5) multiplied by £2.9bn (Table 2).

[‡] NCVO data shows that 74% of arts and cultural organisations received earned income from public sources (defined as *'public sector fees and payments for contracted services'*). This is the closest figure available to indicate the level of commissioned work, however, there is some ambiguity that makes it difficult to tell the difference between grants and contracts in the accounts, and the accounting framework increases the chances of something being called a contract. The Cultural Commissioning Programme survey revealed 36% of organisations had contracts from public sector commissioners. The definition of contracts used for the Cultural Commissioning Programme was: *'A contract specified the service requirements, and made clear what and how a service was to be delivered, and for what payment. Under a contract VAT is chargeable on the supply of services, but not under a grant.'* Neither sample is fully representative of the arts and cultural sector, so it is impossible to confirm the exact proportion of contracted income from available data, however we do believe that the general trend of an increase in contracts is true. For more information about the difference between NCVO and NPC data, please refer to Appendix C.

[§] Public funding (excluding Arts Council) is 17% of total income for arts organisations; 10% is the statutory earned income. This implies that 59% of the public funding is earned rather than voluntary—10% divided by 17% = 59%. Voluntary income is income that is freely given usually as grants or donations.

Figure 6: Public contracts as a proportion of the total income

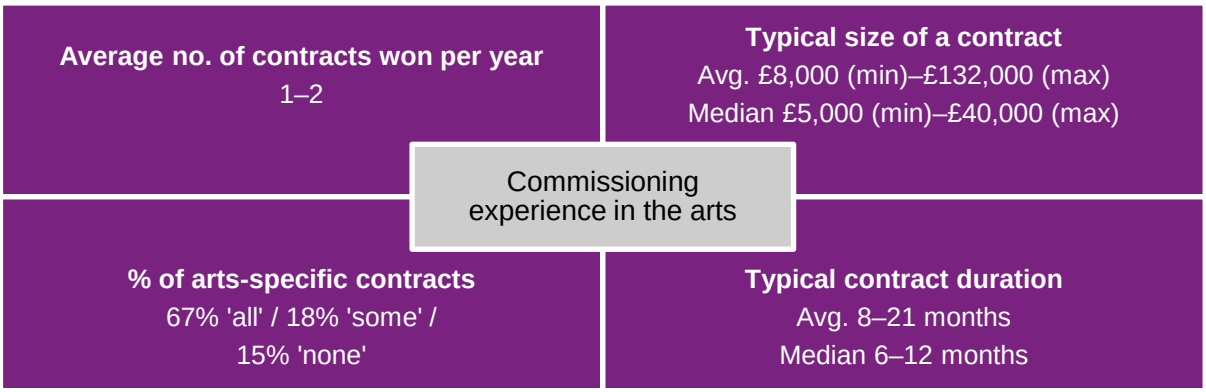


Source: NCVO Almanac and NCVO analysis of charitable arts and cultural organisations.

Today arts and cultural organisations win, on average, one or two contracts a year (Figure 7). Four in five respondents said all or some of their contracts were arts-specific briefs (67% 'all' and 18% 'some'). This was the case with Emma Chetcuti, a director of a local charity called Multistory in Sandwell where a local authority wanted to help neighbourhoods become more active in their communities and saw art as a bridge.[21] However, other people commented that their commissioning contracts (for example, related to education, employment and training or criminal justice) were not aimed at arts and cultural organisations per se.

There is a big range in the size and the length of contracts won by arts and cultural organisations. It is common to see contracts between £5,000 and £40,000, although in practice contract size can range as widely as from several hundred to a few million pounds. A common length of a contract is 6–12 months, but survey respondents indicated that their contracts ranged between a few days and a few years. It is common for contracts to be signed for a year with a renewal clause on a rolling basis.

Figure 7: Public contracts in the arts and cultural sector



Source: Cultural Commissioning Programme survey 2013 (various questions)

In summary, arts and cultural organisations do engage with public commissioning.

However, they secure on average only half of what a typical charity receives every year. Public contracts are only 10% of their income in comparison to 29% for a non-arts or cultural provider. On average, arts and cultural organisations secure one or two contracts per year and the majority are arts-specific briefs.

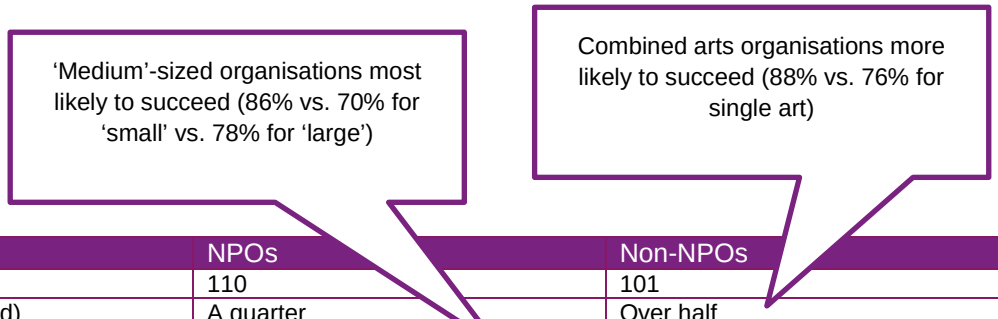
National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs)

NPOs and non-NPOs are different, but have similar success rates in securing public funding and commissioning.

National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) are organisations that are regularly funded by Arts Council England. There are currently 696 NPOs[22] across England. It is interesting to compare NPOs and non-NPOs because there are some important differences and implications for commissioning.*

On average, NPOs are larger than non-NPOs (which includes all micro organisations). NPOs are also more likely to work with a single art form, such as dance, music, literature, theatre, visual arts or some other form as opposed to a combination of these. A quarter of NPOs work primarily with combined art forms in comparison to more than half of non-NPOs.[23]

Table 6: Comparison between NPOs and non-NPOs from the Cultural Commissioning Programme survey (analysis excludes museums and libraries)



	NPOs	Non-NPOs
Count	110	101
Art form (combined)	A quarter	Over half
Size by revenue	Almost all were £100k+ (ie, 'medium' or 'large')	Almost half here under £100k (ie, 'small')
Applied for public funding	Almost all	8 out of 10
Won public funding	8 out of 10	8 out of 10
Proportion of public funding	For half of NPOs public funding was less than 25% of income, and for a further third it was 25–49%.	For almost half of non-NPOs public funding was 50% or more.
Won public contracts	4 in 10	4 in 10

Source: Cultural Commissioning Programme survey 2013 (various questions).

NPOs and non-NPOs showed a similar success rate: in both cases eight in ten secured public funding, and around four in ten secured contracted income (Table 6). From the survey, we see a slightly higher rate of success for combined art form organisations (88% success, compared to 76% success for single art form)—NPOs are more likely to be single art form. By contrast, we see a higher rate of success for medium-sized organisations—which NPOs are more likely to be. This correlation does not prove a causal relationship between art form or size of organisation and success. During interviews, some of the NPOs also commented that it was their NPO status that helped them to secure government contracts; in other words, their status was perceived as a seal of approval or sign of trustworthiness by the funders.

*Arts Council England also funds a portfolio of Major Partner Museums but we do not have data to undertake analysis of this population.

Concluding comments

We do not have reliable aggregated figures for the income profile of the arts and cultural sector as a whole, but data on the charitable arts and culture sector indicate that earned income from government sources—likely to be commissioned income—is significant at £290m.

Arts and cultural organisations feel that social outcomes are relevant to their work, and their experience seems to be comparable with that of the wider voluntary sector in some respects. However the income of arts and cultural organisations is significantly reliant on arts and culture-specific funders, which could present a risk to future income levels.

2. VALUE DELIVERED BY ARTS AND CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS

This chapter is concerned with the way that arts and cultural organisations articulate their value to commissioners, and the reasons why commissioners might be interested in the work of arts and cultural organisations. Chapter 5 discusses the methods of evidencing this value in more detail.

In this section we discuss:

- Where arts and cultural activities can enhance the pursuit of social outcomes
- Engagement and sustained participation
- Inclusivity and difference
- The preventative agenda
- Exploring identity and articulating needs
- Arts and culture addressing the priorities of commissioners
- Is Whether the contribution that arts and culture makes to social outcomes is unique
- Debates about value
- Language and consistency

Key messages

Providers

- It is important to talk the language of social outcomes when interacting with commissioners and submitting bids, but that does not need to be at odds with an artistic method.
- The starting point of discussions with commissioners should be an explanation of the way that your service adds value to the beneficiaries you aim to support, and how you improve outcomes for those people.
- Debates about intrinsic and instrumental value are not relevant to commissioners, and getting caught up in these debates may be a distraction from effective engagement with commissioners.
- It remains important to talk to commissioners about the role of quality in any successful intervention.

Commissioners

- Arts and cultural activities are a relevant response to a whole host of social problems. In particular, these activities have potential to contribute to the preventative agenda.
- Arts and cultural activities are particularly valuable, when compared to other interventions, as they are more likely than alternative approaches to engage participants and ensure ongoing participation. They are able to reach people without accentuating any stigma.
- Where public services seek to engage with, or be relevant to, a range of people—particularly those whom public services traditionally struggle to engage with—working with arts and cultural approaches can be an effective way to do so.

Policymakers and Arts Council England

- Continuing to take the same approach in commissioning public services will continue to get the same results—the significant changes which public services are undergoing demonstrate that this is not an option. Many commissioners now recognise this reality but need guidance from commissioning authorities—whether this be central government, local leadership, or commissioning support bodies—in how to work with arts and cultural providers with more flexibility than current structures allow.
- Arts Council England has a responsibility to continue communicating the value of arts and cultural activities at the sector level, and to do this by taking into account the needs of providers who are increasingly diverting energy into navigating the commissioning process.

This chapter draws primarily on interviews with providers for two reasons: providers made up a majority of interviewees and so we gathered more of their views, but perhaps more importantly, providers are likely to have thought about how and why arts and cultural interventions might be effective, as opposed to commissioners for whom this will be one of many approaches they engage with. Nonetheless, a number of commissioners also expressed enthusiasm for arts and cultural approaches.[24]

Where arts and cultural activities can enhance the pursuit of social outcomes

Individuals benefit in a range of ways from involvement in arts and cultural activities, and the potential for arts and cultural activities to unlock human potential should be attractive to those wanting to achieve social outcomes. Based on interviews with approximately 35 arts and cultural organisations, 20 commissioners, and 30 sector experts, we have identified a number of high-level themes for the ways in which arts and cultural activities contribute to achieving social outcomes that would be of interest to commissioners. These do not necessarily map neatly onto commissioning departments and budgets.

Engagement and sustained participation

A key strength of arts and cultural activities is that they are engaging, challenging and rewarding. Unlike interventions such as a course of medication or the provision of social care, artistic pursuits are enjoyable, independent of the 'ancillary' effects that they may achieve.[25] Arts and cultural interventions take an asset based approach—working with people's potential and giving them a chance to succeed—rather than focusing on the problems and challenges that they face. Participants can feel valued for their contribution, and this avoids the sense that people are a problem to be 'fixed'. This focus encourages sustained participation in activities that are beneficial to recovery. A theme that emerged across interviews was that arts and cultural approaches can be effective in achieving social outcomes precisely because they are not designed solely to target those social outcomes[26] but rather work with individuals' strengths and abilities. This is a strength of these approaches, but can be a real challenge for commissioners who need to make a direct link between the money invested and outcomes achieved. For any service, getting people through the door is the first step to helping them with their problems, but even more important in achieving positive outcomes is the ability to sustain a relationship.[*]

[*] See, for example, World Health Organisation (2003) '*Adherence to long-term therapies: evidence for action*'. In the context of this report, insights in relation to the treatment of depression are particularly relevant.

Effervescent, an organisation that facilitates film, photography and performance projects for young people and vulnerable adults, has a 'turn-up rate' of 90%, for example—a very high rate of ongoing participation for a free, non-compulsory service.[27]

'It's an enjoyable approach that has more likelihood of sticking.'

Chris Gage, Managing Director, Ladder to the Moon[28]

Inclusivity and difference

Arts and cultural interventions can be highly flexible and responsive to the needs, interests and capabilities of those participating. This means that they can also be open and suited to every beneficiary group, including those who might be excluded from other activities (see discussion in Chapter 3).[29] For example in Kent, commissioners are looking into how arts and culture might have a role in building dementia-friendly communities.[30]

But arts and cultural activities can also be a safe way of exploring difference, thereby breaking down barriers between groups that might in other circumstances exclude each other.

Core Arts works with people with mental health problems. The artistic activity supports people to become more resilient and increases their well-being, but an important part of the intervention comes from the public exhibition of the work. The voices and experiences of participants are celebrated publicly, and members of the public gain an insight into mental health problems—generating greater empathy for and understanding of people with different experiences and perspectives.[31]

The preventative agenda

Arts and cultural activities have an important preventative role to play in areas such as health, crime, and the care of older people. In health and social care, arts and culture can provide accessible, flexible and mobile activities delivered in the community, helping to reduce hospital admissions and GP visits. Organisations receiving referrals from GPs can struggle to evidence the impact on referral rates unless information-sharing by GPs is built into the programme design.

In Birmingham, a GP social-prescribing project (part of a wider programme jointly funded by Arts Council England and Birmingham City Council Culture Commissioning Service as part of their Cultural Pilot work with the Community Based Budget programme) is being piloted to assess the effectiveness of creative interventions for people with long term conditions (such as depression), and social isolation as a result of long-term health conditions. Participants are referred to an eight-week programme of creative activity, and the pilot is being evaluated for impact on health and well-being outcomes, including number of GP visits—information which participating GPs and community health workers are committed to sharing.[32]

Arts and cultural activities can be delivered in the community on an ongoing basis and for problems of varying severity. Significantly, these approaches address a broad range of outcomes simultaneously, making them well suited to the ongoing provision of services in a community setting—elements that are central to preventative services.

Commissioners need to balance immediate and acute needs with investment in a long-term strategy, and as budgets come under greater pressure, the most obvious approach may be to retrench and focus on delivering against statutory duties. By their very nature, preventative approaches are extremely difficult to evidence and it can be difficult to invest in preventative work. The extent to which preventative agendas are accepted varies greatly depending on the preferences of local commissioners and the budgets in question. Public health can be progressive in devoting a majority of spending towards preventative interventions; in other areas, such as the commissioning of mental health services, a current lack of the long-term evidence required to demonstrate the ability of preventative activities to divert patients away from acute and secondary care is a hindrance to ensuring

adequate funding.[33] However, a number of the commissioners interviewed in the course of this research did believe that savings could be made through rebalancing funding away from acute interventions and into preventative approaches.[34]

Exploring identity and articulating needs

One way in which arts and culture support people to achieve positive social outcomes is through providing a space to explore identity, and supporting participants to take control of their identity by articulating a version of themselves that they have thought about deeply. This can be powerful in countering negative external perception, and negative self-perception that may have arisen from earlier experiences. For example, when working with young people who are at risk of offending, arts and cultural activities may be as effective as sport-based interventions for building confidence, respect for others, skills in teamwork and discipline, and generating a sense of achievement—but arts and cultural activities also allow people to directly challenge the negative messages they have received about their ability and worth.

'Our identity is the story we tell about ourselves to ourselves, it actually creates our world view. What a good arts process will do is explode the identities that have been put onto people. The people we work with mostly have their dominant story constructed for them by other people. An arts process will enable people to literally rewrite those stories for themselves and share that authentic version of themselves so that society has a better understanding of who they are.'

Toby Lowe, Chief Executive, Helix Arts[35]

Creative approaches also offer a route for people to tell an authentic version of their story, helping professionals to reach a more accurate and holistic understanding of their needs and shape services appropriately. In several interviews, providers noted that formulaic needs analysis produces formulaic answers, as participants tell a version of their story they think professionals want to hear. Needs assessment based on creative approaches gets past this, and is therefore more meaningful and comprehensive.[36]

Image source: Encounters Shop, Dewsbury.

Box 3: Arts and culture as community assets

Some arts and cultural organisations have physical assets that can be of benefit to the community as well as the activities they run. These may be large capital assets such as museums, libraries, archives, theatres and galleries; or they may be the objects that are owned as part of collections, such as instruments, books, artworks and artefacts.

These assets are central to the economic benefits that arts and cultural activities can achieve, through providing jobs and encouraging tourism.[37] Beyond this, however, the physical spaces that they offer contribute social value in a number of ways: they are community spaces that can provide a focal point for social interaction and inclusive activities—so long as organisations work to be genuinely responsive to their communities.[38] ARC, a cultural venue in Stockton-on-Tees, runs a programme of activities for adults with learning disabilities, following the closure of a day centre. Feedback from participants indicates that they value the mixed use of the space, and the opportunity to interact with different kinds of people including practicing artists—a benefit of encouraging activities within the building that go beyond the scheduled activities.[39]

Importantly, they are also neutral, non-threatening spaces:[40] attending your local library or gallery as part of a mental health or adult learning programme does not carry with it the stigma attached to entering a building that is designated as a place for people with a problem. Arts and cultural work that takes place in an open environment avoids the risk of further segregating the people that services are designed to help.

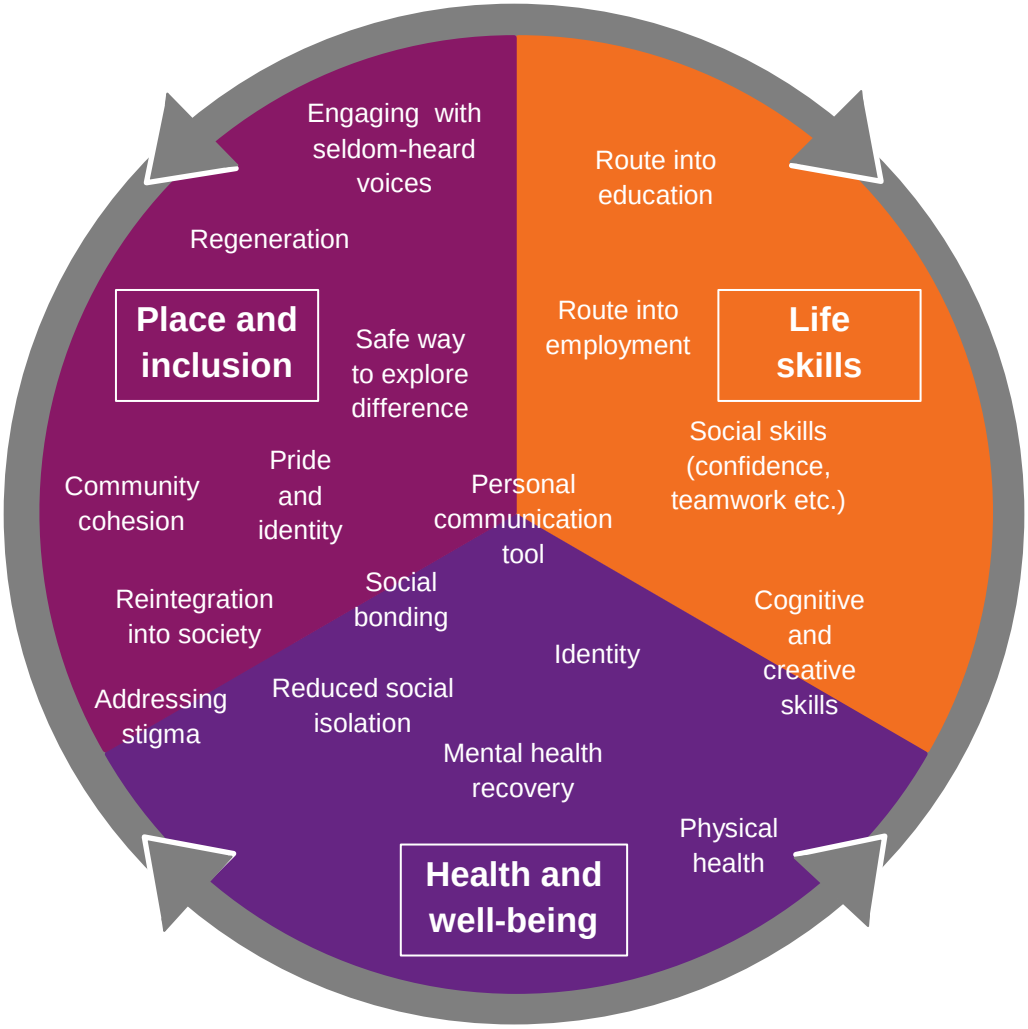
The objects and collections that these organisations own can also contribute to positive social outcomes. Suffolk Museums contribute to the council's priority of increasing educational attainment, for example, by close partnership with local schools to ensure that collections tie in with the curriculum.[41] These objects are also commonly used in the treatment of health conditions through 'arts on prescription' and 'books on prescription' services. GPs refer patients to arts providers through these services to harness the therapeutic benefits of arts activities in treating conditions such as depression and dementia.[42]

It is important to bear in mind, however, that having a focal point in which arts and cultural activities take place may run the risk of segregating these pursuits from society at large and further insulating their beneficiaries. As ever, balance is the key here. The benefits that cultural assets can bring must be appreciated and maintained, but delivered alongside programmes that reach out into the community and take advantage of the arts as a mobile and versatile tool. [43]

Arts and culture addressing the priorities of commissioners

Often commissioners will view the value of arts and culture through the lens of the social outcomes they hope to achieve. To illustrate the social value that arts and cultural activities can achieve, we have mapped these outcomes onto three broad categories relating to health and well-being—life skills, place and inclusion—showing how the interrelating benefits that arts and cultural activities bring can contribute to social outcomes.

Figure 8: Articulating the value of arts and cultural activities to commissioners



Note: This diagram is a visual representation of interview material. The location of outcomes within the diagram (distance from segment boundaries) reflects their relation to the adjacent areas. The arrows indicate that each of the segments can be mutually reinforcing.

Place and inclusion

Arts and cultural activities can encourage civic participation and cohesion—bringing members of a community together and providing a way to communicate a sense of place and local identity. Geographic communities can gain a sense of place and pride in local achievement, which is why investment in cultural institutions can be an effective tool for regeneration. Communities of marginalised groups, not necessarily bound by geographic boundaries, can discover their voice, engage in society and challenge stigma. Other citizens will simply relish the chance to meet and bond with others while they experience a cultural event.

For example, The Brick Box is a community interest company specialising in transforming space through combined arts events. It was commissioned by the regeneration team at Newham Council to reclaim the under-utilised public space below the A13 flyover in Canning Town, London. The area had degenerated and was a hotspot for antisocial behaviour and public drinking. Throughout the summer of 2013 The Brick Box created an urban 'village green', which hosted a programme of free arts activities alongside live music, film and dance.[44]

The organisers used visual arts and film to summarise the success of the event, alongside an evaluation report that was delivered to the council. The criteria reported on, as requested by the council, were: the outputs delivered, an assessment of the use of the space for different forms of activity, estimated visitor numbers, and the wider lessons learnt regarding community involvement and participant demographics.

The success of this event demonstrated that there would be sufficient interest from the community in such activities if the resources were provided. In view of this, the council has incorporated the lessons from the project into the long-term plans for the landscaping and transformation of the area. The success of the A13 Green project also allowed The Brick Box to secure funding (match funding from Arts Council England and private developers) to put on a similar project—'Light Night in Canning Town'—which is now in its second year. The Brick Box maintains good relations with Newham Council and will be applying for another commission to deliver another 'A13 Green' project.[45]

Life skills

Participation in arts and cultural activities can improve individuals' cognitive abilities,[46] give them a chance to interact and express themselves and learn a variety of skills. Learning the technical and creative skills of artistic production opens up a range of new possibilities to participants and raises their aspirations.

Raw Material is a London-based charity that provides the facilities, equipment and training for young people to get involved in music production, performance, film, photography and digital media. This is part of a strategy that puts arts and creativity at the centre of efforts to support participants' well-being and personal development as a way to improve their employment prospects and integration in the community.[47] Raw Material has a service-level agreement contract whereby Lambeth Council partially funds the delivery of a range of services. The council monitors outputs, including attendance and hours of service delivery, alongside demographic data. By collecting data through regular surveys, group meetings and feedback sessions, Raw Material further evidences the achievement of softer outcomes such as improvements in confidence and well-being.

Health and well-being

Individuals benefit from involvement in arts and cultural activities in many ways—from improvements in physical health thanks to a dance class, to improved cognitive function due to taking part in a singing club for people with Alzheimer's. Arts and cultural activities are important tools in enabling self-expression and communication, particularly for those who may struggle to do so through other channels. The benefits of arts and cultural activities for physical and mental health have been much explored in academic literature and project evaluations.[48]

Arts for Health Cornwall and Isles of Scilly, for example, uses dance, design, crafts, visual arts, theatre, writing and singing, as a way to help people with their physical, emotional and mental health. It works in the community with people with mental health problems and those with long-term conditions, and with older people in care homes, particularly targeting dementia. The organisation works with around 20 freelance practitioners, and sees its work as building the inner resources and resilience of its service users, to cope with their problems and enjoy a better quality of life. The organisation is currently contracted through the NHS and local authority budgets.[49]

Organisations focus on physical aspects of health in a number of ways. For example, Breathe Magic uses specially adapted magic tricks to help with physical dexterity in rehabilitation for people with hemiplegia, or who have had a stroke or brain injury. Sue Gallagher, NHS Lambeth Non-executive Director, commented that Breathe Magic achieved progress with children beyond what would be seen in traditional interventions.[50]

Is the contribution that arts and culture makes to social outcomes unique?

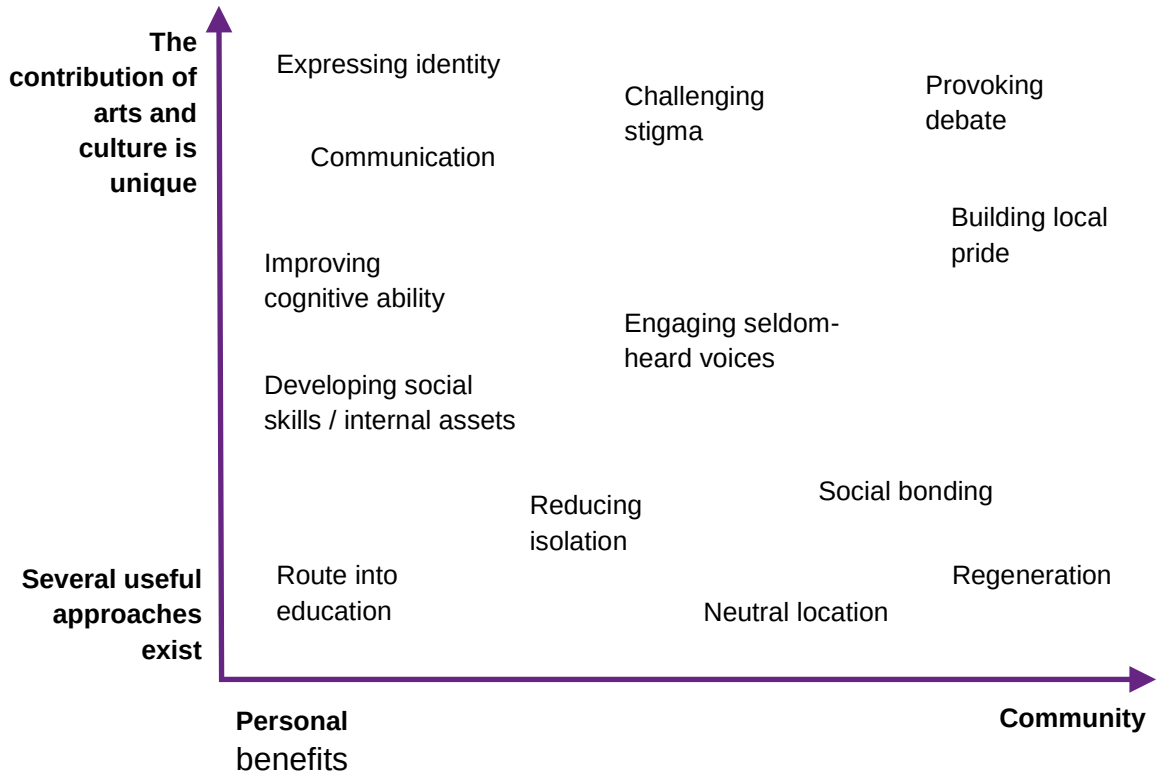
It is rare that any intervention aimed at social outcomes will be the only option. All approaches have alternatives and substitutes, and the same is true for the arts. Sports, conservation and horticultural programmes and activities such as cooking and community meals are most often a direct substitute in terms of the value that arts and cultural activities can achieve—enjoyable activities with effects on health, social skills and community cohesion. Whilst this holds true in the aggregate, at the individual level these activities are not perfect substitutes: different activities will suit different individuals depending on preferences and personalities. As such, public services need to offer a choice—recognising that different individuals will take different routes to the same goals—otherwise some groups will be excluded, and may be denied the help and support that they need.

'Creative arts should be part of a jigsaw of possibilities for people.'

Ian Smith, Commissioning Manager for Mental Health, Kirklees Council[51]

Figure 9 demonstrates where arts and culture offer strong, specific contributions, and where they are among several useful approaches. The other dimension is whether these outcomes are personal or community based. This chart is based on evidence collected from interviews in this research process.*

Figure 9: Understanding the contribution of arts and culture



* Alternative models for understanding the contribution of arts and culture have been developed, including the Architecture of Value developed by Julia Rowntree, and Arts Council England's Holistic case for investment in the arts and culture.

Participatory arts practice

It is often easier to make the case for commissioners to support participatory work—where participants create artistic or cultural work—rather than to support arts and cultural activity which is primarily for audience consumption: it is instinctively easier to see how personal transformation can come about through active participation than through more passive artistic experiences. This is an easier fit for some arts and cultural organisations than for others: the Paul Hamlyn Foundation-funded Our Museum project is supporting ten museums looking for ways to embed participation in their routine work and not just in project work.[52] Working in participatory ways also helps organisations to understand the interests of different communities, and to be more inclusive in designing services.

'I tend to think you get more bang for your buck with participatory work.'

Len Weir, Head of Services for Older People, Haringey Council[53]

Some interventions include a mixture of approaches, for example Dulwich Picture Gallery's 'Good Times: art for older people' programme, which aims to build the resilience of older people, includes a mixture of activities viewing and responding to the collection, as well as creative activities.[54] Some work has been done exploring the benefits of participatory arts practice[55] and studies that have linked positive healthcare environments to improved recovery,[56] but no statistical information on the engagement and consumption of art by people with high support needs—this is an area that needs more work to be fully understood.[57]

This is not to say, however, that direct participants are the only important beneficiaries of arts and cultural activities. Where participatory work takes place, for example in putting on a dramatic production by people with learning disabilities, a considerable benefit also comes through the presence of non-participants—in terms of enhancing a sense of community and in reducing the stigma that people attach to the participants.

Box 4: Commissioners getting creative

A theme from interviews was that commissioners would best grasp the value of arts and cultural approaches by experiencing them. In some places, commissioners have recognised that creative approaches create space to think differently, and have used creative approaches to facilitate new ways of working in a more coordinated and strategic way.[*] In this way arts and cultural activity can become embedded in the conversation much earlier, before the point of service design.

The Dialogue in Action programme in Peterborough[58] brought together senior leaders from different parts of the local authority to experience creatively-facilitated decision-making and develop relationships towards joint working. The programme was not explicitly about commissioning arts and cultural organisations, but the implications for the arts and cultural sector are threefold:

1) By experiencing creatively-facilitated activity, senior leaders understand the benefits first-hand.

2) Senior staff are introduced to the community of artists and cultural organisations working locally.

3) Commissioners thinking in this joined-up way are more likely to develop a coordinated strategy based on resilience-building and preventative work, which arts and cultural organisations can help deliver.

[*] The Place-based commissioning focus area baseline in Appendix A gives more detail of this.

Debates about value

Intrinsic and instrumental value; and does quality matter?

Arts and culture can be valued in terms of their potential to captivate and inspire, or they can be seen as tools to achieve a wider social purpose—and it is clear that arts and cultural engagement can have benefits across a spectrum.[59] This is a long-standing debate in the artistic community, framing these two approaches as 'intrinsic' and 'instrumental' value.[60] While not all arts and cultural organisations feel comfortable focusing on social outcomes, those we interviewed overwhelmingly believe that these outcomes cannot be achieved unless the intervention and the outputs produced are of sufficiently high quality that participants value the experience and the result. The output of participatory activity does not need to meet professional standards expected by the artistic community, but participants need to feel that the intervention is a worthwhile use of their time, that the work produced is a source of pride, and sometimes that the high standards they have achieved have confounded expectations of failure. Participants need to feel that the results of their endeavours have artistic value. The same is true of less participatory artistic and cultural activity: people will not value or consider it a good use of their time unless the artistic and cultural outputs are of a high standard.

Many organisations feel that the involvement of professional artists—people with credibility as artistic producers—is crucial in the achievement of this quality,[61] although opinion is divided as to whether other people (for example, volunteers who are not professional artists) could achieve similar outcomes.[*] A number of providers interviewed for this research employed professional artists to lead and facilitate activities. This brings extra costs to the service, which can make the intervention seem expensive to procurement teams in the context of cost-based scoring criteria.[62] However, to succeed, activities need to be led by individuals with the relevant skills to make the experience interesting and engaging. There is a risk that poor-quality interventions could fail to deliver planned outcomes or even cause harm, and risk damaging the credibility of arts and cultural interventions with commissioners.

For commissioners, artistic value will be of little interest unless it can be linked to those outcomes, yet this does not mean that providers need to make a choice between an intrinsic or an instrumental understanding of their value: the two coexist. Where an organisation works with a specific population in commissioned work, and takes their contributions seriously, this should inform the development of artistic practice, ensuring that all the organisation's artistic outputs are inclusive and reflect the interests of the communities they serve.

Language and consistency

One of the central barriers to better engagement between commissioners and providers in the arts and cultural sector is a misalignment in the language used to describe the objectives of a service. In the new commissioning environment, the language of social outcomes is the currency, whilst arts and cultural organisations will usually feel more comfortable talking first and foremost about artistic outcomes. Many providers report that in their interaction with commissioners they have opted to downplay any mention of themselves as an 'arts' organisation to demonstrate alignment with commissioner aims and to ensure they are taken seriously. They perceive that if the service is couched as a health intervention, or an employment intervention, rather than an 'arts' intervention, it is more likely to gain traction.

This presents providers with an apparent trade-off: downplaying the creative core of their service might lead to greater success in winning contracts, but at the same time it erodes the standing of arts and cultural interventions in the commissioning world. Our research suggests, however, that these two considerations are not incompatible. It is simply the case that whilst providers are focusing on the *methods* used to achieve outcomes, commissioners are focusing on the *outcomes* that these methods can achieve.

[*] Interviewees were divided in their views. See also Daykin, N. and Feldtkeller, B. (2009) *Arts @ Callington Road Project Evaluation Report* for discussion of the role of artist as facilitator.

'We didn't change what we were doing. We just changed how we articulated it… we focused more on outcomes than on activity.'

Pippa Jones, Director, Create Gloucestershire[63]

In order to effectively engage in the commissioning environment, providers need to demonstrate that their services can meet the specified outcomes that are prioritised by commissioners. Artistic interventions can and do contribute to the provision of commissioners' core outcomes, and framing them in these terms will help artistic interventions to maintain a role in the delivery of public services, even as discretionary services are squeezed.

However, talking about outcomes achieved does not have to detract from the method used to achieve them. Commissioners will want to see the intervention described in terms that go beyond the artistic or cultural outcomes, but providers should not shy away from communicating why an artistic or creative approach is a suitable way to achieve social outcomes. Successful delivery on social outcomes using artistic methods will strengthen the track record of the sector in the commissioning environment. Meanwhile, the sector as a whole should look for opportunities to communicate this message of relevance and success in delivering commissioner priorities.

Often an arts and cultural approach will be one among a range of possible solutions open to commissioners. Commissioners will still need to weigh the value of arts and cultural approaches against alternatives to assess which will offer the most economically advantageous solution (recognising both cost and achievement of outcomes). Before commissioners can be expected to act, the sector needs to demonstrate that it delivers value in the areas where it has potential to make a difference. Approaches to measuring the value of arts and cultural activities are discussed further in Chapter 5.

Concluding comments

Arts and cultural providers are thoughtful about the value they deliver in terms of social outcomes, and speak convincingly about how creative interventions can impact social outcomes in ways that are specific to the arts and cultural approach—while recognising that arts and cultural activities are usually not the only ways of achieving these outcomes. The developing literature on this subject will be discussed in Chapter 5.

3. PROVIDER EXPERIENCES OF COMMISSIONING

This chapter explores the unique set of opportunities, but also barriers, that arts and cultural organisations face when engaging in commissioning. While there are under-explored opportunities to provide services to a spectrum of beneficiary groups, organisations must step up to the sometimes new challenges of talking the language of commissioners, building relationships and being mindful of the way commissioning can change the nature of an organisation and its self-perceived ethos.

In this section we discuss:

- Opportunities to be commissioned
- Practical experiences of commissioning
  - Getting involved early, and explaining the value
  - Building relationships and knowing what commissioners want
  - Getting commission ready
  - What providers think of commissioning processes
- Barriers and enabling factors
- Effect of commissioning on organisations
- Different types of commissioning

Key messages

Providers

- Commissioning is not the only game in town and will not be suitable for all organisations.
- Building good relationships with commissioners is essential: this is an important skill for organisations to learn.
- Not all commissioning is the same: each organisation needs to establish which types of contracts it has the skills, capacity and desire to compete for.
- Successful commissioning takes time and commitment: organisations need to plan time to invest in both the bidding and delivery stages.
- Commissioners are working within strict frameworks and may not have the freedom to be flexible about what is required of provider organisations.
- Organisations need to be aware of and draw upon the range of funding available, beyond arts-specific briefs.

Commissioners

- Arts and cultural interventions may help deliver on many commissioner outcomes.
- Knowing who to talk to within commissioning bodies is a particular struggle: commissioners should aim to include the arts and cultural sector in market engagement events, and make commissioning structures and opportunities to influence as transparent as possible.

- While remaining alert to legal requirements and due process, commissioners should be open to less bureaucratic ways of commissioning which minimise the administrative burden for all parties.[*]
- Specifying outcomes rather than methods for achieving them is less administratively burdensome, and allows providers the freedom to bring their familiarity with service users to bear on developing innovative and effective solutions.

Policymakers and Arts Council England

- Local and regional infrastructure organisations should take on a convening role to help arts and cultural organisations make contact with commissioners, and network with other organisations within and beyond the sector. Where local infrastructure is underdeveloped, national organisations such as Arts Council England may be able to play a convening role, or support organisations in the sector to self-organise.[†]
- Organisations in the sector need training, support and guidance so that they feel confident assessing and competing for contracts. The Cultural Commissioning Programme will begin to address this, but change will take time.

Becoming involved in commissioning is not exclusively about securing income: it should be orientated to the design of effective services. Non-delivering organisations have an important role to play in helping commissioners design services effectively. However, even when we do consider the income opportunities of delivering commissioned work, commissioning will not be suitable for all organisations. This chapter seeks to understand the experiences of organisations that have been commissioned, where creative approaches have been successful, and what attributes or situations make it more or less suitable for organisations to engage with commissioning (see barriers and enabling factors from page 45).

Opportunities to be commissioned

This research involved a 'mapping' exercise to identify where arts and cultural organisations are working with specific beneficiary types and outcome areas likely to be of interest to commissioners. In Tables 7 and 8, rows are shaded a darker colour where there is more activity, and a lighter colour where there is little activity. Heat mapping is based on findings from the Cultural Commissioning Programme survey, interviews with commissioners and providers, and consultation with the Cultural Commissioning Programme advisory group. This took in a broad range of practices, but cannot be comprehensive—the ordering of entries in the tables does not reflect a strict ranking.

The final column includes an example of an organisation working in this area: often this is one among many organisations identified in the course of this research (and this may not be the only area in which the organisation works). The table illustrates where organisations are delivering on priorities that might interest commissioners, but not all of these organisations are currently commissioned for their work.

[*] See Communities and Local Government Committee (2014) Local Government Procurement.

[†] The Cultural Commissioning Programme is one of the ways in which Arts Council England is supporting this activity, see www.ncvo.org/CCProg.

Level of activity colour scale

Table 7: Mapping by beneficiary group

Arts and cultural organisations work with a broad array of beneficiary groups, but in particular children and young people, older people, people with disabilities, and those with seldom-heard voices.

Beneficiary group	Activity level	Commentary	Example organisations
Children		Aside from education work relevant to all children; support to children with specific challenges, for example young carers or children in care. Early years work with parents to build communication and parenting skills.	WAVE—runs a programme working with teen parents.
Older people / retired		Can address isolation, support those with dementia to stay active and engaged, and ensure that people in residential environments have access to arts and culture.	Live Music Now—professional musicians in care homes.
People with disabilities		Both adults and children, physical and learning disabilities.	The Museum of East Anglian Life—supported volunteering.
Seldom-heard voices		Arts and culture can be a route to engagement for socially-excluded people to better articulate their experiences. Exhibiting work produced is a way for commissioners and the wider community to understand the perspective of people who may otherwise not have their voices heard.	Core Arts—uses the arts to break down prejudices associated with mental health problems.
Young people		Lots of organisations working within schools. Outside-schools organisations often work with specific outcomes or sub-groups.	Raw Material—music and media experiences for young people.
Local communities		Activities that encourage kindness, empathy, or connection to others in the community. Place-making and local identity.	People United—creativity to build a more caring society.
General public		There are a range of open-access services that receive core funding from government sources. Some commissioned services are for the general public, notably where culture and leisure trusts have been 'spun out' from the local authority (ie, services were previously run and managed by the local authority, but are now run as independent organisations).	Museums, libraries and galleries offer open access (free) or ticketed activities for the general public.*
Refugees / Asylum seekers		Examples uncovered tended to be around practical skills and opportunities, for example libraries offering IT skills and facilities allowing people to read materials in their native language.	Libraries in Staffordshire helping refugee communities get online.
Gender-specific		Relatively little identified addressing issues of gender in isolation, but there is some gender-specific work for people with specific needs or experiences.	Clean Break—theatre company working with female offenders.

* It is less likely that a service open to the general public would be contracted: these organisations provide arts and cultural activity for the general public, but these are often funded through core budgets, and/or through ticket sales.

Table 8: Mapping by outcome areas

The arts and cultural sector can also deliver on a wide range of outcome areas, but particularly in mental health and well-being, physical health, and education and learning.

Outcome	Activity level	Commentary	Example organisations
Education and learning		Using cultural resources to supplement school learning. Participatory experiences for cognitive development and academic achievement. Development of soft skills such as collaboration and problem solving. Re-engaging with learning, particularly for adult education.	Sage Gateshead delivers In Harmony—music and orchestra activity for children.
Mental health		Recurring theme that overlaps with well-being and physical health. Organisations working to demonstrate relevance of arts and culture in clinical settings.	Jack Drum Arts—'Colour your Life' arts on prescription to support mental health.
Physical health		Dance and physical health; particularly preventing falls among older people. Rehabilitation and building motor skills following physical trauma.	Breathe Magic—magic tricks for rehabilitation following stroke or brain injury.
Well-being		Important outcome for almost all interventions and also for many commissioners.	Luton Culture—intergenerational work: well-being for older people.
Crime and public safety		Various aspects including working on well-being and personal development for offenders which encourages people to make positive life choices including not offending.	Safe Ground—prison-based 'Family Man' desistance programme.
Employment and training		Mostly in combination with specific beneficiary group: homeless people, offenders, people with mental health problems.	Helix Arts—developing skills towards employment-readiness.
Inclusion / participation / community cohesion		Relationship between cultural engagement and civic engagement. An interest of Arts Council England, for example through its Creative People and Places fund.	Multistory—local community works with professional artists to tell their stories.
Regeneration		Strong theme in some areas: Southampton is using arts and culture to drive tourism and job creation. Many developers will invest in an arts and culture strategy under community engagement obligations.	The Brick Box—regeneration of disused areas.
Conservation and environment		Some examples, but not a strong theme in survey or interviews. Arts used as a tool to explain ideas and prompt debate about climate change.	Horniman Museum—education sessions looking at traditionally-made objects and manufactured counterparts.
Substance misuse		Relatively little specifically addressing this issue, but may overlap with other outcomes or beneficiary groups, for example offenders.	Action on Addiction, Hope House—support includes art therapy.
Housing		Secure and stable housing can underpin the pursuit of a number of other outcomes, and progress in other outcomes may include developing the skills to maintain a tenancy. Housing associations may invest in public art to help build a positive and enjoyable living environment.	Sovereign Housing has commissioned a sculpture for a new housing development in Torquay.

Despite arts and cultural activities having relevance to outcomes and beneficiaries which would be relevant to a broad range of commissioners, arts and culture-specific contracts remain overwhelmingly important for the sector: 85% of commissioned organisations deliver at least some contracts with arts or culture-specific briefs.[64] As such, arts and cultural organisations should seek more diverse funders for their work—and it is clear that they are working in ways that might be relevant to a range of commissioner audiences. Some interviewees identified contracts from non-arts or culture budgets, where a creative approach had not been explicitly requested. For example, Core Arts, delivering mental health contracts for Lambeth Council, was contracted even though the council had not originally been looking for non-medical approaches.[65]

Following the initial mapping, three focus areas that offered potential commissioning opportunities—that demonstrated potential for progress and yet indicated a need for better understanding and support—were studied in further detail to get a more thorough understanding of opportunities and challenges. Examples and insights from these focus areas have informed findings throughout this report. The three focus areas were:

- **Older people**: arts and cultural activity can contribute to health and well-being outcomes including resilience and maintaining independence in both residential and community settings. It also has applications in a range of long-term conditions affecting people in older life, notably dementia.
- **Mental health and well-being**: mental health, defined as the treatment of diagnosable conditions in a clinical context; and well-being, taken to refer to broader outcomes including loneliness, isolation and confidence, which can be targeted in the community and outside a hospital context
- **Place-based commissioning** can mean different things to different audiences: for commissioners, it means strategic coordination across different budgets and departments to fund common outcomes; for the arts and cultural sector it is often associated with public art expressing community identity and developing connection to locality.

Profiles of these focus areas can be found in the Appendix A.

Practical experiences of commissioning

Getting involved early, and explaining the value

Providers told us that early engagement is a key factor in commissioning success. However, half of all organisations got involved with a commissioning opportunity at the point of completing an application, which is later than ideal, while 40% got involved with commissioners earlier in the process.[66] Providers need to be clear in what they are aiming to achieve and to respond to consultations at the earliest stages if they are to contribute to assessment of needs and influence service design.[67] Many organisations simply do not know how to engage with commissioners, or at what stage in the process they can make their voice heard.[*] Where tender documents have not been written with creative approaches in mind, organisations struggle to make their case at application stage. Some commissioners are simply not interested in creative approaches.[68]

'[The arts perspective] goes down really well when you can have a conversation about it—service managers and commissioners really get it. But trying to articulate that within the scope of a grant or tender applications is really hard. When people put out grant or tender applications they're based on a set of assumptions… if you're trying to challenge that within that application, you're onto a bit of a loser really.'

Toby Lowe, Chief Executive, Helix Arts[69]

[*] This challenge was discussed by a number of interviewees, including: Howard, J., Director at Arts for Health Cornwall and Isles of Scilly (NPC interview, 21 October 2013); Moutrey, D., Director at Cornerhouse (NPC interview, 5 September 2013); Ward, J., Co-director at *Jack Drum Arts* (NPC interview, 31 January 2014).

Building relationships and knowing what commissioners want

As many as 25% of organisations felt that a weak relationship with a funder had prevented them from succeeding in commissioning, and 22% felt that the potential commissioner was not interested in arts and cultural organisations.[70] This theme was repeated in interviews as a key success factor: many providers made a point of getting to know commissioners (see barriers and enabling factors from page 45), going 'above and beyond the call of duty', for example by running free workshops.[71] This approach has implications for staff capacity and it can be challenging for senior staff to balance the time required to engage strategically with commissioners with day-to-day business needs.[72] Knowing who to call, if indeed the right person exists—especially given personnel reductions in commissioning bodies—poses a practical obstacle to forming relationships.

But failure to build effective relationships can have significant consequences: if the arts and cultural sector does not have a high profile with commissioners, organisations may not be invited to market engagement and development events, and may miss tender opportunities or be excluded from consortia development.[73] Even once the contract is secured, disengaged commissioners will create little institutional learning about the project within the commissioning organisation, leaving the contract vulnerable if the individual leaves that post.[74]

In bidding for contracts, organisations need to be flexible and demonstrate that they align with commissioner priorities. Organisations with insider knowledge are at an advantage when positioning themselves in relation to commissioner interests, for example The Albany, an arts centre in South London, has benefited from an in-house occupational therapist helping to navigate health and social care departments. Other examples include Jayne Howard who leads Arts for Health Cornwall and Isles of Scilly and has a background in the NHS, and the WAVE gallery (Wolverhampton City Council's museums, galleries and archives service) which has benefited from the local authority's Arts and Museums service being located within the Adults and Communities directorate, enabling the gallery to align with directorate objectives, and build relationships with colleagues in adult social care. This helped WAVE secure a contract for reablement services with the adult health and social care department.[75]

Getting 'commission ready'

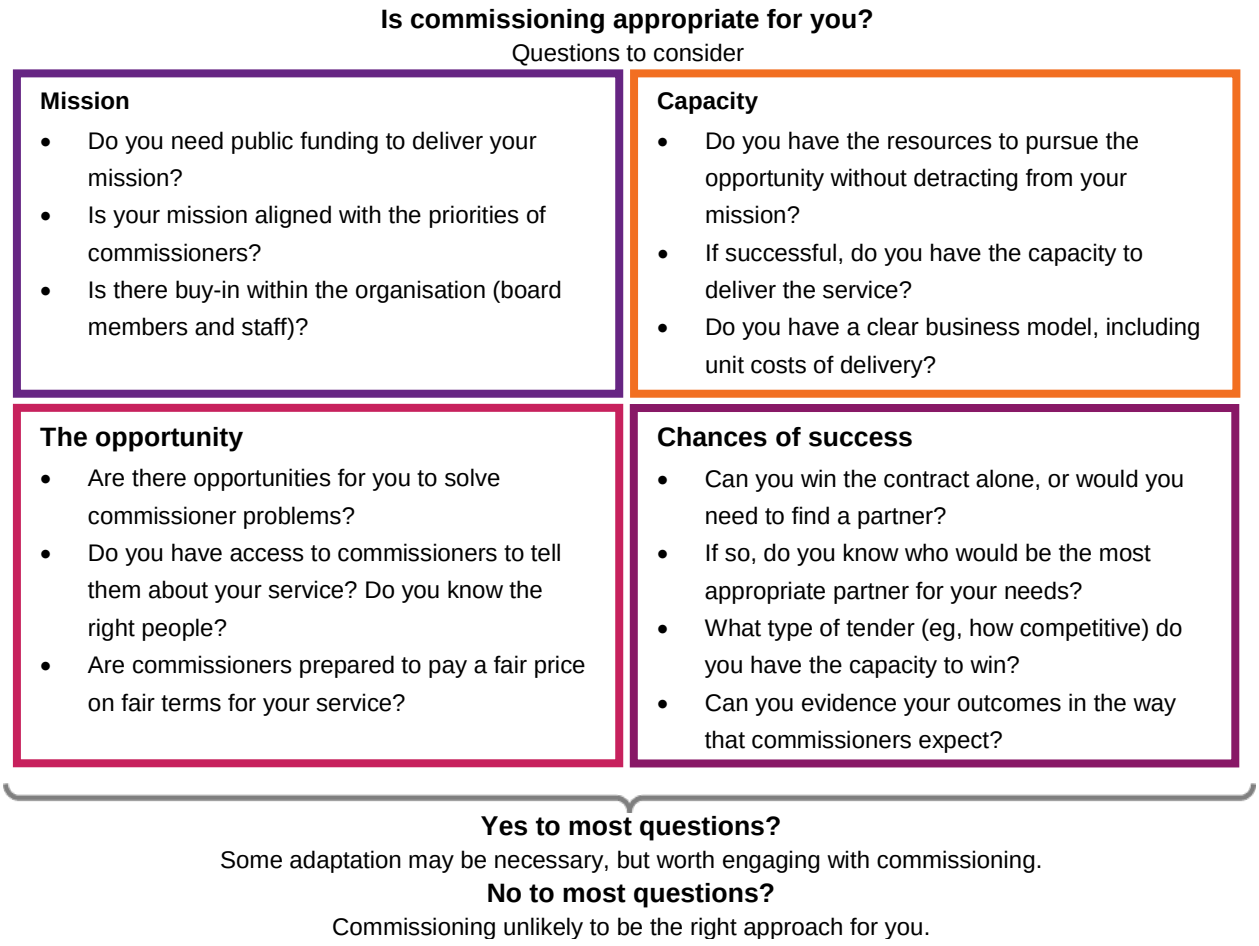
Most organisations that had secured commissioned work did so in a competitive environment: for 67% of organisations at least some of their contracts were competitively won,[76] although interviews uncovered an important minority that chose not to undertake competitive tenders.[77] Some organisations prefer not to devote staff time to opportunities where success is not guaranteed,[78] and try to avoid competitive tendering by developing relationships with individuals or independent organisations, rather than institutional commissioners—for example through personal budget commissioning, through individual relationships with care homes, or with schools and education providers.[79]

Potential providers need to have realistic expectations of their capacity to compete in competitive tenders, and of their role within a commissioning environment. If contracts require completion of a pre-qualifying questionnaire (PQQ) this implies a significant investment of time before the specification for the contract is even available, and is simply not feasible for many small organisations. Providers can take steps to reduce this burden by getting themselves 'commission ready', which involves having in place the required policies, insurance, and appropriate financial and legal documentation. Some investment of time is inevitable though, and smaller organisations with less capacity will first need to decide whether engaging in this sort of environment is right for them (see Figure 10): if so, then finding a role in these contracts will often necessitate some form of partnership (discussed in Chapter 6).

Providers must also be wary of bidding for contracts that focus primarily on cost reduction. In some cases the arts or cultural intervention may offer a high-quality solution at low cost—through better use of existing assets, and by building on the assets of participants to build towards lower reliance on services—however, arts and cultural organisations need to be wary of trying to deliver inadequately resourced contracts where downward pressure on costs forces delivery of poor-quality work.

In some cases, organisations secure grant funding to deliver work under certain conditions which more closely mirror the requirements of a contract. This funding acts as a bridge to smooth the transition from traditional grant funding to contracting arrangements. For example, ARC, a cultural venue in Stockton-on-Tees, received a grant from the Skills Funding Agency to move away from project-based working and develop broader programmes of activity.[80] In Derby, arts and cultural organisations have secured private funding to deliver work aligned with the priorities of certain commissioners, making the case for their interventions to be commissioned in the future.[81]

Figure 10: Assessing whether to engage with commissioning*



* For a step-by-step guide to the commissioning process, see LGA (2013) *Engaging in commissioning: A practical resource pack for the culture and sport sector*.

Box 5: Skills gaps

The main commissioning training needs identified by the survey were:

- finding commissioners and commissions (68%);
- understanding public service markets and commissioning (including understanding of their language and definitions used) (43%);
- managing relationships with commissioners and negotiating contracts (35%); and
- measuring and evidencing impact (35%).[82]

Some interviewees were not fully comfortable with commissioning, and skills gaps included:

- support in assessing which opportunities would be suitable for the organisation before investing time bidding for the work;
- technical elements of bid writing to meet scoring criteria;
- presenting work in person and initiating/maintaining dialogue .

However several did not identify specific skills gaps and instead expressed a general lack of confidence.

Several found colleagues or partner organisations they could draw on for support when needed.

Given the recurring theme of the importance of good relationships with commissioners, relationship building is a key skill organisations need to develop.

One interviewee had been invited to help assess applications for another commissioning opportunity, and found the experience of being in the commissioner's shoes eye-opening for his own bid writing.[83]

What providers think of commissioning processes

A majority of organisations (65%) felt that their contracts were well managed by commissioners, with a significant minority of 15% feeling that contracts were poorly managed (20% were unsure).[84]

Some organisations struggled with short-term contracts and uncertainty over whether these would be renewed, risking discontinuity of support for vulnerable users and additional costs in re-recruiting and training new project staff.[85] Others had experienced poor planning or unclear expectations from commissioners, with specifications not finalised, for example, or changed after delivery of the contract had started.[86] In other cases, power struggles or lack of coordination from co-commissioners impaired the ability of organisations to deliver work effectively.[87]

The ability of arts and cultural organisations to help commissioners navigate controversial situations can be valuable—for example, Creative Health has been involved in informal conversations about how services can be redesigned[88] —however this kind of activity does carry risks of alienating organisations from the beneficiary groups they hope to represent and to serve. In some examples, commissioned organisations felt uncomfortable about being the public face of unpopular spending decisions taken by the local authority.[89]

Box 6: Where do providers hear about commissioning opportunities?*

Finding out about commissioning opportunities is a struggle for some organisations and a key barrier to engaging with commissioning.

The most important source of information on commissioning opportunities was existing relationships with funders (used by 88% of survey respondents). Most interviewees had personal contacts and regular interaction with commissioning staff. Some organisations forged links with non-budget holders to research commissioners, for example, making links through social workers to health and social care commissioners.

The second key route to information was through infrastructure organisations and professional networks, cited by 49% of respondents. These included arts and culture and art form-specific networks such as the National Culture and Leisure Forum, national and local voluntary sector networks such as the local council for voluntary services, and commissioner newsletters and publications (such as the North East Procurement Organisation, or Compete For).

A number of organisations stressed the importance of getting out and meeting both commissioners and potential partners face-to-face at meetings and events. The arts and cultural sector needs to become a regular fixture of market development events, and while some commissioners are alert to the need to include the sector in invitations, others are not and organisations need to proactively seek forums to engage with commissioners. Of course this requires a significant time commitment.

With personal budgets, the service-users are the 'commissioners'. Providers may need to use different networks to raise the profile of their offer, including the personal networks of people working within health and social care departments.

Arts Council England could play a role as a powerful information channel, using its regional structure to engage more actively with local commissioners, identifying relevant budgets, and communicating opportunities to relevant arts and cultural organisations.

Barriers and enabling factors

Providers face a range of barriers to seeking and bidding on commissioning opportunities, from poor information about opportunities to lack of time or poor relationships with commissioners.† Factors will have different levels of importance for different organisations and in different contexts.

* Information in this box is drawn from the Cultural Commissioning Programme survey, September 2013, Q. 46, and a range of interviews: Gage, C., Managing Director at Ladder to the Moon (NPC interview, 30 August 2013); Wilson, M., Programme Director at Tin Arts (NPC interview, 3 September 2013); Chetcuti, E., Director at Multistory (NPC interview, 5 September 2013); MacDermott, P., Principal Librarian at Warwickshire Libraries (NPC interview, 19 August 2013); Weinberg, C., Chief Executive at Safe Ground (NPC interview, 9 September 2013); Lowe, T., Chief Executive at Helix Arts (NPC Interview, 16 August 2013); Rowley, L., independent consultant, and Allison, M., Management Improvement Services Ltd (NPC interview, 14 August 2013); Brown, T., Director at Raw Material (NPC interview, 21 August 2014); Ward, J., Co-director at Jack Drum Arts (NPC interview, 31 January 2014); and Freeman, R., Director at The Brick Box (NPC interview, 31 January 2014).

† Information is drawn from the Cultural Commissioning Programme survey, September 2013, Q. 26, and a range of interviews: Smith, W., Head of Strategy and Enterprise at Sage Gateshead, and Rothwell, A., Culture and Tourism Manager at Newcastle City Council (NPC interview, 22 August 2013); Perman, L., Executive Director at Clean Break (NPC interview, 12 September 2013); Chetcuti, E., Director at Multistory (NPC interview, 5 September 2013); Moutrey, D., Director at Cornerhouse (NPC interview, 5 September 2013); Andrews, T., Chief Executive at People United (NPC interview, 4 October 2013); and Brown, T., Director at Raw Material (NPC interview, 21 August 2014).

Barriers to commissioning success

- **Lack of awareness about opportunities** was experienced by 39% of survey respondents.
- **Lack of time** was equally problematic as organisations recognised the drain on senior staff who need to balance commissioning with other priorities.
- **Level of competition** was the main reason organisations felt they had been unsuccessful: cited by 58% of survey respondents, and echoed by interviewees. We do not have data on what types of organisations survey respondents and interviewees lost out to—whether or not these were other arts and cultural organisations.
- **Poor relationships with the commissioner** left organisations unable to make a case for their work.
- **Cost** was an area where a number of organisations felt they had lost out—where commissioners had understood value for money in purely financial terms. Some felt that money available for contracts was insufficient to deliver a high quality intervention on a basis of full cost recovery—few organisations have the funds to subsidise contracts.
- **Open-access services** can create a challenging case for commissioning: one interviewee noted that GPs were willing to refer to art-on-prescription services but would not pay for it, because they were referring users to already-existing services.
- **Struggling to demonstrate impact** on the outcomes commissioners care about: for example, a theatre intervention struggling to demonstrate impact on health outcomes when the organisation does not have an existing profile in this area.
- **Exclusion from market engagement** can be a problem where activity is focused on engagement with the voluntary sector, and the links between the arts and cultural sector and the voluntary sector are weak. Once excluded at this stage, organisations may not hear about opportunities, or may struggle to engage where they have not been involved in specification design.
- **Out of borough** contracts can be hard to secure, even when organisations have a track record of similar work: grassroots connections can be important to commissioners.
- **Size** can affect organisations' suitability for certain contracts: as contracts get larger, organisations cannot deliver the full range of activity required and need to deliver a small part of a contract secured by a partner, or subcontract from a prime contractor. For example, local authorities may offer a single tender for adult health and social care, rather than a contract to deliver arts activity.
- **Mission drift** can be a concern that discourages some organisations from getting involved in commissioning—they fear they will become preoccupied with delivery of a contract rather than focusing on its original aims (for this reason it is important that organisations only engage in contracts that align with their mission). Some organisations describe this as an **unwillingness to define outcomes in a linear way**: they feel that defining a sequence of outcomes that should result from participation in their activities is contrary to the flexible, creative approach which is central to their work.
- **Museums and libraries** experience structural challenges in securing commissioned contracts from a local authority which they are formally part of: some local authorities have restrictions around ability to pay another part of the same organisation for activities it seeks to outsource. To address this challenge, these organisations may need to work in partnership with independent organisations (such as bidding consortia) to secure contracts which they can then deliver by being subcontracted by the bidding partner.

Despite these barriers, there are ways in which provider organisations can increase their chances, for instance by looking for ways to boost their credibility either through evidence of success or validation from respected partners, or by talking the commissioners' language about beneficiary needs.[*]

[*] Information is drawn from a range of interviews: Smith, W, Head of Strategy and Enterprise at Sage Gateshead, and Rothwell, A., Culture and Tourism Manager at Newcastle City Council (NPC interview, 22 August 2013); Cox, J., Commissioner for Tourism and Culture at Staffordshire County Council and President of the Society of Chief Librarian.(NPC interview, 15 August

Enabling factors

- **Creative, imaginative approaches** to work in new ways can help organisations meet the requirements of commissioners while staying aligned with their original mission.
- **Credibility** from external sources can benefit providers, for example NPO status, achievement of a quality standard, or a leadership role in the sector.
- **Access to commissioners**—knowing who the commissioners are and being able to talk to them about the organisation's approach and success—is crucial, and can be easier in small local authorities.
- **Flexibility** to present the organisation and its work in a way which aligns with commissioner priorities, helping commissioners see the organisation as relevant. Interviewees felt that arts and cultural organisations could better engage with commissioners where they felt comfortable compromising on language, and reflecting commissioner priorities back to them, rather than being too rigid in describing their work on its own terms.
- **A strong board** (of trustees, or equivalent for non-charitable organisations) containing business-minded people who understand the commissioning context, ideally with strong professional profiles (eg, prison governors on the board of an organisation working with offenders).
- **A focus on beneficiaries** throughout the organisation's work, and a real understanding of how to work effectively with groups with specific needs.
  - Combined arts organisations felt there was value in offering beneficiaries choice across a range of artistic disciplines, and thereby greater choice and control over the activities they engage in and a role in co-designing the programme.
  - Museums and libraries act as communication channels as well as cultural producers: this can simplify commissioning relationships as there is no need to balance commissioner interests with artistic autonomy.
- **Ability to engage in partnership working** (see Chapter 6).
- **Sufficient capacity** within the organisation to respond to opportunities as they arise; ensuring that the burden of building relationships and responding to tenders does not fall to one person.
- **Insider knowledge** of what makes commissioners tick, from someone who has experience of working within commissioning bodies. This is something that should be considered when recruiting board members, as trustees can be a valuable way to bring new knowledge and expertise to an organisation.
- **Supportive professional networks** that can assist with advice and expertise can be extremely valuable. These might be infrastructure organisations offering advice and training, or networks of peers bidding jointly for contracts. It is not necessary for each organisation to have all the skills required for commissioning, provided they are present somewhere in the network.
- **Willingness and ability to measure** the things commissioners need to see when managing the contract. Where arts and cultural organisations can demonstrate that they will meet commissioners' expectations for reporting on their work and demonstrating its effectiveness, they will be attractive as suppliers.

2015); Chetcuti, E., Director at Multistory (NPC interview, 5 September 2013); Jones, P., Director at Create Gloucestershire (NPC interview, 15 August 2013); Weinberg, C., Chief executive at Safe Ground (NPC interview, 9 September 2013); Lowe, T., Chief executive at Helix Arts (NPC interview, 16 August 2013); Goddard, C., Library Service Manager at Plymouth City Council NPC interview, 28 August 2013; Davies, M., Head of Policy and Communications at the Museums Association. NPC interview, 3 (NPC interview October 2013); Gant, K., Director at Creative Health CIC (NPC interview. 10 March 2014); and Weir, L., Head of Services for Older People at Haringey Council (NPC interview, 3 February 2014).

Effect of commissioning on organisations

Commissioning can benefit organisations, and interviews highlighted ways in which engaging with commissioning had led to organisational or service improvements. But commissioning also poses challenges which require compromises:*

Table 9: Effect of commissioning and concerns

Area	Effect of commissioning	Concerns
Reputation and profile	Being commissioned increases the profile of the organisation and demonstrates that it has a 'can-do' attitude, improving its visibility and reputation with a range of stakeholders.	Maintaining this level of profile and delivering contracts can be a drain on the resources of senior staff. Organisations need to be comfortable with these consequences.
Professionalise the organisation	Organisations professionalise in order to engage in commissioning. Interviewees highlighted benefits in staff development, improvements in safeguarding, increasingly business-like approaches to management, aligning with best practice bodies and becoming regulated. Some commissioning arrangements require considerable administrative capacity, notably personal budgets in which each participant is invoiced on a monthly basis.	Commissioners want to see a reasonable rate of participants moving through the programme. For one interviewee, this meant that the organisation had to change its model and the level of ongoing support participants could expect. As a result it became less family-like, and needed to adjust to being a smaller part of its beneficiaries' lives
Beneficiary groups	Undertaking commissions can help arts and cultural organisations develop their ability to work with particular beneficiary groups. It facilitates access to these groups which organisations may want to work with for reasons of mission, or to broaden their audience.	Commissioned work can change the nature of relationships with beneficiaries, particularly where the contract involves payment by results and participants recognise that the organisation is incentivised for them to make certain choices.
Artistic practice	Commissioned work can provide opportunities for organisations to promote and extend their own way of working into new contexts: to bring new artists and practitioners into the organisation, providing new approaches and ways of thinking.	One organisation noted a concern that commissioned work could become formulaic and undermine innovation, as commissioners preferred to re-commission services they felt comfortable with.
Focus on social outcomes	Contract requirements provided a focus for articulating social outcomes of an intervention, and for clarifying the organisation's role in the wider social context.	This focus may be very different from the skills that current members of the organisation have. One organisation that we spoke to employed a social outcomes worker to avoid distracting practitioners from their artistic output.
Entrepreneurial attitude	Looking for opportunities and presenting the organisation in a way that resonates with new audiences could make it more entrepreneurial.	
Organisational capacity	Commissioned work usually adds staff posts and increases the range of skills and level of capacity within the organisation.	To reach this point requires an upfront investment in business planning and dedicated staff capacity.
Likelihood of bidding again	Providers were not put off by their experiences of commissioning: 43% of organisations said their experience of commissioning made them more likely to bid again, and 52% said they were equally likely, with only a tiny minority saying they were less likely to bid again.	

* Information in this table is drawn from the Cultural Commissioning Programme survey, September 2013, Q.43, and a range of interviews: Monks, P., Artistic Director at Core Arts (NPC interview, 4 September 2013); Chetcuti, E., Director at Multistory (NPC interview, 5 September 2013); Wilson, M., Programme Director at Tin Art.(NPC interview, 3 September 2013); Goddard, C., Library Service Manager at Plymouth City Council (NPC interview, 28 August 2013); Brown, M., Arts and Service Development Manager at Derby City Council (NPC interview, 9 October 2013); and Brown, T., Director at Raw Material (NPC interview, 21 August 2014).

Different types of commissioning

Commissioning is usually seen as a competitive process. When commissions meet EU procurement thresholds they are required to go to open competition, although 'Part B' services (services that will only be of interest to the member state) do not need to follow the full EU procurement rules. A recent inquiry found that local authorities are using EU regulations 'over-zealously' where they could choose to take less bureaucratic approaches. Smaller contracts can be commissioned in non-competitive ways from a legal perspective, but most authorities will require at least three proposals for work, even if they do not go to full competition. In April 2014, new EU procurement rules came into force, which aim to make public procurement simpler and more effective. At the time of writing it is unclear what effect these will have when implemented as national legislation.

The range of commissioning arrangements and requirements is vast, and there is no standard formula or set of commissioner expectations that organisations need to meet to be 'commission ready'. This will look different for different types of contract. Figure 11 characterises some of the different types of commissioning arrangements, although it is a simplification.*

Figure11: Summary of different commissioning arrangements

More formal
Fewer relationships
Larger contracts

Less formal
More relationships
Smaller contracts

Contracts competitively tendered under OJEU**	**Competitively tendered—do not have an arts & culture-specific brief**	**Competitively tendered—have an arts & culture-specific brief**	**Non-competitive contract opportunities**	**Micro-commissioning: personal budgets**
Legal requirement for contracts over certain thresholds. Subject to EU procurement law. *Implications for providers:* Procurement team involvement. Highly bureaucratic application. Judged against transparent criteria. Likely to be competing against private providers. Suitable for orgs with significant capacity: smaller orgs could subcontract.	Smaller contracts do not need to be publicly advertised but may still be competitive. Creative approaches need to prove relevance against competing alternatives. *Implications for providers:* Need for high standards of evidence. Need to ensure commissioners are aware of value of your approach while writing the specification.	May come from arts-specific sources (eg, out–sourced culture and leisure trusts), or non arts-specific (eg, commis–sioning arts for well-being). *Implications for providers:* Level of competition will vary—in some cases org may be one of few appropriate providers. Personal relationships vital, evidence may be less so.	Providers help design a service and are awarded contract without competition. Risk of legal challenge—public bodies should not exclude viable alternative providers. *Implications for providers:* Low risk of wasted bidding effort. Likely to be smaller contracts with more organisations, eg, schools, care homes. Admin burden of managing multiple contracts.	Individuals receive funding and make decisions about spending it for own care. In practice arrangements vary: some localities operate approved provider lists. *Implications for providers:* Opportunities if have existing loyal attendees. Direct financial relationship with people supported can feel uncomfortable. Difficult business model transition from block contracts.

* Competitive tendering thresholds are complex and vary depending on the type of service. Contracts that are only of interest to the member state may qualify as 'Part B' services, which do not need to be advertised in the Official Journal of the European Communities, but should be advertised nationally. Authorities must, however, publish a contract award if the value is above £156,442. See: blog.tendersdirect.co.uk/2011/02/10/the-mystery-behind-part-b-services/

** OJEU is the Official Journal of the European Communities in which contracts and tender opportunities are published.

Concluding comments

Many organisations are engaging in the kind of work that delivers on the social outcomes and priorities that commissioners care about. This does not mean commissioning will be appropriate for all those organisations, but where the priorities of commissioners align with those of providers it can be a useful avenue to explore. Organisations currently engaging in commissioning have a wealth of expertise in what can aid or hinder success in securing commissioned work. Arts and cultural organisations may find it worthwhile to exchange experiences of what local commissioners care most about when selecting delivery partners. Appendix A provides further examples of circumstances enabling participation in the three focus areas of older people, mental health and well-being, and place-based commissioning.

4. COMMISSIONER VIEWS AND BEHAVIOUR

This chapter explores the challenges commissioners face in an arena of budget cuts growing demand for demonstration of outcome-based results. Even where commissioners understand the value of arts and cultural solutions to social issues, it is often still difficult to make the call to fund them in an often risk-averse environment. The chapter looks at commissioning trends, practicalities and the importance of building relationships.

In this section we discuss:

- What happens in commissioning
- The current context for commissioning, including:
  - Opportunities to influence policy context
  - Commissioning trends
  - Commissioning practicalities
- The arts and cultural sector working with commissioners, including:
  - The importance of relationships
  - What commissioners want to see from arts and cultural organisations
  - Limits to commissioner freedom
  - Changing the system or working within it

Key messages

Providers

- Commissioners are looking for solutions to social problems. Where arts and cultural organisations can provide these, they are likely to be heard.
- There is no replacement for a good relationship with commissioners: contracting success will depend on the ability to position your organisation as credible, knowledgeable, and central to any solution.
- Providers will seek to increase commissioners' understanding of their work, but should also try to understand the constraints within which commissioners are working. Where providers have empathy with the often challenging role commissioners play, it is easier to build a more productive relationship.
- A number of policy trends offer potential for arts and cultural organisations to get involved with commissioning, but how these broad policy themes are implemented is likely to be defined locally.
- Many commissioners are working in risk-averse environments, making it difficult to pursue creative solutions, even if personally convinced of the value. A powerful advocate for arts and cultural approaches—within or external to the commissioning body—can be extremely valuable.

Commissioners

- Redesigning services will only be effective if the process is responsive to the needs of beneficiaries: arts and cultural organisations can be highly effective in helping to reach an authentic understanding of user needs.

- There are ongoing challenges to achieving genuine outcome-based commissioning. Transition from output-based contracts where activity metrics are easily observable, to commissioning that is orientated towards results, requires commissioners to relinquish some control. This is a challenge that the commissioning and procurement professions need to continue to grapple with.
- Commissioners can support organisations to offer effective solutions by being accessible and transparent about their needs.

Policymakers and Arts Council England

- The voice of the arts and culture in public policy is weak, and the sector may need to prioritise where it can best effect change—focusing on change at a local level or working to have creative approaches recognised in national commissioning strategies.
- Commissioners and procurement professionals need to feel confident taking a nuanced, locally appropriate approach to commissioning, rather than taking the most risk-averse approach, which might exclude effective providers. Support and guidance from central authorities to do so would be valuable.
- As a funding body, Arts Council England has the opportunity to support organisations to become more involved with public policy, in the way it has supported involvement in education and working with children and young people, through capacity-building, policy development and supporting research.

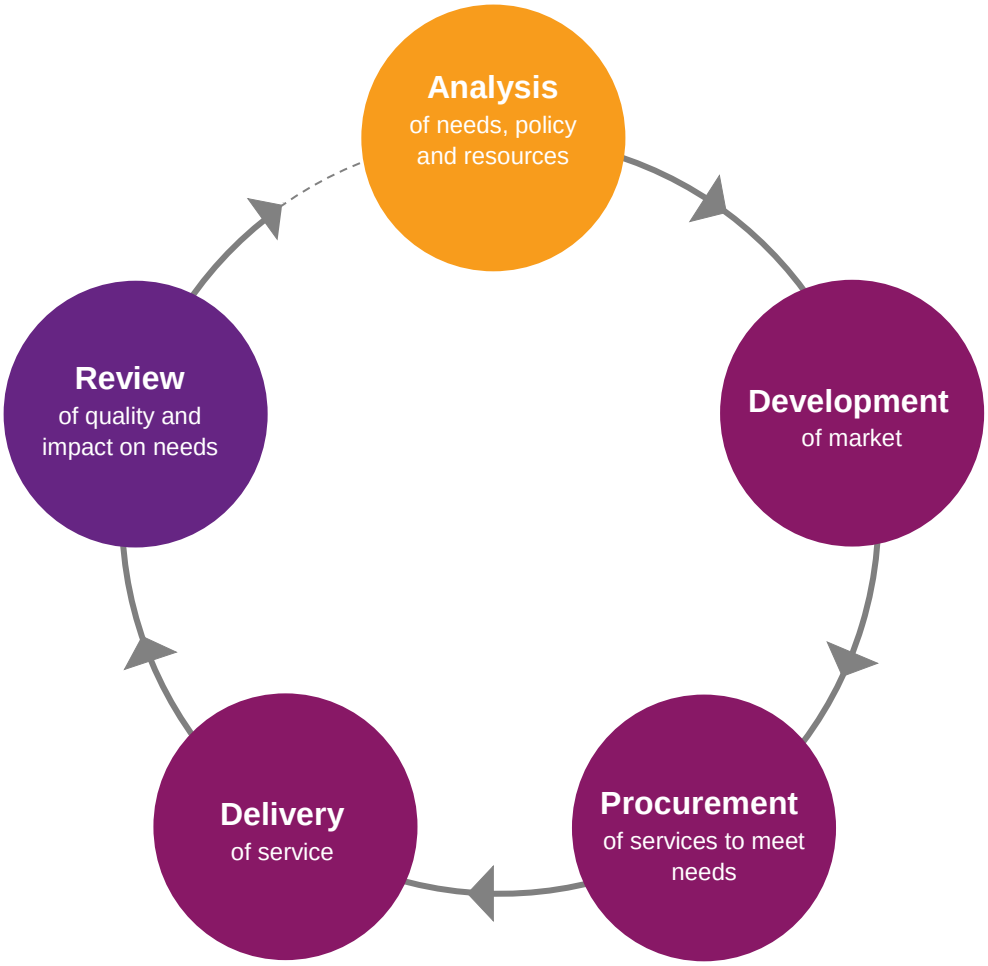
What happens in commissioning

In theory, commissioning should operate as a cycle, which begins with understanding needs and continues through a purchasing process to an evaluation of a service, which then informs a new assessment of need—creating a continuing cycle of improvement.

As shown in Figure 12, the purchase of services—the procurement stage—is just one stage in this cycle. The term 'commissioning' is often misused to refer exclusively to this purchasing stage, ignoring the other stages that are essential to an effective commissioning process.

In commissioning for public services, many public bodies struggle to effectively complete all five stages and for many providers their experience of commissioning is simply an experience of procurement.

Figure 12: The commissioning cycle



Source: NCVO

Note: 'Market' in commissioning means the range of providers that might provide the goods or services required by commissioners. 'Development of market' refers to the process of working with potential providers to ensure a variety of providers are in a position to bid for contracts.

[*] The development of a specification by commissioners is a critical step in determining what is eventually purchased. Both providers and commissioners interviewed as part of this research stressed that once a specification has been completed there is little that can be done to ensure that a tender is sensitive to organisational needs and circumstances. It is therefore a crucial point in the process at which commissioners should seek input from providers, and at which providers should be sought for their input.

The current context for commissioning

Opportunities to influence policy context

The voice of the arts and cultural sector in public policy needs to be strengthened. For many commissioners, arts and cultural activities form a body of 'nice-to-have' services rather than essential activity. Few would argue that it is not beneficial for arts and cultural activities to be available for people, but some in the public sector still tend to see artistic and cultural activities primarily as entertainment—as activities to keep people busy. On these terms it is difficult to justify investment. Some in the sector argue that access to arts and culture for all people is a fundamental right rather than a privilege, and that any publicly-funded arts and cultural activity should be genuinely accessible to all. It is an important argument, but not one likely to hold sway with commissioners facing difficult budget decisions. For commissioners, the key is meeting the outcomes in their remit and for many, arts and cultural activity could be an effective way to do so, as discussed in Chapter 2. Arts and cultural activities need to move from being seen as beneficial but dispensable, to being seen as a strong, valid way of addressing commissioners' core challenges, including their statutory responsibilities:

- Far from just keeping young people off the streets, creative activity can support young people who are at risk of undertaking criminal activity to develop productive relationships with adults, to build skills and confidence to re-engage with education or work, and to communicate a different, more positive view of themselves and their aspirations.
- Rather than just keeping older people occupied in a day centre, creative projects can provide mental stimulation which keeps them engaged and socially connected and slows deterioration towards increased care needs. Joint working on interesting projects can build personal relationships with care home staff, increasing job satisfaction for carers and quality of life for residents.[*]

Commissioning arrangements and priorities—even within similar departments—vary significantly between different geographical areas, and are highly dependent on the views of individuals in leadership positions.

Participants in interviews and roundtable discussions consistently expressed the view that individuals and leadership at the local level has a significant impact on commissioning arrangements, even where the general direction of policy is set at a national level—for example in the speed and mode of implementing the personalisation agenda. Localism is gradually permeating commissioning arrangements, with local authorities and bodies such as Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) carrying out a large portion of public sector commissioning. This means approaches, priorities and processes vary greatly by locality. Whilst all authorities operate according to the same statutory requirements, their flexibility in terms of the combination and separation of certain budgets, and in the personal preferences of decision-makers, varies greatly. One interviewee observed that one inspired local officer is all that it takes to drive a certain agenda.[90] The commissioning landscape even *within* some local councils is far from uniform: where multiple budgets are being managed, much depends on the personal preferences and priorities of individual commissioners. If one adds to the mix contentious issues such as well-being or prevention—which some individuals and some councils give more weight to than others—the picture becomes even more diffuse, with significant variation both *within* and *between* councils.

[*] See 'Changing the system or working within it' on page 62 for a discussion of how the arts and cultural sector could respond to this challenge.

Commissioning trends

Priorities of key commissioning bodies are summarised briefly in the introduction. A number of trends in commissioning are identifiable which broadly characterise many commissioning bodies and departments.

Commissioning for outcomes. An increasing focus on commissioning for outcomes rather than outputs provides a real opportunity for the arts and cultural sector. Outputs are the activities undertaken or goods produced; outcomes are the changes seen in individuals who participate in these activities. Many artistic and cultural programmes are participant-designed, meaning that the nature of the programme (such as the number and content of sessions, and even the art form used) will be responsive to participant input. This process of participant design needs to happen with each new cohort and it can therefore be difficult to predetermine and agree outputs with commissioners at contract design stage. Regardless of the detail of programme delivery, programmes will be structured to achieve certain outcomes with beneficiary cohorts, and this is a more appropriate way to assess success than an output-based approach.

In addition, arts and cultural interventions may be unable to achieve the scale of other kinds of interventions because they often centre around personal interaction and the creation of time and space for exploration. Scale is naturally prioritised by output-centric measurement, as outputs are concerned with things that can be counted. Focusing on outcomes presents a better opportunity for arts and cultural organisations to convey the broad range of benefits that they can achieve.

A number of the major changes in commissioning are based on outcomes—including Transforming Rehabilitation and the Work Programme—however some social outcomes are extremely challenging to track well and measurement is difficult. For some social outcomes it can be hard to see what outcome measures could be reliably tracked within the relatively short timeframes in which commissioners need to work when making and reviewing spending decisions. Where outcomes are not decided and measured appropriately, it can place unexpected and sometimes damaging demands on providers. For commissioners to genuinely commission for outcomes, providers need sophisticated measurement of intermediate outcomes[*] to demonstrate progress.

Payment by results and the hard evidence agenda. The public sector commissioning environment has been showing a marked shift towards payment by results mechanisms, by which service value is judged on the ability to achieve certain outcomes evidenced by hard metrics. Payment by results offers commissioners an opportunity to transfer the risks of failure or underperformance onto providers, as payment is dependent on the delivery of a satisfactory service. Some high-profile examples include the Work Programme, Transforming Rehabilitation and the Troubled Families Programme, but this approach is permeating the public sector more broadly and is increasingly being used in areas such as health. Many of these structures create a sliding scale of outcomes, which means the level of payment received by providers depends on the extent and quality of the outcomes achieved. In some cases, such as the Work Programme, payment structures are binary, which means payment is only received when participants successfully gain employment and no payment is received for improvements that do not result in employment.[†] Commissioners at a local level are investigating how to implement payment by results for other outcomes.

Payment by results systems are the direction of travel in public sector commissioning, which means arts and cultural organisations need to work to be compatible, whilst the systems need to be designed in a way which accommodates these kind of interventions. Currently, these mechanisms are problematic for providers working in arts and culture[91] as they usually work towards softer, intermediate outcomes (for example, building confidence and job readiness, rather than supporting a person into employment),[92] and they often contribute to preventative

[*] Intermediate outcomes are changes that can be seen over the short term which indicate a stage on the journey towards a final outcome.

[†] Extra payments are available when participants successfully maintain employment, but are only paid once a participant has crossed the initial binary threshold.

agendas. The outcomes achieved by arts and cultural organisations are often important steps on the journey to the final outcome, but problems in evidencing this can make it difficult to succeed in competitive payment-by-results tenders.* The shift towards payment by results also raises questions about which outcomes are the most appropriate to pay on: many within and beyond the arts and cultural sector are concerned that this trend creates a narrow focus on what is easily measurable rather than recognising the breadth of outcomes.

Payment by results also presents a philosophical challenge: creative interventions often aim to help individuals begin a different journey, and it is important that the person has freedom to decide where that journey takes him or her. While this often leads to positive outcomes such as desistance from crime, working to pre-defined outcomes risks undermining the effectiveness and applicability of the intervention.

The introduction of the Social Value Act. The Social Value Act, passed in 2012, requires that public bodies consider how the procurement of any services would contribute to the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area. The Act provides useful encouragement to public bodies to give more weight to these concerns when making purchasing decisions, but does not require that they are given greater weighting than cost when taking decisions. The impact of the Social Value Act is still emerging: a paper published in April 2014 found that awareness of the Act is not high enough among key decision-makers.[93]

Some local authorities are moving towards more integrated commissioning models. People needing support from local services often have regular contact with multiple agencies, each addressing a small part of the challenges that an individual faces. Some local areas are beginning to realise that without better coordination this can be inefficient and costly, and may not produce good results for the individual.[94] A similar situation exists for community services for those with lower levels of need. This integrated approach to commissioning is explored further in Appendix A. Since arts and culture work with people in a holistic way (and can help achieve a broad array of outcomes), local areas that take a place-based approach to commissioning (ie, different budgets and services in a geographic location work in a joined-up way) may be more open to the potential of arts and cultural interventions to help them achieve their priorities.

Recognising the need for services to be responsive to beneficiary needs, there is a move in some areas to explore co-design and co-production of services. The National Co-production Critical Friends Group defines co-production as 'a relationship where professionals and citizens share power to plan and deliver support together, recognising that both have vital contributions to make in order to improve quality of life for people and communities'.[95] Commissioners can co-produce with beneficiaries directly, or can co-design with organisations representing users. Co-production can be challenging as it implies a relinquishing of control over service design by the contracting authority. Full co-production is rare, but many areas are taking steps in this direction by improving consultation. Where co-production gains traction there can be a natural fit with arts and cultural activities, which are by nature asset based—drawing out people's talents and ideas rather than focusing on challenges or difficulties (as discussed in Chapter 2). This research phase did not identify any examples of full co-production, but some interviewees described a relationship with commissioners which enabled elements of co-design, or outcomes-based contracts where the delivery organisation had freedom to design the programme of activities working with beneficiaries; Entelechy Arts' programme 'Meet me at the Albany' is an example of this approach.

There are new commissioning structures and bodies in health. This parliament (2010–2015) has seen wide-ranging public sector reform, bringing significant changes to commissioning structures at high speed. The Health and Social Care Act 2012 brought the establishment of Clinical Commissioning Groups. There are now 211 Clinical Commissioning Groups operating across the country, responsible for 60% of NHS budgets.[96] It is unclear how innovative these will be in providing funding for non-clinical solutions.

* For further discussion of payment by results systems in a variety of contexts see: Institute for Government and Collaborate (2014) *Beyond big contracts: commissioning public services for better outcomes*; NSPCC (2011) *Payment by results: opportunities and challenges for improving outcomes for children*; Clinks (2010) *Payment by results: What does it mean for voluntary organisations working with offenders?*; Department of Health (2012) *A simple guide to payment by results*.

The same Act created health and well-being boards: local vehicles for strategic collaboration among health bodies, local authorities and voluntary sector organisations. In most places these do not have budgets, but they do offer a route for arts and cultural organisations to engage with those setting health priorities.

Since 2013, public health budgets have been held by upper-tier local authorities and ring-fenced—originally for two years but now extended to include the financial year 2015/2016.[97] The annual public health budget is approximately £2.8bn nationwide, and while priorities are set locally, the focus is on supporting people to make informed choices to promote health.

There is increasing recognition of the social determinants of health and the influence of income inequality on the well-being of populations. Key academic works such as The Spirit Level, and the publication of Sir Michael Marmot's Fair Society, Healthy Lives—both published in 2010—drew attention to the social determinants of health, and the cost implications for public authorities of effectively supporting populations with high levels of inequality and low levels of social connectedness. The arts and cultural sector is well placed to address some aspects of the social determinants of health, something that is high on the agenda of many local authorities.

All these changes disrupt established relationships within the health and social care system and create space for arts and cultural health interventions to offer new solutions. The arts and cultural sector needs to work quickly to articulate its ability to address health inequalities and establish a claim to these budgets before they become more vulnerable. At present, the ability of the sector to do so will vary across different locations.

Commissioning practicalities

The delivery of public services is undergoing significant changes as needs rise and budgets are cut. The current environment is difficult for both providers and commissioners: commissioners are working with shrinking funds and adapting to new and complex structures and regulations; providers are seeing a reduction in funding available, and a marked increase in the resources required to access it. Yet this upheaval also brings opportunities as established modes of working must change and new relationships can develop. The responses of commissioners will vary: one commissioning expert expressed the view that innovation will be in high demand from some commissioners, and providers who can offer solutions to their challenges can be in a strong position.[98] This does not need to be innovation of a totally new model; it might be transference of a model that has proved effective elsewhere, but not previously used by that particular commissioner. In other cases commissioners may find themselves pushed back towards highly evidenced, proven interventions that guarantee value for money.

'We've seen arts and cultural activities, such as Breathe Magic, deliver better outcomes for young patients than the medically focused therapies traditionally used. But arts and cultural organisations do need to prove they make a difference—health commissioners like us will be comparing results to NICE guidance. We're looking for organisations which understand what matters to us, and that show how well they can work with the people we want to support.'

Sue Gallagher, Non-executive Director, NHS Lambeth[99]

As part of this trend, **arts and cultural budgets are diminishing.** In some areas, culture and leisure services are being outsourced, and teams that previously distributed funding are now playing a role championing arts and cultural organisations to other departments. While local authority budgets are declining in general, arts and cultural budgets have been hit particularly hard since 2013. Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) statistics published in 2013 indicated a decline in local authority spending on culture by 4.2% for 2013/2014—larger than reductions to any other area of spending.[100] Already, a number of councils have cut their entire discretionary spending on arts and culture[101] meaning that there is no earmarked grant funding available to support the core activities of arts and cultural organisations in the local area (aside from statutorily-required

services, such as libraries). As a result arts and cultural organisations are being compelled to look towards contracted outcomes in order to engage (see Chapter 2).

Local cuts are being made alongside central cuts to all departmental budgets.[*] The Department for Culture Media and Sport saw a 7% cut to its resource budget and a 5% cut to its core capital budget in the 2013 Spending Round.[102] This translated into a reduction of 5% in the funding for arts, national museums and galleries. The department described this reduction as 'relatively small' in recognition of 'the huge contribution that they make to our economy'.[103] However, this should be put in the context of the 29.6% cut to DCMS funding of Arts Council England as a result of the 2010 Spending Review.[†]

Arts and cultural organisations that want to access public funds need to make a case for their services to different commissioners, often to new audiences in departments that may be quite unfamiliar with arts and cultural organisations. This requires a tighter focus on the outcomes, and a need to meet standards of evidence to which these commissioners are accustomed.

Budget cuts have direct impact on the level of funds available to commission services, and indirect impact on the internal resources of commissioning departments as they have had to lose staff and are left with fewer experienced staff to engage in sophisticated commissioning processes.

Hollowing out the commissioning profession: cuts within commissioning departments have created a vacuum of expertise, and a dearth of skilled individuals with the experience and confidence to try new things. Many of the people with expertise and confidence to take innovative approaches have lost their jobs. In many places, those who remain are likely to be inexperienced, or too thinly spread across multiple priorities, making it difficult for arts and cultural organisations to make a case for their work. [104]

With the opening up of public services, people who were previously delivering services are now in commissioning roles. Some local authorities have 'spun out' elements of their arts and culture services, usually with the intention of finding cost savings. For example, some have formed independent culture and leisure trusts[105] or libraries services which no longer sit within the local authority.[‡] Arts and cultural organisations can bid to deliver these services which are likely to be large contracts. This can bring challenges as individuals within the local authority who were previously responsible for running services need to begin thinking in terms of service specifications, rather than the practicalities of running services. The transition can be difficult for both sides, with local authorities adjusting to having less input into the way services are delivered.

Commissioners favour the efficiency of large contracts, but arts and cultural interventions are not always suited to scaling. National commissioning structures such as the Work Programme and Transforming Rehabilitation favour solutions that are replicable and scalable,[106] and a lot of public sector commissioning places an emphasis on volume—or the number of beneficiaries that can be reached. For creative interventions, scale can be damaging to service provision as it dilutes local and thematic specialisms and the responsiveness to participants' needs, which are central to the achievement of outcomes. Whilst artistic interventions in the aggregate can reach a broad range of people (see Chapter 2), this reach is made up of a large number of different permutations of art form and approach, each of which could be difficult to scale. This trend is borne out in mental health research in which it is common to see clinical trials based on drug treatments with sample sizes of several thousand, as opposed to studies based on arts and cultural activities which will often have sample sizes of fewer than one hundred.[107]

[*] Whilst some funding may pass straight from central government to arts and cultural bodies (for example in DCMS funding of national museums), other funds are first allocated to local authorities to be spent on delivering and commissioning services. This means that cuts can occur independently at both central government and local government levels.

[†] DCMS Spending Review Settlement Letter to Arts Council England (October 2010). Note that this specifically refers to a cut in resource grant-in-aid funding over the period of 2010–2014.

[‡] For example in Suffolk the libraries service is constituted as an industrial and provident society www.suffolklibraries.co.uk/about/

Larger contracts can incorporate providers working with smaller cohorts through a subcontracting mechanism, though subcontracting—like all partnership—is time-consuming and can be challenging. If commissioners want to preserve the skills of specialist providers in larger contracts based on volume, contracts will need to provide sufficient time and funds for this to be done effectively.

Fragmentation of commissioners: in some areas of commissioning the opposite is happening—the localism agenda and the personalisation agenda both drive devolution of budgets to smaller purchasing units. Many schools now have spending autonomy, and an increasing number of individuals who qualify for health and social care support now manage budgets for their own care through 'personal budgets'. This means that providers also need to adjust to 'micro-commissioning'—developing a lot of one-to-one relationships with people and organisations holding relatively small budgets, where previously these budgets would be distributed through grants or block contracts.

These changes create some space for arts and cultural organisations to work with commissioners who are open to new approaches. It also presents practical challenges as it may become more difficult to identify and communicate with the range of individuals, and organisations will have to develop a broad array of new skills to engage effectively with these different and rapidly changing agendas.

The arts and cultural sector working with commissioners

The importance of relationships

Arts and cultural organisations that have successfully engaged with commissioning invariably highlighted the need to build good relationships with commissioners and other providers. Successful engagement with the commissioning process means getting out and talking to commissioners, attending and organising events and engaging with sector forums. Part of this engagement must be about relaying activities and achievements in a way that makes sense to commissioners and aligns with their priorities. Organisations are right to be wary about mission drift, but this process of engagement is about making the connections between the work they care about and the priorities commissioners have.

Relationship-building might not always be linked to a specific opportunity. Interviewees who had experienced success in this regard emphasised the importance of taking part in as many discussions about target beneficiary groups as possible, with as many different stakeholders as possible, in order to establish credibility as an organisation with deep understanding of the issues. By doing this, organisations are more likely to find themselves invited into the conversation when services are being designed.

'It's about who knows you and people being aware of your work. You have to make yourself visible in those areas.'

Emma Chetcuti, Director, Multistory[108]

An important element of the relationship between providers and commissioners is the opportunity for each side to learn from the other: providers learn about commissioner priorities and in turn educate commissioners about the benefits of creative approaches. In some cases, this is complicated by the need to educate not only decision-makers at commissioner level, but also staff who are likely to be involved in delivering the work alongside the arts or cultural organisation, for example staff working in mental health wards, or in services for homeless people.[109]

A number of commissioners are actively championing the use of arts and culture in public service provision, acting as advocates for creative approaches. Ian Smith, recently retired Mental Health Commissioning Manager at Kirklees Council, for example, ensures that the council plays a supportive role to local providers by distributing and collating quarterly contract monitoring forms to track progress against outcomes and build the evidence base. He has also been central in administering the 'creative minds' strategy of the South West Yorkshire NHS

Foundation Trust, which seeks to put creative approaches at the centre of a preventative healthcare strategy.[110] A number of interviewees commented on the value of having advocates supporting their work and seeking additional opportunities.

While valuable, relationships are very time-consuming to build, and not all organisations have the capacity to do so—and commissioners will not be able to build relationships with all providers. Relationships between providers can be highly valuable where one organisation articulates the voice of the sector to commissioners, and translates commissioner priorities back to the sector.

Box 7: Brokers

A strong theme in this research is that arts and cultural organisations rarely succeed in contracting by working independently. Even those that are sole contractors need to operate in a collaborative environment.

Brokers are individuals or organisations who play a linking role between commissioners and the arts and cultural sector. They can play a valuable role for commissioners in simplifying communication with a broad array of organisations. For providers they can interpret strategic plans to identify likely opportunities for arts and cultural organisations. Brokers with a knowledge of the arts and cultural sector can help commissioners to see the relevance of these approaches to the outcomes they seek to achieve.

- **Individuals working within the commissioning body** can share their knowledge and enthusiasm with those in other departments based on a real understanding of those commissioners' priorities.

Mike Brown is the Arts and Service Development Manager at Derby City Council. As funding to the arts and cultural sector has reduced, Mike now supports the arts and cultural sector to engage with the wider local authority, in addition to distributing arts-specific funding.

- **Bridge organisations** are effective in playing this role for organisations working with children and young people.
- **Umbrella organisations** can play this role for small organisations, for example Making Music helped Kent's Silver Song Clubs to gain commissioned work.
- **Larger delivery organisations** can represent self-organised networks of providers and take on the burden of attending meetings.
- **Trusted providers** may introduce commissioners to other organisations working in areas where they do not themselves deliver work.

There is a risk that a focus on creating cosy, personal relationships will reap variable results depending on the interests of commissioners—it is not clear how transferrable these benefits will be to other organisations, or to the credibility of creative approaches as a whole. One practical implication is that the ability to build relationships is a crucial skill for commissioning, and one for which training should be available alongside the more technical aspects of commissioning.[111] These successful individual relationships need to sit alongside sector-level efforts to make the case for arts and culture within commissioning more broadly.

What commissioners want to see from arts and cultural organisations

The technical needs and expectations of arts and cultural organisations vary widely depending on the type of commissioning they might get involved in, however interviews uncovered a number of attitudes and skills that commissioners need to see from the organisations they work with. Core among these is that providers are seen as credible, effective organisations that understand the nature of the area in which they are hoping to work.[112]

One provider recognised that a key reason for its commissioning success was that it looked for ways to talk about its work publicly in a way that supported the commissioner's role and profile.[113]

Many providers found that a lack of transparency from commissioners made it challenging to assess exactly how to present their work to align with commissioner interests. Here relationships are again crucial: getting to know a commissioner and understanding his or her key concerns helps organisations build a mutually beneficial relationship. It can also help the organisations navigate the uncertain and fast-changing commissioning environment.

'We have to invest huge amounts of time… you have to dedicate a member of staff to go and find these people, find what makes them tick… [in one case] it was very hard to get the commissioner to talk to us, and we had to really put some effort into building that relationship with them.'

Corinne Miller, Head of Culture, Arts and Heritage, Wolverhampton City Council[114]

Limits to commissioner freedom

The commissioner role is not always a senior one within the commissioning body, and commissioners have to operate within constrained environments—lacking freedom to take innovative or pilot approaches. The commissioner remit is to find the most effective and comprehensive service possible, but also to be accountable for public money.[115] Commissioners will be subject to scrutiny from senior management and—in local authorities—elected officials regarding the way money has been spent, and will want to see straightforward metrics that demonstrate the effectiveness of the service. Poor spending decisions not only waste money but could also cause reputational damage at a time when funding is scarce and spending decisions are highly charged. Unsurprisingly this situation incentivises risk-averse behaviour: it is difficult to invest in less-established interventions even if they seem to offer useful solutions. Providers may be frustrated that commissioning arrangements do not make space for their interventions, but without strong strategic leadership, it can be difficult for commissioners to do so.

Commissioner freedom to act is also influenced by the involvement of a number of other agents in the commissioning process—namely procurement, legal, and financial teams who, in general, tend to be cautious and risk-averse. In local authorities, sign-off by elected officials is required at certain stages in order to proceed, making them a key audience for arts and cultural organisations seeking to become involved in commissioning. In other contexts other appointed officials are responsible for sign-off, and are therefore valuable people with whom to build relationships.

For arts and cultural organisations, one of the key challenges is to ensure that specifications leave space for creative interventions and recognise the value that arts and culture can deliver. During interviews we heard from both providers and commissioners who had worked to develop specifications that would suit providers from the arts and cultural sector, but found the specification which procurement professionals were comfortable with differed considerably from the original intentions.[116]

Box 8: Procurement

Procurement is an activity conducted by professionals which seeks to find and contract providers for public services, whilst adhering to UK and EU legislation and regulations. The terms 'procurement' and 'commissioning' are often used interchangeably, however whilst procurement is a specific stage of the process, commissioning *is* the broader process which seeks to establish a need, and design and deliver services to meet that need. Although often overlooked, it is the procurement stage that can be the biggest barrier to involvement in the strategic commissioning process, as the actions of the procurement team are often one step removed or even divorced from commissioner intent.

Procurement teams will outline a service specification that details what a project should deliver. They will also draw up selection criteria, detailing the type of organisation that will fit the bill according to its size, relevant experience and financial standing. Award criteria are also drawn up, which detail how the project should be delivered going forward, setting out requirements for reporting and the provision of evidence. A pre-qualifying questionnaire (PQQ) may be used, which would assess organisations against these criteria before they are invited to bid (an Invitation to Tender).

Despite the advent of the Social Value Act in April 2013, a major concern in the procurement decision-making process is the assessment of the cost/value for money of proposed projects. Procurement will proceed on the basis of a pre-determined cost-quality ratio, which varies between procurement teams and often reflects their appetite for risk.

Changing the system or working within it

A recurring question in this research has been whether arts and cultural organisations should adapt to find a place in the commissioning system as it stands, or seek to change the system. In the clinical mental health space, for example, commissioning of these services is primarily carried out by clinical commissioning groups and adheres closely to the clinical guidelines of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). Arts organisations have so far been able to make a good case for the use of arts in the treatment of those for whom medical interventions are inappropriate (most often in mild cases or in the treatment of children), but have struggled to make inroads where clinical solutions are established. There are questions about whether the overarching attitudes to evidence in the clinical space need to change, and whether funding could be directed away from secondary care towards community-based preventative interventions. It is possible that large-scale policy shifts such as the potential integration of health budgets with social care budgets might incentivise commissioners to think about whole-person care, and loosen the grip of biomedical approaches.

For individual organisations, the question is how far to compromise on the way that work and value is articulated in order to fit in with commissioner expectations. When deciding whether to engage with public service delivery, each organisation must consider the balance between demonstrating relevance in public service delivery with staying true to core mission.

'You can't be too precious about the way you talk about your work. You get a foot in the door by compromising a bit and talking their language. Then when you're embedded in the commissioner's way of working, you can gradually shift the dialogue and help them understand your way of thinking.'

Nikki Crane, Head of Arts Strategy, Guys and St Thomas' Charity[117]

For the arts and cultural sector, the question is at what level one should seek to influence the system—at the local level, or at the public policy level? (See 'Opportunities to influence policy context', page 54.) For different areas of work the levels of influence will vary. Where budgetary control has been devolved to local areas the implementation of national policy direction will be varied, and it will be most effective to exert influence directly

with those who control local spending decisions. It is essential to work in compliance with national quality standards and frameworks (such as Care Quality Commission standards), but formal recognition within these frameworks could be extremely time-consuming to achieve and even if successful, implementation will still vary depending on local political will. Where the national strategy is set by the commissioning body (for example in Transforming Rehabilitation and the Work Programme) influencing the responsible central government department could have a substantial impact on how commissioning decisions are made.

Nonetheless, as noted earlier in this section, without a stronger voice in public policy, the arts and cultural sector will need to keep making the case to different commissioners about its relevance to achieving public sector outcomes. Influencing public policy is rarely something organisations can do individually, but there is an important role for infrastructure bodies and Arts Council England to continue working to influence the public dialogue. Some support bodies and research organisations are undertaking work in this direction.[*] An important step in facilitating this change will be the collation and translation of the disparate evidence base that currently exists (see Chapter 5).

Concluding comments:

Commissioners who have seen the value of arts and cultural interventions can be enthusiastic about their use, and some aspects of the current commissioning context are potentially supportive to arts and cultural commissioning—for example, moves towards co-production, integrated commissioning, and the Social Value Act—however a significant proportion of commissioners are not actively thinking about arts and culture. Furthermore, cuts to public spending, the loss of expert commissioners as departments downsize, and moves to larger contracts, all contribute to making it more difficult to commission in innovative ways that might create more space for arts and cultural organisations to participate.

See focus area baselines Appendix A: 'Policy environment and commissioner interests' for further discussion of these issues as they relate to the three focus areas.

[*] For example the Baring Foundation funded the Age of Creativity platform and the Consilium and Skills for Care paper *What do we know about the role of arts in the delivery of social care?*

5. EVIDENCING SOCIAL VALUE

This chapter explores the importance of evidencing social value to securing commissions. In an outcomes-based commissioning environment, it is difficult to succeed without evidencing results. This poses a particular challenge to the arts and cultural sector which sometimes focuses on softer outcomes or forms part of a wider intervention where cause and effect is harder to prove. The chapter looks at how organisations can adapt to evidence social value to commissioners.

In this section we discuss:

- Why care about evidencing social value
- Strength of evidence of social value
  - Mapping the research evidence base
- How organisations are evidencing their results
  - Tools and practicalities of impact measurement
  - Methods of monitoring and evidencing arts and cultural work
  - The benefits of an outcomes framework
  - Intermediate outcomes
  - Longer-term outcomes
- Measurement challenges
- What organisations should be doing
  - Use the academic evidence base
  - Working with partners to improve evidence standards
- The Four Pillars approach to measuring impact

Key messages

Providers

- To bring about a broader systemic change in the commissioning of arts and cultural activities, providers need to consistently meet higher evidence standards. Standardised tools (Box 13) often represent the least resource-intensive way of doing so.
- The external evidence base is far from perfect, but providers need to make sure they are making use of all the relevant research that exists.
- Organisations should seek to build mutually beneficial relationships with academic partners who can help improve evaluation capacity and offer professional neutrality in assessing the effectiveness of interventions.
- It is not always possible to present a financial cost-saving argument for work, but organisations need to be absolutely clear on their unit costs in order to begin discussing value for money, and also to ensure contract terms will allow for full cost recovery.

Commissioners

- The evidence standards that are required of organisations should be proportionate to the size of the contract and to particular situations. Commissioners should ask themselves whether a gold-plated evidence standard is preventing good and effective providers from entering the market, and what kind of evidence is appropriate to the size of commission and outcomes sought.
- What constitutes 'good evidence' needs to be revisited, as current approaches make it difficult to make the case for preventative interventions that could deliver long-term cost savings, and heavily preference certain types of interventions over others.
- Commissioners must recognise that established techniques are not appropriate in all cases, and may be detrimental to the service (for example using baseline questionnaires may not be appropriate for vulnerable beneficiaries). Measurement requirements should recognise these nuances and be flexible.

Policymakers and Arts Council England

- There is a large body of practice evaluation (such as evaluations of arts and cultural programmes that reflect on the effectiveness of work without the rigour of academic practice) but there are significant gaps in the research evidence base that individual organisations cannot hope to fill independently. This would benefit from further investment—and Arts Council England has announced plans to invest in filling gaps in evidence.
- The existing academic evidence is disjointed and has not yet been gathered into a single, easily searchable evidence library. Efforts are under way to compile such a resource, but to be effective this must be widely known and clearly signposted from the places arts and cultural organisations already go for information—including Arts Council England's website.
- More flexible commissioning could be encouraged by central authorities, permitting or encouraging commissioning bodies to invest in preventative approaches where it is impossible to evidence impact within the life of the contract. Commissioners would benefit from greater clarity and guidance on evidence requirements from central authorities, with clearer guidance around how to balance the need for certain outcomes with investing in promising but less well evidenced approaches.

Why care about evidencing social value

The majority of arts and cultural organisations that have secured public funding recognise the importance of being able to evidence to their success. In the Cultural Commissioning Programme survey, 70% of respondents placed this among their top three success factors.[118] A number of organisations interviewed felt that a key success factor was their willingness and ability to gather the data required to report on contracts.[119]

Commissioning trends noted elsewhere have implications for the kind of evidence required by commissioners: shrinking budgets increase the need to demonstrate that money is spent effectively; the focus on outcomes requires organisations to move beyond activity-based metrics and incorporate more sophisticated ways of evidencing their work; and the payment-by-results agenda requires organisations to prove that their work contributed to outcomes which they often are unable to achieve alone. The level of evidence required, however, varies by commissioner, as summaries in Table 10.

Table 10: Evidence priorities of key commissioners

Spending area	Direction of travel
Justice	**Transforming Rehabilitation:** payment is contingent on individuals ceasing to offend (a binary measure), or reducing the number of offences committed (a frequency measure). Payment is not made on the basis of intermediate outcomes.
Employment	**The Work Programme:** payments are staged based on individuals securing a job and remaining in employment for a period of time. Payment is not made on the basis of intermediate outcomes.
Health	**Public Health:** encouraging changes in population behaviour, taking a preventative approach to health outcomes. NICE (National Institute of Clinical Excellence) has guidelines relating to public health, but Public Health seems to offer more opportunities to support health approaches that have not been clinically proven. **Clinical commissioning groups and mental health trusts:** commissioners are used to working with established medical and clinical solutions, making decisions according to NICE guidelines. NICE recommends treatments with statistically-evidenced health impacts, often based on large clinical trials.
Social care	Social care departments are accustomed to working with well-being and quality of life outcomes and likely to recognise evidence of softer outcomes.
Schools	Secondary schools need to see a clear link between intervention and educational attainment; primary schools are more likely to recognise the importance of creativity within educational development and school attendance.
Culture and leisure budgets	The case for investment in culture and leisure services is made on different terms in different locations. Often participation and inclusivity are important to evidence. In some locations culture and leisure departments will seek to make the case for their work in economic or regeneration terms.
Other local authority budgets	Requirements vary according to department and are influenced by the political leadership or leadership of senior commissioners in addition to statutory requirements and best practice guidance for working in that area.

On a local level this picture is highly variable. In some locations, budget holders in non arts and cultural departments are convinced by creative approaches and make limited demands for evidence,[120] but to make a step change in the use of arts and cultural approaches, these approaches will need to prove their worth in environments where alternative approaches shape commissioner expectations of evidence—notably in health.

'In the past relationships played a much greater role: if you had a little bit of data or a good anecdote and a great relationship, you could make a winning case. Now under competitive tendering… if you cannot show that your intervention is going to produce these outcomes, then [commissioners will say] we can't afford to have you in our bid, because you're not going to help us guarantee [success].'

Charlotte Weinberg, Chief Executive, Safe Ground[121]

Box 9: When is evidence important?

Providers' experiences of how commissioners use evidence varies:

- Some providers had used evidence to convince commissioners of the value of the intervention, and subsequently found commissioners were happy with metrics of service quality.[122]
- Others felt it was possible to secure a new, commissioned service with limited evidence and setting out of outcomes, but expected scrutiny at the point of re-commissioning decisions.[123]

Strength of evidence of social value

Evidencing social value involves two distinct elements: the first is evaluation of a specific service—its effectiveness in delivering what it has been commissioned to achieve; the other is research—adding to the body of knowledge about what works in creative approaches to achieving social outcomes. There is a significant published body of service evaluation, but relatively little work that meets the standards of peer-reviewed academic publications.

These two elements can overlap: some evaluations will be of a standard to add to the body of research, but most will not. Most organisations will need to draw on their own service evaluation to provide a track record for commissioners, but will need to use robust research based on higher standards of evidence to demonstrate that the approach has been proved effective in other contexts.

The evidence base for creative approaches to social problems is growing, but is still extremely patchy. Organisations do not feel easy about evidencing their own work, and struggle to use the existing research evidence base when making a case to commissioners. However we have been impressed by the frequency and range of collaborations between organisations and academic partners to evaluate work in a way that aims to be useful for both academic research and practice evaluation purposes.

Many providers feel a tension between the organisation's artistic motivations and the social outcomes that interest commissioners. NPC's view is that the discussion about work with an intrinsic or instrumental value is unhelpful in a commissioning context. For many organisations artistic outcomes are central to the achievement of all outcomes; where this is the case it could be articulated in a theory of change or logic model, which makes clear to all parties that artistic and social outcomes must sit alongside each other for the intervention to be effective (see discussion in Chapter 2).

There are relatively strong communities of evidence around arts in health (broadly defined to include physical and mental health) and a range of health and well-being outcomes relating to older people and mental health (see discussion in Appendix A). It is essential for providers to clearly distinguish whether they are delivering on well-being outcomes (in which the case for arts and culture is relatively established), or clinical health outcomes, where existing frameworks and evidence standards are more challenging for organisations to meet. One key challenge is that the small size of cohorts involved in most creative interventions, and the fact that artistic interventions are by nature responsive to participants rather than mechanistically replicated, can make it very difficult to generate statistically significant results using control groups, although examples do exist.[*]

Important gaps exist around the preventative agenda—recognising that development of soft skills or resilience[†] can prevent people going on to require higher levels of support. Linked to this, there is a real lack of economic analysis regarding the 'return on investment' of arts or cultural interventions. Both could be addressed in part by an opening-up of public health data but further investment in terms of research is needed.

[*] Examples do exist, such as Healing Arts, Isle of Wight NHS Trust (2010) Evaluation of 'Time Being 2': a participatory arts programme for patients with depression (and low levels of personal social capital).

[†] Resilience is the ability to recover from setbacks, to adapt to change.

Box 10: Creating a health data lab

A range of public health data exists which, if made more accessible, could help organisations understand the effect their work has on health outcomes, such as visits to the GP. The Department of Health 'Outcomes Frameworks in Public Health', the National Health Service and Adult and Social Care set out indicators to measure the impact of direct and indirect factors affecting health and well-being. The Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC) is the key data-holder.

NPC is currently exploring the potential to open up this data in a Health Data Lab, whereby organisations could discover whether the health outcomes of people with whom they had worked had improved. This structure already exists in the criminal justice sector, where the Justice Data Lab provides anonymised information on whether the cohort engaged in a particular programme showed lower levels of reoffending compared to a matched cohort.

For place-based commissioning, the wide range of outcomes makes it difficult to generalise about appropriate modes of evidencing. Diffuse benefits such as change in public attitudes or local pride are particularly challenging, but could be addressed by surveying a sample of people about attitudes and intentions to act. In some locations, place-based commissioning has driven high-level 'strategic coordination' between different departments, sharing data to understand how coordinated action can reduce requirement for services and achieve cost savings. We have not uncovered examples of this approach being used to make a case for arts and cultural interventions that promote community resilience, although one interviewee suggested using health or environmental impact assessment methodology to demonstrate both the predicted and actual impact of arts and cultural activities for larger scale interventions (this approach would require testing for feasibility).[124]

Ultimately commissioners need to be realistic about what evidence is essential in making informed and sensible decisions. By requiring very high standards of evidence, commissioners may exclude highly promising and potentially effective solutions—either because there has been insufficient investment in research to make the case, or because they can only recognise types of evidence that are impossible for creative interventions to provide. Commissioners should focus on proportionate evidence and look for what is necessary to make informed decisions, even if incomplete. Where commissioners are struggling to understand the value arts and culture can deliver, there is an opportunity for providers to get on the front foot and shape the conversation by offering solutions. The standards of information that arts and cultural organisations are able to provide, and the standards required by commissioners, are highly variable and difficult to generalise.

Mapping the research evidence base

Several interviewees—including providers and experts in the field—noted that the existing evidence base for the social value of the arts is not well known or used, and it can be challenging for individual organisations to identify relevant evidence on which to base their case for support to commissioners.

Through this research we found a number of online resources collating this evidence base; resources designed to help individual organisations identify the literature which is relevant to their own work. These online resources are varied: some focus on peer reviewed academic literature, others contain a mix of resources including practice evaluation and how-to guides. In addition there is a range of evidence and literature reviews which summarise the literature in a specific field. Table 11 presents the evidence sources identified in this research process—we recognise that this summary is far from comprehensive, but we hope it will offer a useful starting point for some organisations.

In March 2014 Arts Council England announced a forthcoming research grants programme to fill gaps in the evidence base. This will be a valuable addition for the sector, but equally important is the need to continue efforts to make existing evidence accessible to arts and cultural organisations.

Table 11: Summary of evidence sources identified during research

General evidence sources

Case database: Contains links to studies that examine the drivers, impact and value of engagement in culture and sport. The database was developed as part of the CASE research programme led by DCMS (Department for Culture Media and Sport). http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/webdatabases4/Intro.aspx?ID=2

Culture Case: Accessible summaries of peer reviewed academic research from the UK and internationally. The resource was launched in 2014. Studies are arranged under the headings: intrinsic impacts; educational impacts; economic impacts; neighbourhood impacts; health and well-being impacts; environmental impacts; international impacts; other social impacts. Papers are also classified under thematic headings: consumer behaviour; fundraising; developing new audiences; live and digital engagement; models of community engagement; organisational change; partnerships and collaboration. www.culturecase.org

Culture Hive: A compilation of resources focused on best practice in cultural marketing. Contains a range of research as well as case studies, toolkits and articles. Many of the resources classified as research are not peer reviewed academic studies, and much of the material will not be directly relevant to commissioners. However there is a huge amount of information and reflection on good practice which could help build a case for support and inform practice design. www.culturehive.co.uk

Cultural Value Project: This project aims to develop a framework within which the different components of cultural value will be identified, and to establish for each of the components methodologies and appropriate types of evidence for evaluating their contribution. In doing so it is awarding funding for critical reviews (ie, reviews of existing evidence) and research development (for undertaking new research). This will build the body of evidence, although not all of this work will have a direct link to the social outcomes commissioners seek. www.ahrc.ac.uk/Funded-Research/Funded-themes-and-programmes/Cultural-Value-Project

The Future of Cultural Value: A two-year project aiming to bring together research and develop policy to ensure the flourishing and long-term sustainability of the country's 'cultural ecosystem'. Links to further research are presented under the four themes: Investing in Culture; Valuing Culture; Education and Talent; and International Trends. www2.warwick.ac.uk/research/warwickcommission/futureculture

Third Sector Knowledge Portal: Collaboration between the Third Sector Research Centre, the British Library and the Big Lottery Fund, this library of research, evidence and analysis is not specifically orientated to the arts and cultural sector, but arts and culture-specific work can be searched by keyword, and the web page also offers quick links to publications about public sector commissioning. https://cssfs10.bham.ac.uk/heritage/

Interest-specific evidence sources

National Alliance for Arts Health and Wellbeing: Collates a wide range of resources including arts in health in practice, practical advice and guidelines, and research papers. With text search, the research library contains links to a number of documents from the UK and internationally. Research section also includes a range of links to organisations and academic departments specialising in arts and health. www.artshealthandwellbeing.org.uk

Arts Alliance Evidence Library: Searchable library of research and evaluation documents on the impact of arts-based projects, programmes and interventions within the Criminal Justice System. Contains a mixture of documents, many of which have been conducted by academic partners, but have not always been published in peer reviewed journals. Includes profiles of academic institutions working in this space, and searchable by participant type and by art form. www.artsevidence.org.uk

The Cultural Learning Alliance: The Cultural Learning Alliance works to ensure children and young people have access to culture. The website's Evidence section lists key research into the impact of cultural learning, including Understanding the impact of engagement in culture and sport: A systematic review of the learning impacts for young people (2010), by CASE: the Culture and Sport Evidence programme. www.culturallearningalliance.org.uk

ArtsEdSearch: A project of Arts Education Partnership, ArtsEdSearch provides a summary evidence of outcomes for students (academic, cognitive, personal and social), for educators (personal and professional), for school day and for out-of-school education. Policy implications are laid out for each section, useful context for those interested in public sector commissioning. Studies referenced are searchable using a number of filters (including outcome and provider type), and an assessment of the research, including a summary of findings, significance of findings, and limitation of research, is presented. www.artsedsearch.org

The Age of Creativity: This website brings together resources and examples of practice in the field of arts and older people. Its Resources section includes a range of documents including project evaluations and academic papers. The website offers a brief summary and links to the full documents. There is also a section of reports and policy which provide additional context for conversations with commissioners. www.ageofcreativity.co.uk

Evidence and literature reviews

The value of arts and culture to people and society, Arts Council England, 2014.
http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/research-and-data/value-arts-and-culture-people-and-society-evidence-review/

Arts, Health and Wellbeing beyond the Millennium: How far have we come and where do we want to go?, The Royal Society for Public Health Working Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing, 2013.
http://www.rsph.org.uk/download.cfm?docid=27E2631F-C138-44C3-9AED5058495DB74E

The contribution of the arts and culture to the national economy, CERB, 2013.
http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/pdf/CEBR_economic_report_web_version_0513.pdf

Art therapies and dementia care: A systematic review, Beard, R., 2012, Dementia: The international journal of social research and practice. http://dem.sagepub.com/content/early/2011/09/14/1471301211421090.abstract

A review of research and literature on museums and libraries, Arts Council England, 2011.
http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/browse-advice-and-guidance/museums-and-libraries-research-review

An Evidence Review of the Impact of Participatory Arts on Older People, Mental Health Foundation, 2011.
http://www.baringfoundation.org.uk/EvidenceReview.pdf

Arts and music in healthcare: an overview of the medical literature: 2004-2011, Staricoff, R., and Clift, S., 2011, Chelsea and Westminster Health Charity.
http://www.lahf.org.uk/sites/default/files/Chelsea%20and%20Westminster%20Literature%20Review%20Staricoff%20and%20Clift%20FINAL.pdf

Dancing towards well-being in the Third Age, Literature Review on the impact of dance on health and well-being among older people, Connolly, M., and Redding, E., 2011, Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance.
http://www.trinitylaban.ac.uk/media/315435/literature%20review%20impact%20of%20dance%20elderly%20populations%20final%20draft%20with%20logos.pdf

Keep dancing: The health and well-being benefits of dance for older people, Bupa, 2011.
http://www.bupa.co.uk/jahia/webdav/site/bupacouk/shared/Documents/PDFs/care-homes/general/shall-we-dance-report.pdf

The power of music: its impact on the intellectual, social and personal development of children and young people, Hallam, S., 2010, International Journal of Music Education, August 2010 vol. 28 no. 3.
http://www.edwardmaxwell.com/thepowerofmusic.pdf

Music therapy for depression, Maratos, A., Gold, C., Wang, X., and Crawford, M., 2008, Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, 2008, Issue 1.
http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD004517.pub2/abstract

Public value and the arts, a literature review, Keany, E., Arts Council England, 2006.
http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/documents/publications/phpnzcVVG.pdf

How organisations are evidencing their results

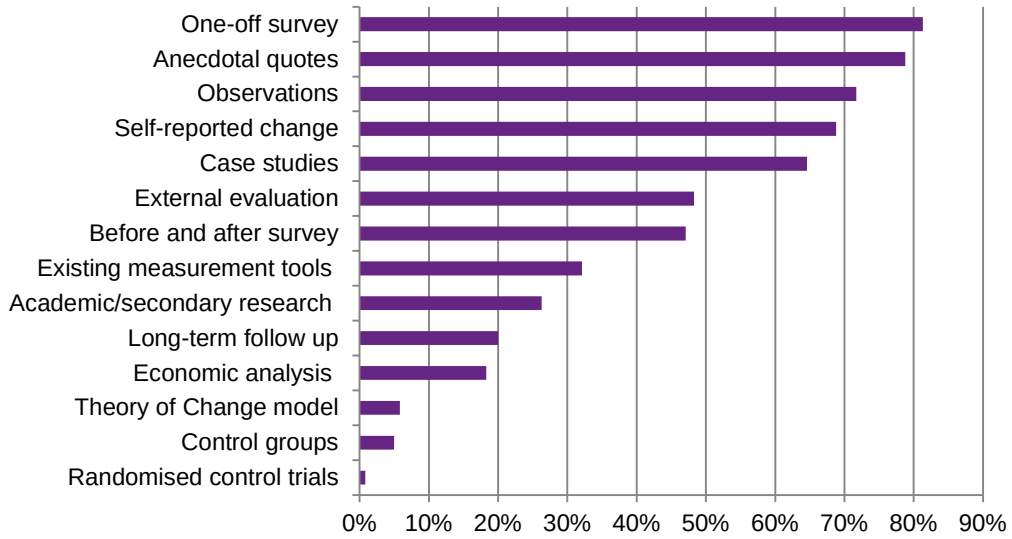
Tools and practicalities of impact measurement

Using the Cultural Commissioning Programme survey data (discussed in Chapter 1) we can see a high-level picture of impact measurement practices from across the sector. While the majority of organisations recognised the importance of evidencing their impact to commissioners, in most cases the methods used were the less-sophisticated methods from the list of impact measurement practices identified in the survey.

The five most commonly used approaches, all used by at least half of all organisations, were:

- one-off surveys;
- collection of anecdotal evidence;
- observational data;
- self-reported change from participants; and
- case studies.

Figure 13: Impact measurement practices



Source: Cultural Commissioning Programme survey, Q10: *'What do you use to measure your impact?' Please tick all that apply* (N=240).

Box 11: Explanation of advanced evaluation practices

Economic analysis: Assessing the financial value of an intervention through methods including cost-effectiveness analysis, cost-benefit analysis or Social Return on Investment.

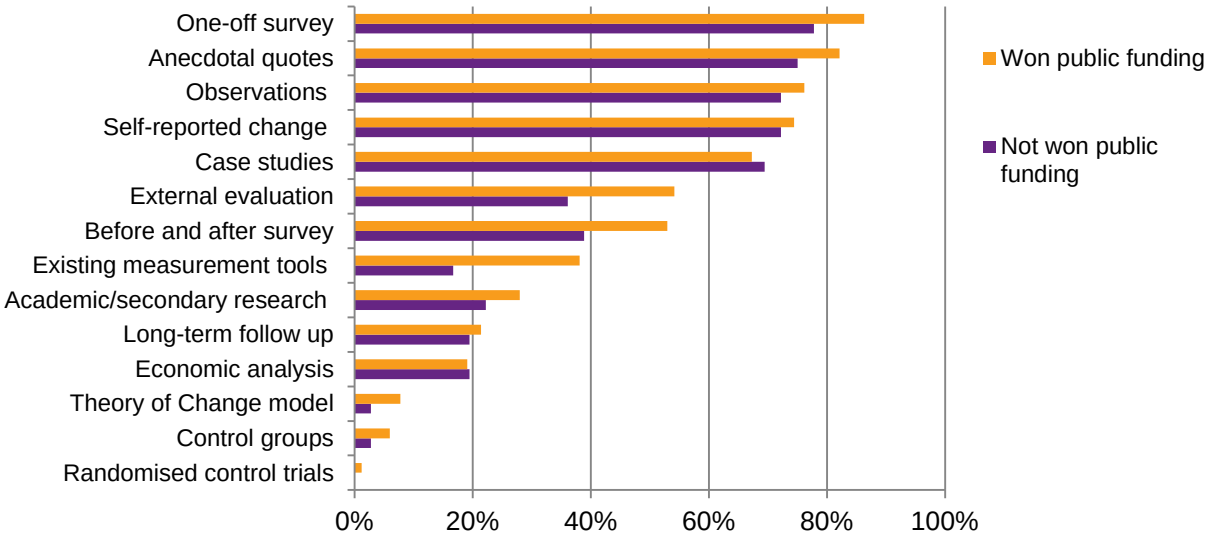
Long-term follow up: Measuring the same indicators over a longer period to assess what changes have been sustained.

Control groups: Comparing those who have received an intervention with those who have not.

Randomised control trials: Providing an intervention to part of a group that is randomly selected, and measuring changes across the whole group

Organisations that had won contracts were slightly more likely to use almost all methods of evidencing their work, although results were statistically significant in only a few cases.

Figure 14: Impact measurement practices of organisations that have and have not won public funding



Source: Cultural Commissioning Programme survey, Q10: *'What do you use to measure your impact?'* (Won public funding N=168, Have not won public funding N=36).

A smaller proportion of organisations undertook more sophisticated methods of evidencing their work, including economic analysis, long-term follow up, and the use of randomised control trials.

A study of the impact measurement practices of charities revealed a similar trend, with far higher responses for the simpler impact measurement practices, and decreasing responses to the more sophisticated ones. Although these responses are not directly comparable due to the different survey methodologies and question phrasing, the arts and culture sector seems to be undertaking a similar amount of impact measurement to the wider voluntary sector when it comes to the simpler practices, however when we look at the more advanced practices, the arts and cultural sector seems to be slightly behind the charity sector.[*]

Half of all organisations outsourced their evaluation, which indicates an investment of resources in this task, but may also indicate a lack of confidence or expertise within the organisation. For eight out of ten organisations, impact measurement for public funders is a challenge, with half of all organisations citing lack of resources as the main issue. Other important challenges include a lack of skills and expertise, and indicators being required by funders that felt meaningless to the delivering organisation (these answers did not vary significantly between organisations that were successful in winning contracts and those that were not). Medium-sized organisations were more likely to employ external consultants than small organisations (53% vs.30% respectively), yet they cite lack of resources as their top barrier to impact measurement, which might imply that organisations find it cheaper to employ someone to undertake an external evaluation than to develop this expertise internally.

[*] NPC's report *Making an impact* (2012) found that just under 60% of charities responding to the survey reported using case studies, customer satisfaction forms and bespoke questionnaires. Just over half reported using before-and-after measures, one third economic analysis, a quarter long-term follow up, 15% control groups, and 8% randomised control trials. Pritchard, D., Ni Ogain, E., and Lumley, T., (2012) *Making an Impact: Impact measurement among charities and social enterprises in the UK*. NPC.

Figure 15: Barriers to impact measurement

Source: Cultural Commissioning Programme survey, Q30: (organisations which found impact measurement for funders challenging) *'What are your main barriers that prevent you from measuring your impact?' Please tick maximum 3* (N=161).

Methods of monitoring and evidencing arts and cultural work

Looking in more detail at the approaches used by organisations through interviews, we found that many organisations build up a picture of the impact of their work using a patchwork of different methodologies.

Basic **monitoring data** is a building block of most organisations' approaches and is often required by commissioners as a basis for key performance indicators. Data tracked could include numbers of users and demographic, or postcode data to track whether users are from particular target communities.[*] Some metrics can be used as indications of service quality or the quality of the organisation, for example the ratio of participants to facilitators.[†] Attendance metrics act as indicators of adherence, and where organisations are offering multiple activities, usage metrics indicate both demand for services and ability to provide appropriate services.[125] This data is often the easiest to collect, although organisations need suitable systems to store and analyse data, and ideally should build collection into everyday work.

Service satisfaction and **participant feedback** is an important element of monitoring: ensuring participants feel the service is a worthwhile use of their time, and understanding ways to improve it. Satisfaction is a target for any service.

Most organisations look for ways to convey the richness of participants' experiences. Popular methods include **case studies** to illustrate how work has affected individuals;[‡] **exhibitions or performances** of artwork; and **photographic and visual records** of the programme. These approaches can be effective in bringing interventions alive, and a number of interviewees (including both commissioners and providers) indicated that seeing work first-hand could be compelling.[126] Some commissioners will have the freedom to commission based on experience and personal conviction. For most, this could open their mind to the potential of creative approaches, but further evidence will be needed.

[*] Weiner, M., Community Engagement Manager at Dulwich Picture Gallery (NPC interview, 15 October 2013).

[†] Lowe, T., Chief Executive at Helix Arts (NPC Interview, 16 August 2013).

[‡] A number if interviewees also commented that case studies of commissioning relationships could help commissioners see the value creative approaches could bring. The Cultural Commissioning Programme will develop a library of case studies.

The benefits of an outcomes framework

Many organisations define an **outcomes framework** as an organising principle for the change they expect the service to deliver. The advantage of an outcomes framework is that it allows organisations to identify which outcomes are important and build appropriate approaches to evidencing them. An outcomes framework is not in itself a method of measuring social impact, but it provides a framework for planning and communicating how programmes of activities can achieve outcomes. Outcomes frameworks can help providers select appropriate impact measurement practices, and compile data collected through a number of sources into a unified narrative.

NPC believes that the Theory of Change is a useful tool for creating an outcomes framework. It creates a visual map that demonstrates the logical flow from activities to intermediate outcomes, and final outcomes that may be of interest to commissioners. Based on this map, organisations can identify where their mission-related outcomes align with outcomes of interest to commissioners. The visual map can act as a useful communications tool between providers and commissioners, articulating why a certain approach will achieve the outcomes the commissioner seeks. It also provides a framework for prioritising the outcomes that are most important to measure, and ascertaining the most appropriate ways to demonstrate progress towards them.[*]

Some organisations interviewed had created theories of change both to support their work as well as their engagement with commissioners. Helix Arts has developed separate theories of change for each of its programmes; Create Gloucestershire has devised a theory of change for the whole arts sector, and bids for work where the outcomes are aligned with the priorities of commissioners.[127]

Image source: Big Draw at Arnolfini. Credit Richard Coleman.

[*] Kail, A., Lumley, T. (2012) *Theory of Change: The beginning of making a difference*. NPC

Box 12: An example of an outcomes framework

Live Music Now supports the UK's best emerging professional musicians from across the genres to use their talents for the benefit of those who are otherwise excluded from the joy of experiencing live music: it works with children and young people with special educational needs, and with older people.

To demonstrate the impact of its work with older people, Live Music Now is developing an outcomes framework. It has defined six key areas in which it expects its work to influence the lives of the older people it works with, and is developing strategies to evidence progress in each of these areas:

1) Communication and social bonding: through interviews with participants, reflective diaries, and observation of behaviour (filming or photographing sessions), it is possible to assess increases in interaction with others. Level of communication often decreases in older people, particularly those living with dementia. Live Music Now is exploring how to track changes over time.

2) Cognition and understanding: Music can trigger memories in people with dementia. In early 2014 Live Music Now undertook an innovation study with the East Kent Neurorehabilitation Unit at Kent and Canterbury Hospital and University of Kent's School of Psychology . The study recorded evidence of the impact of live music intervention on the well-being of patients recovering from brain injury. Results are expected in summer 2014. The organisation will use indicators from the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale to assess whether people feel optimistic, can think clearly, feel confident, are interested in new things, and feel they can make up their own mind.

3) Wellbeing: The Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale assesses elements of well-being, and Live Music Now also looks for physical signs of enjoyment. In partnership with Ageing and Assisted Living Network from the University of Essex and the Orders of St John Care Trust the organisation is going to carry out a pilot in a residential care home, using film to capture physical signs of enjoyment (how long people smile for, or whether they look up to engage with the performance), and measure any changes in this over time.

4) Engagement with the world: Live Music Now is interested to understand whether high quality live musical experiences encourage people to engage with other activities and opportunities: it plans to track whether participants take a greater control of their environment, choose to eat meals in the dining room rather than in a bedroom, and choose to engage in other arts and non-arts activities on offer.

5) Physical or clinical health outcomes: There is evidence that singing has an impact on respiratory health, and that dance or movement may improve mobility alongside the health benefits of mental stimulation. Live Music Now is interested to understand whether participation in their programmes can support older people to live independently through the impacts outlined above or through impact on further health indicators, such as fewer visits to the GP or reduced use of medication.

6) Personal development: Participation in Live Music Now activities exposes participants to professional-standard live performances of new music that they would not otherwise encounter and although not currently measured, this could encourage people to try new skills, and to have a voice in designing programmes.

Outcomes frameworks may include **artistic outcomes** which the organisation feels are crucial to its mission and the achievement of social outcomes, however the non-artistic outcomes are likely to be of greater interest to commissioners. Outcomes frameworks that do not contain artistic outcomes may be easier to transfer between different artistic interventions to gather consistent data. Some of the organisations interviewed, such as Tin Arts in Durham, have taken steps to define SMART outcomes by employing external evaluators.[128]

Intermediate outcomes

Often **intermediate outcomes** are central to what the organisation is hoping to achieve. To credibly establish that intermediate outcomes have been achieved, it is important to create a baseline—an assessment of participants' position in relation to these outcomes before the intervention begins. Baselines can be challenging for arts and cultural organisations, as described in the section 'Measurement Challenges'. Organisations evidence soft outcomes with varying levels of rigour:

- The simplest way is by using **before and after surveys**, asking participants to self-assess their position in relation to certain outcomes. Surveys designed by the organisation may be useful because they are specific to the intervention, but do not have any external validation, and may not meet the evidence standards commissioners require.
- **Standardised tools** take before and after measures using questions that have been rigorously tested and validated, giving assurance that improved scores reflect genuine improvements that can be compared across organisations. Some commissioners will be comfortable with specific tools that are used by other interventions. See Box 13 for a further discussion of standardised tools.
- **Assessment by professionals** who are associated with the programme, either the artist facilitators or specialist carers (for example in projects working with older people). If professionals develop a long-term relationship with participants they can keep a record of improvements that might not be captured in more formal outcome structures.[129]
- Many organisations **video record** sessions to illustrate change over time. Some are looking for ways to quantify observable change. Where an outcome is social engagement (for example for older people with dementia) it is possible to track response to stimulus, such as the amount of time participants spend smiling, and their interaction with others.

Box 13: Standardised tools

Our research has indicated that these tools are being used well in the arts and cultural sector: one example is the wide use by interviewees of the Warwick and Edinburgh Mental Health and Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) to capture well-being outcomes, whilst 32% of survey respondents reported using existing tools to measure the impact of their work.[130]

Tools are used to measure the change in participants as a result of a taking part in a particular intervention. They may take the form of a psychometric scale, a questionnaire or a system for recording practitioner observations. By capturing information before, during and after an intervention, tools can be used to measure change in participants, or 'distance travelled', and therefore give an indication of the impact of activities. Standardised 'off-the-shelf' tools have already been developed and validated through peer review; such tools may initiate from academics, companies, charities or other organisations which see a need to develop them.

An advantage of validated tools is that they are trusted, often having been developed by measurement experts. The use of standardised tools avoids the investment of time required to develop valid, reliable and sensitive tools, whilst providing a form of evidence that is credible to commissioners, and with which they may already be familiar.

A broader advantage in the use of these tools is that standardising the collection of evidence allows comparison with other organisations and the building of sector-wide evidence on the outcomes that arts and cultural activities can achieve.

A principal downside to the use of standardised tools is that they may alter the relationship between provider and beneficiary. Many require that participants fill out forms or questionnaires at various intervals, meaning that the experiential aspect of arts and cultural activities can be undermined, and organisations begin to feel less familial to their beneficiaries. The 'standardised' aspect of these methods also means that organisations cannot adapt them to their specific circumstances or that they may not be sensitive enough to the specific outcomes that are targeted.[131]

Organisations therefore need to decide between investing the time required to develop specific tools and using recognised measurement tools that are not a perfect fit. Adapting standardised tools is not advised, as this can undermine their credibility.[*] When selecting the most appropriate tool, it is important to consider both the best way to capture the outcomes of a particular intervention, and the standards or expectations of commissioners.

Longer-term outcomes

For some organisations it is possible to gather data on **final outcomes,** such as securing and maintaining a job or desisting from crime. This method is often popular with commissioners. However collating this data is challenging: arts and cultural interventions often help people to take the first step on a journey; the final outcome will often occur months or years after the creative intervention. Even if the outcome can be tracked, the organisation can claim only to have made a contribution rather than take full responsibility for the outcome.

Nonetheless, **long-term follow up** to assess the longevity of changes or achievement of final outcomes can be a powerful way of evidencing impact. It can be resource intensive and difficult to remain in contact with people who have completed an intervention, and therefore is most suited to intensive or long-term interventions where the organisation has invested heavily in each participant.

[*] For more information see, NPC and Clinks (2014) *Using off-the-shelf tools to measure change*.

Above all, commissioners are interested in a **financial case** that demonstrates services offer good value for money, achieving outcomes at lower cost than alternatives. Some organisations have been developing skills to make a financial case for their work, responding to requests from commissioners.[132] Some commissioners have noted that organisations claim ability to undertake Social Return On Investment (SROI) analysis, but clearly lack these skills. (For an explanation of economic analysis, see Box 14.) A Unit Cost Database, developed as part of the Centre for Social Impact Bonds toolkit, contains information on the costs of services in areas including crime, education and skills, employment and economy, fire, health, housing and social services. These data can help organisations build a case for support by benchmarking their own costs against known costs of services.[133]

Box 14: The challenge of making a financial case

An economic analysis summarises impact in monetary terms by translating costs and benefits into a value that can be expressed using a currency. This enables aggregation of data across different outcome areas and communication of impact in a way that is widely understood, in other words, 'for every pound spent, charity x creates y pounds in value'.

Not all positive social outcomes can be monetised and in some circumstances this method of communicating impact is not appropriate. Some important social outcomes do not produce a cost saving in any other area. An example would be end of life care—allowing people to die in their own homes may cost more than other forms of care, and it would be difficult to make a financial case for doing so, but many would agree this is still an important outcome worth investing in. There is a danger that if social impact measurement focuses too narrowly on making a financial case—and if this becomes a primary driver of commissioning decisions—this may neglect important outcomes that cannot be monetised.

Even where economic analysis is appropriate, there are many practical challenges in completing it robustly. First and foremost, organisations need to consider whether they have the right data and how robust that data is. They must consider, for example, whether they have accounted for a counterfactual (an alternative scenario of what would happen to beneficiaries in the absence of the intervention); or whether there is any negative (unintended) impact that could result from the intervention.

A few different methods are used for carrying out economic analysis. Social Return on Investment (SROI) is famous for being able to put a monetary value on outcomes that are particularly hard to monetise, such as well-being or community cohesion. This often relies heavily on stakeholder engagement which can make it quite subjective—a characteristic that has brought mixed reviews from both funders and charities. At times a more traditional cost-benefit analysis or a simple break-even analysis is appropriate. A cost-benefit analysis is very similar to an SROI but depends less on stakeholder involvement; a break-even analysis is an alternative when the data collected is not good enough for a cost-benefit or an SROI analysis. The result of a break-even analysis is the number of beneficiaries one needs to help in order for a programme / organisation to pay for itself.

An economic analysis is much more than just a neat financial ratio: it is as much about the learning—by doing an economic analysis, one needs to undergo a rigorous planning process to collect the right data. As a result, it often helps to improve the quality of impact data before beginning the analysis—a process that may take a year or more. A good economic analysis should be underpinned by a well thought through theory of change, the use of standardised or validated tools and a thorough literature review, among other things.

In some cases, organisations will be able to undertake **advanced measurement practices** such as the use of **control groups**, but this will usually occur in conjunction with a partner (see discussion in Chapter 6).

Evidence and relationships

The need to build relationships with commissioners and the difficulties that are involved in initiating these kinds of relationships is a challenge that is shared by any organisation that is seeking to win public funding, and not a problem that is unique to arts and cultural organisations. This challenge was a central theme in many of the interviews conducted for this research, yet a number of these organisations have built **strong relationships with commissioners** who provided support in developing an appropriate method to evidence social outcomes. This joint working might involve negotiations over an approach both sides are happy with,[134] or sharing of expectations and established tools[135]—which may require some support from the commissioning body to help implement tools effectively. Where this relationship does not exist, organisations may be able to proactively identify the evidence frameworks they will be expected to report under for certain commissioners, and align their data collection accordingly.[136]

Image source: Told By An Idiot Intergenerational Project 2 (Royal Exchange). Royal Exchange Theatre's programme of activities/events provided as part of the Age Friendly Manchester Cultural Offer programme. Photographer: Joel Fildes.

Measurement challenges

Baselines are problematic and can decrease the impact of the work[137]

As described in Chapter 2, arts and cultural activities can be effective specifically because they do not define people in terms of their problems or challenges. If participants feel they are being observed it can change the nature of the intervention and may undermine trust and willingness to participate. Some organisations opt to take baseline measurements part way through the intervention, and accept that they cannot capture the absolute starting point.

Predefined outcomes are challenging to creative approaches, and outcomes-based tools inappropriate for creative interventions

Arts and cultural interventions are often described as taking participants on a journey: some organisations are uncomfortable pre-defining the end point of that journey or stating the life choices participants should make as a result. This is at odds with commissioners' desire to pay for certain outcomes. Some organisations are comfortable with this tension and make compromises with a view to educating commissioners over time. Others will feel uncomfortable doing so, and may find commissioning inappropriate.

Outcome scores can go down part way through an intervention

In interventions designed to raise aspirations, outcome scores assessed on a scale may dip midway through the intervention, reflecting participants shifting their expectations of what 'good' looks like. This is observed in many standardised tools for different types of intervention, and commissioners need to be aware of this.

Limits to staff capacity and expertise to keep up to date with evolving best practice and the academic evidence base

Evaluation of social impact is often not provided for in budgets. As such, organisations may need to invest to train staff in evaluation practices, and ensure staff have time to be trained properly in evaluation techniques. Even if evaluation is outsourced the organisation needs capacity for ongoing data collection and to act on findings. The relationship between providers and infrastructure organisations (support bodies that can provide advice, guidance and training, for example Arts in Health Networks and the Arts Alliance working in the criminal justice system) is essential here in disseminating new research and publications that help providers keep on top of best practice in evaluation and current developments in academic research.

Providers should also be clear with commissioners and other funders about the costs of good evaluation and push to have this included in budgets.

Evaluation partners don't understand needs and create toolkits that can be difficult to implement[138]

Often the research questions asked by academics and the evaluation priorities of providers are not fully aligned. Some providers struggle to adjust to research methodologies. Organisations must develop sufficient expertise to develop effective briefs for partners, and ensure effective communication as the evaluation approach is developed. One interviewee from the consultancy Willis Newson is working with the University of West England to look at how to narrow the gulf between practice evaluation and academic research.[*]

[*] Daykin, N., Attwood, M. and Willis, J. and Willis Newson (2013) 'Supporting arts and health evaluation: Report of a UK knowledge transfer partnership'. *Journal of Applied Arts and Health*, Volume 4, Number 2, 1 October 2013: pp. 179–190(12).

Primary beneficiaries may have difficulty in articulating change[*]

For beneficiary groups with communication challenges, organisations need to support participants to articulate the impact of the service in ways meaningful to them, and triangulate this with information from other sources (eg, assessment by facilitators).

In other circumstances the challenge comes in encouraging participants to communicate an authentic account of their experiences, rather than to regurgitate the stories they think people want to hear. In these cases, creative methods may be a more useful starting point than standardised baselines.

Ethical challenges of reporting on participant assessment

Organisations must ensure that individual participants cannot be identified in relation to sensitive or personal information that might be reported to external parties**.** In Harmony Newcastle Gateshead is exploring these issues with GPs and psychiatrists.

Commissioners have unrealistic expectations and may not recognise intermediate steps towards ultimate outcomes

There is a need to stress the important contribution of intermediate outcomes to long-term outcomes in dialogues with commissioners, as well as the appropriate contribution organisations can make earlier in the process. In some areas this importance is already being recognised: the National Offender Management Service (NOMS), for example, has commissioned work to understand intermediate outcomes on the route to desistance.[†]

Poor access to independent data sources

A number of interviewees discussed difficulty accessing independent data on the outcomes of their participants. Dulwich Picture Gallery, for example, accepts referrals from GPs but does not have access to data on GP visits to see if its activities reduce reliance on GPs.[139] NPC is working to open up government data to help organisations use externally-collected data, without the need for individual follow-up (see Box 10).

Not all outcomes can be presented as improvements

For organisations working with certain types of beneficiary groups or outcomes, success might be maintaining a level of independence or stabilising a condition, rather than seeking improvements. These organisations need to carefully negotiate appropriate metrics of success with commissioners.

It is extremely difficult to demonstrate value for money—particularly for preventative services

The challenges are discussed in Box 14. Most organisations will struggle to complete a cost benefit analysis, let alone a credible social return on investment. Organisations could begin by establishing a firm idea of their own unit costs. Evidence for preventative approaches requires longer-term 'longitudinal' data, which may not exist and cannot be created without considerably delay and investment in resources.

[*] For example, Tin Arts works with people with learning disabilities. Wilson, M., Programme Director at Tin Arts (NPC interview, 3 September 2013).

[†] The National Offender Management Service has funded research into intermediate outcomes for desistance from crime in a range of interventions including arts interventions. This research is informing the development of toolkits to help organisations measure progress of participants in their interventions against these outcomes. See www.rand.org/randeurope/research/projects/reduce-reoffending.html

What organisations should be doing

Use the academic evidence base

During this research, some commissioners expressed frustration that providers often seek to demonstrate the effectiveness of their own approach, rather than to design programmes based on the existing evidence base.[140] Creative organisations are justifiably cautious about replicating work from elsewhere: many are adamant that interventions only work where they are responsive to the needs of, and shaped by, participants.[141] This sense of ownership and direction can be central to the achievement of outcomes. It should be possible to replicate an approach or a methodology that can be directed by participants, rather than replicating a programme of activities. This can be challenging to commissioners who expect to monitor a contract based on completion of a range of pre-agreed activities, alongside (rather than instead of) information about outcomes achieved.

The research evidence base on arts and cultural interventions contains a small number of Randomised Control Trials (RCTs)—considered the highest standard of evidence. Where an RCT shows a statistically significant improvement, there is a strong case that the intervention does deliver outcomes. However RCTs can only ever describe a highly specific set of circumstances, and for most organisations it will be impractical or inappropriate to replicate these exactly. Until we have a sufficient number of studies of this type it will be very difficult to make a more general comment about the ability of certain creative interventions to deliver on certain outcomes. This means that not all arts and cultural activities can be conclusively evidenced with reference to the academic evidence base. Nonetheless there is a valuable and growing body of academic research in this area which providers should take time to engage with and use in conversations with commissioners. Both commissioners and providers need to learn how best to draw on this evidence base in ways that are practical and proportionate as they take decisions about commissioned services and service design.

Working with partners to improve evidence standards

In this research process we discovered many providers working with academic partners to evidence their work. Providers may not be able to afford a dedicated evaluation specialist within the organisation, and working with PhD or masters students can be an effective way to access high-quality evaluation capacity.[142]

A range of different academic bodies and departments are interested in researching the impact of creative approaches. There are a few institutional posts specialising in arts, culture or creativity, which are natural research partners—for example, specialists in arts in health.[143] Cultural organisations are also working with partners from a range of disciplines including business schools,[144] social gerontology,[145] clinical psychology,[146] education,[147] and sport science.[148] Indeed many projects are interdisciplinary: the Dementia and Imagination project based at Bangor University involves academics from health, medicine, and the arts.[149]

Academic researchers have methodologies at their disposal that organisations would struggle to implement independently. Working within established frameworks lends rigour and credibility to findings. Academic approaches vary in methodology and the type of data gathered. Approaches uncovered in this research included:

- Ethnographic: researchers aim to capture the social meaning of interactions in naturally-occurring settings through observation. Arts for Health Cornwall and Isles of Scilly is working with a PhD student from the University of Falmouth to investigate the benefits of making and participating in the arts for older people.[150]
- Use of theoretical frameworks to drive semi-structured interviews with participants. The Dementia and Imagination project at Bangor University conducts qualitative research through semi-structured interviews using a discussion guide that is theoretically based, using the social connectedness approach.
- Quantitative studies that seek to establish the effect of an intervention in statistical terms. For example, an ‘arts on prescription’ service run by the Isle of Wight NHS Trust was evaluated using the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS) and the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale alongside other scales to

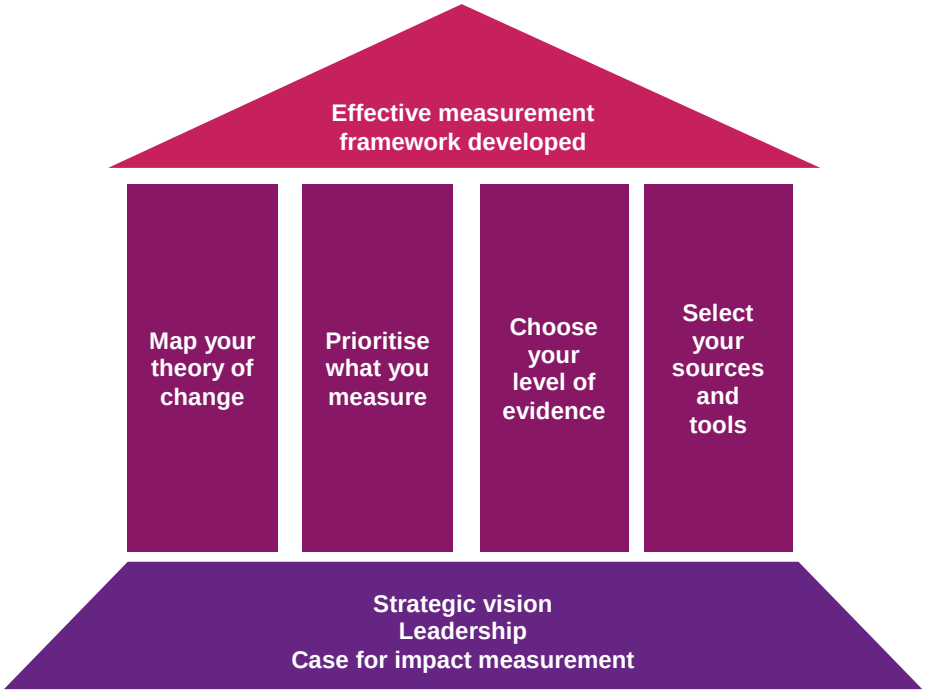
measure the effectiveness of the intervention in terms of clinical outcomes. The evaluation showed a statistically significant decrease in levels of depression.[*]

Both provider organisations and academic researchers recognise the potential methodological challenges of working together. For providers, even free research resource requires time to manage and implement effectively.[151] Often research questions are not framed in a way that makes it easy to translate findings into practice improvement. Researchers comment that provider organisations can struggle to make adjustments to research approaches, such as the ethical requirement that research participants remain anonymous, while organisations are accustomed to photographing sessions as a record of the work.[152] Work is underway to develop effective practice around collaboration between practitioners and the research community.[153]

NPC has developed an approach to measuring impact that has proven transferrable and appropriate to many organisations delivering social outcomes. The following summary is extracted from NPC's publication *Building your measurement framework: NPC's four pillar approach*, which gives more detailed guidance on each of the four pillars.

[*] Healing Arts, Isle of Wight NHS Trust (2010) *Evaluation of 'Time Being 2': a participatory arts programme for patients with depression (and low levels of personal social capital)*: p. 8. It should be noted, however, that the analysis suffers from a very small sample size.

Figure 16: The four pillars approach to measuring impact



Step one: Map your theory of change

Many charities struggle to know where to start with impact measurement. Starting with your goals and developing a theory of change provides clarity, revealing the causal links between what you do and what you are trying to achieve. It gives you a coherent framework to underpin your measurement efforts.

Step two: Prioritise what you want to measure

Collecting the right amount of quality data is key, and getting there might require some trial and error. Prioritise the most important outcomes from your theory of change, and focus on measuring these. Your impact is likely to be diffuse, affecting different people in different ways over different time frames. Trying to capture all these changes is complicated and may not be the best use of scarce resources. Do not be tempted to be driven by collecting data that is convenient—just because something is easy to measure, does not mean it is important.

Step three: Choose your level of evidence

Decide on an appropriate level of rigour of evidence of your impact that suits the needs of your stakeholders. There is no one size fits all because different situations, organisations and people require different levels of evidence. How rigorous you need to be depends on your needs, resources and capabilities, and those of your audience.

Step four: Select your sources and tools

Decide what data you need and select or develop measurement tools or data sources to capture it. You may find an existing tool or data source, or you may need to develop one. Consider what tools already exist to measure your outcomes, and think about existing evidence for causal links in your theory of change.[*]

[*] More information about the four pillar approach can be found in NPC (2014) *Building your measurement framework: NPC's four pillar approach.*

Concluding comments

Arts and cultural organisations use a wide array of impact measurement practices to demonstrate their effectiveness to commissioners. These practices are broadly in line with what is happening in the charity sector, although use of advanced measurement practices seems less widespread.

There is a need for more evidence of a robust standard to help persuade commissioners who require the highest standards of evidence of the relevance of arts and cultural interventions, and this needs to be collated and made available somewhere accessible so that time-pressed provider organisations are able to easily understand what works and support their case when communicating with commissioners.

6. PARTNERSHIP WORKING

This chapter looks at the advantage of working in partnerships, but also the challenges they create. Partnerships allow providers to engage in commissioning projects that would otherwise be beyond their scope, fill skills gaps and benefit from a range of expertise, however partnerships introduce complexity through the need to foster individual relationships and by creating new organisational structures.

In this section we discuss:

- The current situation
- Reasons to partner
- Partnership models and practicalities
- Implications of partnership

Key messages

Providers

- Most providers will not be able to succeed working independently–partnership will be an important factor for most organisations engaging with commissioning.
- Partners should be selected to build on a range of complementary skills between the organisations—creating a value network. The most appropriate partners will not always be those with which organisations have the strongest existing relationship. Organisations should expect to work with a range of partners including those beyond the arts and cultural sector.
- Partnership has many advantages but takes time and investment; it is not necessarily a cheaper option.
- Partnerships will not always be smooth, but this should be accepted rather than seen as a failure. Competition with partners needs to be carefully negotiated.
- Potential partners need to feel they are working with credible organisations and will need to be convinced of the strength of the organisation in the same way as commissioners.

Commissioners

- Partnerships bring complexity: where commissioners expect providers to work in partnership this should be recognised in timescales and budgets.
- Commissioners can play a valuable role in supporting organisations to negotiate partnerships without being prescriptive in defining the arrangements they expect to see implemented.

Policymakers and Arts Council England

- Brokers have a valuable role to play in helping the arts and culture sector win commissions. The roles require time and capacity and will rarely happen spontaneously: the sector will need to invest in supporting the broker role for this to be fully effective.
- Increased contract size makes partnership essential if smaller organisations are to be involved. If structural arrangements make it difficult for arts and cultural organisations to participate, then organisations with certain expertise will be systematically excluded.

The current situation

Partnership working was an important theme throughout this research: interviews indicated that partnership was a key factor in the success of many organisations. Given the shift towards larger contracts, it is likely to become increasingly important as arts and cultural organisations seek opportunities to deliver part of a larger contract.

Almost half of all organisations had applied for public funding as part of a partnership.[154] Just under a quarter of these (23%) said that a partnership was a prerequisite of public funding, which implies that over three quarters of these partnerships were created out of choice. Smaller organisations were more likely to find that partnership was a prerequisite of commissioners.[155] Three quarters of organisations felt that working in partnership was a key success factor in enabling them to win public funding, and larger organisations were more likely to feel this way.[156]

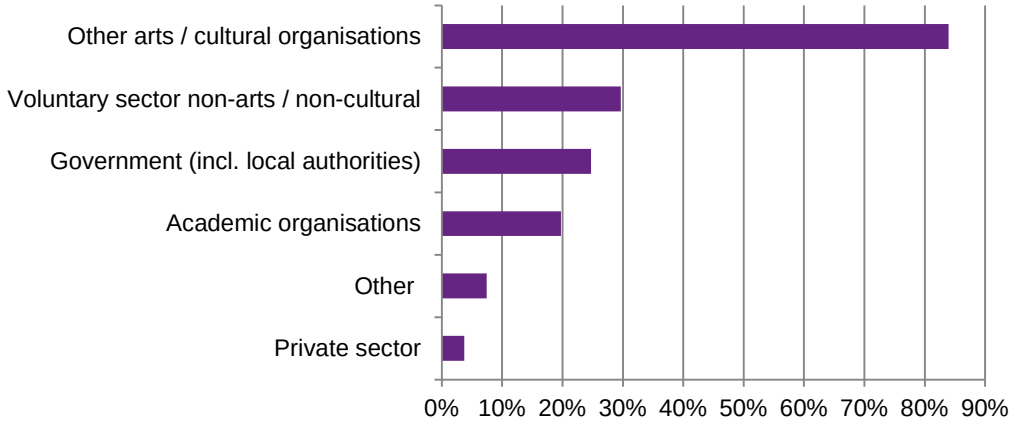
As contracts become bigger, some commissioners are explicit in requiring organisations to work in partnership, fearing the loss of expertise and community capacity if smaller organisations are cut out of commissioning opportunities. While large, resilient organisations are attractive lead partners, smaller organisations can be more responsive to community need and may find it easier to innovate.[157] For commissioners, there is a challenging balance to strike in supporting the development of partnerships without being prescriptive in defining what types of partnerships they expect potential providers to form.

'The commissioners are pretty hands-off… they don't want to make the cuts so they're leaving it to the sector to make the decisions… The initiative is with us to come up with new models and say to the commissioners "You're interested in integrated care pathways and joined-up working, so here's how that would look". We're hoping to put something together because we know that they haven't got the time yet [to work out] how best to retain what's there.'

Paul Monks, Director, Core Arts[158]

Other arts and cultural organisations were the most common partners of the organisations in our survey, but a range of sectors offered partnerships. To succeed in the commissioning environment, it will become increasingly important for arts and cultural organisations to seek partners from outside the sector and benefit from the different perspectives in developing work that remains true to each organisation's artistic mission, but resonates with the concerns of all stakeholders.

Figure 17: Partner organisations



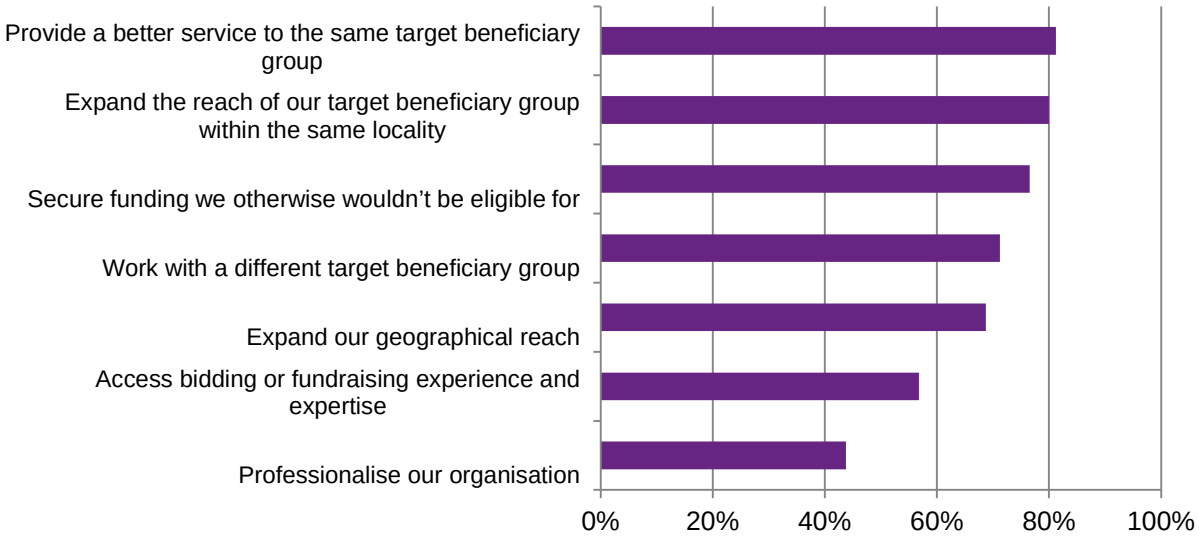
Source Cultural Commissioning Programme survey, Q20:*'Who were the organisations you've partnered with?'* (multiple response, N=81).

We do not have a direct comparison with the partnerships that the voluntary sector as a whole engages in, but an NPC survey of the commissioning experiences of charities found that more than a third (35%) were subcontracted by other charities, while a quarter (26%) were subcontracted by private sector organisations.[159] This is a far higher engagement with the private sector than we see in the arts and cultural sector.

Reasons to partner

Organisations can gain additional skills, expertise or capacity by working in partnership, enabling them to win and deliver work that would otherwise be outside their reach. Survey respondents were most likely to feel that partnership helped them provide a better service to existing beneficiaries, and extend their organisation's reach to more of its target beneficiaries.

Figure 18: Benefits of working in a partnership



Source Cultural Commissioning Programme survey, Q21:*'Please rate your agreement with the following statements. Working in partnership has helped us: (agree and strongly agree)'* (N=81).

Looking in more detail at these findings using evidence from interviews, arts and cultural organisations felt that partnership can deliver:

- Improved, joined-up service for beneficiaries who are engaging with multiple services. Previous research has found that charities working in consortia feel they deliver better public services.[160]
- Access to a small part of a much larger contract that an organisation could not deliver alone. Organisations might offer a creative intervention within a single contract providing end-to-end services.[161]
- Expertise in working with specific beneficiary groups which might require particular training or adaptations.
- Increased geographical reach to scale a successful intervention, working with partners embedded at the grassroots of their community, while ensuring the service is adapted to local needs.[162]
- Exposure to technical skills that the organisation does not have in-house: bidding skills, safeguarding expertise, and knowledge of the policy context.[163] Smaller partners can be relieved of responsibility for areas where they lack capacity, or can work closely with partners to build knowledge of these areas for the future.
- Meeting the technical requirements of a Pre-Qualification-Questionnaire (PQQ), for example level of reserves, or level of turnover as a multiple of total contract value. Smaller organisations may be structurally excluded from tendering by the requirements of the PQQ but compete by working with a larger, more financially stable partner.
- Evaluative expertise by partnering with academic institutions, forming mutually-beneficial relationships. Academics have access to subject matter for practical studies, and providers receive low-cost, high-quality research and measurement capacity. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.
- Referral networks to ensure that the people who could benefit most from the service are aware of it. With changes in the structures of the public sector, the referral networks that some organisations have relied on are crumbling and alternative routes need to be found.[164]

Partnership models and practicalities

The model selected for collaboration or partnership has practical implications, and different models will be appropriate in different situations. Many of these models are equally relevant to organisations in the wider voluntary sector.

Table 12: Models of partnership and their implications

Model	Advantages	Challenges
Single equal partner	Easier to manage.	May need more partners to gain expertise needed.
Prime-sub contracting relationship	**As prime**: Can select partners you feel comfortable working with. In previous research, charities were more comfortable as primes.[165] **As subcontractor**: Can be involved in contract where capacity or expertise is lacking to be prime.	**As prime**: Financial risk if delivery partners fail to meet requirements. **As subcontractor**: Can be seen as bid candy. Risk of budget being squeezed; perceived as having negative impact on financial security.[166]
Informal alliance or network	When organisations' objectives are aligned, can be highly effective.[167]	Small organisations may fear voices lost among larger players.
Formal consortia	Clear responsibilities and expectations. Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs) ensure each organisation has equal voice in decision-making.[168]	Can be highly bureaucratic. Organisations struggled when partners worked to the letter of the contract, rather than in the spirit of shared aims.[169]
Non-delivery partner eg, evaluation specialist	Has access to specialist expertise.	Requires time and resources without adding to delivery capacity.

The broader challenges of partnership working have not been addressed in detail by this research, but these challenges—experienced by organisations beyond the arts and cultural sector—have been well covered in previous publications.*

Implications of partnership

Even if partnership bids are not successful, the experience of developing joint bids can initiate continued partnership working. Where collaborative working becomes a habit, it can simplify market engagement for commissioners in valuable ways. In some locations the arts and cultural sector has formed a provider network: when commissioning opportunities arise, network members identify the partners best placed to deliver the work. It can be challenging to negotiate the allocation of opportunities, but such networks are working effectively in some locations.[170] The risk is that this approach requires substantial investment and the level of return is not guaranteed.

'Create Gloucestershire brought together a consortium of organisations that meant we could offer [services] across the county, whereas previously when people have acted individually, they were only able to respond to a small geographical area.'

Pippa Jones, Director, Create Gloucestershire[171]

Partnership often needs to be balanced with competition. Organisations may work with partners they are competing with in other contexts. In provider networks, a number of partners may feel they can add value to a contract and the bid development process will require careful, honest negotiation to decide on the strongest combination of organisations. If one delivery organisation plays the valuable broker role on behalf of smaller partner organisations, this may simplify the process for the latter, but it also confers a competitive advantage to the former as an organisation known to commissioners. There is no simple answer to these challenges, but they are being successfully negotiated around the country.[172]

Collaborative working can drive innovation in service design, as organisations find cost-effective ways to achieve the same outcomes by working together. However collaboration in itself does not drive cost savings—it requires investment of time and money by each partner. It can be difficult to deliver services in a lean, low-cost way while working in partnership and organisations need to fully factor these costs in to financial planning. Despite the pressure to partner, some organisations are finding it more difficult to work in partnership where contract funds are meagre.

Partnership inevitably brings challenges as organisations with different leadership styles, beliefs, and approaches to conflict need to negotiate new modes of working. Complementary organisational cultures are important factors in the success of a collaboration, just as disparate methods of working (with beneficiaries or operationally) can present great challenges. Recognising the need to work through differences at a leadership level, and acknowledging to all staff that effective joint working takes time to get right, can ease the pressure during transition to these new ways of working.[173]

Concluding comments

While not unique to the arts and cultural context, the importance of partnership to commissioning success is clear. However, building effective partnerships requires time and resources.

* See, for example, Kail, A. and Abercrombie, R. (2013) *Collaborating for Impact.* NPC and Impetus.

CONCLUSION

Arts and cultural organisations have a valuable role to play in the delivery of public services. The sector can address many of the priorities for which commissioners struggle to find solutions, on both an individual and community level.

One of the great benefits of arts and cultural solutions is that they are asset based: they build on the existing capacities and capabilities of individuals and communities. For individuals, participation may be about enjoyment, building skills, or a sense of achievement—rather than feeling that they are part of an intervention that addresses a problem. In many cases the interventions work almost inadvertently because they do not appear to directly address the challenge commissioners are working to overcome, but nonetheless have an impact on them. This can be problematic for commissioners who need a clear articulation of how an intervention will help to achieve their aims, and high-quality measurement of outcomes. A useful tool for structuring discussions between commissioners and providers regarding proportionate and appropriate outcomes measurement would be 'theory of change': a visual map of the logical sequence between activities being undertaken and outcomes achieved.

Commissioning, however, is not suitable for all organisations, and it cannot be treated simply as supplementary core income. Commissioned work will only be suitable for organisations where the aims of commissioners are closely aligned with the mission of the organisation, and where the organisation is able to dedicate attention and staff capacity to engaging with the often bureaucratic processes. Not all commissioning is the same: the time commitment and skills required will vary depending on the size of contract, the type of commissioner, and partnerships with organisations that have complementary skills. With this variety, there is no simple checklist for whether organisations should engage with a specific commissioning opportunity (although we present some of the questions organisations need to think about in Figure 10), but where organisations follow this route, they will need to develop skills in assessing and qualifying opportunities.

The experience of arts and cultural organisations is similar to that of the voluntary sector. Many of the challenges faced are shared with other mission-driven organisations, often of a similar size, operating in this complex and fast-changing commissioning environment. Arts and cultural organisations may have different challenges in balancing their artistic mission with social mission, and in articulating how an artistic methodology works to address social outcomes, but they share measurement challenges with many voluntary sector organisations of collecting reliable 'distance travelled' information for participants while working to build relationships of trust with them. Given the extent of shared challenges, arts and cultural organisations could benefit from closer relations with voluntary sector infrastructure and support available[*] to help engage with commissioning.

Measurement is a real challenge for arts and cultural organisations engaging with commissioners. Tools and approaches exist to help practitioners demonstrate their social outcomes—many are transferrable from outside the arts and cultural sector—however there are substantial gaps in the external evidence base linking arts and cultural interventions to social outcomes. Commissioners will vary in the extent to which this influences their decisions: in some local relationships, commissioners are comfortable commissioning arts or cultural interventions based on a relationship with the organisation, and experience of similar work being effective; in other contexts—particularly health—commissioners are accustomed to high standards of clinical evidence. Often equivalent evidence does not exist for arts and cultural interventions; in part due to lack of investment, and in part due to methodological barriers. The challenge is for provider organisations and commissioners to move closer together

[*] For example, training often offered by councils for voluntary service in local authorities, by NCVO and other national voluntary sector infrastructure, and by arts networks in some local areas.

in building a consensus about realistic and proportionate evidence for artistic interventions through ongoing dialogue; to make it easier for providers to understand and access the existing evidence; and for continuing efforts to fill the gaps.

Commissioners are limited in the flexibility of the approach they can take both by EU law governing competition (although changes to EU procurement regulations introduced in March 2014 may alter this picture), and by the regulations and expectations of the commissioning body they are working within. Commissioning bodies often take a conservative and risk-averse approach to implementation of EU law to avoid legal challenges, but often do not take advantage of flexibility that exists within these rules. This flexibility might help in the design of processes more suitable for arts and cultural organisations to engage with (such as reducing bureaucracy, or limiting competition). The commissioning body's own standard practices often do not have the force of law, but are nonetheless important guidelines according to which commissioners are expected to work. In many cases it would be valuable to review the appropriateness of these guidelines for the commissioning of services to address complex social problems. With permission to take a more nuanced approach in these circumstances, potential providers, commissioners, and procurement professionals could work together to reach more innovative, effective solutions.

In reality, the circumstances of commissioning are often far from optimal for arts and cultural organisations. For many of these discussions there is an underlying question about which party should make adjustments to accommodate the other. Individual arts and cultural organisations may need to make compromises in the way they work, or invest heavily in bureaucratic commissioning processes alongside ongoing dialogue with commissioners about how to design a purchasing system that enables providers such as themselves to engage. The likelihood is that arts and cultural organisations will need to make more substantial changes than commissioners are able to—but change is needed from both sides to build an effective system.

Each chapter of this report highlights some key recommendations for arts and cultural organisations, for commissioners, and for those who have strategic influence over the system. In summary:

- Arts and cultural organisations should be confident in articulating the impact their interventions can have on the outcomes that commissioners are looking to address, drawing on the available evidence base and good practice for reporting their own outcomes—while remaining sensitive to the constraints under which commissioners are operating.
- Commissioners should draw on the expertise of arts and cultural organisations when designing services, and be aware of how structural decisions regarding the size of contracts and bidding requirements might exclude providers that offer innovative solutions.
- Working with arts and cultural organisations may require commissioners to work in more flexible ways. This is often challenging as commissioners work within strict guidelines that may minimise risk in straightforward outsourcing arrangements, but can stifle the development of innovative solutions to complex social problems. Those who exert strategic influence over the system—including elected officials at local level, decision makers within national government, health and other commissioning bodies, and Arts Council England—should look for ways to support commissioners in taking decisions that may carry greater risk, but may also offer better outcomes. This support might come through clearer guidance as to where commissioners can take more flexible approaches, and where this is not appropriate.

Over the period from the launch of this report until mid-2016, the Cultural Commissioning Programme will be delivering a range of activities to support arts and cultural organisations to engage more effectively in commissioning, building on the insights shared with us from those working on the frontline. This report provides a starting point for understanding the key challenges and opportunities.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Focus area baselines

Appendix B: Data presentations

Appendix C: Research methodology

Appendix D: Annotated bibliography

Image source: In-Situ. Recorded Soul dance and archiving programme with In-Situ artist William Titley exploring the local connections to Northern Soul

APPENDIX A: FOCUS AREA BASELINES

These baselines are arranged under six headings which offer a framework for understanding the market and the opportunities for arts and cultural organisations to engage with commissioners in the focus area. Contract size for survey sample (median) £5,000–£40,000, and length (median) 6–12 months.		
This column contains a brief summary description.	**Provider potential to add value**	• Do arts and cultural activities add value to commissioner outcomes? • How widely accepted is the role of arts and culture in this space (amongst wider audiences than commissioners)?
Light shading indicates less positive picture for arts and culture.	**Policy environment**	• What is the big picture for policy in this area? • What are the levers of power that determine provider experience? These vary depending on sector. • What is the direction of travel for future policy trends? • How well does this fit with the strengths of arts and culture in delivering on public service outcomes?
Darker shading indicates a more positive picture.	**Commissioner interest**	• What are the key departments commissioning in this focus area? How many of them are there? • What are their priorities and what are their restraints? • Are they likely to be resistant to arts and culture playing a role here?
Shading occurs along a five colour spectrum.	**Ability to evidence**	• What is the research evidence base that arts and cultural organisations can deliver on the outcomes commissioners care about? • What tools are organisations using to evidence their outcomes? • What does current practice look like?
All assessments are based on information currently available.	**Other actors**	• Which infrastructure organisations are working in this area, and do they help arts and cultural organisations engage with commissioning? • Do (non-public) funders support organisations to engage in commissioning? • What is the role of partnerships in this focus area?
Circumstances enabling participation: • Examples of success and good practice. • Format: Who has been commissioned and by whom? Why did this work? What does this tell us about the circumstances under which commissioning of arts organisations (in this focus area) is successful?		
Opportunities to influence (presented for all three focus areas on a separate page): • How should organisations best work with commissioners to affect the way commissioning is conducted? • Are there any specific opportunities to influence commissioners in this focus area?		
These focus area baselines offer a summary of detailed research; much of the richer detail has been incorporated into the report. They are a snapshot of circumstances based on a finite research timeframe; they cannot be comprehensive, and the picture varies significantly depending on location.		

Older people

Overview: Arts and cultural activity can contribute to health and well-being outcomes including resilience and maintaining independence, in both residential and community settings. It also has applications in a range of long-term conditions affecting people in older life, notably dementia.

48% of arts and cultural organisations say they are working with older people

- Contract size (median) £4,000–£30,000, and length (median) 3–12 months.
- Fewer organisations secured commissions (42%), and more organisations practising a single art form (52%).
- A higher proportion secured only one contract in the past year (47%), although there is also a higher proportion of organisations with more than five contracts (17%) compared to the total survey population.

Organisations working in this area receive funding from health and social care and regeneration departments.

Provider potential to add value Lots of work in this area, and broad acceptance of arts and culture relating to a number of outcomes. Not well-integrated with mainstream older people's care.	• Wide range of practice for people with dementia: using museum collections for reminiscence therapy, singing, and the use of role play.[174] • Arts and cultural activity can play a role in recovery, or support during other long-term health conditions, including cancer recovery and stroke rehabilitation.[175] • Arts and cultural activity contributes to a broader health and well-being agenda by keeping participants mentally stimulated and socially connected.[176] • Cultural venues offer the opportunity for social interaction beyond the funded activity, creating an experience where participants are not defined solely in terms of their age or capacities. In some places this is being brought together into a 'day centre' offering.[177] • Incorporating arts and cultural activity has positive impacts for job satisfaction for care home staff, improving relationships with residents through shared projects.[178] • Some arts and cultural organisations have effective partnerships with the health sector and older people's sector, but creative approaches are not central to these sectors.[179]
Policy environment Clear need to think differently about older people's care. Some opportunities in personal budgets, but often difficult in practice. Also opportunities in building resilience—but this varies by locality.	• There are ten million people over 65 years old in the UK, and this is set to almost double by 2050. The 'Barnet Graph of Doom' [180] shows the impact this will have on health and social care budgets, and there is widespread recognition that alternative approaches are needed—potentially creating opportunities for arts and cultural organisations. • Cuts to health and social care budgets averaging 7% in 2012/2013[181] have led many local authorities to increase the threshold for support so that people with moderate needs no longer qualify[182] leaving them vulnerable and at risk of developing higher levels of need. Some local authorities are investing in building resilience to help older people stay independent for longer—an opportunity for arts and cultural organisations. • Older people are increasingly supported through personal budgets, although some local authorities are moving faster than others.[183] This provides an opportunity for new types of providers to deliver services. Many organisations find budgets are too small to deliver high-quality artistic experiences, and struggle to translate group work into unit costs.[184] • Local authorities are responsible for public health budgets. The budget ring-fence is due to be removed in 2016: public health may be absorbed into health and social care. • Aside from central government pushing personalisation, decisions about older people's care and the role for arts and culture within it will be made locally.
Commissioner interest Local authorities have a statutory	• £8.9bn was spent on older people's social care in 2012/2013,[185] distributed by 152 upper-tier local authorities. Commissioners focused on delivering statutory minimum services, and on making the transition to personal budgets. Spending on direct payments for adults was £1.2bn in 2012/2013 (across people with disabilities & older people).

duty to invest in older people's care, but many will prefer established alternatives. There are opportunities with a number of health audiences, but the arts and cultural sector needs to fight to make the case for creative approaches.	• £2.8bn is spent on public health annually.[186] Spending priorities will be set locally through strategic needs assessments. Health and well-being boards usually do not have commissioning budgets, but will inform the priority setting and are a useful point of influence for arts and culture organisations to persuade local decision-makers of the benefits of supporting older people through arts and cultural activity. • Clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) will commission a majority of healthcare, with a budget of £65bn or 60% of the NHS budget,[187] of which much will be earmarked for specific medical needs. It is unclear if CCGs will fund innovative non-medical solutions. • The speed of change and pressure on budgets means that many commissioners are focused on acute pressing needs, such as bed-blocking, and struggle to invest in upstream preventative services. • Each commissioner would benefit from effective resilience building and could commission it generally or in relation to specific health conditions. None has formally recognised the value of arts and culture in achieving outcomes. In some areas strong leadership helps commissioning bodies think strategically: arts and cultural organisations need to look for receptive audiences in each locality.
Ability to evidence Good standards of practice evaluation and growing body of academic evidence should suit some commissioners, but will not meet clinical standards.	• Range of effective methodologies to demonstrate soft outcomes/well-being and improved physical health, for example, filming sessions to show behaviour change. • Commissioners and providers need appropriate indicators of success. In older people's care success could be stability or slowed deterioration, rather than improvement. • Lots of practice evaluation, for example, collated on the Age of Creativity website. • Independent research base relatively developed compared to other areas of arts and cultural practice: a small number of peer-reviewed studies show moderate correlations between dance and falls prevention, singing and slowing down the progression of dementia, and visual arts and well-being. • Very difficult to build a robust value-for-money argument. • Research programmes at the Sidney DeHahn centre and in gerontology departments. • The evidence can effectively make a case to local authority commissioners with freedom over spending decisions, but is not yet of a standard to influence clinical frameworks.
Other actors Supportive infrastructure, need to embed with older people's sector.	• The NHS Arts in Health network offers valuable infrastructure support. • Private funders invest in front-line work and supportive infrastructure, notably the Barings Foundation and the Age of Creativity website. There is a layer of privately-funded work that could be commissioned relatively easily if the case for support could be made. • Potential to make a much better link with older people's voluntary sector.
Circumstances enabling participation • The Albany and Entelechy Arts have been commissioned by Lewisham Council to deliver daytime arts activities for older people: an example of a small organisation with expertise working with older people finding commissioning opportunities by working with larger partners that have relationships with commissioners. • WAVE, the museums, galleries and archive of Wolverhampton, has been commissioned by Wolverhampton adult health and social care to deliver activities for older people and those living with dementia: an opportunity for a close partner of the local authority to develop a programme using its existing assets. • Creative Health was commissioned by NHS Telford and Wrekin to explore creative participation with people affected by dementia, and the effect of this work on well-being. This demonstrates the willingness of commissioners with a medical perspective to explore the benefits of arts and culture.	

Mental health and well-being

Overview: 'Mental health' (defined as the treatment of diagnosable conditions in a clinical context) and 'well-being' (taken to refer to broader outcomes including loneliness, isolation and confidence, which can be targeted in the community and outside a hospital context).

35% of arts and cultural organisations surveyed say they are working in mental health and well-being

- Contract size (median): £5,000–£40,000. Contract length (median): 3–12 months.
- A higher proportion* of non-NPOs (46%) and a higher proportion working with combined art forms (56%).
- Public funding makes up more than half of income for 32% of organisations.
- Success rate in securing contracts was higher (52%), and 21% of secured contracts were non-arts based.

Charities in this area are particularly funded by health and social care, GPs, youth support and NHS budgets.

Provider potential to add value Value of arts accepted in contexts outside strategic commissioning. Strong on social outcomes where medication not an option. Contributes to community care /preventative agenda.	• In other non-commissioned areas that relate to mental health, the value of the arts seems to be more generally accepted. The benefit of arts activities in psychiatric wards is acknowledged (though squeezed by the cuts).[188] The ability of public art to enhance care environments is also widely accepted. Whether this conveys an acceptance of therapeutic value (as opposed to stabilising/calming effects) is unclear. Strategic commissioning budgets also represent a different set of priorities to one-off capital investment in public art. • Arts interventions have a unique ability to address problems in sociability and communication. They are important in establishing therapeutic relationships and encouraging people to express themselves who may otherwise be unable or reluctant to do so. A creative outlet can also be an important way to relieve mental distress.[189] • Research participants commented that a number of agendas that are gathering momentum present a considerable opportunity for arts and cultural organisations in terms of their contribution to well-being outcomes. The social inclusion and recovery movement, prevention, and health promotion strategies for resilience are key agendas in which arts and culture can find a place.[190]
Policy environment Government has a pro-mental health agenda, though cuts have not reflected this. Developments in personalisation, commissioning structures and central government funding hold potential to offer opportunities.	• 'No health without mental health' strategy puts mental health and well-being outcomes at the centre of government health priorities, but budget cuts do not reflect this policy.† • The significant majority of public mental health funding currently goes towards secondary care.[191] This is an area that is heavily dominated by preferences for clinical methods. Yet greater potential for arts-based interventions currently lies in community-based well-being activities. • Despite a long-standing commitment to move care away from hospitals and into the community, measures imposed from April 2014 will see funding redirected from non-acute to acute services.[192] • Integration between health and social care budgets may help to reduce the stranglehold of biomedical approaches. • Personal budgets may be a useful tool to demonstrate user preference for creative activities.‡ Currently eligibility criteria and budget levels are a barrier. • Health and well-being boards could be very powerful advocates and conveners, but they are not currently pulling their weight.

* In comparison to the other focus areas.

† In 2012/2013, total NHS spending fell (by 1%) for the first time in a decade. Foundation Trust funding was also cut by 2% in real terms between 2011 and 2013.

‡ From approximately 84 mental health personal budgets in Kirklees, creative arts are the most popular. Smith, I., Mental Health Commissioning Manager at Kirklees Council (NPC interview, 30 October 2013).

Commissioner interest CCGs show a strong preference for pharmacological approaches. Local authorities more likely to recognise unique arts benefits in well-being space.	• There are 211 CCGs and 152 upper-tier local authorities, each with 2-3 relevant budgets, which could include public health and health and social care, sometimes split between children and adult services. There are 51 Mental Health Foundation Trusts. • CCGs focused on NICE clinical guidance, showing a strong preference for pharmacological interventions and talking therapies. • There is isolated recognition of the ability of arts interventions (namely art therapy) to contribute in the clinical space: acting where drug therapies are inappropriate (for example, when treating children), establishing a therapeutic relationship, improving psychosocial functioning and avoiding remission.[193] • Local authority commissioners are a more receptive audience, interested in prevention and well-being as part of a growing public health agenda (though this varies by location). Local authorities have ring-fenced public health grants, though the ring-fencing of funds is uncertain beyond 2016.[194] While it lasts, public health is a potential source of commissioned work for community-based mental health and well being.
Ability to evidence Many providers produce good results via established tools. Some question whether dominant measurement techniques are appropriate.	• A good body of academic literature (such as psychology and neuroscience) exists, though this is rarely known, accessible or applicable for providers and commissioners. Some provider studies have produced statistically significant results, but these cannot compete with the large sample sizes of clinical trials. Artistic activities are not uniform and replicable, making large sample sizes difficult to achieve. Current attitudes to 'acceptable evidence' (eg, RCTs) do not fit well with creative, well-being-focused activities. • In some cases the primary beneficiary may be unable to articulate change, making measurement based on self-reporting a challenge.[195] • Measurement may be intrusive and alter what is being observed and may be detrimental to the provider-beneficiary relationship. • Mental health and well-being deal with a large number of soft or less-tangible outcomes.
Beyond commissioning Good arts and health infrastructure, opportunities to engage more with academia.	• A number of infrastructure organisations play an important convening and advocacy role (National Alliance for Arts Health and Wellbeing; London Arts Health and Wellbeing Board; London Arts in Health Forum; Arts and Health Southwest/Southeast). These organisations have a variety of roles, including support, advocacy and research, but do not have the financial and human resources to be a strong lobbying voice. • There is a disconnect between the academic community and providers in applying research findings to practical issues, and in partnership in research or evaluation. • Within commissioning bodies, arts coordinator roles are beneficial but rare.[*]
Circumstances enabling participation • Jack Drum Arts has been commissioned to deliver an arts on prescription service, 'Colour Your Life', across County Durham in a consortium with community health organisations, a leisure trust, a volunteer development agency and various community learning partners. The partnership allows an increased geographical reach, as well as harnessing complementary skills to improve the service. • Arts and Health Cornwall and Isles of Scilly receive income from various local and NHS commissioned projects, as well as a yearly grant from their local public health team. This success has been driven by their partnership with a number of individual academics and academic institutions to carry out evaluative research to build their evidence base and draw on the credibility of academic rigour.[196]	

[*] South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust (SLaM) employs a head of arts strategy and the Isle of White NHS Foundation Tust runs an 'arts in health' strategy with a full-time director. These positions are not common however. Similarly only some local authorities have a specific arts director/coordinator. Shearn, H., Head of Arts Strategy at SLaM, and Blazey, D., Head of Grants at Maudsley Charity (NPC interview, 11 February 2014).

Place-based commissioning

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Overview: Place-based commissioning can mean different things to different audiences.
For commissioners, it means strategic coordination across different budgets and departments to fund common outcomes.
For the arts and cultural sector it is often associated with public art expressing community identity and developing connection to locality.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">72% of arts and cultural organisations surveyed deliver outcomes associated with place-based commissioning
This was defined using the outcomes ‘community cohesion’, ‘social engagement and civic participation’ and ‘regeneration and access to local services’.
Contract size (median): £5,000–£35,000. Contract length (median): 6–12 months.
The ‘strategic coordination’ definition could be relevant to any budget holder, and a wide range of outcomes.
The ‘community identity’ definition includes ‘place and inclusion’ outcomes referenced in Figure 8..
These two conceptions of ‘place’ can overlap: building community identity could be part of strategic coordination—but either could exist independent of the other.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Provider potential to add value

Strong opportunity for arts and culture: 1) the most obvious response to ‘place-making’; 2) a holistic way of working with people for commissioners hoping to work in integrated ways; 3) a powerful learning tool for commissioners to think differently.</td><td>Strategic coordination: working in a more integrated way does not automatically imply a creative response. Local services will choose to coordinate for different outcomes. Well-being underpins many outcomes, and where commissioners are thinking holistically about supporting individuals, aiming to build more resilient communities, arts and cultural activities can be an appropriate response because it works with the whole person.
Community identity: this is a very natural fit for the arts and culture—the visual, public nature of artistic works can be an effective tool for communicating how people feel about the place they live. This can operate in a range of ways—it might involve community input to an artwork that a professional artist translates into a public artwork.[197]
A further, unique way that arts and cultural organisations can provide value to commissioners is by introducing them to new creative ways of thinking and working together. Arts and cultural activities can be the tool through which commissioners understand how to achieve coordinated working. This can shift the way commissioners approach designing services, before they are commissioning any work.[198]
Creative projects are fun, engaging, and provide opportunities for people from different communities to work collaboratively. Place-based activity can work towards inclusivity—giving a public platform to people who are marginalised in society,[199] and working to ensure that everyone in society has access to its cultural assets.[200]</td></tr>
<tr><td>Policy environment

Policy environment which encourages strategic coordination—but can be ignored at local level. Weak policy incentive to invest in community identity.</td><td>Whole Place Community Budgets operate in four pilot areas (launched Dec 2011) with local partners working to ‘co-design new approaches to public service reform taking a place-based, whole-systems view.’ The pilots aim to improve outcomes for people amid budget cuts, recognising it is impossible to address rising needs while ‘salami slicing’ budgets (ie, distributing total cuts by reducing each budget by a small proportion).
As local areas find savings by cutting commissioner roles, local authority functions have no choice but to become less siloed, which can make coordination easier. The speed and scale of change across public services can also work to break down established silos: new commissioning units (for example, CCGs and schools with budgetary independence) have more flexibility to forge different types of relationships.
Local strategic partnerships are vehicles for coordinated working across agencies within a local area, but in some areas their importance is fading. The newer Health and Wellbeing Board structure offers similar opportunities but again their impact is variable.
The resilience and prevention agenda is gaining currency in some areas. Some</td></tr>
</table>

	commissioners are looking to create supportive structures for those whose needs are not acute, but need some help maintaining stability. Arts and cultural organisations could provide a solution that lies between intense interventions and open-access services.[201] • Central government is promoting an agenda of civic action (the Big Society, Step Up to Serve)—but this does not have much impact locally.
Commissioner interest Place-based commissioning could be a response to a wide range of commissioner priorities—difficult to make overall assessment.	• Local areas do not have to care about either definition of place: local leaders may choose to invest, but there is no statutory duty to do so. • By either definition, if local leaders do care about place, there should be opportunities for arts and cultural organisations. In the 'community identity' approach, creative responses could be a first port of call. In the 'strategic coordination' definition, statutory bodies may first focus on their own coordination (improving referrals) before commissioning to fill gaps. • Budgets involved in 'strategic coordination' will vary depending on priorities. If driven by supporting vulnerable individuals, it could involve housing services, health, police, employment services and others. • Commissioners may agree strategic coordination in principle, but success requires all partners to care about it equally, to make it a key priority, and to invest both money and time in making it a success. • 'Community identity' work may be funded by budgets associated with marginalised parts of the community (for example, youth), focusing on civic engagement. It could also be driven by an economic improvement, and involve housing associations, LEPs, Business Improvement Districts, and regeneration departments. In either case culture and leisure services are often central to the work of projects building community identity.[202]
Ability to evidence Different strategies for different outcomes. Lack of academic evidence base, but probably sufficient for commissioner requirements.	• Both definitions include such a wide variety of outcomes it is difficult to generalise ability to evidence and commissioner appetite for evidence. • Individual well-being can be measured using established tools. There may be economic metrics to evidence regeneration. Participation rates and demographics help evidence increased inclusivity and access to arts and cultural activities . More diffuse benefits such as change in public attitudes or levels of pride are far more challenging, but could be addressed by surveying a sample of people about attitude and intention to act. • In areas that have highly developed 'strategic coordination', departments can share data to understand cost savings of reduced access to services. This evidences the effectiveness of the overall approach, rather than the contribution of any single intervention. • Some academic interest for example, Birmingham Public Services Academy.[203]
Beyond commissioning Private sector opportunities, but often one-off.	• Arts Council England's 'Creative People and Places' fund supports work that ensures inclusive access to the arts and culture. • Private sector redevelopments often include an arts strategy. This is a way for local authorities to secure a level of community investment during commercial redevelopment, and offers a potential (non public sector) audience for artworks created with community involvement. Other purchasers of public art include schools and housing associations.
Circumstances enabling participation • 'Strategic coordination': in Manchester the development of an integrated commissioning hub aims to simplify the number of services involved in supporting each individual. The culture and leisure department is highly involved in developing opportunities for arts and cultural organisations to be involved in these plans. • 'Community identity': in Birmingham, three local pilots were run responding to local community interests to increase participation in arts and build capacity and habits of involvement in local decision-making.	

Opportunities to influence

Across the focus areas:

- Elected officials set the strategic direction for a locality and are essential allies. Creative approaches are not statutory requirements, and will gain traction where there is strong local leadership. National policy agendas shape the frameworks commissioners work within, but local priorities will influence the role for arts and cultural organisations.
- Advocates with insider knowledge of commissioning priorities can be influential with decision-makers. Creating a coalition of support around these advocates can build momentum and demonstrate that the arts and cultural sector is coordinated and proactively looking to understand and match commissioner priorities.
- Preventative arguments (in all three contexts) are also notoriously difficult to evidence, though public health commissioning shows some evidence of being open to these arguments.
- Some organisations struggle to 'talk the language of commissioners' because they feel uncomfortable with the tone of discussions—many prefer not to compromise in the way they talk about their work. However it can be easier to influence the debate by beginning to work with commissioners, demonstrating how arts and cultural approaches can work, and gradually helping commissioners to move towards a perspective the organisation feels more comfortable with. Each organisation will need to decide how flexible it can be in working to commissioners' agendas without compromising their mission.

Older people:

- Not all commissioners will be open to creative solutions, but in each locality there are some who might be persuaded. Organisations should look for case studies where their approach has worked and share these with the various audiences.
- Some commissioners may have more medical or analytical backgrounds, others may have creative backgrounds. Providers should aim to speak both 'languages' equally well to make the most convincing case.
- Developing the personal budget market will take huge investment, and many local authorities are struggling to find the best routes to transition. Arts and cultural organisations that can offer supportive, innovative solutions could have an opportunity to influence how the transition is implemented.
- Look for ways to build a coalition between the arts and cultural sector and the older people's sector so that creative responses to the challenges of ageing become more central to ideas about best practice.

Mental health:

- A central question is whether the efforts of providers and the arts and cultural sector are best spent in trying to shift attitudes (for example, through dialogue and cultivation of the evidence base) or in finding a way to usefully fit into the system as it exists.
- There are certain things that clinical approaches cannot achieve well, such as intervention with mental health problems in children or patients who are reluctant to pursue pharmacological approaches, well-being issues in the community, and prevention.
- However, negative attitudes of gatekeepers (for example, GPs in 'arts on prescription' services that rely on referrals) and the strength of evidence in favour of substitutes mean that the clinical space is currently a hostile one for arts and cultural organisations.
- Providers can make a good case at the local authority level, as part of holistic well-being interventions, however this relies heavily on funding in this area being adequate in relation to clinical funding.

Place-based commissioning:

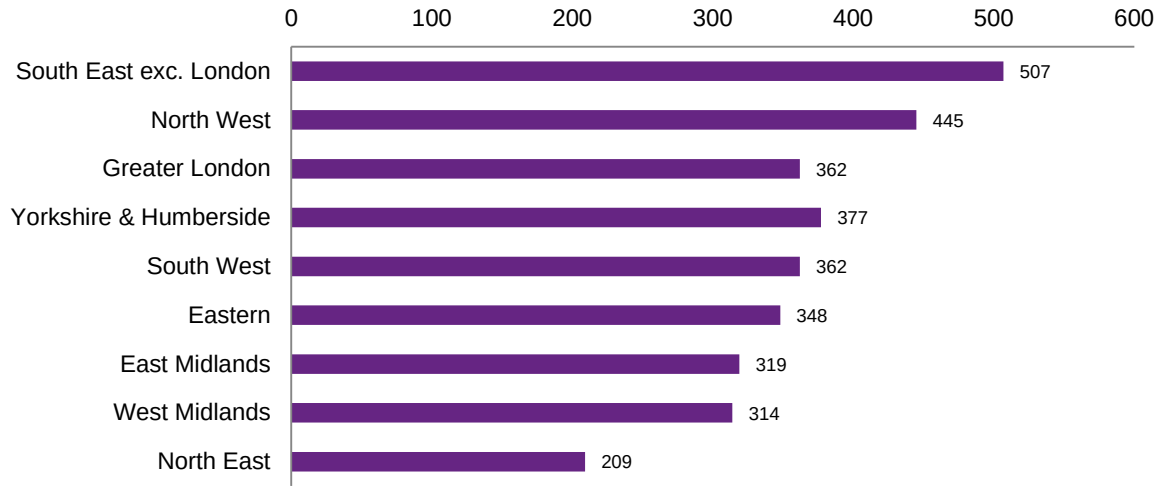
- The most fundamental way to influence commissioners is through creative projects that help commissioners work together more strategically. This will shift relationships and open commissioners to creative solutions. This needs to be a leadership decision, individual organisations will not be able to bring this about.
- Commissioners need to see the value of 'strategic coordination' approaches by hearing from peers.

APPENDIX B: DATA PRESENTATIONS

This appendix contains additional presentations of data to give additional information on geographical distribution of organisations and revenue sources, including further detail of public funding and public sector commissioning. Data is drawn from the CIPFAstats Public Libraries data, the Cultural Commissioning Programme survey, and the filtered sample of NCVO Almanac data.

Libraries

Figure 19: Number of libraries per region 2011/2012



Source: CIPFAstats Public Libraries data.

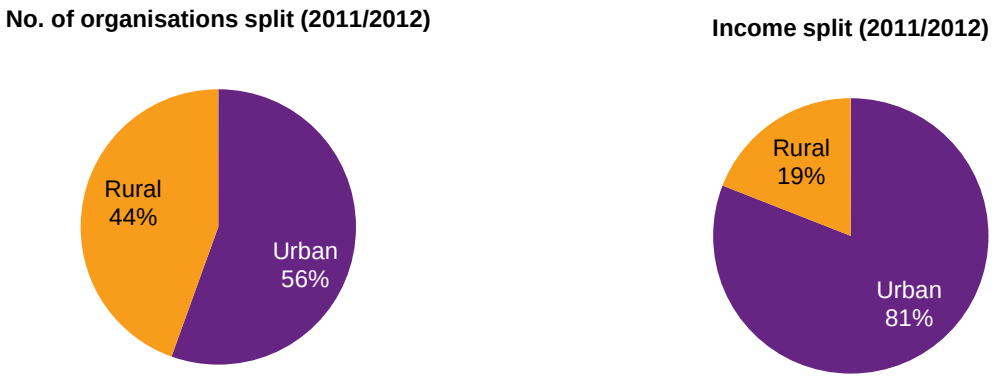
The highest number of libraries is in the South East. The regional analysis used for this data is not directly comparable with regional analysis used elsewhere in this document.

Rural vs. urban split

Over half of all arts and cultural organisations in England are based in urban areas, however these urban organisations appear to receive over 80% of total income. The reason why the income split is skewed is because most of the large organisations (£1m+ in revenue) tend to be urban-based. Small organisations with an income of under £100,000 are almost evenly split between rural and urban. Larger organisations are more likely to be urban-based.

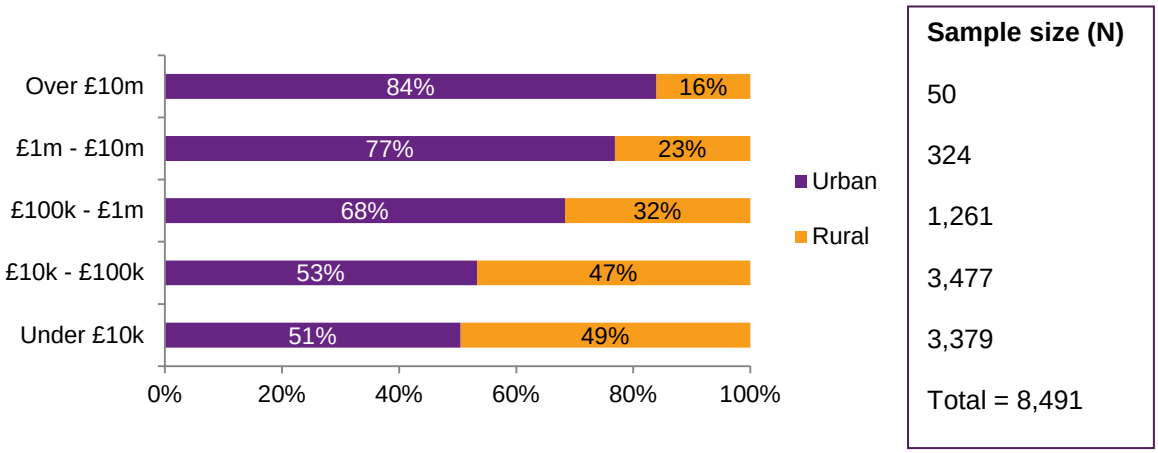
These figures, however, are based on where the arts and cultural organisations are headquartered. For instance, a large organisation headquartered in London might receive funding to run a project in a rural community but because it is headquartered in London, the funding would count as urban income. It is not unlikely that some of the medium and large organisations headquartered in an urban area also operate outside it. In other words, the figures tell us about the type of arts organisations that get funding but not how the actual income is distributed: the actual income distribution going to urban areas is likely to be between 56% and 81%.

Figures 20 and 21



Source: NCVO Almanac.

Figure 22: Distribution of organisations by urban/rural and income band (2011/2012)



Source: NCVO Almanac.

Revenue sources

46% of all income that went to arts and cultural organisations in England in 2011/2012 was earned and came from private channels. Most of it came from individuals—the general public (excluding charitable foundations set up by individuals) —in, for example, the form of membership subscriptions and fees for services. Private earned income as a proportion of total income remained high across all organisations.

For small organisations, the second most important source of income was voluntary, coming again from private channels including individuals, trusts and foundations, and corporates. As organisations become larger, though, their income from public sources grows. 44% of all the public sector funding came from Arts Council England as voluntary income,* however, if we exclude this, 60% of the rest of the public sector income was earned rather than granted.

* Arts Council England voluntary funding (£375m) / total public funding (£375m + £191m + £292m).

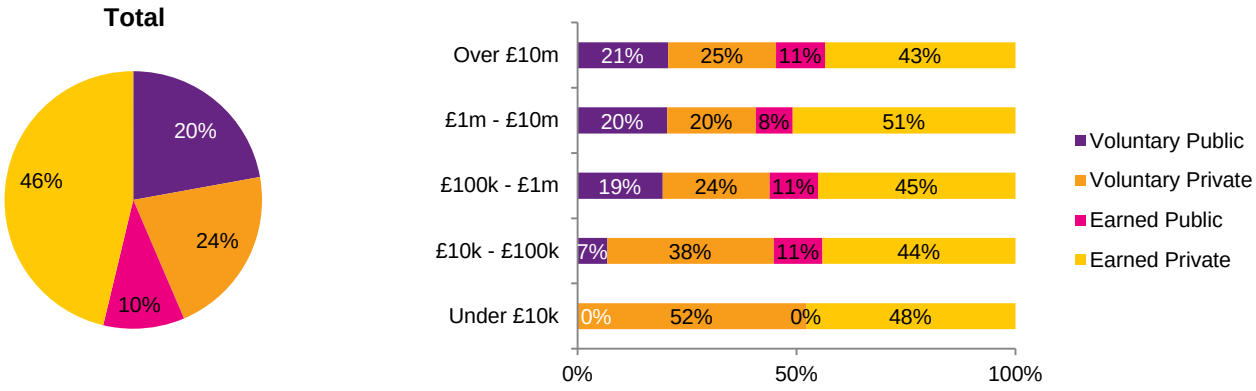
Table 13: Income distribution in the arts and cultural sector in England (2011/2012)

		EARNED	VOLUNTARY	INVESTMENT
PRIVATE	Individuals The general public, excluding payments from charitable foundations set up by individuals.	£1,173m Fees for good and services; Membership subscriptions with significant benefits; Fundraising by charities; Rent from property for a charitable purpose.	£283m Individual donations (gross, including Gift Aid); Covenants; Legacies; Membership subscriptions without significant benefits	n/a
	National Lottery	n/a	£67m	n/a
	Voluntary Sector Such as trust and grant-making foundations	£28m Services provided under contract.	£282m Grants from charitable trusts and distributed by charitable intermediaries.	n/a
	Private sector Excluding payments from charitable foundations set up by businesses.	£59m Sponsorship; Research or consultancy; Patent royalties	£48m Corporate grants and gifts	n/a
	Investment The proceeds generated from investments and cash balances	n/a	n/a	£63m Dividends; Interest payments; Rent from investment property; Doesn't include gains on the value of investments.
PUBLIC	Statutory sources Arts Council England, other government agencies in the UK, the EU and international gov'ts.	£292m Public sector fees; Payments for contracted services	£375m (Arts Council) + £191m (other) Funding grants; Grants to charitable intermediaries	n/a

Source: NCVO Almanac. Definitions of different income types is drawn from the NCVO Almanac analysis.

Note: Based on 8,525 arts and cultural organisations.

Figure 23: Income distribution by income source and income band (2011/2012)



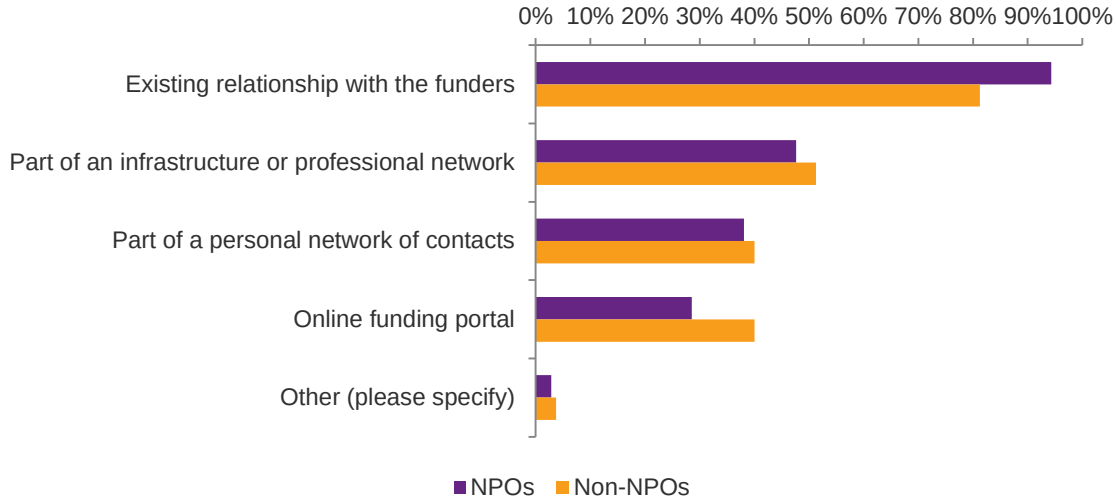
Source: NCVO Almanac.

Public funding

Most arts and cultural organisations tap into existing relationships with funders to find new public funding. NPOs tend to do this more often than non-NPOs, but for both it is the main way to access public income. About half of all arts and cultural organisations leverage on the contact base of an infrastructure or professional network. (Interestingly, this is maybe how non-NPOs tend to compensate for having less direct relationships with funders.) Third in line is utilising a personal network of contacts, but only two in five arts and cultural organisations do so.

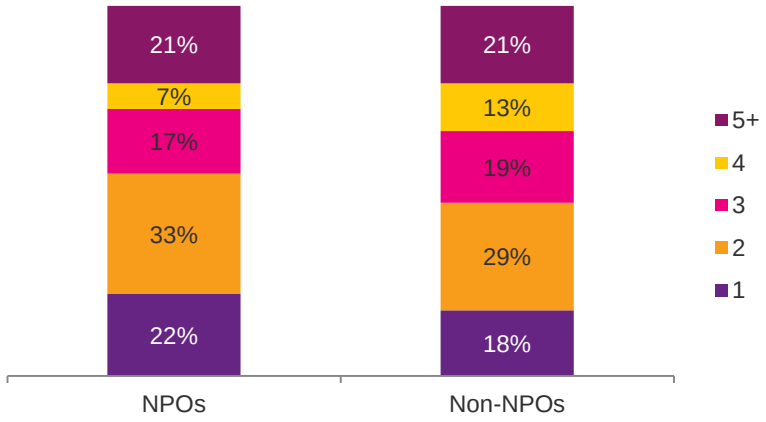
On average, half of all arts and cultural organisations that won public funding got one or two grants or contracts per year. One in five won five or more. There was no consensus about what in particular made them successful at winning public funding. The most popular reason was the ability to evidence that they were able to meet the outcomes. Three in five organisations agreed with this. Reputation and profile of an organisation and relationship with funders (the latter particularly true for NPOs) also played a significant role. Non-NPOs stressed the track record of delivering a similar piece of work more than having a relationship with a funder.

Figure 24: How NPOs and non-NPOs look for new public funding opportunities



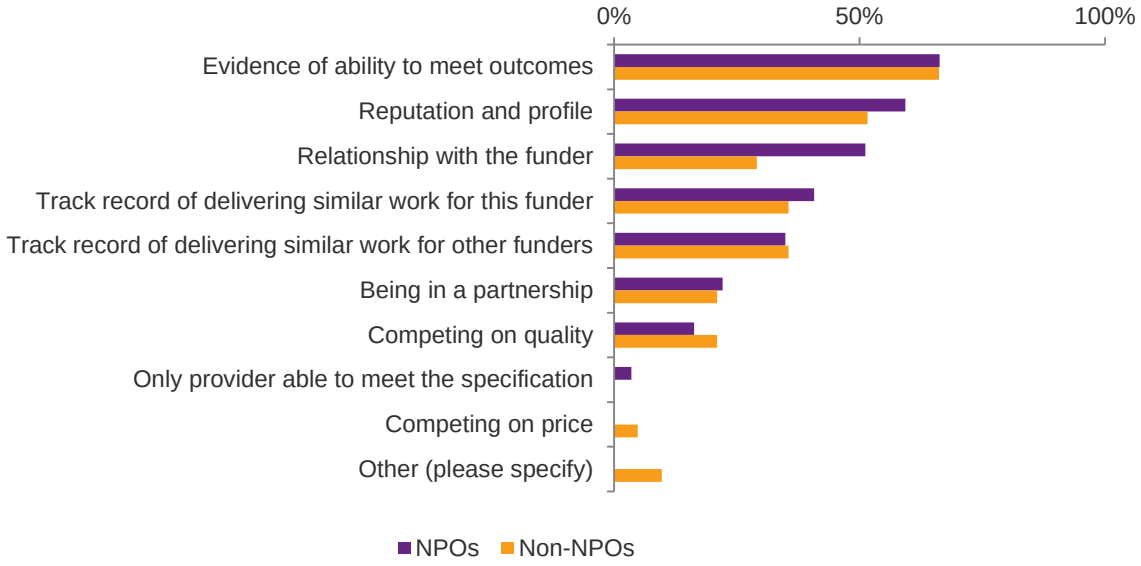
Source: Cultural Commissioning Programme survey 2013.

Figure 25: Distribution of the number of public grants and contracts won by NPOs and non-NPOs in a single year



Source: Cultural Commissioning Programme survey 2013.

Figure 26: Success factors behind winning public funding as perceived by NPOs and non-NPOs



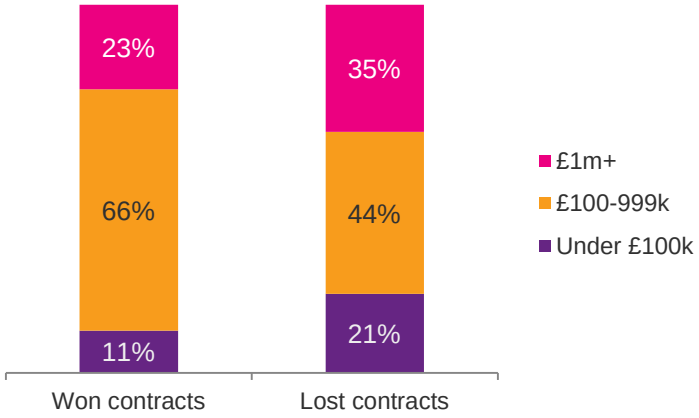
Source: Cultural Commissioning Programme survey 2013.

Public commissioning

In the Cultural Commissioning Programme survey, most arts and cultural organisations which won public contracts were medium-sized (66%). Interestingly, those which won public funding, but only as grants, were a more varied size distribution. Those which won contracts also tended to have a slightly higher public funding as a proportion of total income.

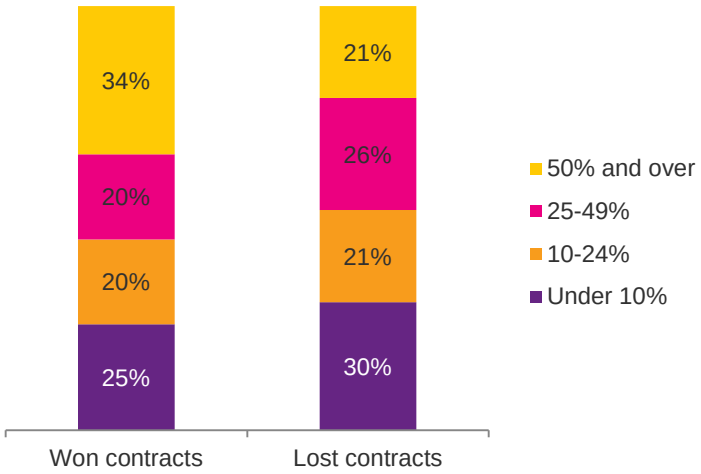
Half of those which won public commissioning got involved only during the actual application stage. Only two in five got involved in the pre-application stage. The public contracts were not always competitively tendered: about a quarter said that they were not, while a third commented that only some were.

Figure 27: Size distribution of arts and cultural organisations that won and lost public contracts



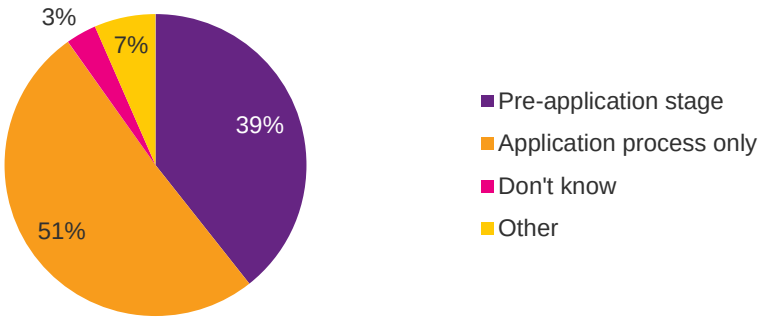
Source: Cultural Commissioning Programme survey 2013.

Figure 28: Distribution of public funding (as a proportion of total income) of arts and cultural organisations that won and lost public contracts



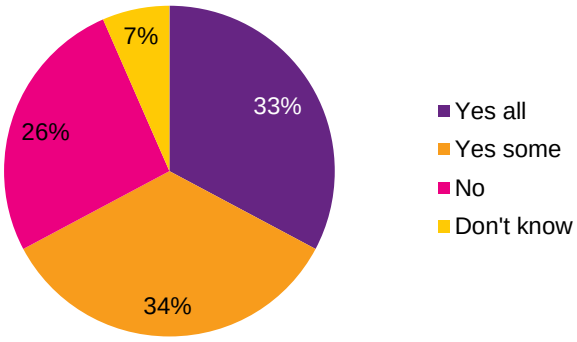
Source: Cultural Commissioning Programme survey 2013.

Figure 29: Distribution of arts and cultural organisations by the stage at which they get involved in public commissioning



Source: Cultural Commissioning Programme survey 2013.

Figure 30: Proportion of public contracts won by arts and cultural organisations that were competitively tendered



Source: Cultural Commissioning Programme survey 2013.

APPENDIX C: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research was undertaken in two phases which are described below: this report draws on research from both phases. Specific elements of the research process are described in more detail following the description of each phase.

Phase 1

The aim of phase 1 was to understand the landscape of the arts and cultural sector, focusing in particular on those organisations delivering commissioned work. The intention was to gain a broad picture of arts and cultural organisations' current involvement in commissioning, and to understand the areas of alignment between their activities and commissioners' priorities. Research methods employed were:

- interviews with commissioners, providers, and sector experts;
- literature review;
- survey of arts and cultural organisations;
- analysis of financial data on arts and cultural organisations based on NCVO's Almanac data; and
- consultation with advisory group.

A key aim of phase 1 was to identify three focus areas to interrogate in greater detail during phase 2. The key criterion for focus areas was that arts and cultural organisations were delivering on the priorities of commissioners. We first compiled a list of important factors, based on categories identified for the survey and on discussion amongst the project team:

- 12 outcome areas;
- 11 beneficiary groups; and
- 22 commissioning bodies (including national, regional and local bodies or departments).

Drawing on all of the phase 1 research, we assessed the level of activity being undertaken by arts and cultural organisations which was of potential interest to commissioners for each of these 45 factors. We assessed against these three categorisations as we did not want to pre-define whether focus areas would be driven by outcomes, beneficiaries or commissioner types. We considered heat mapping also by art form, but decided that this would not be a useful way to focus, as many art forms were relevant across a range of beneficiaries, outcomes and commissioners.

We created 'heat maps', with darker shading where research had uncovered more activity. Extracts of these heat maps are presented in Chapter 3. Twenty-three factors were identified where research had identified substantial activity.

It was clear that these 23 factors represented a much smaller number of important themes or potential focus areas, so we 'clustered' the factors to identify overlaps (for example where an outcome area clustered with a commissioner and a beneficiary type). This gave us nine potential focus areas.

Through consultation with the Cultural Commissioning Programme (CCP) advisory group and other experts, these nine areas were narrowed to the six which would be presented to the advisory group, based on reviewing which

of the focus areas were most likely to be practical and useful to study. These six areas were each assessed against high-level decision criteria: level of activity, alignment with commissioner interests, ability to evidence impact, type of arts and cultural organisations working in this space, potential for development, and potential to expand audiences. Assessment against these criteria was used as a framework to prioritise three focus areas to be studied in more depth during phase 2. Through discussion with Arts Council England, three focus areas were selected: older people, mental health and well-being, and place-based commissioning.

Phase 2

Phase two focused on gathering more detailed information to understand the commissioning situation in the three focus areas to gain in-depth knowledge of the way that interactions between commissioners and providers play out in practice. Research methods employed were:

- further interviews with arts and cultural organisations, commissioners, and experts;
- further desk based research;
- presentation to advisory group, and feeding into discussions; and
- a roundtable with experts to test and refine findings.

The results of phase 2 research are presented as Appendix A.

Research elements

Interview and literature review

Interviewees for phase 1 were identified through contacts of NPC and the Cultural Commissioning Programme partners, through Arts Council England regional contacts, and through initial interviews with sector experts. In total, across both phases of research, almost 100 interviews were conducted, including approximately 40 arts and cultural organisations, 30 sector experts, and more than 20 commissioners.

When selecting arts and cultural organisations as interviewees, the list of contacts was classified according to art form, geographical location, whether they were NPOs or not, beneficiary types, outcome areas, and whether the work was participatory or not. Interviewees were selected from within this list, ensuring coverage of the different organisation types and interests. The list was added to and gaps in coverage filled by identifying further interviewees through on-going conversations. In identifying commissioners, NPC identified a list of commissioning departments and perspectives, and found interviewees to cover these perspectives using existing contacts and those identified during the research process. In phase 2, further interviews were conducted with arts and cultural organisations, commissioners and sector experts in the three focus areas.

Relevant literature was identified through the interview process. Identified documents were prioritised for review based on relevance to the programme's research questions The literature review did not involve a systematic review of academic literature.

Cultural Commissioning Programme survey

This survey was designed to help us explore and understand the experiences and views of the arts and cultural sector in delivering publicly funded services and was designed by NPC following discussion with Cultural Commissioning Programme (CCP) partners to identify priority research questions. Partners commented on a draft survey, and we tested the survey by telephone with three organisations to confirm that respondents understood the questions in the way that had been intended.

The survey was distributed through infrastructure networks. This is a convenience sample, chosen to ensure that we gathered the broadest possible range of responses rather than a statistically robust sample. For this reason we cannot be sure how representative responses are of the wider arts and cultural sector—it is likely that the sample will over-represent the views of those who already have an interest in public sector commissioning.

The infrastructure organisations were identified by CCP partners with input from Arts Council England staff and other experts—in total more than 100 contacts representing approximately 35 infrastructure organisations, in addition to Bridge organisations, museum development contacts, and Arts Council England regional leads. All were contacted by email inviting them to send a link to the survey through their networks, and some key infrastructure organisations were also contacted by phone. Contacts were also asked to send a reminder email before the survey closed. The survey was open from 12 September 2013 to 6 October 2014.

The survey received 407 responses. This data set was cleaned to remove any incomplete responses, any responses from organisations not working at all in England, and some which had submitted inconsistent survey responses. A small number of non service delivery respondents were also removed from the data set. The total number of analysed responses was 240.

Survey data will be available to download from NPC's website.

NCVO analysis of charitable arts and cultural organisations

Data was taken from the 2014 Almanac (which uses data relating to the financial year 2011/12). NCVO data is based on annual accounts of the voluntary organisations submitted to the Charity Commission,* and contains detailed information on income and expenditure as well as other financial details. To identify arts and cultural organisations we selected organisations from the list of registered charities in England and Wales that:

- had selected 'Arts/Culture/Heritage/Science' as part of their activities in their annual returns to the Charity Commission;
- were in the International Classification of Nonprofit Organisations (ICNPO) category 1100 'Arts and Culture'. (this is a standard international way of classifying charities which has been applied to the register of charities by NCVO); and
- had a registered address in England.

The list of organisations was then classified into the categories shown below. This classification was based on keyword-searching in the name and charity object fields. The list was also matched to Arts Council England's list of Regularly-Funded Organisations, to ensure that those organisations were included. The list of 839 Regularly Funded Organisations is the appropriate sample to match to NCVO Almanac data for the financial year 2011/2012, however from 2012 the portfolio of Regularly Funded Organisations was replaced by National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs), of which there are 696. For simplicity the NPO terminology has been used throughout this report:

- Infrastructure
- Visual arts
- Music
- Theatre
- Heritage
- Combined arts
- Museum
- Dance
- Library
- Literature
- Festival
- Radio
- Zoo
- Aquarium
- Garden

* The duty to file accounts and the Annual Report with the Charity Commission applies to all Charitable Incorporated Organisations (irrespective of income) and to all other registered charities whose gross yearly income exceeds £25,000.

Any organisations that did not match one of those categories were then excluded, as were organisations in the aquarium, zoo, radio, garden and heritage categories. This gave a total of 8,525 organisations.

Comparison between Cultural Commissioning Programme survey and NCVO samples

The average size of an organisation in the Cultural Commissioning Programme survey (CCP survey) sample is bigger than in the NCVO sample. The NCVO sample has a large proportion of small organisations (81% vs. 23% for the CCP survey). Half of the small organisations in the NCVO sample were 'micro' organisations (with income under £10,000). In the CCP survey sample there are more medium-sized organisations as a proportion of all organisations (47% vs. 15% for NCVO) (Table 13). Small organisations may be under-represented in the CCP survey sample because these organisations may not be as well connected to infrastructure networks, or may not have as much interest in public sector commissioning. In addition, the survey was open for responses from other (non-charitable) organisation types such as museums and libraries, which do not have the same income profile. These difference make it important to analyse data using multiple sources.

The survey sample also has a significantly higher proportion of NPOs (National Portfolio Organisations that are regularly funded by Arts Council England). In the CCP survey this is 46% of the 240 respondents. In the NCVO sample, we assume that the majority of these 839 Regularly Funded Organisations are charitable, and it is therefore approximately 10% of the 8,525 total (Table 13). This discrepancy is likely to have been influenced by the way the data were collected for each sample. The CCP survey was distributed through networks and infrastructure organisations, including Arts Council England's network of contacts. Arts Council England's strong links with NPOs and its position as a funder is likely to have increased the level of responses from these organisations. NPOs are, by definition, publicly funded, and this is likely to have influenced the higher rate of success in securing public funding (ie, including both grants and contracts) in the CCP survey sample (Table 13).

There is a significant difference between the success rates in winning public contracts between the two samples. Here the relationship has reversed: more arts and cultural organisations in the NCVO receive earned income from public sources than the proportion winning contracts in the survey sample. These are the most directly comparable definitions of the commissioned income organisations receive, but the definitions are not identical. The survey defined a contract in the following way: *'A contract specifies the service requirements, and makes clear what and how a service is to be delivered, and for what payment. Under a contract VAT is chargeable on the supply of services, but not under a grant.'* In the NCVO data, we look at the overall earned income from public sources taken from the financial accounts, which allows for some ambiguities about the definition of income as voluntary (usually grant) income or earned (usually contract) income[*]. In other words, the NCVO result could be inflated.

[*] The accounting framework also increases the chances of something being called a contract.

Table 14: Comparison between CCP and NCVO data samples

	CCP	NCVO
Year	2013	2011/2012
Sample size (number of organisations)	240	8,525
Breakdown by size (as % of total no. of orgs) - Small (under £100k) - Medium (£100k–£999k) - Large (£1m and over)	 23% 47% 30%	 81% 15% 4%
Proportion of NPOs in the sample	46%	10%
Proportion of organisations (excl. micro organisations*) that secured public funding (incl. ACE funding)	8 out of 10	5 out of 10
Proportion of organisation that secured contracts out of those that secured public funding	4 out of 10	7 out of 10

* Annual income under £10,000. They are excluded from this calculation because, due to their size, it is unlikely that they will have the capacity to apply for and secure public funding.

APPENDIX D: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Understanding commissioning

Future of Public Services

NCVO's 'Future of Public Services' series uses learning from members to review the role of voluntary organisations in the delivery of public services. With the increasing use of new types of partnerships, contracts and payment models in public service design and delivery, how can we ensure local needs are met and the most disadvantaged not left behind? How can volunteers and voluntary organisations provide much needed engagement with local people? This series aims to tackle these questions and provides real examples of how services can be commissioned in a way that truly enables community-led delivery.

Thomas, H. (2013) *Understanding commissioning and procurement.* Compact Voice.

www.compactvoice.org.uk/sites/default/files/understanding_commissioning_and_procurement_guide.pdf

This is designed to be an accessible and practical guide for local voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations involved in, or considering, public sector commissioning at the local level. The guide walks through the stages of the commissioning cycle, outlining trends and recommendations for providers. It highlights the importance of partnership working, meaning that providers should participate at every stage of the commissioning process, form consortia, and act as trusted and collaborative providers of services.

This is a very useful guide that walks through a complicated process in an accessible format. Coming from the perspective of the voluntary sector makes this useful reading for any provider organisation that is curious about public sector commissioning.

LGA and cCLOA (2013) *Engaging in commissioning—A practical resource pack for the culture and sport sector*.

www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/culture-tourism-and-sport/-/journal_content/56/10180/3665542/ARTICLE

This four-part resource contains a number of case studies outlining lessons learnt based on discussions with commissioners and culture and sport organisations; a step-by-step guide to engaging with commissioning; a worked example of 'mapping the commissioning landscape'; and a self-assessment guide on commission readiness aimed at sports, community, arts, and cultural groups.

NAVCA and NCVO (2010) *Pathways through the maze: a guide to procurement law*.

www.navca.org.uk/publications/maze

This document provides a comprehensive summary of the technical aspects of the commissioning and procurement process. It outlines EU procurement rules and where they apply, a detailed account of the procurement process from start to finish, advice on challenging public body decisions, a discussion of the different contractual arrangements that third sector organisations may enter into, and an outline of the issues surrounding contracts and grants alongside top tips and links to further information.

NLGN and CBI (2012) *Commissioning Dialogues*.

www.nlgn.org.uk/public/2012/commissioning-dialogues-3/

This report focuses on the importance of relationships in the commissioning environment. It concludes that there is currently insufficient dialogue between councils and independent providers, suggesting that commissioners need to put in place better conditions to facilitate this—in particular tackling the thorny issues of risk, openness and capacity—or risk losing out on access to innovative partners and providers.

Evidence of the value of arts and cultural activities

Mowlah, A., Niblett, V., Blackburn, B., and Harris, M. (2014) *The value of arts and culture to people and society—an evidence review.* Arts Council England.

www.artscouncil.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/browse-advice-and-guidance/value-arts-and-culture-people-and-society-evidence-review

This recent report summarises the available evidence* for the value of arts and cultural activities to the economy, health and well-being, society (community) and education. It also considers where current gaps lie in the evidence base for the wider societal value of arts and culture. These are namely that there are insufficient studies with large sample sizes and longitudinal data and few that summarise the cost implications of these activities for public spending. There is also a lack of up-to-date evidence in specific areas such as museums and libraries and digital technologies. As with any review of literature aimed at such a large topic, it is difficult to be entirely comprehensive, and this research should not be considered representative of the evidence in its totality. It is a very useful starting point, however, and can be used in conjunction with a variety of literature reviews and resources. A key point to take away from this research is the need to consider the different impacts that arts and cultural activities can have for different groups (rather than aggregating at the population level) and to consider the implications for ensuring that arts and cultural activities are inclusive and open to all.

DCMS (2010), *The modernisation of public libraries: A policy statement.*

http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http:/www.culture.gov.uk/images/consultation_responses/modernisation_review_public_libraries.pdf

This document summarises policy trends and goals for public libraries, written by Margaret Hodge during her time as Minister for Culture. Written in 2010, though much of the discussion is somewhat out of date, it provides useful context for present discussion and trends. In particular, pp.31–32 discuss libraries in the local commissioning context, suggesting that 'commissioners need to be informed about *what* libraries provide and libraries must be pro-active in offering solutions to local priorities'. Appendix A (p52) also provides a model of impact, looking at the immediate personal benefits, intermediate outcomes, and long-term outcomes of library activities and resources. It also provides a list of national indictors relating to these outcomes. It is important to note, though, that further work would need to be done in assessing the evidence supporting the causal links between activities and outcomes, as well as the adequacy of the indicators suggested.

Fujiwara, D. (2013) *Museums and happiness: the value of participating in museums and the arts*.

www.happymuseumproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Museums_and_happiness_DFujiwara_April2013.pdf

Drawing on data from the Taking Part survey, this study looks at the relationship between museums, the arts and well-being—comparing the impact to other activities such as participation in sports. This work takes an economic approach to analysis by expressing the value of the activities in monetary terms. The report discusses methodological issues that may arise from expressing value in this way. Instead of traditional methods that rely on

* Published since 2010, published in English and research studies, outcome or process evaluations based on scientific principles containing primary data using sound methodologies or robust analyses of secondary data.

people's stated and revealed preferences (for example, reporting how much people report that they would be willing to pay to keep a museum in their town, or the price that they pay to attend an exhibition), this study uses a methodology that attaches monetary values to measures of people's subjective well-being. This 'Wellbeing Valuation' approach has recently been adopted as part of HM Treasury's *Green Book*, which provides guidance on estimating value. The study finds that people value visiting museums at roughly £3,200 per year. The value of participating in the arts is estimated at £1,500 per year per person (the same value as participating in sports), and the value of being audience to the arts is estimated at £2,000 per year per person.[*]

LGA and cCLOA (2012) A guide to developing a local outcomes framework for culture and sport, http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/culture-tourism-and-sport/-/journal_content/56/10180/3510559/ARTICLE

A step by step guide in developing an outcomes framework to understand the difference a service makes. Aimed at an audience of local authorities and their partners, these web pages help bodies develop a framework for how culture and sport activities contribute to a range of social outcomes. Includes guidance on developing components of an outcomes framework, and guidance on five stages of creating an outcomes framework: Deciding an overall approach, Creating a logic model, Reviewing evidence, Selecting performance indicators, and Using and reviewing the framework

Joss, T., *Aesop 1: A framework for developing and researching arts in health programmes*.

http://artsinhealth-framework.org/

Developed in collaboration with 40 professionals in the field (practitioners, researchers and arts and health funders), this framework is designed to help bring arts activity into the mainstream of health research and discourse. The framework allows organisations to gauge their progress in the journey through developing and researching arts in health programmes. Numerical scales provide a sense of current progress and steps that need to be taken to improve the strength of research. The website provides access to the framework, worked examples, a glossary of terms, a discussion forum and interviews with artists and health professionals.

Links to further information sources about evidence of the value of arts and cultural activities can be found on page 69-70.

Policy context and the landscape of the arts and cultural sector

Gash, T., Crowe, D. and Kippin, H. (2014) *Beyond big contracts: commissioning public services for better outcomes.* Institute for Government and Collaborate.

www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/publications/beyond-big-contracts

Based on in-depth interviews, workshops and roundtables with commissioners, policy professionals, providers and practitioners of complex services, as well as surveys of local and national commissioners, this research outlines the changes that are occurring in public sector commissioning, the implications and criticisms of these reforms, and recommendations to the government on how commissioning should evolve. The report considers three main topics: outcomes, relationships and risk and innovation. It finds that there is a shift towards outcomes-based contracts (moving away from short, process based contracts), commissioners are transferring more financial risk onto providers in the hope that this will encourage innovation, and that commissioners are becoming less connected to smaller and social sector providers.

[*] NPC would advise caution in interpreting the numerical outputs of economic methodologies (see Chapter 5, Box 14). Methodologies such as these provide a good starting point for discussions about impact and value, but should not be used as stand-alone demonstrations of impact. Rather, they should be discussed in the context of the extensive qualitative narrative that underpins them.

Community and Local Government Committee Inquiry (2014) *Local government procurement.*

www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmcomloc/712/71202.htm

The inquiry was launched to investigate the progress of council procurement operations in cutting costs, reducing burdens on independent providers, improving risk management and fraud reduction and strengthening links with community objectives. As a starting point, the committee suggested that progress has thus far been too slow and patchy. Key findings in this context were calls to reduce excessively bureaucratic procedures that increase costs and burdens on suppliers (for example, through applying EU procurement laws less readily and simplifying and standardising Pre-Qualification Questionnaires (PQQs) where possible). The committee also re-emphasises the directives of the Social Value Act, which called for social value to be considered on the same terms as finances. An overarching recommendation came in a call for increased investment in skills development for the procurement profession.

Arts Council England (2011) *A review of research literature on museums and libraries.*

This research provides a useful overview of the activities of museums and libraries, the shape of the museum and library sectors and their place within the wider arts and cultural and voluntary sectors. This was commissioned by Arts Council England in preparation for its new responsibilities relating to museums and libraries from October 2011.

Highlights from focus area specific readings

Older People

Waugh, J. (2013) *Memories in the Making: the impact of reminiscence activities on people with dementia.* WAVE, The Museums, Galleries and Archives of Wolverhampton.

An evaluation of four series of arts and reminiscence workshops delivered in Wolverhampton residential care homes by a qualified facilitator. The outputs and outcomes of the workshops are summarised both quantitatively and qualitatively, using feedback from participants, care staff and family carers. Improvements were observed in general well-being, feelings of happiness, contentedness and isolation, clarity of thought, confidence of interaction, levels of engagement, and repeat attendance.

Cutler, D. (2013) *Local Authorities + Older people + arts = a creative combination.* Baring Foundation

http://www.baringfoundation.org.uk/AOPLocalA.pdf

A discussion of the ways in which arts activities can be beneficial for older people, and can be a useful approach for local authorities in supporting an ageing population. The publication discusses the benefits of art for older people, and the opportunities across a range of different local authority services and priorities. The publication includes a range of case studies of local authorities which are supporting older people through arts in a range of ways.

Mental health and well-being

Secker, J. et al. (2007) *Mental Health, Social Inclusion and the Arts: Developing the evidence base*. Anglia Ruskin University and University of Central Lancashire.

This research, commissioned by DCMS, was the recipient of an Arts and Health Award from the Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH). The study included: a survey of arts and mental health projects in England; a retrospective analysis of outcomes data from two projects; the development of indicators and measures for use in an evaluation framework; the implementation of the evaluation framework in a before and after study of mental health and social inclusion outcomes for participants in an arts project; and qualitative case studies with workers and participants of six projects. It found that arts activities for people with mental health needs are not ‘one size fits all’, and that support for arts and mental health work would benefit from resources to carry out evaluations—contributing to the

better design of services. Overall, results suggested that there was sufficient evidence to support using arts activities in achieving improvements in mental health and social inclusion, particularly in terms of empowerment.

Royal Society for Public Health (2013) *Arts health and well-being beyond the millennium: how far have we come and where do we want to go?*

This report provides *'a review of the evidence for the benefits of the arts to health, as well as the policy context of commissioning arts and health initiatives'*. It provides useful context by charting progress in this area since the Nuffield Trust's Windsor conferences in 1998/99, which sought to raise the profile of insights from the humanities in medical discourse, specifically emphasising the place of the arts in health and well-being. The report also considers what work must still be done in this area, advocating the use of arts-led initiatives in the public health arena, and positioning this in the context of the RSPH campaigning strategy for 2013–2018.

Place-based commissioning

Reshaping Public Services Academy (2013) *A Radical Approach to Reforming Public Services* Conference presentations

http://redditch.whub.org.uk/cms/council-and-democracy/reshaping-publc-services.aspx

These five conference presentations explain how Bromsgrove & Redditch Councils and Stoke-on-Trent City Council are developing integrated ways of working. The presentations illustrate the ways in which the different services which interact with citizens are sharing information so that the needs of individuals can be effectively addressed, rather than receiving a number of disjointed interventions. For the councils involved, this is a way to solve the problem of increased demand with diminishing budgets.

Community Champions (2012) *White City Zone: Service Information Hub—Engaging with Residents and Communities to Co-design a 'Wellbeing Map'*

http://communitychampionsuk.org/wellbeing-map/

A report describing a process of community engagement and co-design, whereby residents identified what prevented people from engaging with health services, generated ideas for improving access to services, explored what might aid accessibility, and designed a programme for future development and local action. The project was supported by NHS North West London, it involved a series of four workshops, and resulted in a range of conclusions and recommendations for further action.

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Project partners at nef.

Clare Cooper, from the arts specialist network MMM (now disbanded).

A number of staff at Arts Council England who have supported the research with advice, information, attendance at workshops, and sharing of contacts.

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Sandy Nairne, Director, National Portrait Gallery

Robin Simpson, Chief Executive, Voluntary Arts

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(Some interviewees have been included as Advisory Group members above.)

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Lucy Perman, Executive Director, Clean Break

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Pippa Warin, Senior Relationship Manager, Arts Council England

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Jane Willis, Director, Willis Newson

Martin Wilson, Programme Director, Tin Arts

Gill Windle, Senior Research Fellow (Gerontology), Bangor University

Ginnie Wollaston, Cultural Officer, Birmingham City Council

Roundtable attendees

(Some roundtable attendees have been included as Interviewees above.)

Kate Adams, Director, Project Artworks

Laura Bailey, Arts and regeneration officer, Kent County Council

Donna Close, Arts and Cultural Projects Manager, Brighton and Hove City Council

Rosemary Doyle, Head of Library and Heritage Services, Islington Council

Christa Drennan, Consultant, Mental Health

Gregg Hutchings, Consultant, BOP Consulting

Catherine Orbach, Co-Director, Culture Shift

Jenny Peevers, Director, Creative Health

Bridget Rennie, Head of Development, Streetwise Opera

David Slater, Director, Entelechy Arts

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NEW PHILANTHROPY CAPITAL

NPC is a charity think tank and consultancy which occupies a unique position at the nexus between charities and funders, helping them achieve the greatest impact. We are driven by the values and mission of the charity sector, to which we bring the rigour, clarity and analysis needed to better achieve the outcomes we all seek. We also share the motivations and passion of funders, to which we bring our expertise, experience and track record of success.

Increasing the impact of charities: NPC exists to make charities and social enterprises more successful in achieving their missions. Through rigorous analysis, practical advice and innovative thinking, we make charities' money and energy go further, and help them to achieve the greatest impact.

Increasing the impact of funders: NPC's role is to make funders more successful too. We share the passion funders have for helping charities and changing people's lives. We understand their motivations and their objectives, and we know that giving is more rewarding if it achieves the greatest impact it can.

Strengthening the partnership between charities and funders: NPC's mission is also to bring the two sides of the funding equation together, improving understanding and enhancing their combined impact. We can help funders and those they fund to connect and transform the way they work together to achieve their vision.

Cultural Commissioning Programme

The Cultural Commissioning Programme's purpose is to help the arts and cultural sector to better engage in public service commissioning and to support public service commissioners build their awareness of the potential for arts and culture to deliver their outcomes.

The Cultural Commissioning Programme is a three-year programme running from July 2013 to June 2016, funded by Arts Council England, and delivered by NCVO (lead partner), NPC and nef.

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