



**A.N.D**

A new direction for arts,  
culture and young london

---

## **A NEW DIRECTION**

# **CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT BY YOUNG LONDONERS: AN INTRODUCTION TO KEY TRENDS, DRIVERS AND CHALLENGES**

**Catherine Bunting**

**July 2013**

---

## About A New Direction

A New Direction connects children, young people and education with the best of arts and culture in London.

We believe that together we can make London the best city in the world for young people's cultural and creative development.

We campaign for the value of arts and culture to the lives of all young Londoners, promote practical ways that schools and other institutions can develop cultural opportunities, and work with arts and cultural partners to ensure the highest quality in work with children and young people.

A New Direction is part of a national network of bridge organisations, funded by Arts Council England via the lottery.

[www.anewdirection.org.uk](http://www.anewdirection.org.uk)

## About the Author

Catherine Bunting has over 12 years' experience of research, evaluation and impact assessment in the public, private and voluntary sectors. She has extensive experience of arts and cultural research, with an emphasis on understanding cultural participation and its value. Catherine is a member of the team working on the AHRC-funded project 'Everyday Participation', exploring the ways in which people participate in culture in everyday life, and is also leading an impact study of CultureHive, a major programme run by the Arts Marketing Association to raise standards in marketing and audience development.

Previously, Catherine was Director of Research at Arts Council England where she was responsible for developing and delivering the Arts Council's national research programme, and led the Arts Debate, the Arts Council's major public inquiry into the value of the arts. She was a founding member of the Culture and Sport Evidence programme, a multi-agency research programme led by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

## Foreword

It can be easy to make assumptions about young people's engagement with arts and culture. Sometimes we forget that things that we take for granted as adults – like travelling on the tube at night to get back from an event – are out of the question for many young people. Sometimes we frame our understanding through our own childhood experience and think that because we did something it follows that others can do it too. This can be even more the case in London where our perception of being in the global cultural city can mask the reality of extreme inequality.

AND commissioned this research into the cultural habits of young people in London because, as far as possible, we want young Londoners to tell us about their experience of the city's cultural landscape in a way that is unmediated by adults. This report uses the results of a poll of over 1,600 young people from different backgrounds and different parts of London, to help unpick the key dynamics of engagement as well as suggesting areas for further investigation.

It shows that, in general, levels of engagement with arts and culture are high (the report notes on page 7 that they are much higher than those of the adult population of England). But it is important not to let the general picture of high engagement mask the fact that some groups of young people experience real difficulties in being able to take part in London's culture – this is a complex ecology that needs to be understood and carefully nurtured if we want more (and different?) young people to engage.

Perhaps the most compelling story in the report is about the crucial role that schools and teachers play in introducing students to cultural experiences at an early age.

**There are three key areas in which schools are critical:**

Engaging young people in the more **'formal' cultural experiences** that they are less likely to take part in during their spare time, i.e. theatre, art exhibitions, museum visits. Without schools introducing young people to these experiences it is likely that young audiences would be seriously in decline.

Enabling high levels of **engagement for the 11-15 age group** (our survey did not include primary school age children) before levels of engagement dip markedly post 16. This is an age at which young people have limited agency to drive their own cultural engagement, and schools play a crucial role that impacts on lifelong habits of arts and cultural engagement.

**Levelling access to cultural opportunities** so that it is not dependent on wealth or class: in our survey, young people from lower social grade backgrounds were more likely to cite teachers and school as introducing them to culture than young people from higher social grades where families typically play this role.

Staying with the last point, for adult engagement social grade tends to be a key determinant of whether or not a person engages in arts and culture, but this was not the case for the 11-15 year olds we

surveyed. And results showed that some of the highest rates of cultural engagement came from inner London, which has some of the highest rates of poverty in the country.

It is likely that schools are evening out the cultural engagement gap between rich and poor at secondary level. In some ways this echoes patterns we have seen in London over the last ten years where inner London schools have had success in closing the gap in GCSE attainment between young people on Free School Meals and the rest of the population. Could it be the case that the success of London schools over the last ten years (particularly for students in receipt of Free School Meals) is connected in some way to schools enabling excellent cultural engagement?

At the point when schools are under even more pressure to deliver 'standards' as measured by success in academic subjects, it is critical that we don't lose their contribution to enabling widespread engagement in culture (that is not dependent on family background) and building the audiences and artists of the future.

Although the report suggests generally high levels of engagement, there are two groups that appear significantly disadvantaged and where dedicated action is required. These are the young people Not in Education, Employment or Training post 16 ('NEET') and young people in outer London.

Young people that are NEET are disadvantaged in three ways: they don't have school support, they don't have money in their pockets, and they are more likely to be isolated and not have friendship groups to spark activity. With the school leaving age going up there is an opportunity for schools to do more to engage this group in a range of cultural experiences, but this will require help from the cultural sector to provide opportunities and deep thinking about the right kinds of experiences to engage a group that is a long way outside the mainstream.

Outer London disadvantage is also a complex problem. This report suggests that the poll findings support the notion that physical proximity to cultural venues is a key driver of engagement. It is likely that this is compounded for young people who are unlikely to have the capacity to travel far outside their area (depending on age) and have less money (or autonomy) for visits into central London compared with adults.

The problem of a relative lack of opportunity in outer London has been known for a long time. It is a key factor in AND's work with schools too (outer London schools tend to offer fewer opportunities for cultural engagement). Given that most young people live in outer London, this is a real problem that requires a significant realignment. We need to find ways of supporting cultural organisations to expand their partnerships beyond inner London and look at innovative ways of enabling greater opportunity in those boroughs.

Part of the challenge in connecting the arts and cultural sectors with young people is the diffuse nature of the sector – there is no consistent ‘provision’ and no requirement for cultural organisations to tailor their offer to the needs of young people. But there are schools and teachers in every area, there are music hubs too, and libraries, and most places have youth centres and cultural organisations. Perhaps the focus should be on building a level of capacity in every place so that schools, cultural providers and others can align their work to make it easier for young people to take part in the fantastic culture of their locality as well as of the global city.

**Holly Donagh,  
Partnerships Director,  
A New Direction**

Join the conversation about cultural education:

- On our LinkedIn discussion page <http://linkd.in/12NGch7>
- Via Twitter [@A\\_New\\_Direction](#)
- By email [info@anewdirection.org.uk](mailto:info@anewdirection.org.uk)
- and sign up for our e-news - [www.anewdirection.org.uk/signup](http://www.anewdirection.org.uk/signup)

**[www.anewdirection.org.uk](http://www.anewdirection.org.uk)**

## Background

A New Direction (AND) connects children, young people and education with the best of arts and culture in London. AND's vision is for London to be the leading city in the world for young people's cultural and creative development. It campaigns for the value of arts and culture, promotes ways for schools to develop cultural opportunities and helps cultural organisations to improve the quality of their work with young people.

A key part of AND's role is to build understanding of the cultural education landscape in London. AND's 'Picture of London' sets the context for the organisation's work with a visual display of data on London pupils, schools, educational attainment, cultural organisations and audiences and other demographic and economic factors (A New Direction, 2012). Last year, AND commissioned detailed research into the extent and nature of London schools' engagement with cultural organisations, which concluded that, while schools are fairly committed to cultural activities, it may be possible to encourage greater engagement through a more diversified, joined-up, accessible offer (Lord et al., 2012).

AND is starting to paint a detailed picture of the supply of cultural opportunities for young people in London, and in February 2013 it commissioned a poll to enrich this picture with data on cultural engagement by young people themselves. Market research company TNS surveyed 1,664 people aged 11-25 living in London and collected data on

participation in free time activities, attendance at a range of cultural venues and events, attitudes to culture including motivations and barriers to involvement, use of transport and feelings about the future.

AND is also the London partner for Strong Voices, a national programme supported by the Department for Education, which aims to help some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged young people in the country access high quality arts and cultural opportunities. Understanding the picture of youth engagement across London is key for AND to frame the challenges and opportunities faced by this specific group of young people when engaging with arts and culture.

This report presents some of the key findings from the survey. It is a starting point for understanding how young people engage with London's cultural venues and events and some of the factors that might encourage or limit further engagement. By exploring what young people do both in and outside school, and how engagement levels vary across the city, this report aims to help AND and its partners take a strategic view of the overall cultural offer for young people in London and how it might be improved.

The report starts by highlighting some of the key trends and drivers found in previous research on cultural engagement. The main section of the report presents the findings of AND's survey of young Londoners, exploring levels of attendance at different types of cultural activity and how attendance varies by factors such as age and social grade. The report concludes with some

reflections on what the findings might mean for organisations working with young people in London and recommendations for further research. A detailed description of the survey methodology is provided in the appendix.

## **1. Recent trends in cultural engagement**

The last thirty years or so have seen a substantial increase in knowledge about how people engage in culture. Governments and funding bodies around the world have sought to inform and evaluate cultural policies by carrying out population surveys that ask people about their involvement in a range of cultural activities, and regular studies now take place in the UK, the United States, France, Denmark, Italy and the Netherlands among others (Schuster, 2007). Typically, these studies collect data on attendance at cultural venues and events (such as theatre, museums and festivals) and participation in creative activities (such as painting, crafts and playing a musical instrument). When analysed alongside demographic data such as age, gender and occupation, this data tells an interesting story about how different people engage in different kinds of culture in different ways. Less, perhaps, is known about why people engage and what they get out of it – but understanding overall patterns is a good place to start.

At first glance, engagement levels in England seem fairly high. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport's Taking Part

survey reported that in 2011/12, 78% of adults (aged 16 or over) in England had engaged in the arts in the last year and 74% of adults had visited a heritage site, and these figures represent a significant increase in arts and heritage engagement since the survey began in 2005/06. At the same time, levels of attendance at specific cultural venues and events are often surprisingly low. For example, the most popular activity included in the 'arts' category of the Taking Part survey is live music, including pop and rock gigs, but in 2011/12 less than a third of adults (30%) had been to a live music event. Less than half the adult population (49%) had been to a museum or gallery in the last year; less than two-fifths (39%) had used a library; and less than a quarter (22%) had been to see a play or drama (DCMS, 2012a, 2012b).

The Taking Part survey also collects data on cultural engagement by children and young people and typically finds that young people engage at a much higher rate than adults. For example, in 2011/12: 83% of 11-15 year olds had taken part in arts and crafts activities (including painting, photography, crafts such as pottery or jewellery making, attending an arts and crafts exhibition and participating in an arts and crafts lesson); 78% had visited a library; 77% had taken part in music activities (including singing, playing a musical instrument, attending a live music event and participating in a music lesson); and 61% had visited a museum. Trend data for children and young people is available from 2008/09 and shows that for 11-15 year olds the biggest increases in engagement have been for cinema and

other film and video activities (from 70% to 84%) and for street arts, circus, festival and carnival events (from 36% to 47%) (DCMS, 2012b). The rise in attendance at events such as street arts and carnival coincides with an increased focus on these combined art forms by public funders such as Arts Council England, but may also be part of a broader growth in demand for informal, outdoor, social celebrations as seen in the proliferation of commercial music festivals in recent years.

Not everyone experiences culture in the same way or to the same degree, and research has repeatedly shown that attendance at more established cultural forms such as theatre, music, dance, museums and galleries is influenced by some key demographic factors (Bunting et al., 2008). Broadly speaking, levels of engagement are highest among more privileged groups in society. Women and girls typically engage more than men and boys; white people engage more than those from a Black or Asian background; having young children or poor health reduces the chances of very active cultural engagement. However, the most significant factor appears to be education: people with a degree are much more likely to engage than those with few or no qualifications, even when other factors such as income, occupation and age are held constant. No one is quite sure why education should have such a strong effect – is it because schools, colleges and universities create more opportunities for people to get involved, or because education brings with it a heightened ability

to understand, connect with and therefore enjoy culture (Chan and Goldthorpe, 2007)?

Research has also indicated that parental encouragement is very important in stimulating a lifelong interest in culture – almost as important as education. Oskala et al. (2009) analysed data from the Taking Part survey to show that people who had been encouraged to attend or participate in the arts by their parents when they were growing up were more likely to be actively engaged as adults. The effect of parental encouragement was particularly strong among those with the lowest level of education: Oskala et al. calculated that those with few or no qualifications had a 77% chance of attending arts events as adults if they had been taken to arts events at least once a year by their parents when growing up, compared with a 62% chance among those with the same educational background who were never taken to the arts by their parents<sup>1</sup>. However, not all families experience this ‘cultural socialisation’ in the same way – disadvantaged parents are less likely to encourage their children to engage with culture and girls and white children are more likely to be encouraged.

There is growing understanding of the importance of geography in driving cultural engagement. In particular, there appears to be a ‘London effect’ in that engagement levels are higher in the capital than anywhere else in England once differences in the demographic and socio-economic make-up of the population have been taken into account (Bunting et al., 2008).

---

<sup>1</sup> These figures apply to a hypothetical woman from London, white British, in her 40s, in very good health, owner-occupier, living with a partner without any children, medium social status level, with an income of £25,000 per annum.



This may be simply because of the wealth of opportunities to experience culture in London compared with other parts of the country, but there may also be some subtle identity factors at play – perhaps Londoners associate culture as a key element of a ‘metropolitan’ lifestyle.

To date there has been relatively little research on how the location of cultural venues helps to shape engagement patterns. If you live, work or go to school near a theatre or museum are you more likely to engage, regardless of your background? Brook (2012) has shown that access to venues is highly influential in predicting attendance at museums and galleries. Brook calculates that even those who are generally less likely to attend (people from Black and Minority Ethnic groups with no educational qualifications) are 50% more likely to do so if they have good access to a museum or gallery. As Brook points out, these findings are very significant for policy makers because the amount and distribution of cultural facilities are factors they can do something about.

The existing research base provides good evidence of some of the key drivers of cultural engagement among the English population as a whole, particularly the importance of education, the influence of childhood cultural experiences and the potential to shift engagement patterns by improving access to cultural facilities. This is a useful context in which to explore the findings of AND’s survey of young Londoners, which contributes to the evidence base by revealing the specific engagement patterns of young people in the region and how engagement changes as young people make the critical transition from school to further education, work or whatever else life might hold for them as young adults.

## 2. Engagement by young people in London

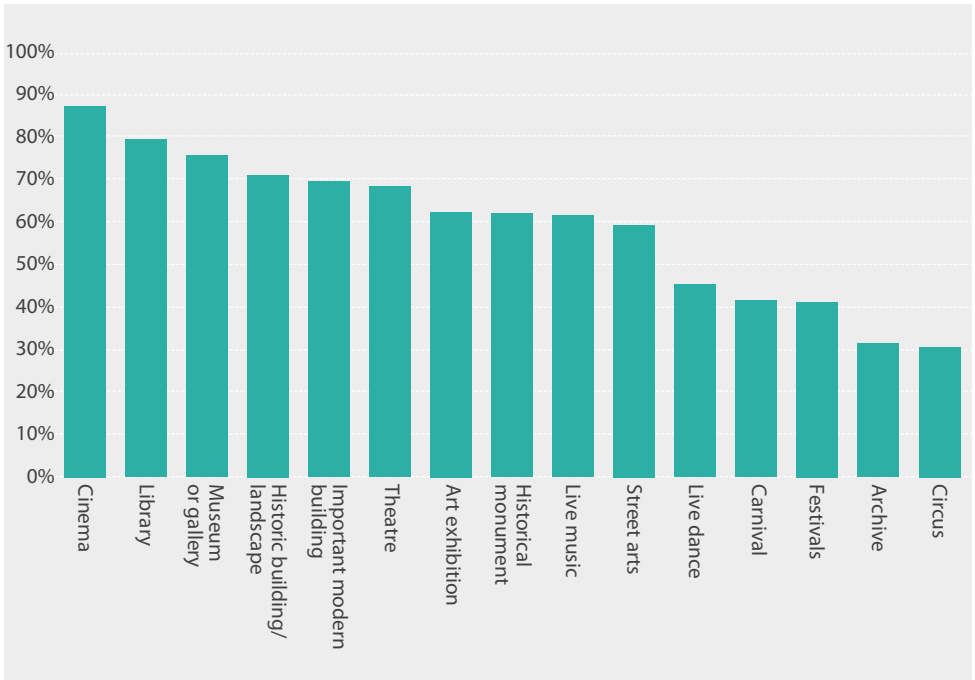
### Overall attendance at cultural venues and events

Young people in London are active attenders at a range of cultural venues and events, as shown in Figure 1 (a full description of the venues and events included in the survey is provided in the appendix). Perhaps unsurprisingly, cinema is the most popular activity, but over three quarters of young Londoners had also used a public library and been to a museum or gallery over the last year.

Levels of cultural attendance by young people in London compare fairly well with broader free time activities; the survey found that 80% of young Londoners listen to music in their free time and 78% watch television. However, the survey did not collect data on frequency of engagement and so music and TV may form part of day-to-day life for many young Londoners whereas a trip to the theatre or going to a carnival is likely to be more of a special occasion.

Interestingly, the survey revealed few significant differences in cultural attendance by gender, although young men in London appear to be more likely to go to more informal, outdoor events such as circus, festivals and carnival.

Figure 1: Attendance at cultural venues and events by 11-25 year olds in London

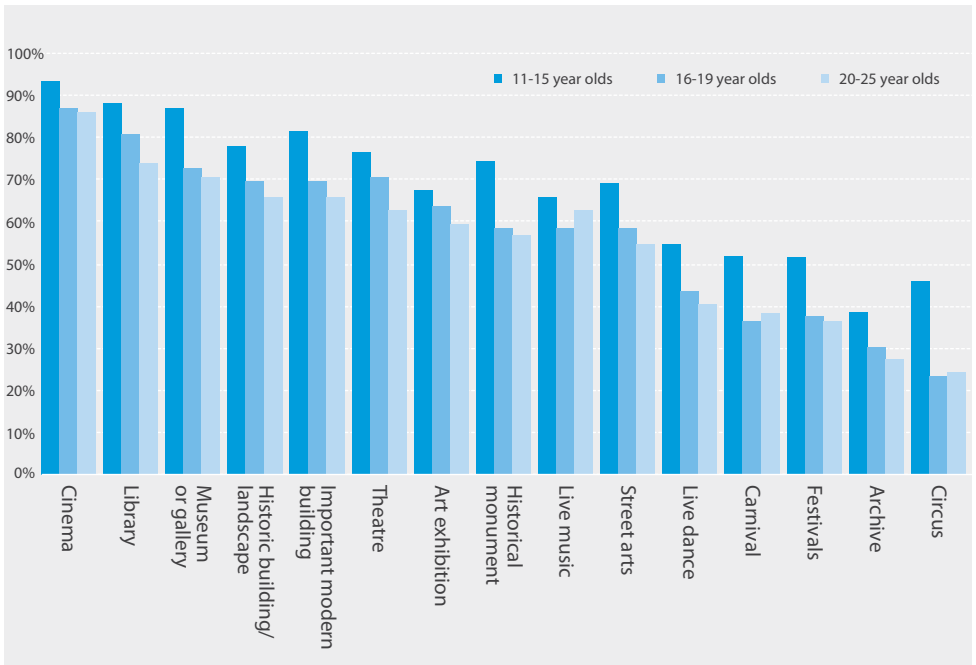


**Attendance by age**

Figure 2 shows that for all cultural venues and events included in the survey, attendance rates drop after age 16 – and for most activities the drop is quite considerable. For example, 86% of 11-15 year olds had visited a museum or gallery in the past year compared with 72% of 16-19 year olds and 70% of 20-25 year olds. The drop is likely to be associated with changing lifestyles and reduced opportunities as young people move on to college or sixth form or leave education altogether. The survey also shows how influences and attitudes start to shift with age.

For younger people, parents are still a relatively important influence: 39% of 11-15 year olds cited parental encouragement as a factor motivating them to get involved in cultural activities compared with 13% of 16-25 year olds. Peers start to play a greater role: 25% of 16-25 year olds were encouraged to get involved in culture by their friends compared with 14% of 11-15 year olds. Practical barriers such as lack of time, money and information become much more significant past the age of 16.

**Figure 2: Attendance at cultural venues and events by young people in London by age**



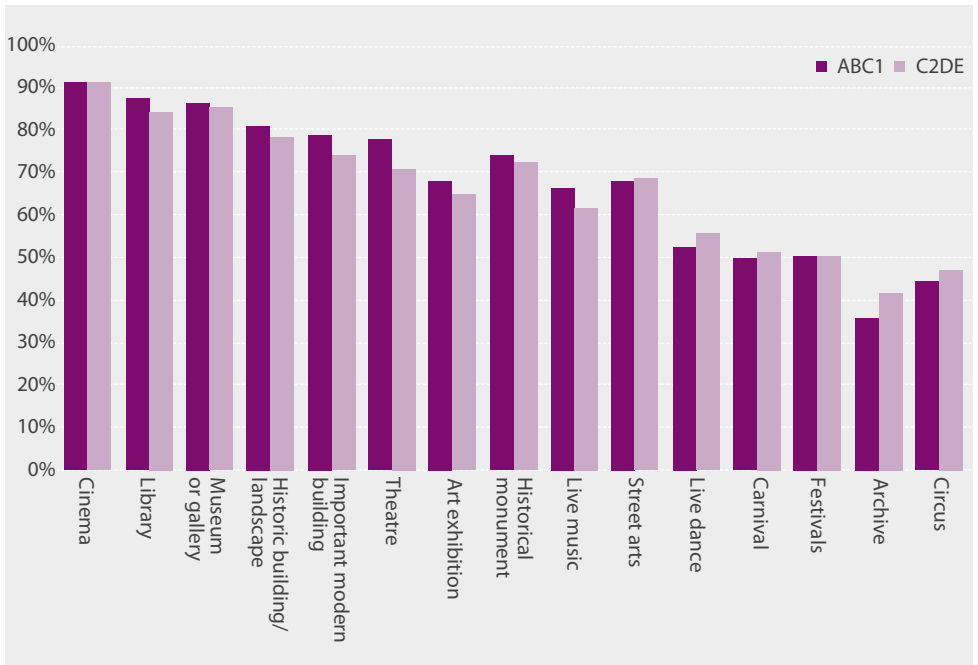
### Attendance by social grade

Age also appears to be an important factor when considering differences in attendance levels by social grade. If engagement by young people in London followed the same socio-economic pattern as adult engagement, young Londoners from higher social grades (ABC1) would be significantly more likely to attend cultural venues and events than those from lower social grades (C2DE). In fact, Figure 3 shows that among 11-15 year olds in London there is very little difference in levels of attendance by ABC1s and C2DEs. The only significant difference by social grade for this age group is for theatre performances, where 11-15 year olds from higher social grades are more likely to attend than those from lower social

grades. Otherwise 11-15 year olds attend at broadly the same level across the social spectrum.

However, Figure 4 indicates that attendance by 16-25 year olds in London shows the same sort of social divisions that are seen among the broader adult population. In London, 16-25 year olds from higher social grades are significantly more likely to attend every type of cultural venue and event except libraries, street arts, festivals and circus. Even going to the cinema, an activity which might be expected to have broad appeal across social groups, is significantly more common among ABC1s than C2DEs for the 16-25 year old group.

**Figure 3: Attendance at cultural venues and events by 11-15 year olds in London by social grade**



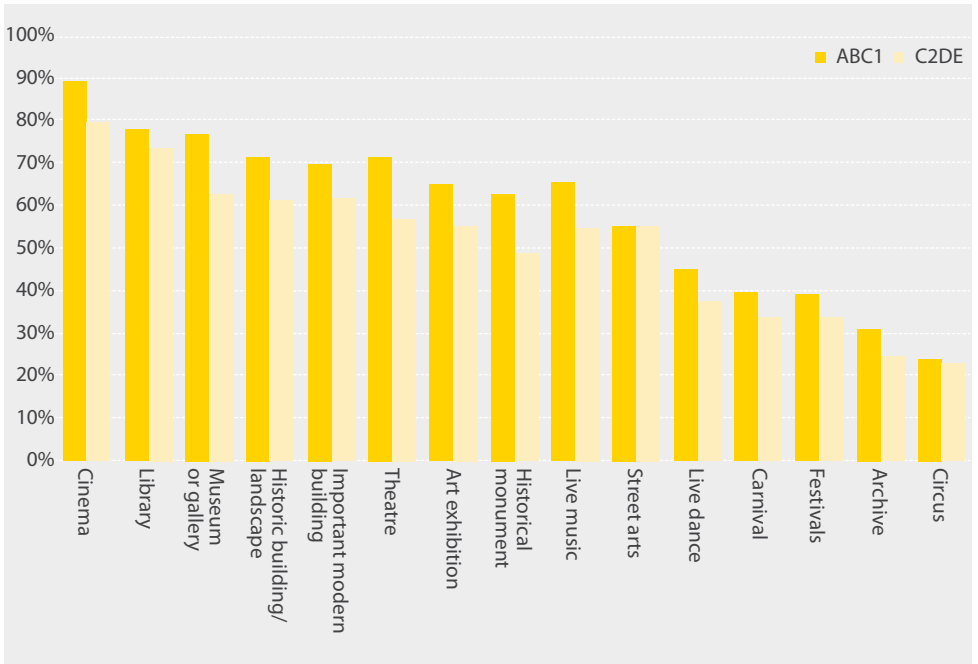
**CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT BY YOUNG LONDONERS:  
AN INTRODUCTION TO KEY TRENDS, DRIVERS AND CHALLENGES**

If social grade differences only start to kick in after the age of 16, this may be because, up until that point, school plays an important role in enabling attendance by all children, regardless of their background. After 16, cultural engagement may be more dependent on inbuilt interest and motivation and these psychological drivers are perhaps stronger among those from more privileged backgrounds, who are more likely to have been encouraged by their parents to engage and to see culture as part of their way of life.

There is some evidence to support this idea in the attitudinal data collected by the survey. Young people were asked who organised their first memorable trip to a cultural event or place of interest.

Across the whole sample (11-25 year olds) those from higher social grades were significantly more likely to say that their first memorable cultural experience was organised by their parents (46% of ABC1s compared to 30% of C2DEs). Those from lower social grades were more likely to have experienced their first memorable cultural trip through school, college or university (35% of C2DEs compared with 27% of ABC1s).

**Figure 4: Attendance at cultural venues and events by 16-25 year olds in London by social grade**

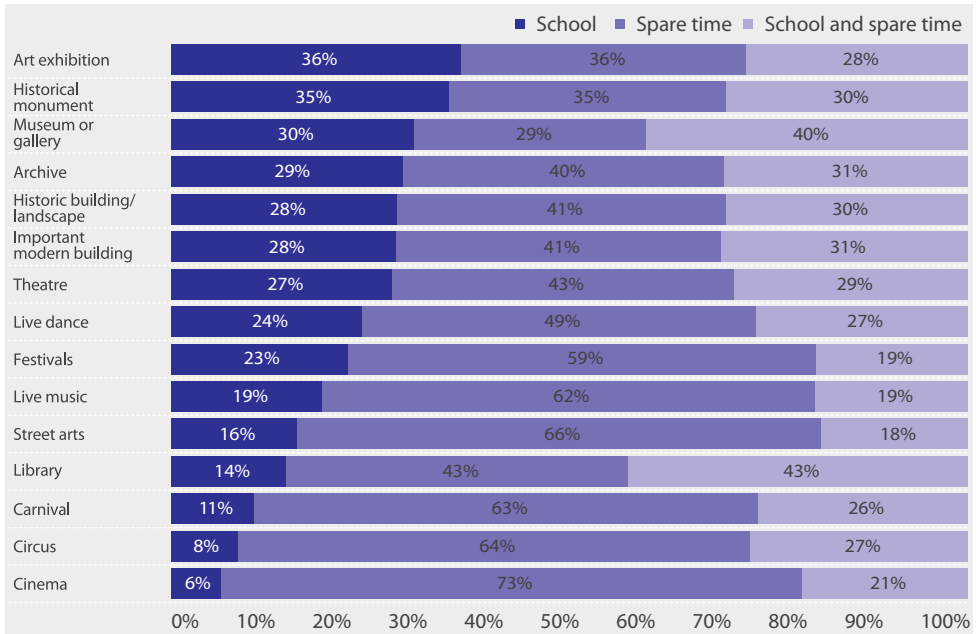


**Attendance at school and in spare time**

If schools are important in shaping engagement patterns among 11-15 year olds then it is interesting to explore how far school-based activity accounts for overall attendance at different cultural events and venues. For each cultural venue and event, the survey asked 11-15 year olds whether they had attended during school lessons, during their spare time, during both school lessons and spare time or not at all. Figure 5 shows for each cultural venue and event the proportion of 11-15 year old attenders who had attended only during school time, the proportion that had attended only during their spare time and the proportion that had attended during both school and spare time.

It's clear that cultural venues and events in London are not reliant on schools for their young audiences. For all of the venues and events included in the survey, the majority of those who had attended in the last year had done so purely in their spare time or in their spare time as well as engaging through school. However, schools do appear to be more important in enabling attendance at more formal cultural activities. For example, of all 11-15 year olds in London who had attended an art exhibition in the last year, over a third (36%) had only done so because they were taken as part of a school lesson and the same number had attended purely in their spare time. By contrast, of all those who had been to a street arts event, 16% had only

**Figure 5: Breakdown of attendance at cultural venues and events by 11-15 year olds in London across school and spare time**



done so during school time whereas 66% had attended with no involvement of school at all. It may be that teachers perceive a higher educational value in more ‘traditional’ cultural forms (art exhibitions, museums, historical monuments, theatre) than in more informal or community-based activities (cinema, live music, street arts, carnival) – or perhaps a trip to a gallery is simply easier to organise than taking a class to a festival.

**Attendance by education and employment status**

Previous sections have shown that while many young people in London engage in culture in their spare time, schools are still important in enabling attendance, particularly by young people from less privileged backgrounds and at more formal kinds of cultural venues and events. We have seen that overall attendance drops after the age of 16, but how do attendance patterns vary depending on whether a young person stays in education (including college/sixth form and university), finds employment (including apprenticeships, training and internships) or is Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)?

**Figure 6: Attendance at cultural venues and events by 16-25 year olds in London by education/employment status**

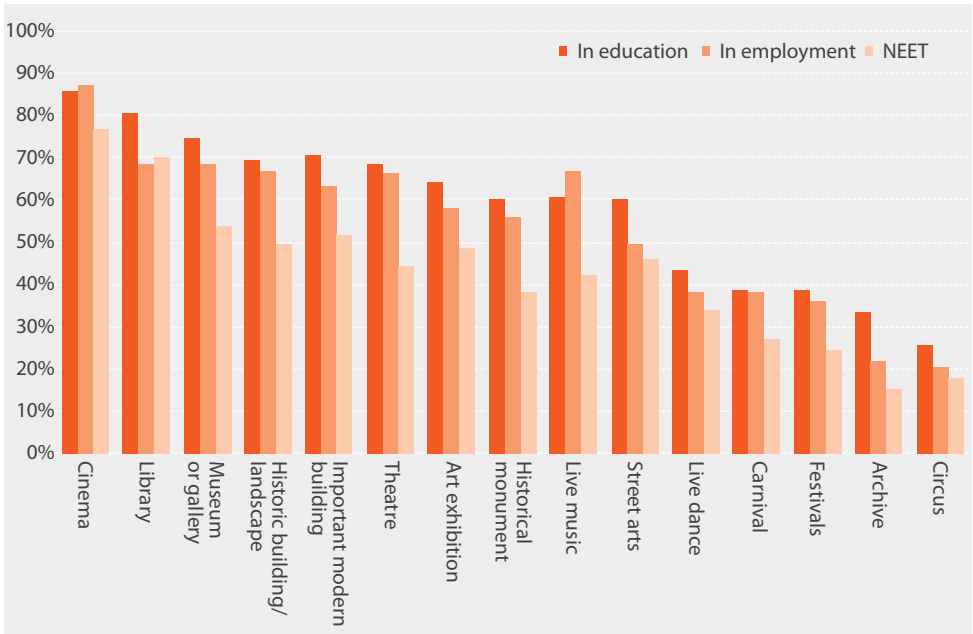


Figure 6 shows that, while attendance levels at most cultural venues and events are fairly similar for 16-25 year olds in education and employment, there is far less cultural attendance by those NEET. Those 16-25 year olds in any kind of education or employment were significantly more likely to attend live music and theatre and visit historic buildings and monuments; 66% of 16-25 year olds in paid employment or undertaking an apprenticeship, training or internship had been to the theatre in the past year compared with just 44% of those NEET. Those 16-25 year olds in school, college/sixth form and university were all significantly more likely to attend art exhibitions and street art events and visit archives than those NEET; 64% of 16-25 year olds in education had been to an art exhibition compared with 49% of those NEET. This difference is also shown in the responses to the attitudinal questions included in the survey. For example, 16-25 year olds in any kind of education were significantly more likely to agree that there are enough opportunities for a young person to get involved in arts and cultural activities in London than those NEET and significantly more likely to agree that they are interested in arts and cultural activities taking place in London.

Those defined as NEET may be a particularly disadvantaged group of young people who are unlikely to be experiencing some of the key drivers of cultural engagement. They are no longer in school and so are not engaging in cultural activities as part of the school day; they may be from less privileged backgrounds and so less likely to have been encouraged by their parents to engage; they are not making social connections through work or training that might lead to greater cultural involvement; in some cases their personal circumstances may have a direct impact on their ability to engage with arts and culture (e.g. young carers, refugees); and, critically, they are not at university or college and so are not experiencing the strong influence that higher education seems to exert on cultural tastes and preferences. For organisations working to promote cultural engagement by young people, those defined as NEET are a particularly important and challenging group to reach.

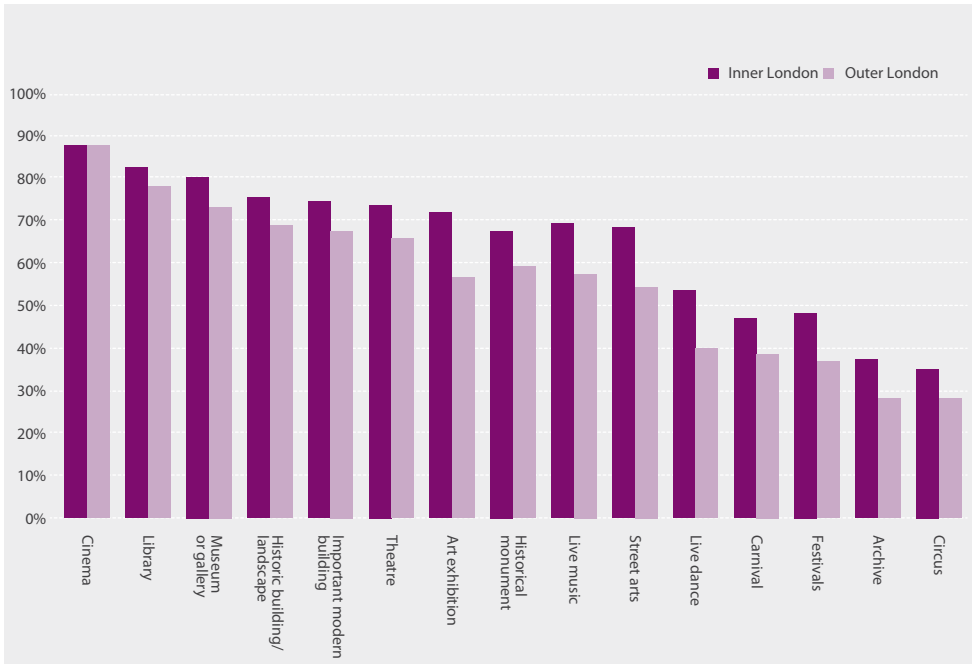


### Attendance by borough

Finally, the survey provides some insight into how engagement levels vary across different parts of the city. In particular, it is possible to compare attendance at different cultural venues and events by young people living in inner and outer London boroughs, as shown in Figure 7. Across the whole sample (11-25 year olds), attendance levels were higher among young people living in inner London for every cultural activity except cinema. Unlike with social grade, schools do not appear to be levelling the playing field when it comes to differences by borough.

If anything, the disparity seems greater among those of school age: 11-15 year olds living in inner London boroughs were significantly more likely to attend every cultural venue and event included in the survey than those in outer London. Among 16-25 year olds, those living in inner London boroughs were significantly more likely to attend every venue and event except cinema, libraries, carnival, circus and important modern buildings or public spaces (for these activities there were no significant differences in attendance by those living in inner and outer London boroughs).

**Figure 7: Attendance at cultural venues and events by 11-25 year olds in London by borough**



Across the whole sample there were also attitudinal differences: those living in outer London boroughs were significantly less likely to agree that there are enough opportunities for a young person to get involved in arts and cultural activities in London (64% compared with 73% of those in inner London boroughs) and significantly less likely to agree that they are interested in arts and cultural activities taking place in London (65% compared with 78%).

Given that some of the highest levels of poverty in London are found in the inner boroughs, it seems unlikely that differences in cultural engagement by borough can be fully explained by differences in the socio-economic make-up of local communities. Rather, these findings seem to support the conclusions of Brook (2013) that access to cultural venues is a key driver of engagement. In particular it may be that inner London schools are more likely to have active relationships with the major cultural institutions clustered in the city centre. Schools in outer London boroughs do not have the same ease of access to such a wide range of high quality cultural activity.

### 3. Conclusions

The findings of AND's Survey of Young Londoners provide useful insights into how young people engage with cultural venues and events in London. In particular, because the sample covers the age range from 11 to 25, the data tells an interesting story about how engagement changes at different ages and life stages, particularly as young people leave school.

London schools appear to play an important role in enabling people to experience culture, particularly more formal activities such as visiting an art gallery or a heritage site. Schools may also help to create greater equality of opportunity in that they involve young people in different cultural activities irrespective of their circumstances, and introduce some young people, particularly those from more disadvantaged backgrounds, to experiences that they might otherwise not have had. It would be useful to carry out further research with teachers to find out more about how they make decisions about cultural activities for their pupils, the types of culture they think are appropriate and valuable in a school context and whether they see themselves as having a role to play in encouraging their pupils to develop lifelong cultural interests and habits.

However, being exposed to formal culture at school may not be enough to spark a sustained interest. What happens at home is important too, and the data indicates that ongoing cultural engagement past the age of 16 is more likely among those from more affluent families, who may have been taken to the theatre or to museums and galleries

as a regular part of family life and encouraged by their parents to get involved in creative activities. This suggests that it would be valuable for cultural organisations working with schools to consider ways of engaging parents as well as young people, and encouraging an interest in culture as an enjoyable family activity and not just something that happens through school. For those organisations working to increase engagement among young adults over the age of 16, it may not be the best use of resources to target relatively settled young people who are attending or have plans to attend university; it may be that the most powerful but also challenging way of shifting engagement patterns at this age would be to find ways of connecting with young people Not in Education, Employment or Training.

The difference in attendance at cultural venues and events in inner and outer London boroughs is fascinating and worth exploring further. In particular it would be useful to carry out multivariate analysis of the data to estimate the importance of where young people live in predicting cultural engagement relative to factors such as social grade, education status and whether they are encouraged to engage by their parents. The initial analysis presented in this report suggests that for major cultural institutions in central London the priority is not necessarily to work with very local schools, which already have a wide range of cultural opportunities to choose from, but rather to work together to create a more accessible offer for schools in outer London boroughs.

The survey collected very useful data on young people's attendance at a range of cultural venues and events but it did not include any questions on more participatory forms of culture – playing in a band, photography, fashion design and so on – or on engagement with culture through media and digital technologies. It would be useful to repeat the survey and include questions on engagement with a wider range of cultural activities and then to carry out some sort of segmentation to explore how young people cluster around different cultural forms and tastes. One option here would be to combine all the Taking Part data for children and young people in London since 2008/09, which should produce a large enough sample to carry out a meaningful segmentation and to further explore how engagement varies across London boroughs.

Finally, a quantitative survey can only capture so much information about cultural engagement. As Miles and Sullivan (2012) point out, people who rarely engage with the types of traditional or mainstream culture that typically feature in surveys nonetheless often have rich and involved cultural lives made up of informal forms of participation and day-to-day social activities. Qualitative research involving techniques such as participant diaries and ethnography would reveal a great deal about how young people in London spend their spare time, how they make decisions about where to go and what to do, how they express themselves creatively and the kinds of activities that have particular meaning and value. By combining quantitative analysis with qualitative insight AND can develop a deep understanding of the cultural lives of young people in London today.

## Appendix

The findings set out in this report are from an online survey of young people in London conducted by TNS on behalf of AND. The survey took place between 12th February and 4th March 2013. All questions were completed directly by the young person (apart from the social grade question for 11-15 year olds which was completed by a parent/carer on their behalf).

The sample comprised 1,664 young people aged 11-25 living in London. It is representative of the wider population of young people living in London by gender, age, borough and social grade. Interlocking quotas were set for age and gender to strengthen the representativeness of the sample within these two dimensions. The sample was drawn from an online panel of respondents managed by TNS and supplied by its partners SSI and Lightspeed Research. Panellists are recruited via a number of online and offline channels and are entered into prize draws and a points system as an incentive to take part. The panel is exclusively used for research purposes and is actively managed to ensure quality of responses and representativeness of the samples are maintained.

To capture data on cultural engagement, the survey asked respondents whether they had attended or visited any of the following in London over the last year, in school lessons, spare time or both:

- live dance event
- live music performance

- theatre performance such as a play, pantomime, opera, musical or comedy
- street arts
- circus
- carnival
- festivals from other cultures
- exhibition or collection of arts, photography, sculpture or other craft work
- cinema or an outdoor film screening
- public library
- archive or record office
- museum or gallery
- historic building, garden or landscape open to the public
- historical monument or site of archaeological interest
- important modern public building or space.

These descriptions of cultural venues and events are based on the categories included in Taking Part, the national survey of cultural participation led by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. However, it is not possible to make direct comparisons between the findings of the two surveys because of differences in methodology; for example, the London poll was carried out online whereas Taking Part collects data through face-to-face interviews.

## References

- A New Direction. (2012). *Picture of London*. Retrieved from <http://anewdirection.org.uk/knowledge/research>
- Brook, O. (2013). *Relating Cultural Participation to Cultural Opportunities using Commercial and Government Data*. Paper presented at the ESRC National Summit Conference for the Research Capacity Building Clusters, Aston University.
- Bunting, C., Chan, T., Goldthorpe, J., Keaney, E., and Oskala, A. (2008). *From indifference to enthusiasm: patterns of arts attendance in England*. London: Arts Council England.
- Chan, T. and Goldthorpe, J. (2007). Social stratification and cultural consumption: The visual arts in England. *Poetics*, 35, 168-190.
- DCMS. (2012a). *Taking Part 2011/12 Quarter 4 Statistical Release*. London: Department for Culture, Media and Sport.
- DCMS. (2012b). *Taking Part 2011/12 Adult and Child Report Statistical Release*. London: Department for Culture, Media and Sport.
- Lord, P., Dawson, A., Featherstone, G., and Sharp, C. (2012). *London Schools Research: Cultural Engagement*. Slough: NFER.
- Miles, A. and Sullivan, A. (2012). Understanding participation in culture and sport: Mixing methods, reordering knowledges. *Cultural Trends*, 21(4), 311-324.
- Oskala, A., Keaney, E., Chan, T., and Bunting, C. (2009). *Encourage children today to build audiences for tomorrow: Evidence from the Taking Part survey on how childhood involvement in the arts affects arts engagement in adulthood*. London: Arts Council England.
- Schuster, M. (2007). Participation Studies and Cross-National Comparison: Proliferation, Prudence, and Possibility. *Cultural Trends*, 16(2), 99-196.



Image credit:  
The Dorfman Hub  
by Sophie Laslett  
for The Roundhouse

Design by  
UXB London

**A New Direction**  
3rd Floor  
20-26 Brunswick Place  
London, N1 6DZ

**T. 020 7608 2132**  
**F. 020 7608 8996**  
**W. [anewdirection.org.uk](http://anewdirection.org.uk)**  
**E. [info@anewdirection.org.uk](mailto:info@anewdirection.org.uk)**  
**Twitter: @a\_new\_direction**

**A.N.D**



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**