

Bradford Arts Centre

Capital Redevelopment & Heritage Activity Programme Final Evaluation

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June 2026



Supported using public funding by
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Introduction

In March 2023, Kala Sangam, Bradford's arts centre, was awarded £4,998,500 from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport's Cultural Development Fund (CDF) to support an ambitious capital redevelopment and to enable delivery of a programme of activity with four local, diverse communities. Alongside this investment, £2,291,947 was awarded from The National Lottery Heritage Fund (Heritage Fund), £250,000 from The Garfield Weston Foundation, £200,000 from Bradford Metropolitan District Council, £40,000 from Bradford 2025 and £25,000 from The Foyle Foundation. The company receives investment from Arts Council England as a National Portfolio Organisation.

The redevelopment has transformed and reshaped the Grade II Listed heritage building, creating a new 200-seat theatre space, with Heritage Fund support contributing to the creation of five new studios and a new home for Bradford Community Broadcasting (BCB). A new entrance, two new lifts, Changing Places facility, foyer and central staircase has ensured that the building is accessible to all. The newly named Bradford Arts Centre opened on 7 October 2025 during Bradford's year as UK City of Culture. Throughout this document we will refer to Kala Sangam as Bradford Arts Centre to reflect the name change that was implemented during the redevelopment.

During the redevelopment the Bradford Arts Centre team and activity was based at Bank House in central Bradford. This temporary space had one studio space, allowing the company to continue its support for artists in the run up to Bradford's year as UK City of Culture, and a range of spaces available to hire for meetings, events and conferences.

Running in parallel to the capital works and activities at Bank House, Bradford Arts Centre worked in partnership with **Keighley Creative, South Square Centre** and **Bloomin' Buds Theatre Company** (initially based at The Rockwell Centre) to deliver a programme of activities with communities across the Bradford district. The four partners formed a network of creative venues, with each organisation hosting an Arts & Heritage Officer (AHO) within their team. Officers worked with local communities to build a programme of activities inspired by their local identities and cultural heritage. The unique model saw the four Arts & Heritage Officers employed by lead organisation Bradford Arts Centre, but jointly managed with their parent hub, allowing for learning, sharing and cross-group collaboration.

About this report

The Audience Agency (TAA) was appointed in 2023 to evaluate the capital redevelopment and heritage activity programme. This evaluation report focuses on demonstrable outcomes to date, specific to different elements of the project and areas of investment. As a large, multifaceted project, activity in this report is divided into five core sections to keep focus and aid flow:

- Community Arts Hubs & their communities
- Artists & freelance creatives
- Bradford Arts Centre
- Economic & placemaking in Bradford
- Capital redevelopment

Methodologies

A mixed-methods approach was used to evaluate the programme as follows:

Participatory monitoring: TAA has drawn on Bradford Arts Centre's existing participatory monitoring to measure engagement as part of its core programme with schools and community groups.

Visitor survey: Between November 2025 and March 2026, a survey was administered by staff at Bradford Arts Centre and monitored by TAA to understand visitor demographics and experiences of the newly opened building.

Ticketing data: Ticketing data from September 2025 to March 2026 was provided by Bradford Arts Centre to understand the geographic profile and **Audience Spectrum** profile of bookers for events at Bradford Arts Centre.

Hub monitoring and data collection: Partner hubs each completed 6-monthly monitoring forms and progress reports. Hubs took part in an evaluation training session with TAA in October 2023 to support evaluation and data collection on the ground with community participants.

Arts & Heritage Officer reflective discussions: Partner hub leads came together on a quarterly basis to reflect on their individual and collective learnings. We also held a final sharing in March 2026 to collect end of project reflections via interviews and a reflective workshop session that explored:

- The hub model design
- Whether the hub model succeeded in co-creating artistic responses/new work with communities
- Whether there was increased engagement with specific target groups and what this looked like:
 - Older women of Pakistani heritage (through partnership with WomenZone)
 - South Asian Mothers and their children, largely of Pakistani heritage but also including a wider representation of the South Asian sub-continent
 - Smaller numbers of Eastern European refugee community participants
 - Older White British people (through partnership with u3a – University of the Third Age)
- Organisational change at Bradford Arts Centre as a result of the hub model and whether new skills had been developed with a focus on;
 - Producing (in a sustainable way, for specific audiences)
 - Enhanced networks and opportunities
 - Monitoring, data collection and evaluation
 - Increased/refined strategic activity plan
- Professional development as a result of engaging in this work

Community evaluators: Nine community evaluators, recruited by each of the hubs, were trained in data collection methods by TAA. Community evaluators developed case studies in connection to hub settings to highlight individual activities and sessions.

Community hub survey: An ongoing participant survey was administered by Arts & Heritage Officers and managed by TAA to understand participant demographics and experiences.

Artist & volunteer survey: Artist and volunteer surveys have been used to understand artist/volunteer demographics and experiences.

Staff reflections: Focus groups with key staff members involved in the redevelopment and archive development were delivered at key stages, and wider staff team reflections were collected at the interim stage. In March 2026 TAA met with key staff who had worked on the capital and arts & heritage programmes to understand:

- The complexity of the funding model with its multiple funders and how this impacted on the team
- The hub model and if it had succeeded in increasing engagement with diverse groups and had built resilience in the wider team and cultural sector in Bradford
- The professional development of the team
- Whether heritage is better identified and explained
- The biggest challenges and achievements of this work

Artist and archivist reflective interviews: In April 2026, interviews were held with an artist who has continued engagement with Bradford Arts Centre from St Peter's House until present to reflect on her experiences. This was followed by an interview with archivist Alex Wilson to understand the heritage outcomes linked to the archive and the successes and challenges of creating a living archive of Bradford Arts Centre's history and longevity.

Sharing session: The TAA team attended the final hub sharing session in January 2026 to meet the arts & heritage team and their participants to build a wider understanding of the work that had been developed and meet and chat to participants about their experiences. At the sharing session, work from all four hubs was on display with an opportunity to meet with participants from Bloomin' Buds, u3a and WomenZone.

Digital analytics: Digital engagement data has been provided by Bradford Arts Centre to understand engagement with their newly created Archive Adventures series.

Capital evaluation: The capital evaluation explores processes, successes, challenges, learning and perspectives around the capital development work. TAA led an initial mid-discussion session with key Bradford Arts Centre staff involved in the capital development in December 2024. Another session with key staff was run in early 2026, following the opening of the building, along with one-to-one interviews with contractors involved, including representatives from Simpson, the main contractors; Turner and Townsend the project managers; and the architects.

Project records: Data related to capital outputs is drawn from project monitoring records and target spreadsheets.

Note: The percentages shown in charts have been rounded to the nearest whole number for ease of presentation and reporting. Therefore, some percentages may appear to add to less or more than 100%.

Note: All data collected from people under the age of 16 was given with informed consent from their parent or guardian. Collecting consent from parents or guardians was managed by hub leads and supported by TAA.

Executive summary

Overall, the project has met or exceeded the majority of its targets and has generated substantial benefits for communities, artists, and the wider cultural sector. It has provided employment and development opportunities for early and mid-career creatives through the Arts & Heritage Officer roles, while strengthening pathways into cultural participation for communities across Bradford.

Arts & heritage programme

Network hubs model

The network hubs model was central to the delivery of the arts & heritage activity programme, facilitating 8,713 engagements across 508 arts & heritage activities between April 2024 and March 2026. These took place at Bank House (Bradford Arts Centre's home during the redevelopment) and in partnership with Keighley Creative, South Square Centre and Bloomin' Buds Theatre Company (initially based at The Rockwell Centre).

The decentralised nature of the hub model has been fundamental to its success, bringing creative activity directly into neighbourhoods and community settings, and engaging communities unlikely to access city-centre cultural provision. Partnerships established through the hubs developed a strong network of community practitioners who were able to co-create activity with their specific communities, ensuring programmes were locally relevant and responsive to community interests and needs.

Activity was very well received, with 99% of community participants responding to surveys rating positively the quality of workshops and events.

The hubs were effective in engaging diverse communities, reflecting the programme's original aims. Participants included people from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, as well as significant numbers of women and older people. In **Audience Spectrum** terms, the findings suggest that hub-based activity was particularly successful in reaching audiences with low to medium levels of cultural engagement.

Challenges were encountered around gatekeeping, as well as race and gender biases, particularly when working through male community leaders who often acted as 'community connectors' to those most likely to benefit from, and engage with, creative interventions. In response, the hub approach at Bradford Arts Centre evolved over time, adapting its methods and developing new partnerships with groups interested in participating in co-creative processes. This flexibility enabled the programme to

broaden its reach and engage communities that may otherwise have remained underrepresented.

Although the long-term impact of the arts and heritage hub model is still emerging, early indicators demonstrate increased repeat visits and audience engagement, stronger community relationships and trust, increased word-of-mouth promotion, improved access and participation among underrepresented groups, and a reduction in the perceived distance between communities and city-centre cultural provision. There has been notable crossover between those engaging with hub activity and visits to the newly reopened Bradford Arts Centre.

The hub model is influencing the future strategic direction of programming at Bradford Arts Centre by commissioning and shaping work that originates within communities. Over time, this approach has the potential to create a growing network of community ambassadors, including participants, artists, creatives, and cultural workers, who continue to advocate for and engage with the organisation.

Archive

A major achievement has been the creation of a new archive, which has digitised approximately 10,000 images, processed nearly 300 hours of video, and scanned and catalogued between 2,000 and 3,000 documents. More than 200 moving image assets have been made publicly accessible, while hundreds of duplicate media items, including CDs and DVDs, have been identified, logged, and digitised. The long-term ambition is for the physical archive to be housed with the West Yorkshire Archive Service, ensuring its preservation and accessibility for future generations.

Artists

The programme has made a significant contribution to artist development. Between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2026, Bradford Arts Centre recorded 521 artist engagements, despite the main building being closed for most of this time.

Artists have been engaged in a variety of ways, including delivering programmes within hub-based arts & heritage initiatives, as well as creating new work for the opening of Bradford Arts Centre and subsequent touring activities.

Engagement with Bradford-based artists increased substantially compared with previous activity, creating both paid opportunities and platforms for creative practice.

During the project, Bradford Arts Centre were also especially successful in increasing the proportion of younger artists, LGBTQ+ artists, and those identifying as D/deaf or as having a long term physical or mental health condition/illness. There was also an

increase in the proportion of artists identifying as Asian/Asian British: Pakistani, Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Black Caribbean, and as Other Ethnic Group: Latin American.

The vast majority of artists agreed that engagement with Bradford Arts Centre helped them to develop their skills and knowledge, exposed them to new ideas, benefitted their connections with other artists, and will benefit their career trajectory

Co-creation was a central ambition of the programme and, while its implementation proved complex and uneven across different settings and communities, it generated valuable learning about the conditions required for meaningful community-led cultural activity.

Bradford Arts Centre

For Bradford Arts Centre, the programme has delivered strong audience and organisational outcomes. Audience feedback since reopening has been overwhelmingly positive, with attendees reporting a strong sense of ownership, belonging, and connection to the venue. The programme has helped establish an identity for Bradford Arts Centre that reflects diverse viewpoints and experiences, contributing to increased civic pride and a sense that the building is a space for everyone.

Audience data demonstrates that the profile of those attending Bradford Arts Centre since reopening is more closely aligned with the demographics of Bradford than is typically seen within arts organisations.

The venue is successfully attracting audiences across lower, medium, and higher culturally engaged **Audience Spectrum** groups, while also engaging a younger audience than has historically been the case. It is notable too that a high proportion of audiences from Bradford were visiting with children (44%), suggesting strength in the family offer for local audiences.

An almost equal split between first time and returning audiences are attending, suggesting both strong audience retention and growth, and a healthy mix to build on.

The project has significantly raised the profile of Bradford Arts Centre and strengthened relationships with stakeholders, partners, artists, and communities. Through the hub model and extensive on-the-ground engagement, awareness of the organisation has increased across the district, laying strong foundations for future growth and community collaboration.

Financial resilience has increased, with the new spaces enabling a significant rise in external hires and session bookings compared to pre-closure (600 during the first six

months of opening, compared to 561 across the whole 2023/24 year); with a corresponding rise in value of hires and bookings (£107,581 during the first six months of opening, compared to £103,302 across the whole 2023/24 year).

Bradford Arts Centre has increased earned income following reopening, generating £154,946 in the first six months (average £25,824 per month), compared to £244,358 in the full 2023/24 year (average £20,363 per month).

Capital redevelopment process

All of the core intended outputs of this project were delivered, despite the challenges, and in addition the project delivered five new studio spaces, surpassing the original target of four.

The main challenge during the capital works was the uncovering of major issues, which had not been identified earlier due to building access, with one of the most significant finds a structural column hidden by a wall, in the middle of the theatre seating space. These findings resulted in additional work and costs, and overall there were a disproportionate number of changes required, although no high level changes to the approach.

Overall, the capital team, including contractors and Bradford Arts Centre staff, worked well together. This was with the exception of the mechanical & electrical (M&E) contractors, who were felt to fall far short of expected standards. The close involvement and commitment of the Bradford Arts Centre team was a critical part of the success of the overall capital team and was praised by contractors.

The opening programme and Bradford 2025 presented an immovable moment by which the building had to open, putting pressure on the whole staff and contractor team. However, this deadline was taken seriously and all pulled together to make it happen, with the immovability of the opening date understood and respected. The deadline meant opening with more snagging issues still in place than ideal and a staged approach, which saw the area housing BCB completed a little later, but this was recognised as being the right approach to ensure the building could open to the public on time.

Delivery against intended project outcomes

This section is structured around the four main project areas, as set out in the evaluation framework. For each area, the intended outcomes of the project are presented, with the evaluation indicators that determine success set out under each. Data and insights are presented and discussed under each outcome to determine the extent to which the project achieved that intended outcome.

The majority of intended outcomes apply across the project, however the two main funders - CDF and Heritage Fund - have some specific requirements/expected outcomes. Where outcomes relate specifically to one funder, this is indicated.

The four areas addressed in this section are:

1. Community arts hubs & their communities
2. Artists & freelance creatives
3. Bradford Arts Centre
4. Economic & placemaking in Bradford



Illustration of Bradford Arts Centre's Community sharing event by Nadya Girendroheru. Nadya is an artist, volunteer and community evaluator on the project

1. Community arts hubs & their communities

This section reflects on the delivery and evaluation of the network hubs model, capturing key learnings and case studies to inform future practice.

Network model overview

Running in parallel to the capital works and activities at Bank House, Bradford Arts Centre worked in partnership with Keighley Creative, South Square Centre and Bloomin' Buds Theatre Company (initially based at The Rockwell Centre) to deliver a programme of activities with communities across the Bradford district.

The four partners formed a network of creative venues, with each organisation hosting an Arts & Heritage Officer within their team. Officers worked with local communities to build programmes inspired by local identities and cultural heritage.

The model was unique, with all Arts & Heritage Officers employed by Bradford Arts Centre but jointly managed with their host hub. This enabled:

- Learning and sharing
- Cross-group collaboration
- Stronger connection across the district that offered more opportunities for communities to engage with cultural heritage

“The network model has provided a meaningful, locally rooted way for Bradford Arts Centre to connect with communities across the Bradford district. Arts & Heritage Officers reported benefitting from peer support, shared ideas, and collaboration opportunities that have increased connectivity between creatives and communities, showing what can happen when people work collectively and collaboratively to increase engagement in culture.”

The Arts & Heritage Officers valued Bradford Arts Centre’s support, noting the importance of “having space and resources to test new approaches and take risks” and not working “in isolation but as part of a bigger team with a shared goal.”

SURVEY RESPONSES BY COMMUNITY HUB

174 community hub survey responses were collected by the Arts & Heritage Officers from April 2024, up to and including March 2026. 50% of the responses came from Bradford Arts Centre, 29% from Keighley Creative, 14% from South Square Centre and 6% from The Rockwell Centre.

Where disclosed by hub leads within the monitoring form, data was collected at 45 (14% of all sessions) of the activities delivered by hubs.

1.1 A shared programme of performances, workshops and outreach activities visits each hub site. [CDF]

INDICATOR: Delivery of shared programme of activity across hub sites. Record of activities/ongoing evaluation of the work with hubs.

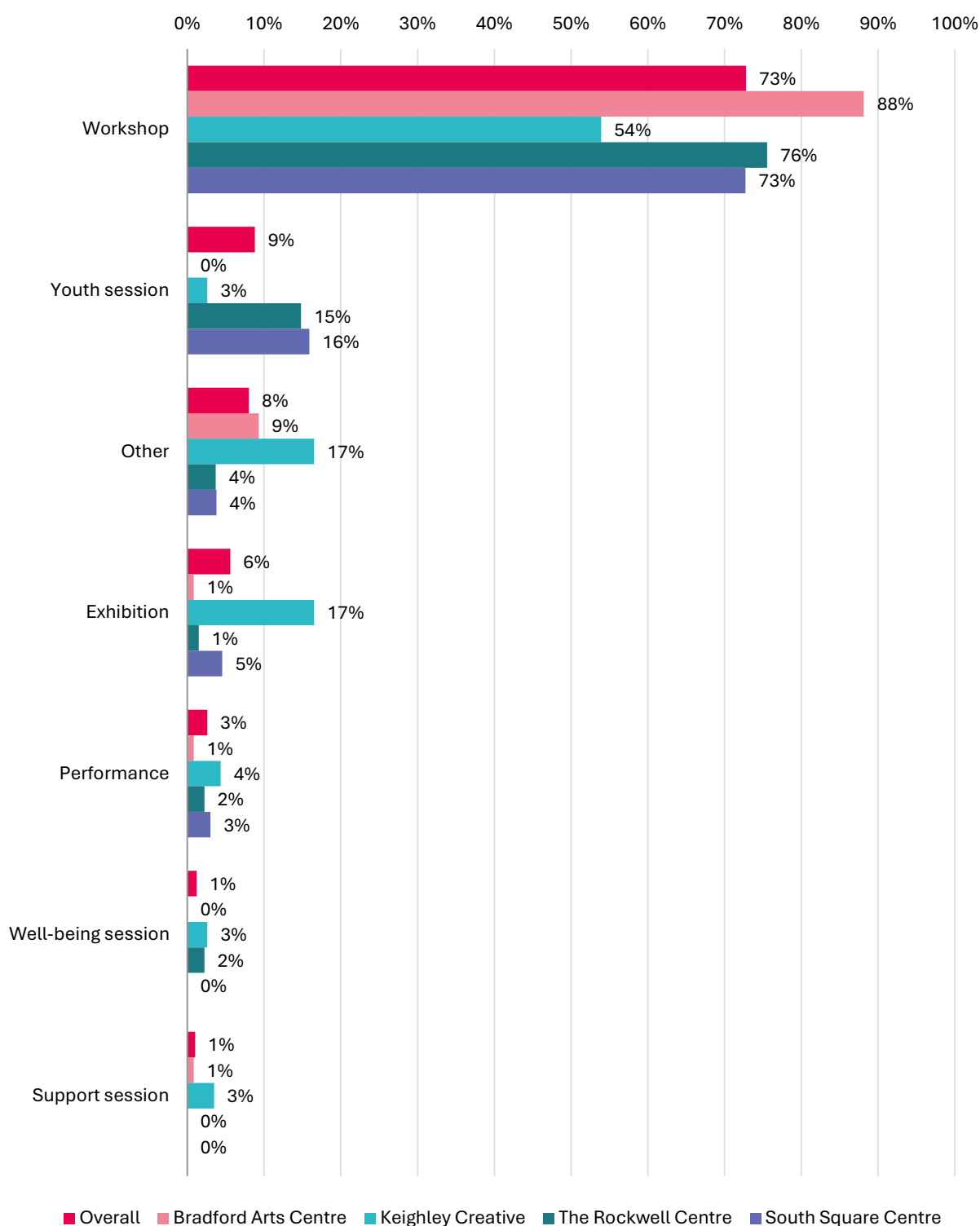
Workshops were the dominant session type across community hubs, accounting for 73% of all activity. Within these and other session types, contemporary visual arts emerged as the most common artform overall, representing 23% of all sessions. However, this pattern was not consistent across all locations. At the Bradford Arts Centre hub, contemporary visual arts made up only 3% of sessions, while workshops were particularly prominent, accounting for 31% of all sessions delivered at that site.

Across all hubs, workshops also appeared as an artform category in their own right, making up 18% of sessions, although these often incorporated multiple artforms. Traditional visual arts accounted for 16% of sessions, while 13% were classified as other artforms. Sessions specifically designed for children and families represented 12% of the total.

Smaller proportions of activity included youth sessions (9%), other session types (8%), and exhibitions (6%), reinforcing that most delivery was workshop-based, with a diverse but secondary spread of artforms embedded within them.

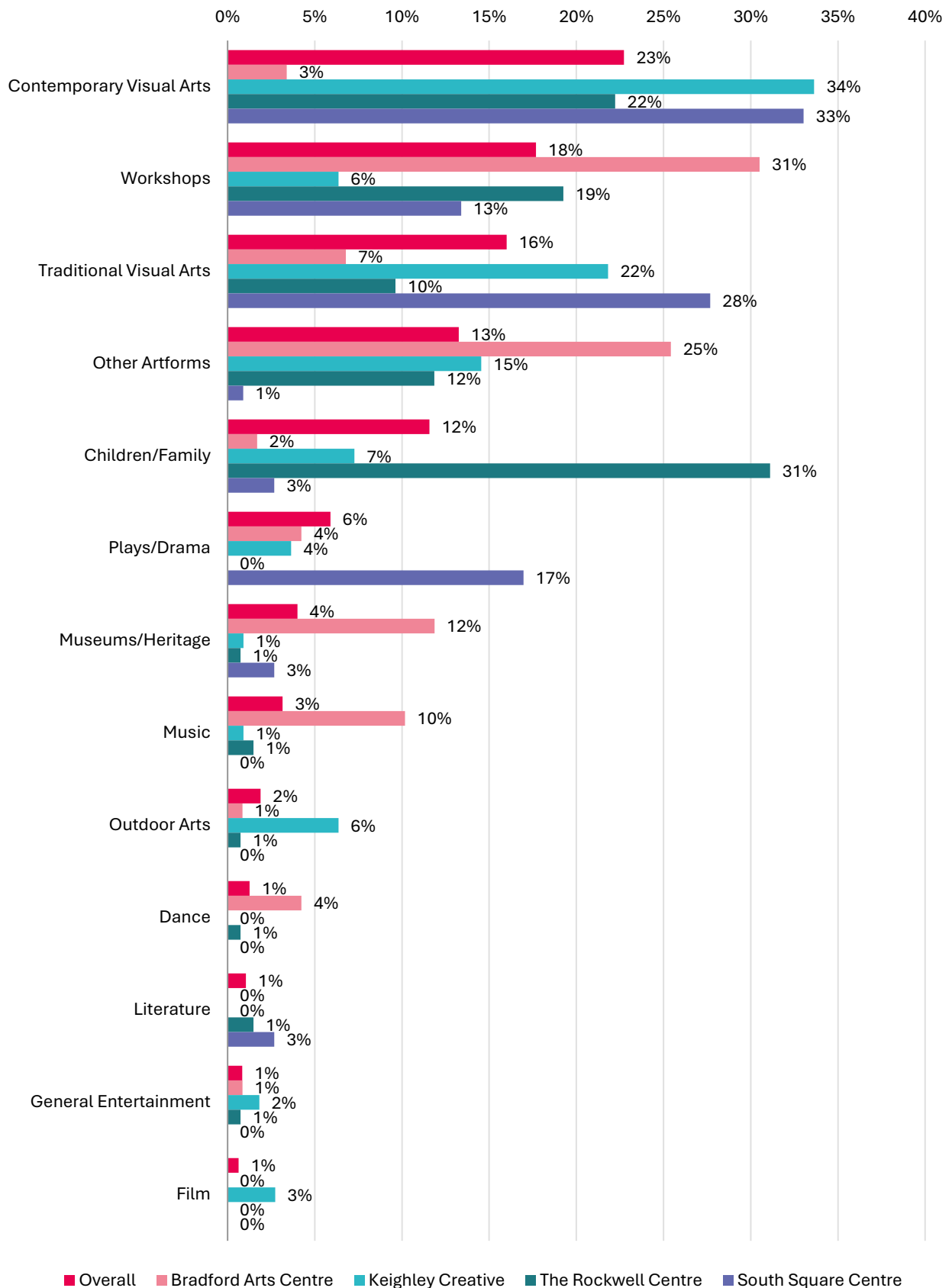
The findings should be interpreted cautiously because categories appear to mix session formats (e.g. workshops), artforms (e.g. contemporary visual arts), and audience types (e.g. children and families). Workshops could incorporate multiple artforms, variation between hubs may partly reflect differences in classification practices of each Arts & Heritage Officer rather than substantive differences in programming. However overall, each hub had a varied programme of activity that has included workshops, performances and outreach activity.

TYPE OF SESSION



Base: 500 / 118 / 115 / 135 / 132

ARTFORMS OF COMMUNITY HUB OUTREACH ACTIVITIES



Base: 475 / 118 / 110 / 135 / 112

1.2 High quality performance work takes place at hubs.

INDICATOR: High proportions of audience members report feeling that the work was high quality and relay why.

Participants at the community hubs rated the quality of the workshops and events very highly, with 99% giving a positive rating, 63% “very good” and 36% “good.” This overwhelmingly positive response indicates that participants found significant value in their experience. There were no ratings of “poor” or “very poor” with a small 1% saying “neither good nor poor.”

Feedback on what contributed to this high quality highlighted three key drivers for those who participated:

- Firstly, **enjoyment of the activity** was central, with participants describing sessions as engaging and fun, which likely supported strong participation
- Secondly, many reported **learning new skills**, suggesting that the workshops were not only enjoyable but also meaningful and enriching
- Thirdly, participants noted **increased confidence** in their own creativity, pointing to a deeper, more personal impact

When grouped together, these findings suggest that the workshops were not just well delivered, but genuinely impactful. They successfully combined engagement with skills development and personal growth, leading to benefits that extend beyond the sessions themselves, particularly in building confidence and encouraging creative expression.

“Thank you for the sessions. They make my week happier.”

“For me I have found it interesting and a learning experience.”

“I enjoyed the self-portrait session and was proud of how I displayed my work. It feels good to mix with people and do something for myself.”

“I was helped by staff and members to be more creative than I thought I could be which was something new that I discovered about myself.”

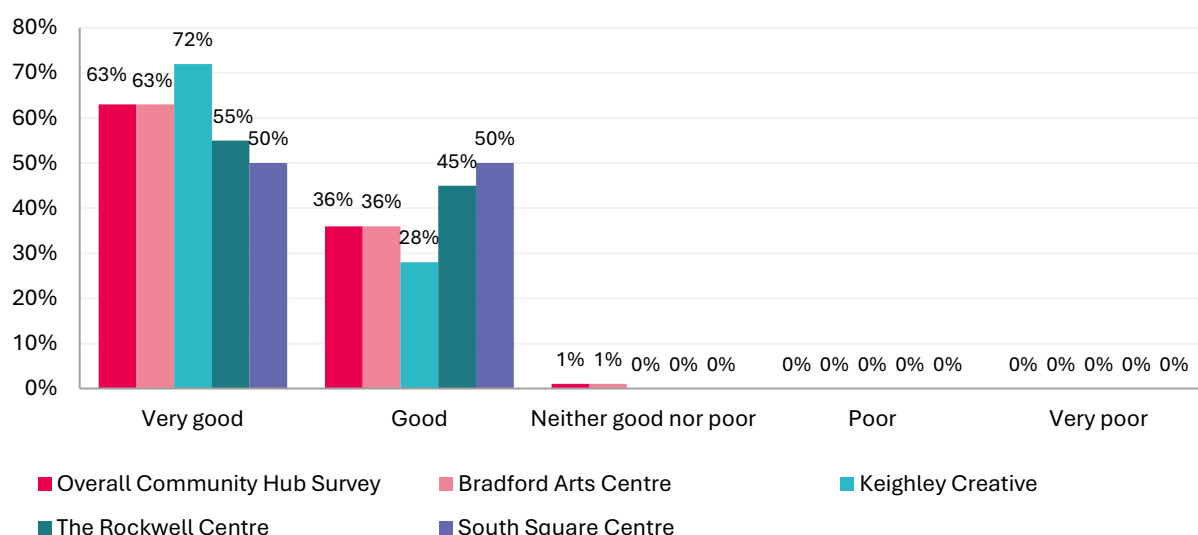
“It's interactive for all ages for such as the painting there was a sense of community and we all painted, spoke and ate cake.”

“Made me feel like I fit in!”

“What I loved is the professional way that work is displayed and the work itself was fantastic.”

Community hub survey responses

QUALITY OF THE WORK THAT TAKES PLACE AT THE WORKSHOP/EVENT



Base: 171 / 86 / 50 / 11 / 24

Margin of error: 7% / 10% / 12% / 29% / 20%

1.3 More than 20k people in total, from least-engaged communities within walking distance of Bradford Arts Centre will engage in heritage activities and outcomes: 10k people will engage directly in one heritage activity. 10k people will engage in heritage outcomes. [Heritage Fund]

INDICATOR: Increased participation in heritage project activity within the City Ward compared with baseline.

Between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2026, 1,744 people engaged directly across the Bradford Arts Centre activity plan. This figure reflects participation in activities delivered through the Bradford Arts Centre hub programme.

The programme co-created multiple heritage exhibitions with community partners, including u3a and WomenZone, which are currently on display at Bradford Arts Centre. While direct participation has been recorded, interactions with these exhibitions are not fully captured within engagement figures.

Initial programme planning assumed that hub activity would primarily be performance-based, enabling local audiences to engage with heritage through live events and performances. However, as the co-creation process developed, participants increasingly chose visual arts as the preferred medium for exploring and communicating heritage stories and experiences.

As a result, two major community-led exhibitions were developed and installed within Bradford Arts Centre, where they will remain on display throughout the first year of opening. These exhibitions contribute significantly to wider heritage engagement through ongoing public interaction and venue footfall.

In January, when the exhibitions opened, Bradford Arts Centre recorded a footfall of 6,964 visitors. Monthly footfall has continued to increase, indicating growing public interaction with the heritage displays and continued engagement with the programme outcomes.

INDICATOR: Increased participations - workshops delivered/school bookings recorded with/within target postcodes.

Between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2026, Bradford Arts Centre engaged significant numbers of children with 5,684 engagements from pupils across 81 activities that took place in local schools and at Bradford Arts Centre.

1.4 A wide range of people are directly involved in outreach activities. [Heritage Fund]

Bradford Arts Centre identified a clear priority to increase engagement in their hub by working with communities who do not traditionally participate in the arts, and specifically with Bradford Arts Centre itself. The target groups included:

- Older women of Pakistani heritage (through partnership with WomenZone)
- South Asian mothers and their children, primarily of Pakistani heritage but also representing a wider South Asian demographic
- Smaller numbers of participants from Eastern European refugee communities (through partnership with NAFS – Nutrition, Advice, Fitness and Self-Care)
- Older White British people (through partnership with u3a)

The Bradford Arts Centre hub engaged people of a wide range of ages, with a particularly strong emphasis on those aged 70+ (38%). 90% identified as female. The hub engaged people from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds: White: British (44%), Asian/Asian

British: Pakistani (18%), Asian/Asian British: Prefer to self-describe (18%), White: Gypsy, Roma or Irish traveller (14%) and any other ethnic group not listed (6%).

Initially, Bradford Arts Centre aimed to work with the New Libya Society, NAFS and the Rohingya Centre to reach specific target communities. However, due to unforeseen challenges, these partnerships did not progress.

The relationship-building phase was widely described as “knotty and messy.” While community gatekeepers were instrumental in bringing groups together, they could also present challenges. In some cases, gatekeepers acted as intermediaries who “spoke for” participants, limiting direct engagement and reducing participants’ agency. This was particularly problematic within a project centred on co-creation, where shared decision-making was key. The team remained committed to their groups, but when the gatekeepers prevented activity, it became clear that this could be detrimental to future relationships and to the groups they wanted to engage.

Additionally, it was acknowledged that the identity of Arts & Heritage Officers, including factors such as gender and race, could influence relationship-building and levels of trust within certain communities. This added a further layer of complexity to engagement and required careful, ongoing navigation.

“We came across a lot of what we rephrased as gatekeepers. Those communities we’d found were led by very strong men who kind of, it felt culturally, didn’t like the fact that it was two women running our project. And it just seemed to be a bit of a clash that we couldn’t get past.

It was almost like, particularly with [group name redacted] we wanted to work with the women, but there was a barrier put between us, so we couldn’t get to the women.”

Arts & Heritage Officer

As a result of these challenges, Bradford Arts Centre adapted its approach and developed new relationships with Roma Voices through an existing connection with the European Drom group.

Overall, while these challenges were significant, they also reflect the realities of undertaking deep, community-led work and the time required to build trust, participation, and genuinely collaborative practice. Despite the challenges, the network

model proved valuable. It provided Bradford Arts Centre with a meaningful, locally rooted approach to connecting with diverse communities across the Bradford district.

Although adaptations were required, strong and impactful projects were ultimately developed through partnerships with WomenZone, u3a, and European Drom.

WomenZone, a charity dedicated to inspiring and empowering women through health, wellbeing, education, and social inclusion was particularly successful. WomenZone supports women from diverse backgrounds, predominantly from South Asian communities. The WomenZone project, which ran over 15 months, involved participants creating artworks inspired by the 99 names of Allah. The work combined calligraphy, drawing, and painting, and fostered both creativity and social connection.

One participant reflected:

“I love to do printing and drawing... we really enjoyed painting and drawing. I felt like a child again. Every session brought something new. We had fun, talked, sang, and created together. We didn’t even feel the months go by... I feel proud of what we did, and we want to do it again.”

WomenZone participant

The importance of safe, welcoming spaces specifically for South Asian Communities was also highlighted:

“The safe spaces that all the hubs have provided have been so important. Some participants wouldn’t normally go out or even come into Bradford before. Now they’re thinking, ‘Oh, I can go into Bradford’.”

Arts & Heritage Officer

This shift in confidence translated into increased engagement with Bradford Arts Centre itself:

“They came in to record their ‘99 Names’ piece at Bradford Arts Centre. They saw the artworks on the walls and were really excited. Since then, they’ve all come back at least once. Before, they weren’t coming into the city much at all so the fact they’re now coming through the door is amazing.”

Arts & Heritage Officer

The impact extended across other groups as well. One u3a participant described her experience as transformative:

“Being involved with the Bradford Arts Centre heritage project has been truly transformative for me in later life. After retiring, I felt a bit at a loose end, but this project has given me structure, a reason to go out, and the chance to meet new people.

Working with artists helped me rediscover long-dormant skills and explore new interests like photography. It also gave me the opportunity to share my own story memories of places like the cathedral and feel part of a community again.

Knowing that the refurbished Arts Centre now has a vibrant programme makes me much more likely to come into the city. It feels like I’m not only gaining something personally but also giving something back to Bradford.”

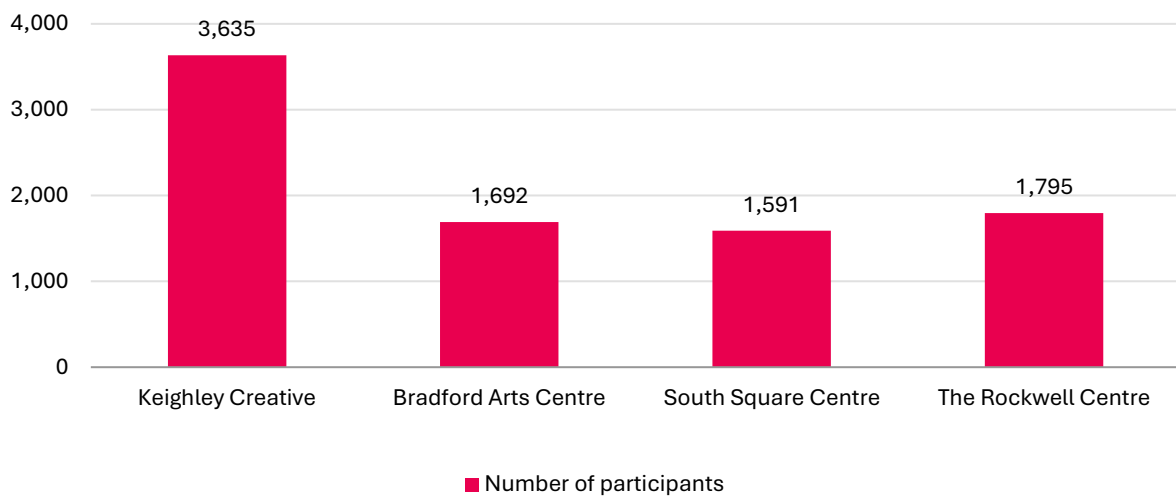
u3a participant – identifies as White and over 60

While the project’s development phase was sometimes a challenge it ultimately fostered meaningful engagement, built confidence among participants, and strengthened connections between the identified communities and Bradford Arts Centre.

PARTICIPANTS AND SESSIONS AT COMMUNITY HUBS

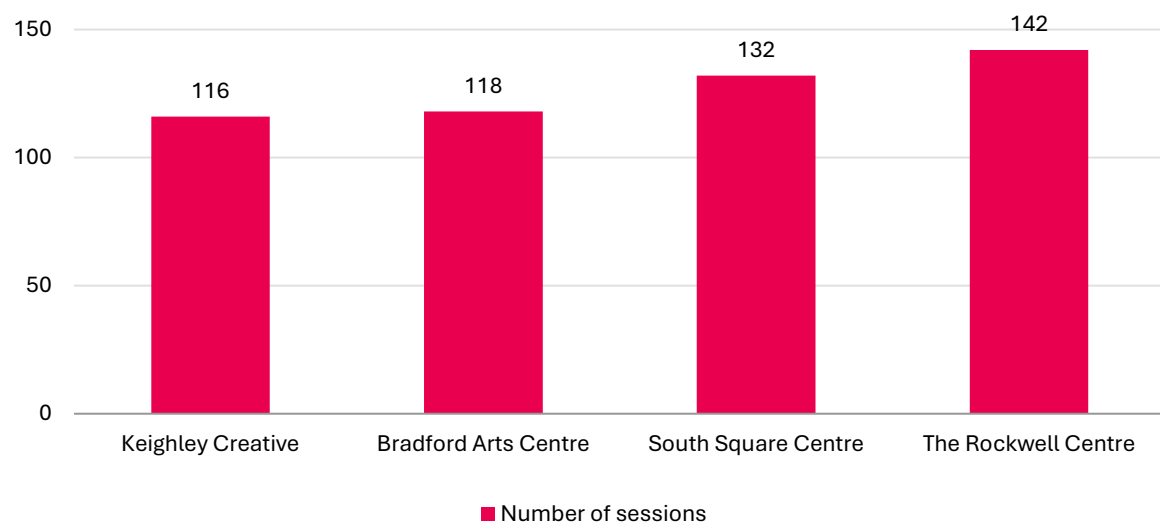
During the span of the project, from April 2024 to the end of March 2026, there were 8,713 participant engagements across 508 arts & heritage activities delivered by the four community hubs, with 3,635 participants at Keighley Creative, 1,795 at The Rockwell Centre, 1,692 at Bradford Arts Centre, and 1,591 at South Square Centre. It is important to note that these figures do not indicate unique individuals and there may be repeat participants included in these figures.

Number of participants at community hubs



Base: 8,713

Number of sessions at community hubs



Base: 508

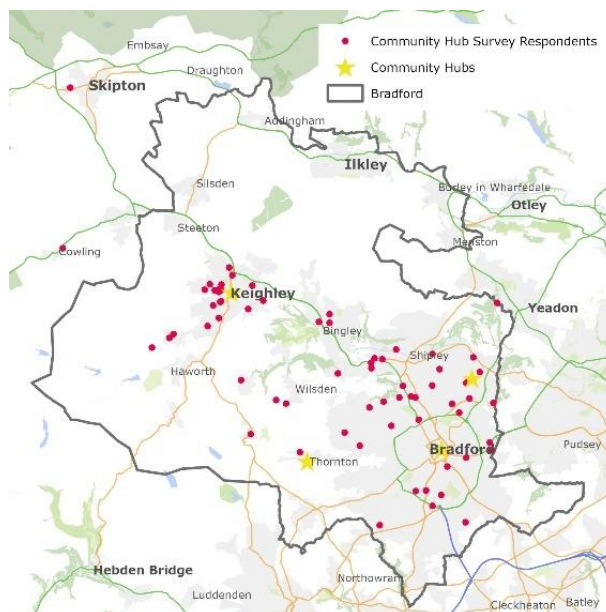
LOCATION OF HUB PARTICIPANTS

The map here shows the distribution of community hub participants who completed the surveys. Whilst this is not a complete picture of all participants, it does show distribution of engagement across many areas of Bradford.

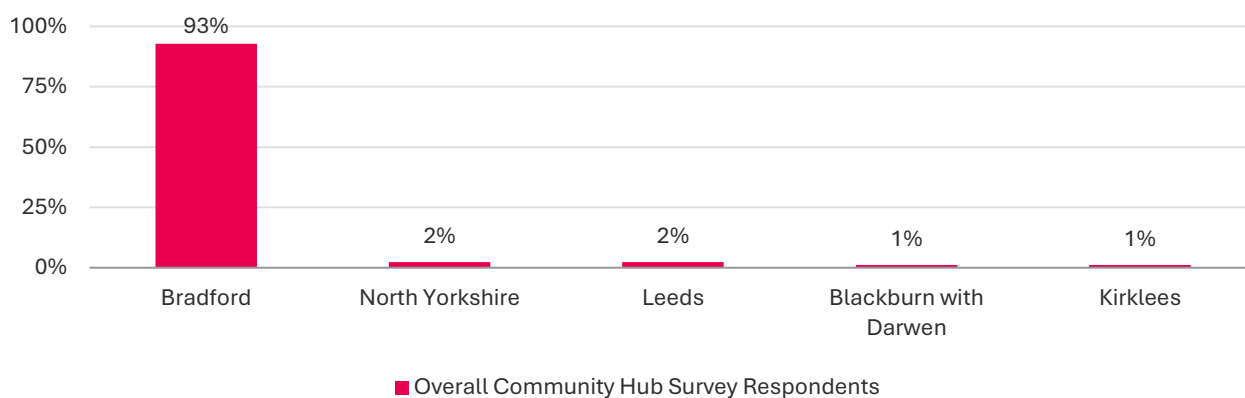
93% of participants in hub activity who completed the survey were living in Bradford, which is an increase from previous Audience Answers data surveying Kala Sangam's audience from 2022/23, which shows 66% of respondents living in Bradford.

The top wards were Heaton (14%, 12 respondents) and Keighley Central (13%, 11 respondents).

Base: 84

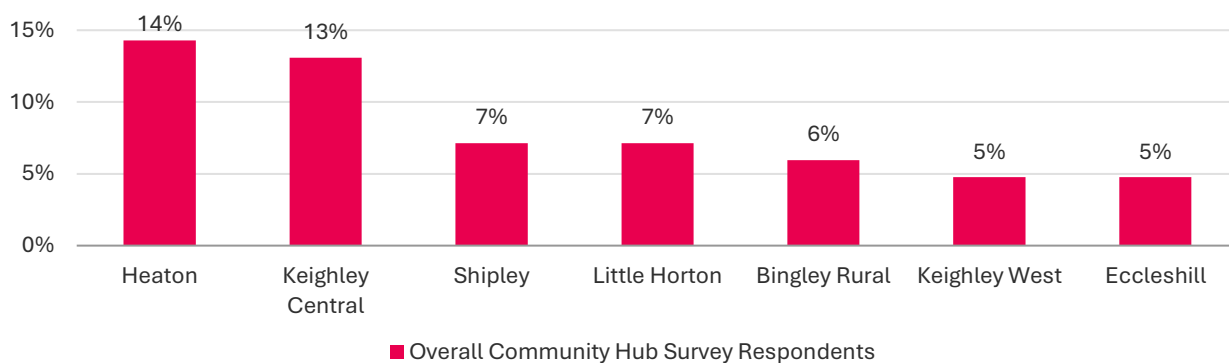


Local Authorities



Base: 84

Top Wards

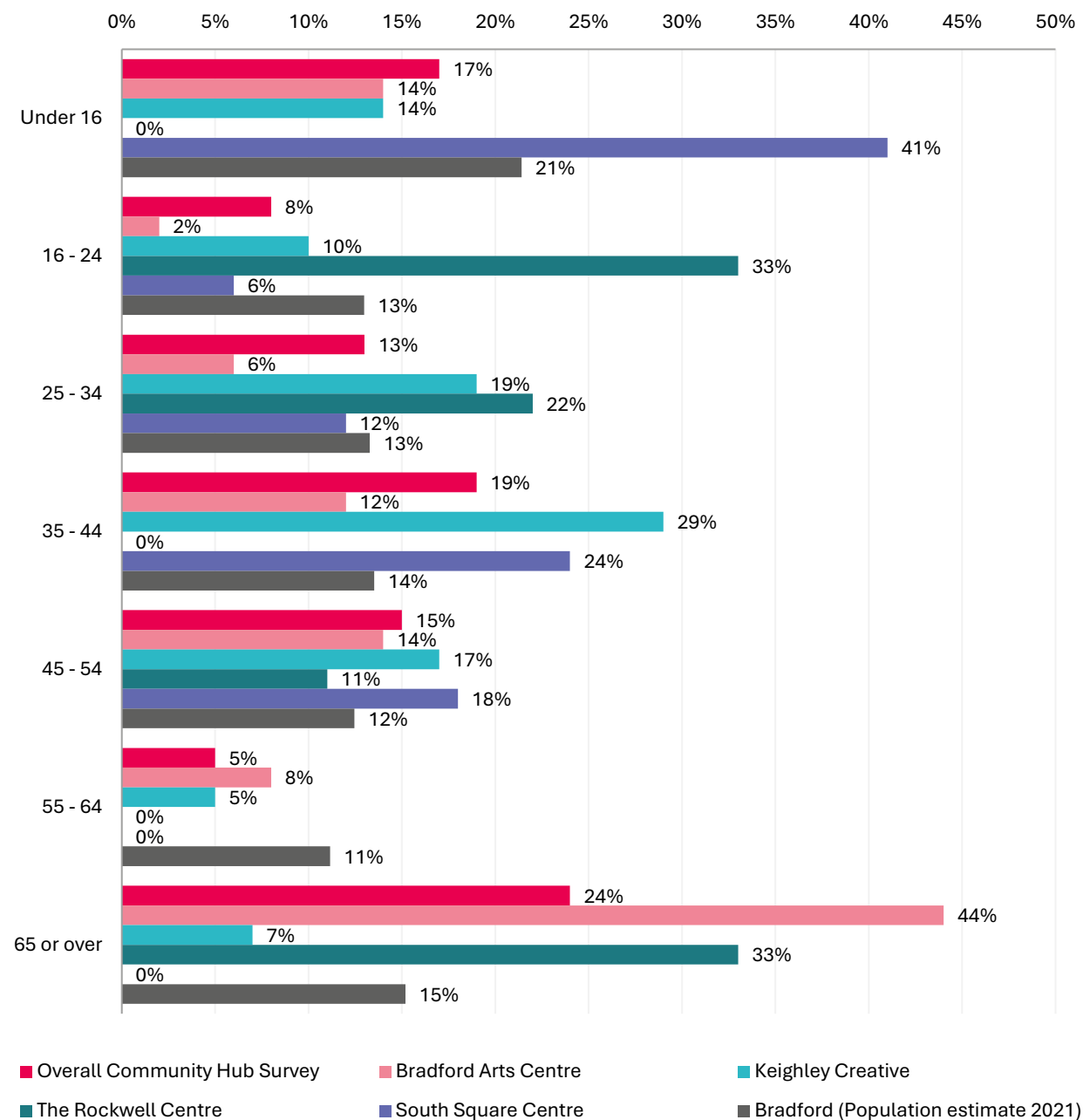


Base: 84

AGE

Community hubs engaged participants across a wide range of age groups. Among survey respondents, the largest proportion were aged 65 or over (24%, compared to 15% of the Bradford population). This was followed by those aged 35 - 44 (19% vs. 14% in Bradford), and participants under 16 (17% vs. 21% in Bradford).

Overall, this suggests that community hubs were particularly successful in engaging older adults compared to the wider Bradford population, while participation among younger people, especially those under 16, was slightly lower in comparison.



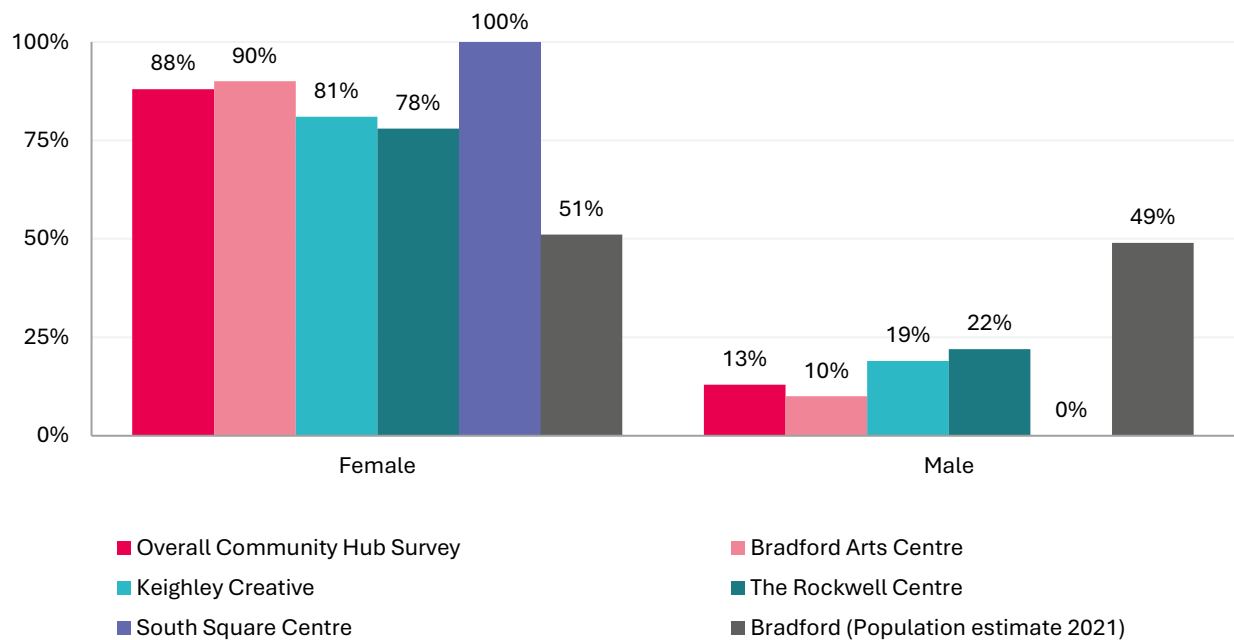
Base: 118 / 50 / 42 / 9 / 17 / 546,412

Margin of error: 8% / 14% / 14% / 31% / 23% / 0%

SEX/GENDER

A large majority of survey respondents (88%) were female. This skew should be understood in the context of delivery, as many community hubs worked with female-only groups. For example, organisations such as WomenZone partnered with Bradford Arts Centre, while initiatives like the Girls' Group delivered through The Rockwell Centre/Bloomin' Buds specifically targeted female participants.

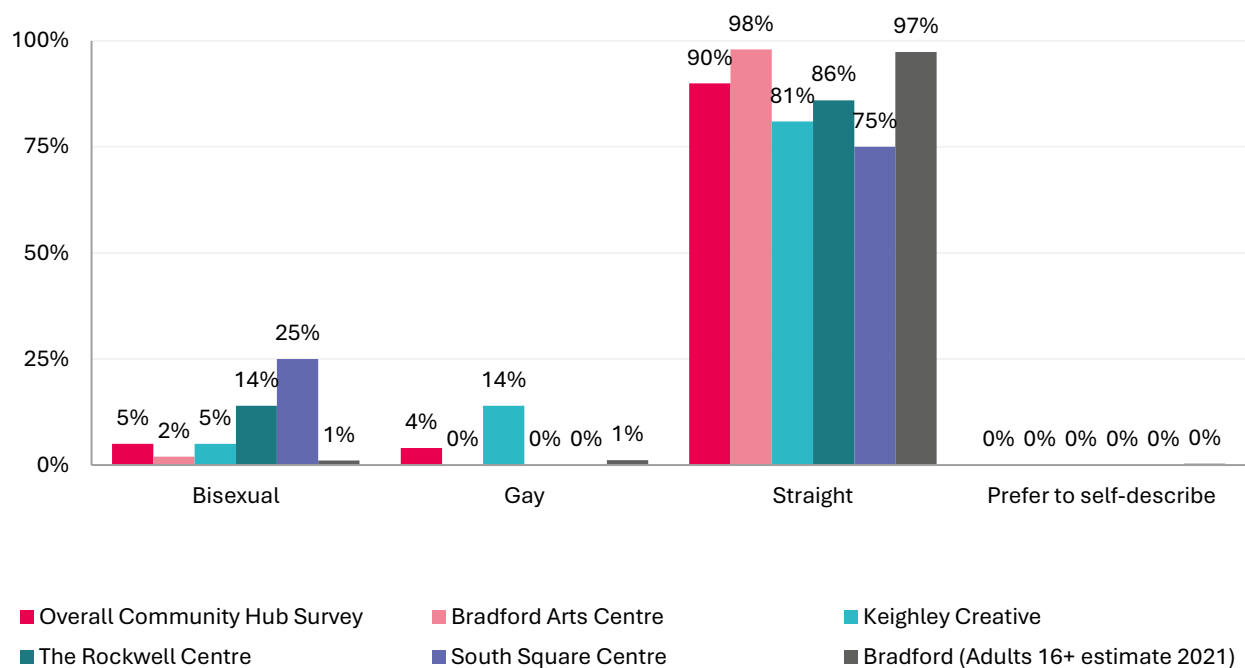
As a result, the gender distribution of respondents likely reflects the targeted nature of some programmes rather than overall accessibility, indicating strong engagement within female-focused provision.



SEXUAL ORIENTATION

The majority of participants who completed the survey identified as straight (90%), with smaller proportions identifying as bisexual (5%) and gay (4%). No respondents selected the option to self-describe.

This distribution suggests greater diversity in sexual orientation among respondents than in the Bradford adult population overall. It should be noted that this wasn't one of the identified aims of the hub model.



Base: 73 / 41 / 21 / 7 / 4 / 384,656

Margin of error: 7% / 4% / 17% / 26% / 42% / 0%

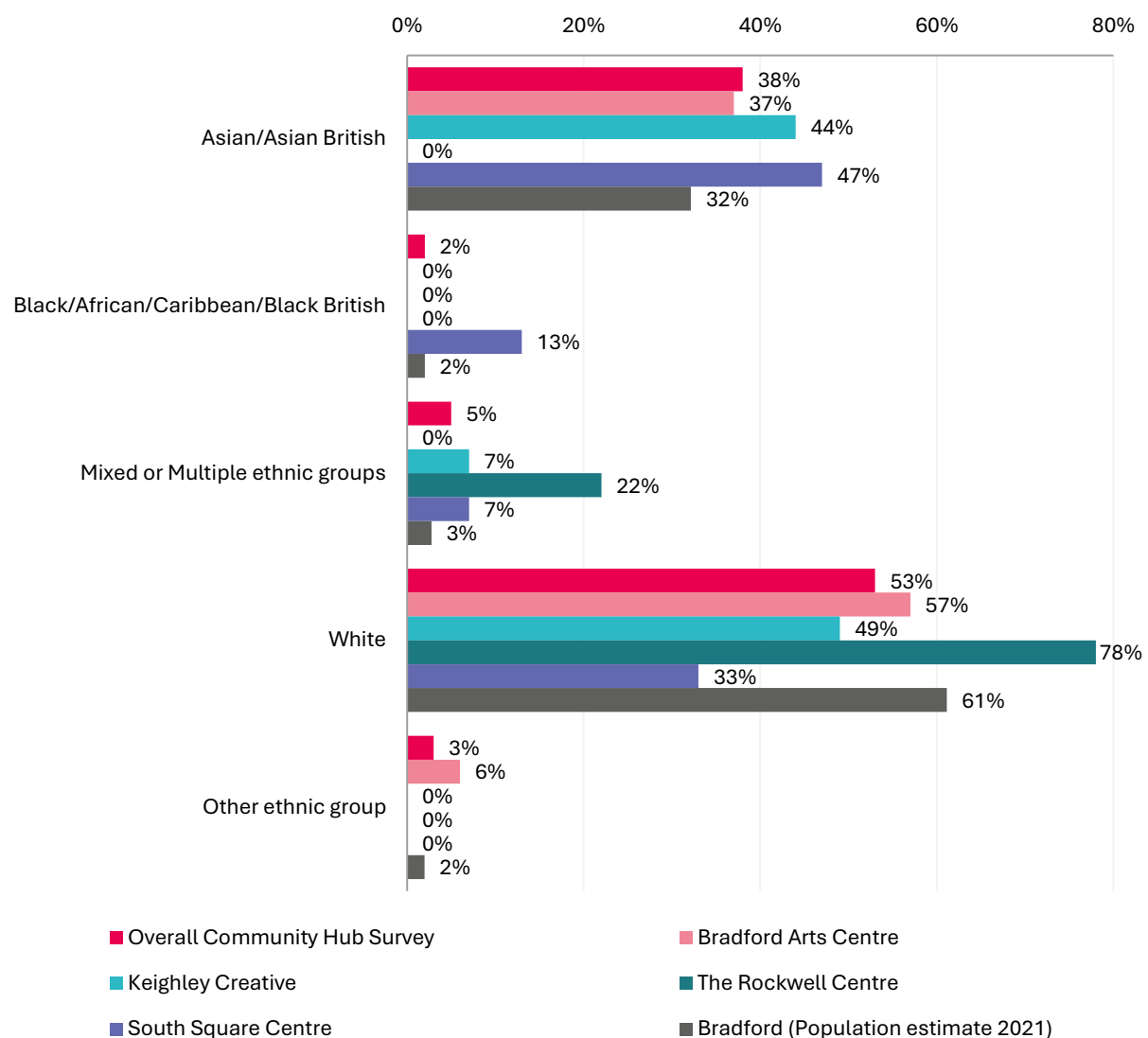
ETHNICITY

Just over half of survey respondents identified as White (53%, compared to 61% of the Bradford population). A substantial proportion identified as Asian/Asian British (38% vs. 32% in Bradford), while smaller shares identified as Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups (5% vs. 3%) and Black/African/Caribbean/Black British (2% vs. 2%).

Overall, this suggests that community hubs engaged a relatively more ethnically diverse group of participants compared to the wider Bradford population, particularly among Asian/Asian British and Mixed ethnic groups.

See **Appendix I** for a more detailed breakdown of ungrouped ethnicity categories.

With which ethnicity do you identify? (Select one only)



Base: 114 / 49 / 41 / 9 / 15 / 546,412

Margin of error: 9% / 14% / 15% / 27% / 25% / 0%

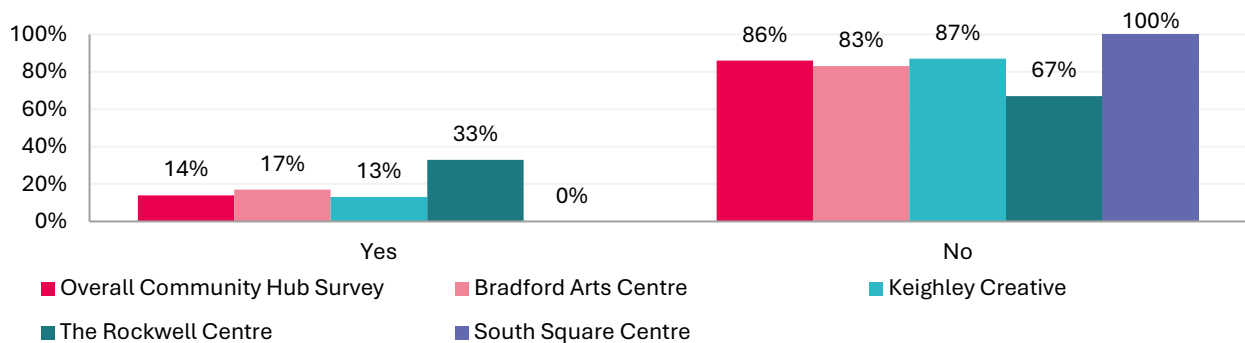
DISABILITY AND NEURODIVERGENCE

The majority of respondents did not identify as D/deaf or disabled (86%) or as neurodivergent (77%). Overall, 14% of participants identified as D/deaf or disabled, although this varied notably by location. The highest proportion was at The Rockwell Centre (33%), followed by Bradford Arts Centre (17%) and Keighley Creative (13%).

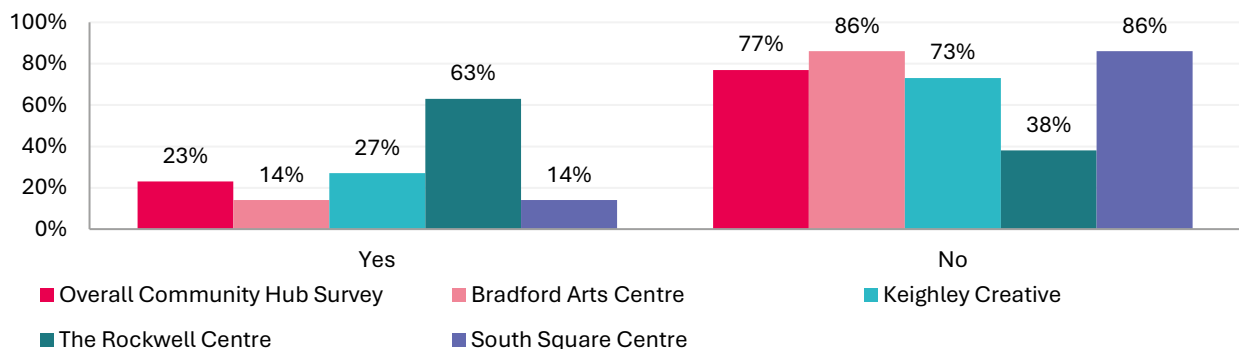
A similar pattern is evident in relation to neurodivergence. While most respondents did not identify as neurodivergent (77%), there was significant variation across hubs. The highest proportion was again at The Rockwell Centre (63%), compared to 27% in Keighley and 14% at both Bradford Arts Centre and South Square Centre.

These findings suggest that certain hubs, particularly The Rockwell Centre/ Bloomin' Buds may be more successful in engaging D/deaf, disabled, and neurodivergent participants, highlighting differences in accessibility and reach across locations which could be useful when planning future work with neurodivergent and disabled communities and creatives.

Do you identify as D/deaf, and/or do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses expected to last for 12 months or more?



Do you identify as neurodivergent? Being Neurodivergent could include Dyslexia, ADHD etc.



AUDIENCE SPECTRUM

Audience Spectrum¹ is a geo-demographic profiling and targeting tool, developed by The Audience Agency, that segments the UK population by their attitudes towards culture, and by what they like to see and do. Audience Spectrum profiles are used to understand what levels of cultural engagement hub participants have. Please note that, due to the small sample here (84 respondents provided a valid postcode via the survey) these results should be viewed as indicative only.

Through its outreach activities at community hubs, Bradford Arts Centre has attracted segments with generally medium and lower cultural engagement. The most prominent Audience Spectrum segments are Kaleidoscope Creativity, Frontline Families, Trips & Treats and Up Our Street. 72% of the responding participants belong one of these groups:



Kaleidoscope Creativity (24%): Mixed-age urban low engagers preferring free, local, culturally specific arts and festivals. *Lower cultural engagement*



Frontline Families (19%): Harder pressed suburban and semi-urban households for whom arts and culture plays a small role. *Lower cultural engagement*



Trips & Treats (15%): Suburban households, often with children, whose cultural activities usually are part of a day out or treat. *Medium cultural engagement*



Up Our Street (14%): Sociable retirees looking for inexpensive, mainstream, local leisure opportunities. *Lower cultural engagement*

Compared to the Bradford population, several segments are overrepresented in the hub survey data – meaning they appear amongst hub participants as a higher proportion than they do in the Bradford population. These include Up Our Street (14% vs. 11% in Bradford), Frontline Families (19% vs. 15% in Bradford) and Kaleidoscope Creativity

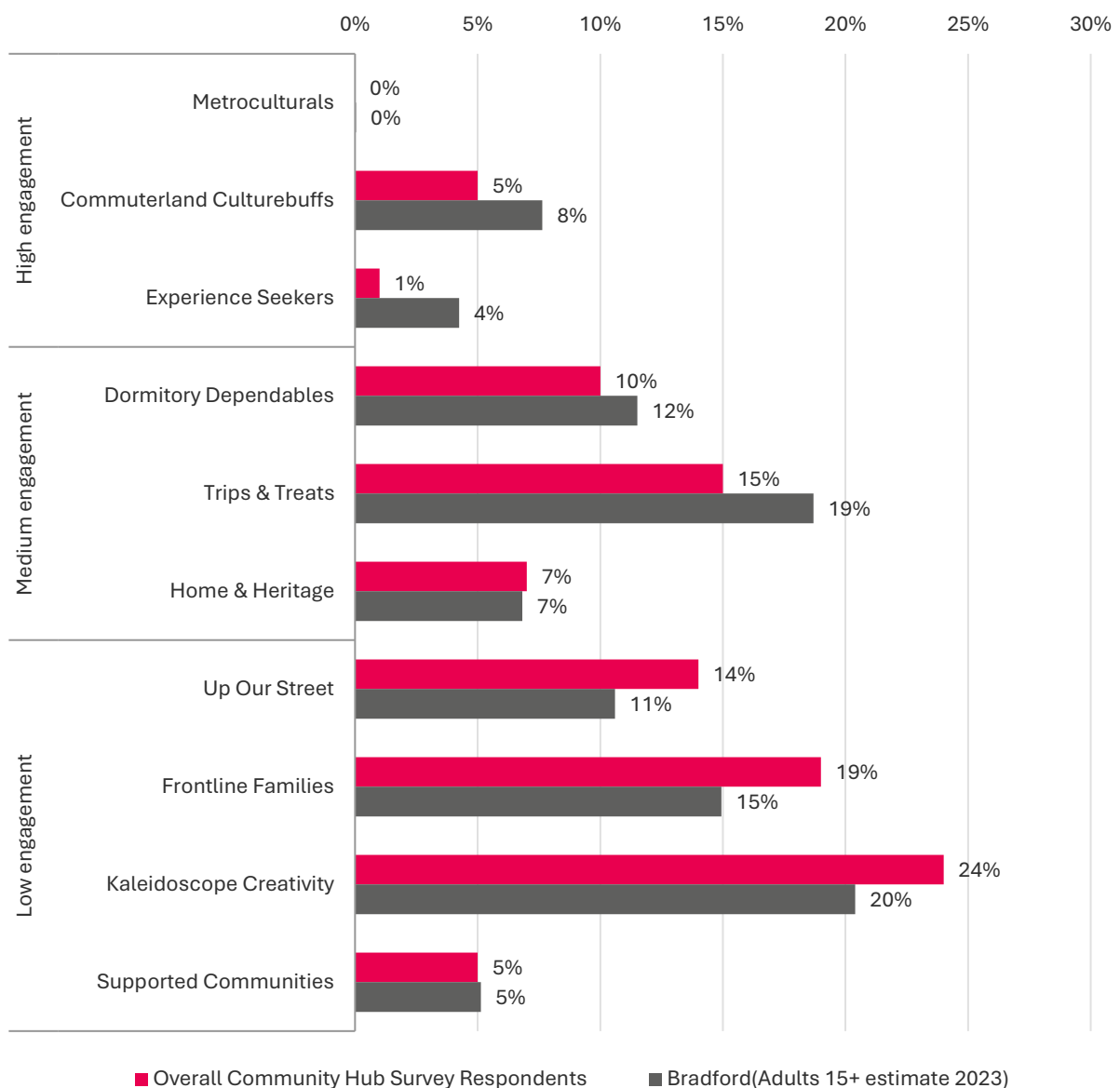
¹ To find out more and to view the pen portraits for each segment visit: <https://audiencespectrum.org/en>

(24% vs. 20%). Conversely, Trips & Treats is underrepresented compared to the population (15% vs. 19% in Bradford).

Overall, medium cultural engaged segments account for 32% of responding participants compared to 37% of the Bradford population, lower engaged segments account for 62% of responding participants compared to 51% of the Bradford population and higher engaged audiences account for 6% overall compared to 12% of the Bradford population.

These results suggest that the hub activity was particularly successful in reaching groups with both lower and medium cultural engagement.

Audience Spectrum Profile: Community hub survey respondents

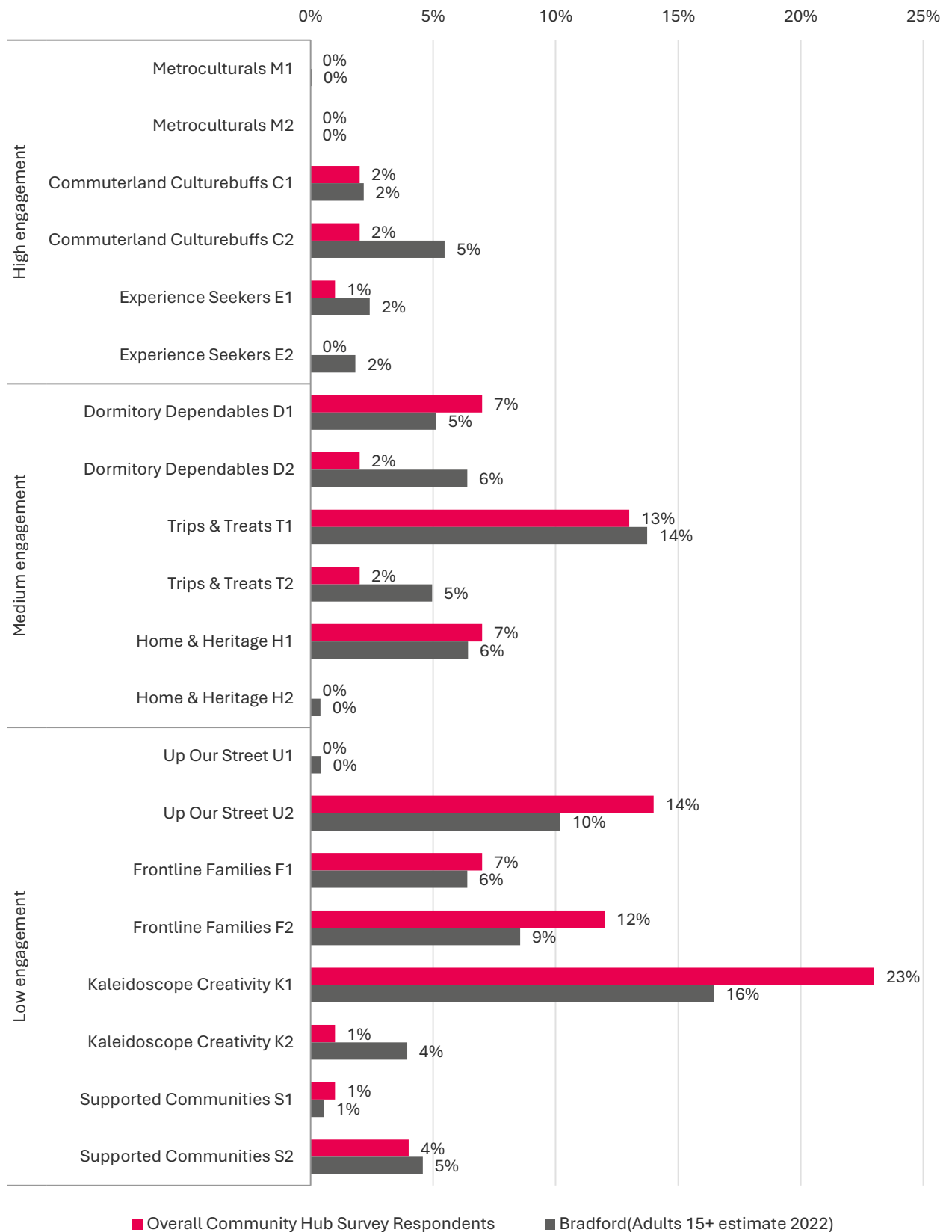


Base: 84 / 431,581

The Audience Spectrum segments can further be broken down into subsegments. The top Audience Spectrum subsegments for Bradford Arts Centre's responding participants at community hubs are **Kaleidoscope Creativity K1**, **Up Our Street U2**, **Frontline Families F2** and **Trips & Treats T1**. These subsegments make up 62% of all Bradford Arts Centre's responding hub participants.

- **Kaleidoscope Creativity K1 (23%)**: Settled and diverse urban communities. *Lower cultural engagement*
- **Up Our Street U2 (14%)**: Older residents of terraces and flats in built up areas. *Lower cultural engagement*
- **Trips & Treats T1 (13%)**: Modern young families, building a future. *Medium cultural engagement*
- **Frontline Families F2 (12%)**: Younger, cash-strapped families and couples starting out. *Lower cultural engagement*

Audience Spectrum Subsegment Profile: Community hub survey respondents



Base: 84 / 431,581

ENGAGEMENT IN ARTS & CULTURE

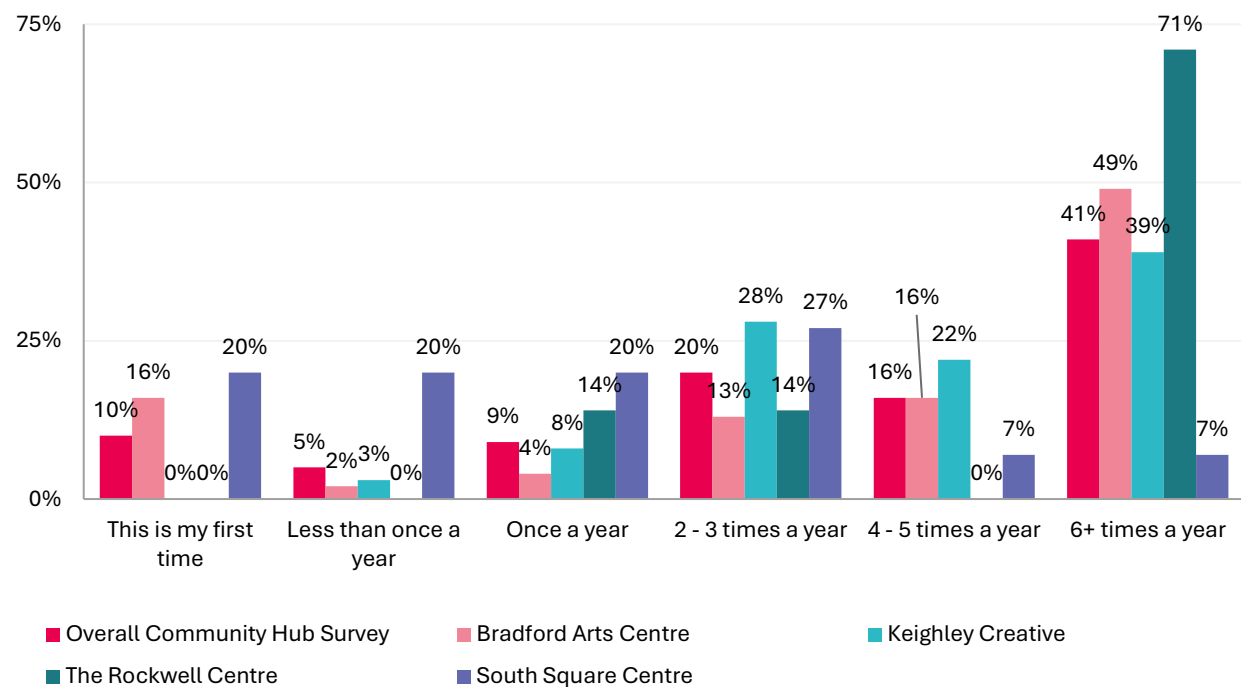
Across the community hub survey, engagement with arts and culture is generally strong, with the largest share of respondents (41%) participating six or more times a year. This indicates that regular attendance in arts and culture is the dominant pattern overall, supported further by a number of respondents attending arts and cultural activity two to five times annually.

However, participation levels vary noticeably between hub organisations. The Rockwell Centre/ Bloomin' Buds stands out for exceptionally high arts and cultural engagement among their participants, with 71% of respondents engaging six or more times a year, suggesting creatively engaged participants who are committed to participating in arts and culture as part of their daily lives. Bradford Arts Centre also has participants who show strong regular participation, with nearly half of their respondents attending at this level. Keighley Creative presents a more balanced mix of frequent and occasional attendance, while South Square Centre has the lowest rate of regular arts and cultural engagement among their participants with a more dispersed pattern across lower-frequency categories, including a notable proportion of first-time attendees.

Overall, the findings suggest that while arts engagement is generally frequent across those surveyed, there are clear differences between organisations, ranging from high regular engagement to more occasional or introductory involvement. Considering this alongside the Audience Spectrum results, we can see a range of engagement levels in arts and culture.

This question is returning somewhat higher arts and cultural engagement than is implied by the Audience Spectrum profile. Whilst it is impossible to know for definite the reason for this, speculatively this may be a combination of the lower sample size used in the Audience Spectrum profile and perhaps higher engagement in participatory events reported in this question (which could be at a community level i.e. the type of thing offered by the hubs) rather than engagement with more 'traditional' cultural organisations e.g. as an audience member.

How often do you attend or participate in arts and culture experiences? By this we mean online or in-person activities produced by arts organisations, museums and/or libraries, such as exhibitions, performances, literature events, gigs, festivals, creative participation, etc.



Base: 103 / 45 / 36 / 7 / 15

Margin of error: 9% 15% / 16% / 34% / 22%

1.5 Increase engagement to support 3,000 additional children per year to develop creative skills and potential. [CDF]

INDICATOR: Increased participations in activities/performances by children.

There were 6,148 engagements from pupils across 81 activities that took place in local schools from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2026. The total number reported relates to engagements so may count repeated visits and not specifically apply to individual participants.

1.6 Hubs become more resilient and have developed their capacities. [CDF]

Across the programme, hubs demonstrated significant growth in organisational capacity, skills development, and operational confidence. The Bradford Arts Centre team made themselves available to support with building stronger community links and also gave access to their expertise in finance, operations, programming, marketing and HR. For some, this represented a fundamental shift in how they engage communities, operate as organisations and deliver locally led work.

As Keighley Creative reflected:

“It’s been a step change, massive... it’s engaging a new audience that we haven’t been able to target before... it’s been somewhat revolutionary.”

Keighley Creative staff member

The hub model expanded what organisations were able to deliver, but in doing so also exposed capacity limits and the complexities of balancing core work with additional funded projects. These challenges ultimately acted as a catalyst for developing new skills, more sustainable ways of working, and stronger organisational resilience.

“We’ve got our own way of doing things, and then there was the way of how things were done for this project... trying to keep them separate... but they also seep into each other... it’s been a little bit challenging.”

Hub organisation

When faced with challenges such as limited staff capacity, funding pressures, or changing participant needs, hubs adapted their approaches, altering schedules and ways of working to maintain effective delivery. This reflects an increased capacity to respond to operational pressures.

For example, South Square found that delivering their original activity plan that comprised of working with multiple groups, with long timelines, and significant administrative demands placed unrealistic pressure on their Arts & Heritage Officer. In response, they redesigned their approach into shorter, term-based projects with more clearly defined co-creation. This better aligned with both participant needs and staff capacity.

They referred to this as “chunking” and it demonstrates a growing ability to align programme design with engagement levels, organisational capacity, and the practical realities of community outreach co-designed to meet community and staff need.

Hubs also developed skills in navigating organisational complexity, particularly around governance, staffing structures, and identity. South Square highlighted the challenge of communicating organisational arrangements to communities who sometimes struggled with broader understanding. When the Arts & Heritage Officer might be based in a hub

and employed by Bradford Arts Centre, this created some confusion within communities about accountability around “who we work for?”.

While affiliation with Bradford Arts Centre brought increased visibility and strategic value, hubs operating in geographically or culturally distinct areas such as Keighley recognised the importance of building local trust. In these contexts, sustainable engagement depended less on institutional branding and more on strong, embedded relationships within the community.

In some cases, hubs faced significant external challenges that required rapid organisational adaptation, further strengthening their resilience and problem-solving capacity. Bloomin’ Buds, for example, experienced the loss of their primary building due to escalating costs and ongoing issues with anti-social behaviour:

"We lost our building, which was a big problem. We were based at Rockwell Community Centre, and there were several issues, really. We were facing a lot of anti-social behaviour on the estate, and it was costing a lot to try and fix the building and the grounds and things, which were just like an endless battle, utilities went from £25,000 to £45,000."

Hub organisation

This disruption required a complete reconfiguration of delivery, including relocating activities to temporary venues and managing staff changes. Despite these pressures, the organisation successfully retained participants many of whom had additional needs by carefully managing the transition over time.

"We didn't lose any participants... it was really important for us to facilitate that over a number of weeks, rather than just tell them... next week is somewhere different."

Hub organisation

Periods of organisational uncertainty also created opportunities for capacity-building through new working relationships. At Keighley Creative, the Arts & Heritage Officer operated for the first quarter of delivery without permanent senior leadership. During this time, the Arts & Heritage Officer developed informal support structures with local partners, including the council's neighbourhood team, effectively using them as “semi line managers.” This experience strengthened partnership working, autonomy, and

confidence in decision-making, while also embedding the AHO more deeply within local delivery networks:

“I kind of ended up using them as, like, semi line managers... any problems... I would go to them.”

Arts & Heritage Officer

Support from Bradford Arts Centre further contributed to this capacity-building by providing consistent guidance and stability during a period of transition.

While managing delivery models and organisational complexity presented significant challenges, these experiences enabled hubs to develop more flexible delivery approaches, stronger partnership networks, and greater organisational resilience. As one hub reflected:

“It’s definitely taught us a lot about how we would do things moving forward... we’ve definitely benefited from being part of this.”

Hub organisation

Being part of a wider programme connected to Bradford Arts Centre increased visibility and credibility for participating hubs. However, this also created challenges in messaging, particularly alongside the high-profile Bradford 2025 programme which often confused communities and participants around what they were engaging with:

“Being part of a project with Kala Sangam automatically gave the project more profile... but there were consistent challenges with messaging... because of Bradford 2025 having such a high profile.”

Hub organisation

Some community confusion arose where similar activities were running in parallel:

“We were doing textile-based work... alongside Bradford 2025... people were like, ‘What’s this for?’... we had to keep reiterating it’s separate.”

Hub organisation

Over time, participants developed clearer understanding, particularly through sustained engagement.

The hub model facilitated stronger networks and peer-to-peer learning between organisations, with hubs valuing the consistent support provided by Bradford Arts Centre who throughout this process contributed to increased sector resilience. Hub staff also encouraged the sharing of good practice across localities, strengthening networks and knowledge exchange through a range of mechanisms, including a shared WhatsApp group and Padlet used to support communication and project monitoring.

As two hub organisations reflected:

“The supported hub model ensured peer support (AHO’s and leadership) and has strengthened our organisation in terms of resilience and preparation to apply for Arts Council NPO.”

“It helped us start the project because we had a network of support coming into the project, it gave us space to chat to people in the same position as us to reflect and help each other.”

Hub organisations on their Padlet

Keighley felt that the connectivity that was facilitated by the team at Bradford Arts Centre was crucial in keeping everyone connected:

“Bradford Arts Centre/ Kala Sangam, as it was, are still very active in keeping everyone connected, and I think that was the main way crossover happened.”

Keighley Creative

For South Square, being involved in this work raised their profile:

"I think there's an advantage, I guess, from like, from a messaging perspective of, like, being part of the Bradford Arts Centre project, because I think there may be some people that didn't know South Square... if they didn't see that, it's almost like, yeah, Kala Sangam, so it...instantly had a bit more profile, so that, yeah, that was helpful."

South Square staff member

Many of the hubs valued the support from the team at Bradford Arts Centre in helping with not only HR, but also policy and practice through in-kind support throughout the project, which has grown their knowledge for the future.

“We've had support from Bradford Arts Centre on like, our policies and things like that as well. So as an organisation, we've definitely benefited from being a part of this, outside of delivering the work.”

Hub organisation

This exchange of knowledge extended beyond delivery into organisational development and sustainability planning and is preparing many of the hubs for the future.

Arts & Heritage Officers, embedded within each hub and co-managed locally while supported by Bradford Arts Centre, played a crucial role as on-the-ground producers. They balanced local needs and community-led activity with wider project outcomes, acting as a bridge between grassroots engagement and a centre led strategic framework that will continue to build as a result of this work.

Their locally rooted presence enabled them to build meaningful relationships with both artists and communities. As trusted figures, they were able to embed themselves within communities, advocate for the Arts Centre, and support the development of work that was genuinely co-created. This approach ensured that projects were shaped by participants' interests, even when these were not always easily articulated:

“We're not picking our own art forms... we're going with your reactions... and they really threw themselves into it.”

Arts & Heritage Officer

This highlights the importance of responsive, process-led engagement, particularly where participants may not have prior experience of co-creation or the confidence, language skills or belief that they are capable and can create work:

“They've probably never had that much say... it's scary... you've never had that much artistic freedom... but because we had the time, you could nurture them into that.”

Arts & Heritage Officer

The hub model enabled the development of programmes that originated locally but were showcased centrally. Exhibiting work at Bradford Arts Centre, some of this for three months post opening, created opportunities for participants to see their work in a professional context, encouraging pride, ownership, and continued engagement. It also supported artist development and created pathways into future programming. This has enabled many of the hubs to adapt their working styles to enable this type of transition for their communities in the future.

All hubs expressed a strong commitment to sustaining this way of working. In some cases, this is already being realised through securing additional resources. For example, South Square has successfully obtained funding to continue their Arts & Heritage Officer role, demonstrating both the value placed on the model and increased organisational capacity to resource it:

“We managed to get funding for our AHO role, but the long-term plan is to have enough funding to keep them long term. And we're looking at other options for that, potentially another HLF bid... now we've done it, I feel like we couldn't imagine not having that part of our programme, that sort of outreach.”

Hub organisation

This reflects a broader shift across hubs, where outreach, partnership-working, and community-led delivery are no longer seen as time-limited project activity, but as integral to their ongoing organisational practice which in turn will help them produce and programme in a different way.

Despite clear gains in capacity and skills, all hubs identified funding and sustainability as a critical ongoing challenge.

Keighley Creative highlighted the precarity of continuing the work:

“That’s the reality... we don’t yet have funding secured to continue the work that’s been done.”

Hub organisation

There was widespread concern about ending activity and the impact on participants:

“We’re not looking forward to telling people it’s going to end... we’ve enjoyed it so much... funding at the moment is just so competitive... I’m a bit nervous about what’s next for people.”

Hub organisation

This challenge is compounded by the wider funding context, particularly in the aftermath of major investment linked to Bradford 2025.

In response, organisations are exploring new approaches, including developing community champions to sustain activity beyond funded periods and diversifying income streams (e.g. combining community and heritage funding routes).

"We managed to get funding for another six months of our AHO's role but long-term plan is... to keep them long term... Now we've done it, I feel like [we] couldn't imagine not having that part of our programme, that sort of outreach... I think we've got faith that [in the long term] that will be beneficial for us."

Hub organisation – South Square

As well as these areas, the reflection with the hubs identified further areas where they have grown their capacity and resilience as organisations;

- Strengthened organisational capacity and workforce development
- HR systems, governance, recruitment and workforce development

A key area of development was increased staffing capacity and organisational infrastructure. The hub model enabled smaller organisations to expand their teams and deliver more sustained outreach work than previously possible.

For many of the hub teams that sat outside of Bradford Arts Centre, this meant a notable expansion in staff capacity:

“We’re still a really small team... five salaried staff now, two of them paid for by Bradford Arts Centre... it’s the biggest salary team they’ve ever had...”

having that capacity of a full-time person... has definitely made that reach wider... than just the town centre.”

Arts & Heritage Officer

This additional capacity allowed organisations to move beyond short-term, project-based activity towards more strategic and consistent engagement with communities over the two years of delivery.

When reflecting on their thoughts and feelings about the project overall, many of the AHOs and hub organisations commented on how much they appreciated the length of the funding.

“It worked having full/part time employed staff to deliver the project over two years, the consistency for the participants being able to work and have contact with the same AHO allowed relationships to build and develop naturally.”

Hub organisation via Padlet

Participation in the programme also strengthened internal systems, particularly around HR, policies and governance. Support from Bradford Arts Centre was described as critical in building confidence and resilience in these areas.

One hub organisation noted:

“The support from Bradford Arts Centre has been absolutely invaluable... they’ve been at the end of the phone the whole time... we had some challenges... and all the HR was dealt with by Bradford Arts Centre... it didn’t feel too onerous.”

Hub organisation

Hubs also reported increased confidence in reviewing and refining internal policies:

“We’ve had support... with our policies... so as an organisation, we’ve definitely benefited... outside of delivering the work.”

The programme prompted reflection and learning around recruitment processes, particularly in ensuring staff are well-suited to community-based, participatory work and the importance of strong recruitment practices when things may not go as planned. Bloomin' Buds had to change their staff member very soon into the delivery of projects and on reflection were grateful for the in-kind support received from Bradford Arts Centre in making sure this was a thorough and streamlined process.

"I think the support offered from Bradford Arts Centre has been absolutely invaluable. And they've been at the end of the phone the whole time, which has been really helpful. We've had some challenges...we changed officer partway through, it wasn't pleasant and it was very difficult to deal with. And I think it was really, really helpful that Bradford Arts Centre supported us with that, and that all the HR and everything was dealt with by Bradford Arts Centre. So because obviously the model is that the funding is for the officers and the activity, but it's sort of like, in kind that is additional from our capacity as an organisation. So, it didn't feel like too onerous."

One hub highlighted the limitations of traditional interview approaches:

"We learned a lot... what you see at interview stage... I think next time... have them come to sessions and mix with the groups... we've recruited somebody and then realised they're not comfortable in that environment."

This reflects a shift towards more practice-based, values-led recruitment aligned with co-creation principles for hub organisations. These skills have been developed as a result of the ongoing support given throughout the delivery phase of this project.

While the hub model has significantly strengthened organisational capacity, skills, and networks, its long-term impact is constrained by financial uncertainty. Nevertheless, the evidence suggests that participating organisations are now better equipped structurally, strategically, and operationally to deliver inclusive, community-led arts engagement in the future.

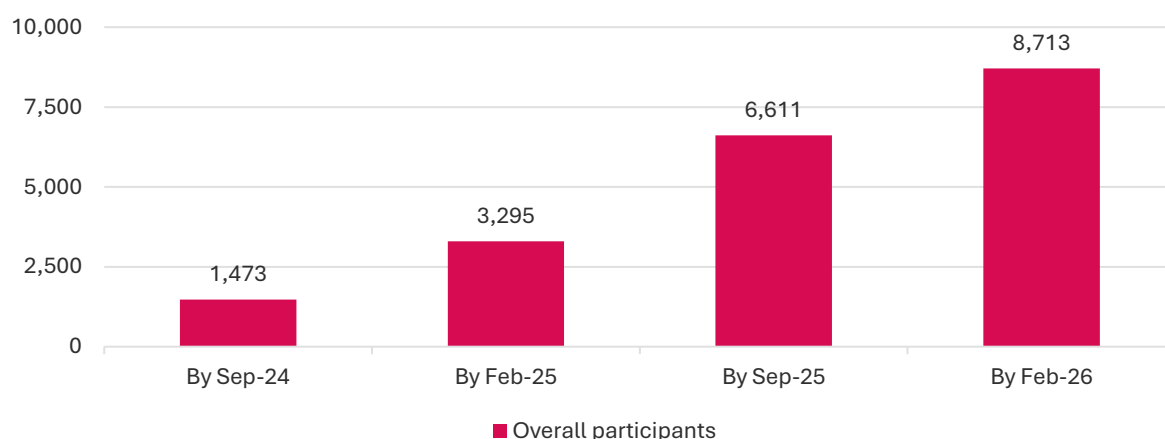
HUB ENGAGEMENT THROUGHOUT THE PROJECT

The charts below illustrate the cumulative number of sessions delivered and participants engaged across the community hubs during the delivery phase of the project (drawn from the project monitoring records) demonstrating increased levels of participation and engagement over time.

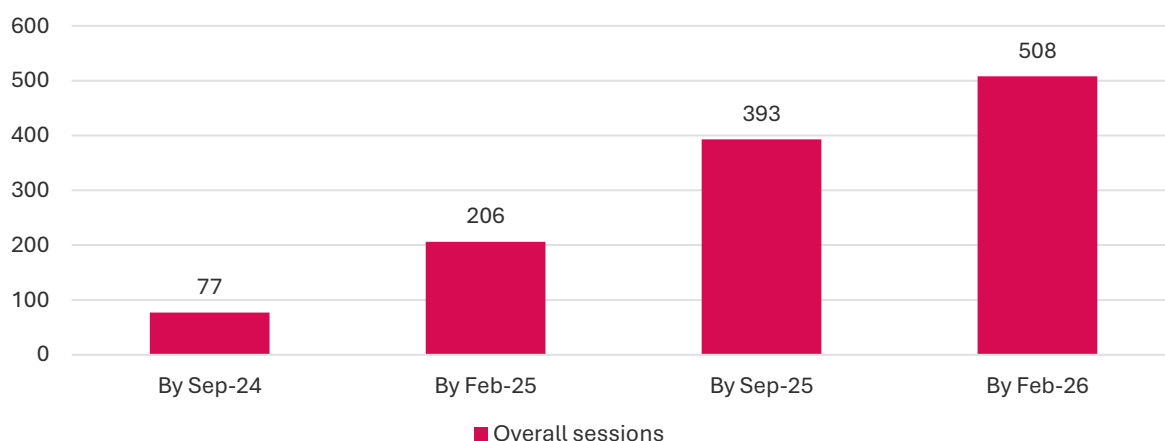
Overall participation increased from 1,473 participants recorded by September 2024 to 3,295 by February 2025, before rising substantially to a total of 6,611 by September 2025. By February 2026, cumulative participation stood at 8,713. A similar pattern was reflected in the number of sessions delivered, which increased from 77 sessions by September 2024 to 206 by February 2025, 393 sessions by September 2025, before reaching 508 sessions by February 2026.

Each column represents cumulative data collected up to and including the reporting date, across the project to that date.

Cumulative overall participants in hub activity by the end of each reporting period



Cumulative overall sessions at hubs by the end of each reporting period



1.7 Activity protects/supports 50+ creative industry companies/sole traders based at hubs. [CDF]

INDICATOR: Opportunities for creative companies/sole traders at hubs.

34 creative companies and sole traders have been protected and or supported as a result of this funding:

- 7 at Bradford Arts Centre (Bradford Arts Centre itself, tenant companies that include Dance United Yorkshire, Bradford Community Broadcasting and Bradford Producing Hub)
- Bradford Arts Centre also supported Associate Companies based at Bradford Arts Centre, these include Rhythmosaic, MOV Dance Theatre, Mobius Dance and Bradford South Asian Festival
- 10 at South Square (South Square, café operator and 8 resident artists)
- 16 at Keighley Creative (Keighley Creative itself and 15 regular studio holders)
- 1 at Bloomin' Buds

The creation of new paid roles within each hub enabled locally-based creatives to access employment opportunities within their own communities. A central mechanism for this was the introduction of Arts & Heritage Officer roles, paid project-funded positions embedded within each hub and supported by Bradford Arts Centre. These roles:

- Provided employment for early- to mid-career creatives with a community focus
- Built skills in project design, delivery, and partnership working
- Created a cohort of practitioners who shared learning, contacts, and peer support

This cohort model enabled AHOs to learn from one another, developing a shared practice beyond their individual organisations.

The model brought direct financial investment into hubs, which in turn supported a wider pool of creatives:

- Salaries for Arts & Heritage Officers
- Project budgets allocated through activity plans

- Paid opportunities for artists and sole traders to deliver workshops, commissions, and engagement activity

This effectively embedded artist-led and community-based work that hubs would not previously have had the capacity or resources to deliver. It also enabled creatives to build new relationships with hubs, creating potential pathways for future collaboration.

“Bloomin’ Buds and South Square... what the model did was give them... the financial support to deliver the project, and the capacity in terms of an Arts & Heritage Officer... so it strengthened them in that way.”

Bradford Arts Centre staff member

In some cases, this support was critical to sustaining activity. At Bloomin’ Buds, AHO-led work was, at one stage, described as the organisation’s main programme, effectively maintaining artist activity during a fragile period.

Beyond direct funding, hubs and the artists working within them benefited from extensive mentoring and organisational development support from Bradford Arts Centre. This included:

- Finance and budgeting support (e.g. Excel training)
- HR and operational guidance
- Programming and marketing advice to better position and promote work

“It’s not just the Arts & Heritage Officers. It’s like mentoring, guidance at every level, marketing, programming, operations, finance... which is incredible.”

Bradford Arts Centre staff member

1.8 15 FTE jobs created at the hubs. [CDF]

INDICATOR: Recruitment at the hubs.

Eighteen jobs have been created through this work at Bradford Arts Centre, including full-time roles and equivalent positions. This total includes seven Arts & Heritage Officer roles, comprising Arts & Heritage Officers and the archivist, alongside three additional posts created following the reopening of the newly refurbished building. Multiple artist roles equivalent to four full-time positions have also been supported. A further four jobs will be created through the café recruitment planned for summer 2026, bringing the overall total to eighteen roles created as a direct result of this work.

1.9 Network of 4 arts hubs is innovative, sustainable, and relevant to local communities. [CDF]

INDICATOR: Delivery/evaluation of network hubs model to capture key learnings/case studies to inform future practice.

INDICATOR: Impacts reported by community and education partners/participants and audiences around significance of Bradford Arts Centre programme to their lives.

The hub model has demonstrated that locally-embedded, relationship-led approaches are both innovative and effective in engaging communities, while also building longer-term sustainability and resilience.

A key learning is the importance of strong anchor relationships within communities. All hubs were invested in building trusted local partnerships which then supported them to engage participants meaningfully and sustain involvement over time. The Arts & Heritage Officers played a critical role in this, developing relationships with participants, community leaders, and local organisations. This relational approach reduced the perceived distance between communities and Bradford Arts Centre, making partnership working more accessible and realistic:

“They’re aware of Bradford Arts Centre now, whereas before... it’s almost like reduced the distance. It feels more feasible for them to do a partnership with us.”

Bradford Arts Centre staff member

This highlights an important capacity developed through the model. Having locally based, recognisable staff helps to legitimise the central organisation within communities, making future co-production and co-creation both more feasible and more attractive.

The model also highlighted the value of flexibility and community-led delivery. Rigid activity plans were often less effective than approaches that allowed projects to evolve in response to local need. Keighley Creative, for example, reflected on the importance of developing confidence in this approach:

“They evolved to meet the needs of the people they were targeting... and that’s just fine.”

Hub organisation – Keighley Creative

This adaptability enabled hubs to remain responsive and ensured that activity was shaped by participants rather than imposed structures. For some organisations, this has led to a fundamental shift in practice, with community-embedded work now seen as core rather than additional:

“An absolute central part of what Keighley Creative needs to be.”

Hub organisation - Keighley Creative

A further learning relates to access and outreach. Taking activity directly into communities rather than expecting participants to travel to central venues proved critical, particularly in areas where transport, language barrier or confidence acted as barriers to engagement. This approach widened participation and reinforced the importance of meeting people where they are.

The hub model also demonstrated the effectiveness of embedding funded staff within partner organisations, supported by central coordination and peer networks. This structure strengthened delivery while also building capacity within hub host organisations, enabling knowledge-sharing and fostering a sense of collective ownership across the network.

Importantly, the model emphasised that place-based differences must be recognised and accommodated. Successful delivery depended on locally tailored approaches, including adapting delivery models to reflect local contexts, deviating from standardised approaches where appropriate, and prioritising community-led growth.

There is also clear evidence of impact on audiences and engagement with Bradford Arts Centre. Hub activity has already begun to translate into increased and more diverse participation within the refurbished building. For example, women involved in hub-based projects attended events such as Qawwali Night, bringing family members and encouraging wider participation:

“On the Qawwali night, we had a lot of women in here... they were the ones that were on the women’s joint project... came into the space with families, told other people, and then after that people have come from it as well.”

Bradford Arts Centre staff member

Similarly, engagement through the hub model strengthened relationships with partner groups such as u3a, resulting in ongoing use of Bradford Arts Centre as a venue and increased awareness of its wider offer:

“I think what it did, the project, probably strengthened the relationship between u3a and the Arts Centre, and that's probably one of the reasons why we're having our speaker meetings here...this is a perfect option. It will make u3a members generally more aware of the other things that the Arts Centre is offering, because obviously they've got all the advertising and their other events and things, so I'm sure people will come to other things.”

Participant and Community Evaluator

These examples demonstrate a measurable shift in perceptions of accessibility and relevance, as well as the model’s potential to support longer-term audience development.

Overall, the hub model shows strong potential to create a transformational step change in an organisation’s role within its local context, building more resilient, outward-facing institutions. However, this is dependent on sustained investment. While there is a strong appetite to continue or expand this way of working, hubs emphasised that it is resource-intensive and cannot be delivered as a low-cost add-on. Future iterations must be strategically aligned, particularly with priorities such as increasing footfall to the building and supported by appropriate funding:

“Would you do that again?... That is probably funding dependent... our priority for the next five years has to be driving footfall into this building... if it brings people in, then yes.”

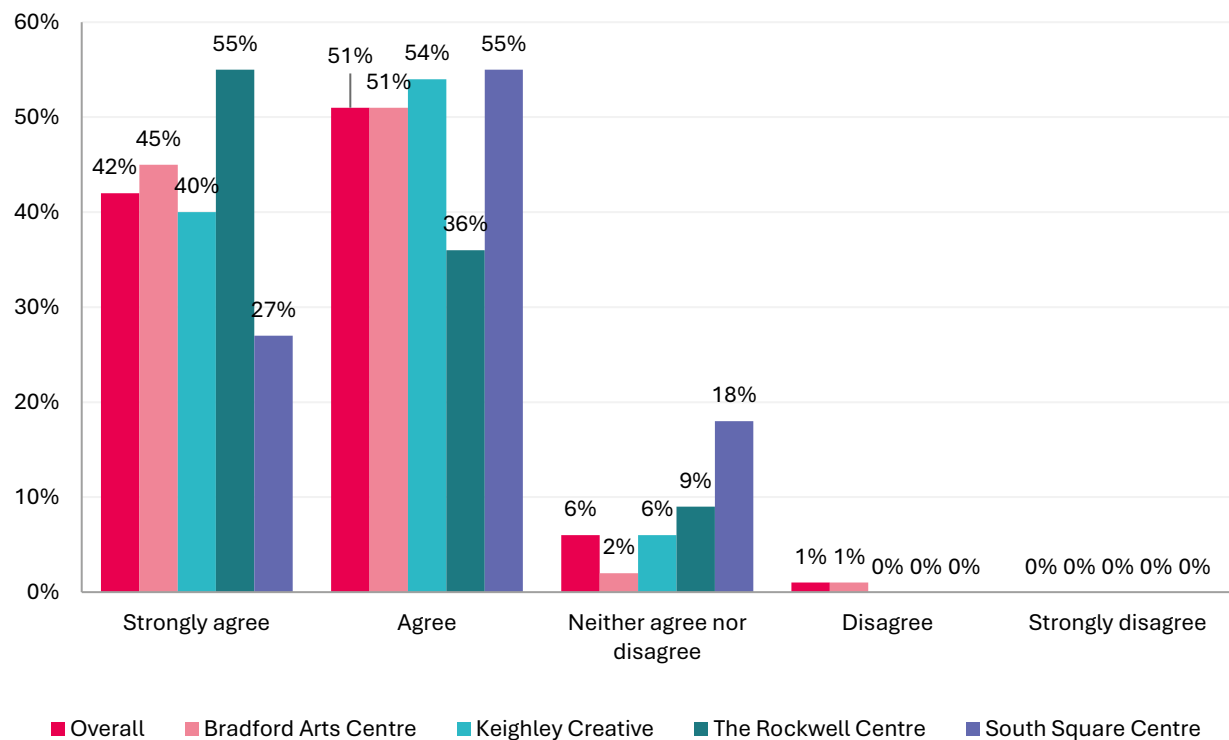
Bradford Arts Centre staff member

RELEVANCE TO PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR COMMUNITY

Participants found the activities at the community hubs were relevant to themselves, their interests and their community.

- 83% strongly agreed or agreed that what they watched/took part in today was relevant to them and their interests
- 82% strongly agreed or agreed that the hub they visited is relevant to them and their community

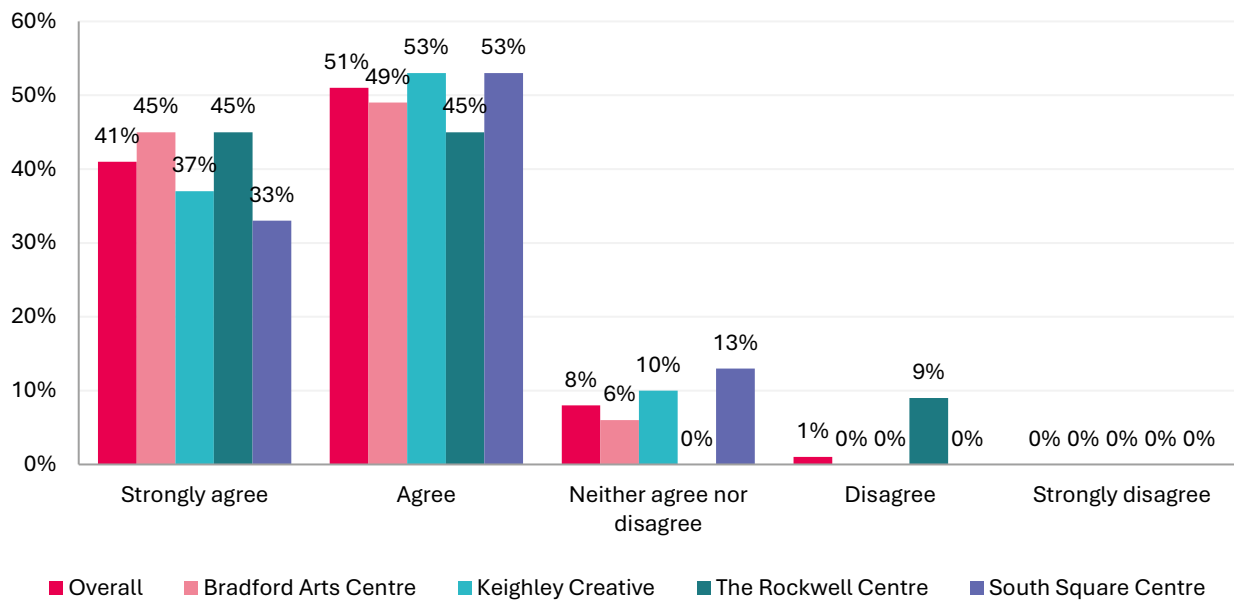
What I watched/took part in today was relevant to me and my interests.



Base: 169 / 86 / 50 / 11 / 22

Margin of error: 8% / 11% / 14% / 29% / 21%

{hub name} is relevant to me and my community.



Base: 158 / 83 / 49 / 11 / 15

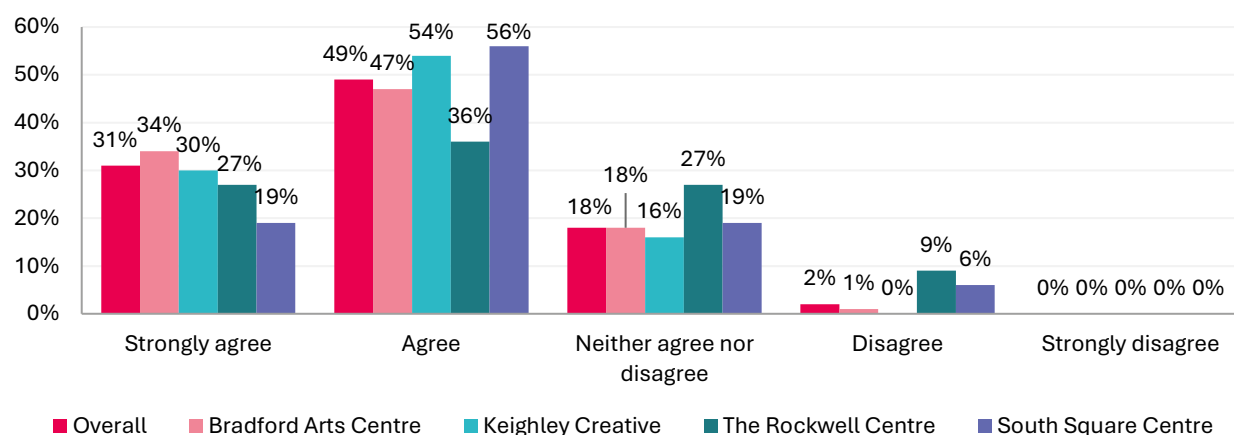
Margin of error: 8% / 11% / 14% / 29% / 25%

CONNECTION TO OWN CULTURAL HERITAGE; LEARNING ABOUT THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF OTHERS

Community hub participants also indicated that taking part in the community hub activities enabled them to feel more connected to their cultural heritage and learn about the cultural heritage of others:

- 80% strongly agreed or agreed that what they watched/took part in at the hub left them feeling more connected to their cultural heritage
- 82% strongly agreed or agreed that what they watched/took part in at the hub made them feel represented
- 75% strongly agreed or agreed that what they watched/took part in at the hub helped them to learn about the cultural heritage of others

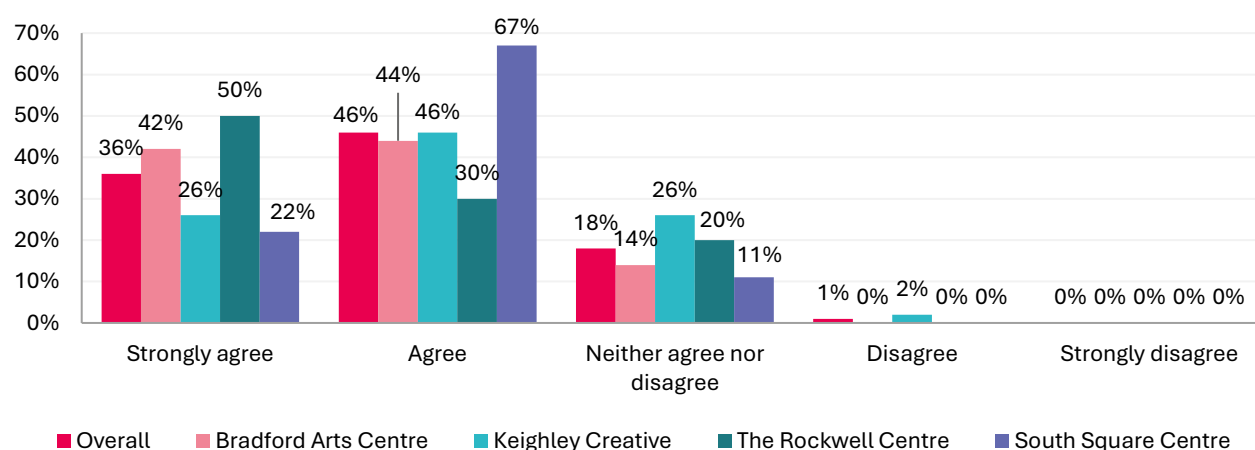
What I watched/took part in today left me feeling more connected to my cultural heritage.



Base: 160 / 83 / 50 / 11 / 16

Margin of error: 8% / 11% / 14% / 28% / 24%

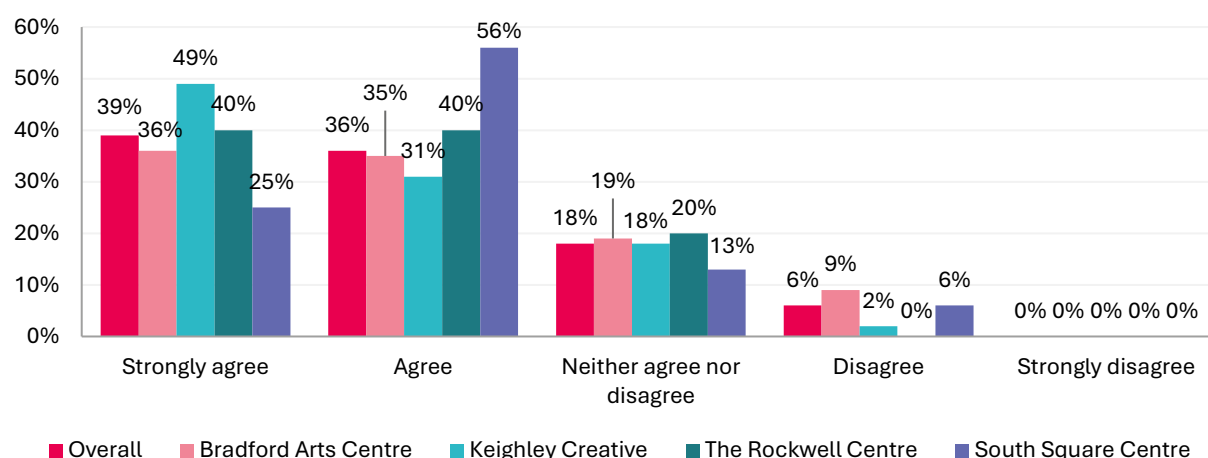
What I watched/took part in today made me feel represented.



Base: 163 / 85 / 50 / 10 / 18

Margin of error: 8% / 11% / 26% / 31% / 22%

What I watched/took part in today helped me to learn about the cultural heritage of others.



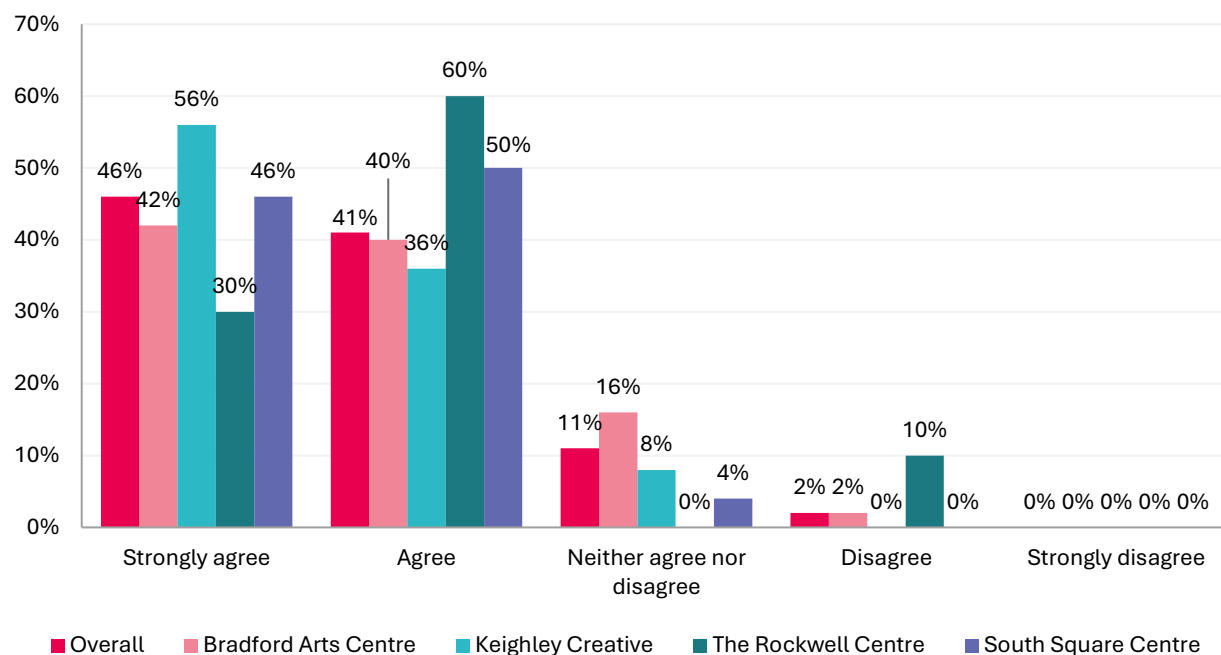
Base: 160 / 85 / 49 / 10 / 16

Margin of error: 8% / 10% / 14% / 30% / 24%

NEW LEARNING

Community hub participants were also able to learn something new by taking part in the activities, with 87% strongly agreeing or agreeing that they learned something new as a result of what they watched or took part in at the hub. This was particularly high amongst participants at Keighley Creative, with 92% of participants strongly agreeing and agreeing with this statement.

I learned something new as a result of what I watched/took part in today.



Base: 170 / 86 / 50 / 10 / 24

Margin of error: 7% / 10% / 14% / 30% / 20%

WELCOME & ACCESSIBILITY

Overall, participants found the community hubs to be welcoming and accessible, with 98% of responding participants strongly agreeing or agreeing that the hub they visited is welcoming and accessible. When participants were asked to expand about what made the hub welcoming and accessible, many cited the friendly, caring staff and the buildings being comfortable spaces that were easy to get to.

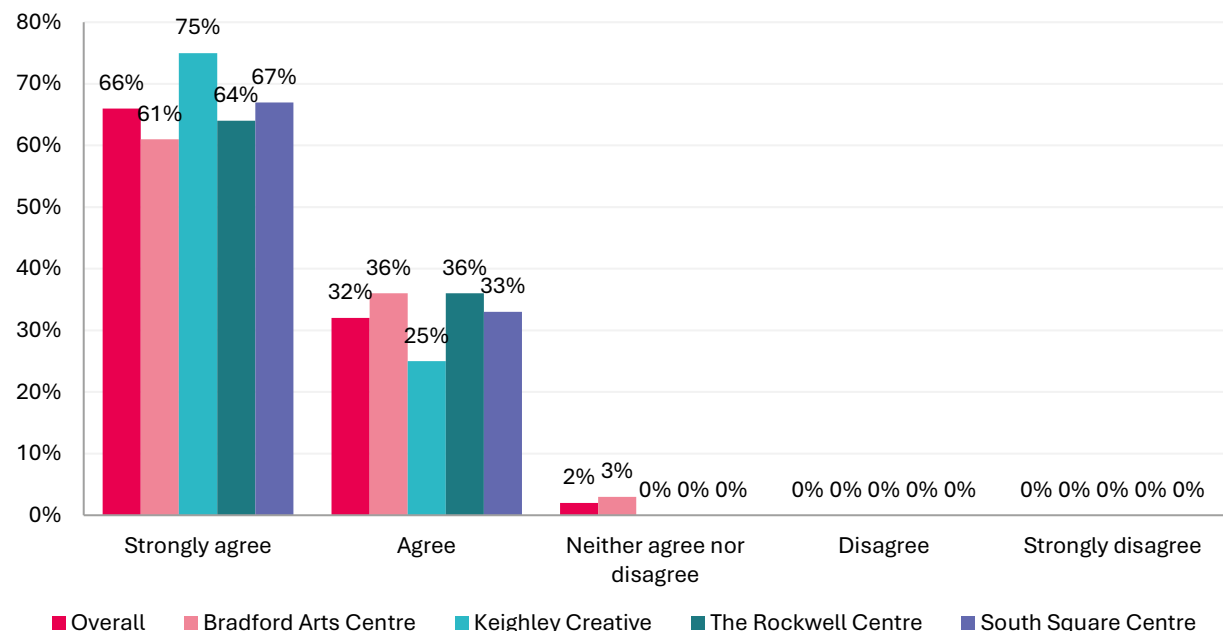
“Everyone makes you feel so welcomed and included and visitors were truly enjoying themselves and having fun. Keighley Creative always has lots going on for so many people, there is always something of interest.”

“It gets me out of the house, and I enjoy the groups I go to and I like the people there.”

“It’s a group where I have an opportunity to express myself. It’s given me the opportunity to express my emotions, meet new people and I feel safe to go through a mixture of emotions.”

Community hub survey respondents

{hub name} is welcoming and accessible.



Base: 167 / 87 / 51 / 11 / 18

Margin of error: 7% / 10% / 12% / 28% / 22%

1.10 People will have greater wellbeing. [Heritage Fund]

INDICATOR: Responses from surveys and data captured within sessions indicates that participants strongly agree or agree that engaging with hub/heritage activities has enhanced their wellbeing.

Survey responses and qualitative feedback taken from reflective sessions indicate that participants overwhelmingly agreed or strongly agreed that engagement in hub and heritage activities positively contributed to their wellbeing. Quantitative and qualitative findings suggest that participation supported social connection, creativity, learning, and a stronger sense of belonging within local communities. Respondents also reported that programming focused on grief and shared experiences had a positive impact on their health and wellbeing.

FIVE WAYS TO WELLBEING

Using the **Five ways to wellbeing | New Economics Foundation²**, participants across the hubs were asked to rate their agreement with a series of statements linked to the five wellbeing actions: Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Keep Learning, and Give.

Participants were asked whether:

- They made new friends or met people who were similar to them (Connect)
- they made new friends or met people who were different from them (Connect)
- they were able to do something creative and/or active (Be Active, Take Notice)
- they gained or developed skills or learned something new (Keep Learning)
- they felt a stronger sense of belonging within their neighbourhood (Give, Connect)

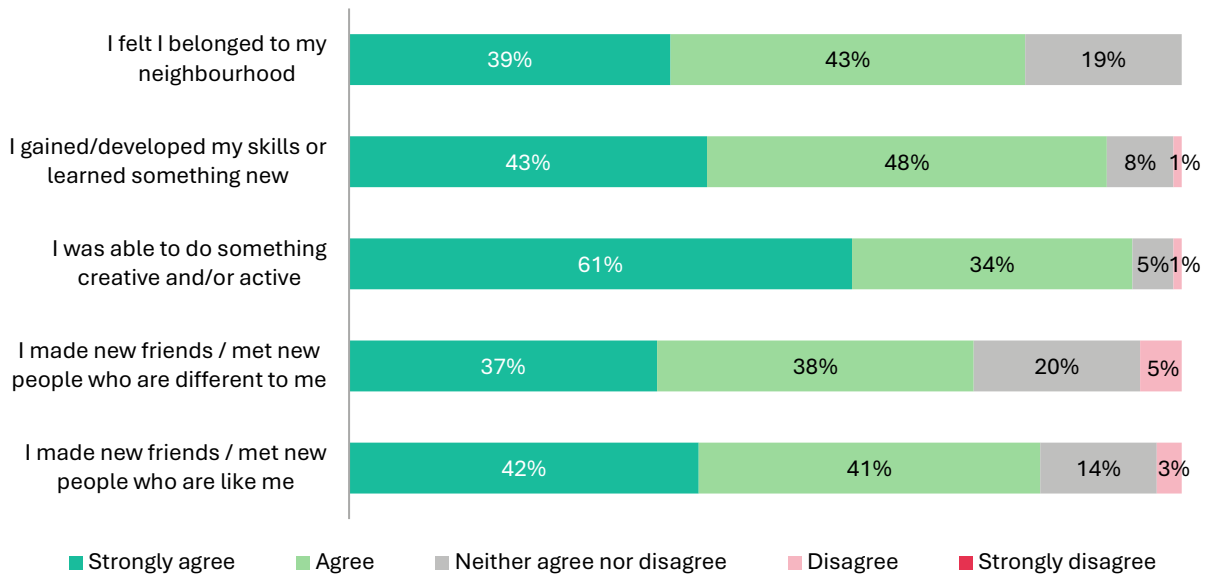
RESPONSES

- 83% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that they made new friends or met people like them (Connect), rising to 85% among Bradford Arts Centre participants specifically.
- 75% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that they made new friends or met people different from themselves (Connect), rising to 76% among Bradford Arts Centre participants.
- 95% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that they were able to do something creative and/or active (Be Active, Take Notice), rising to 97% among Bradford Arts Centre participants.

² New Economics Foundation, *Five Ways to Wellbeing*, 2008.

- 91% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that they gained or developed skills or learned something new (Keep Learning), rising to 94% among Bradford Arts Centre participants.
- 82% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that they felt they belonged to their neighbourhood (Give, Connect), compared with 81% among Bradford Arts Centre participants.

And to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following?



Base: 161 / 158 / 167 / 167 / 161

Margin of error: 8% / 8% / 7% / 8% / 8%

Across the programme, hubs have made a significant contribution to participants' wellbeing, particularly by creating safe, supportive environments and providing consistent, structured activity that has supported participants to feel a sense of belonging in their communities and develop new friendships.

Many hubs functioned as vital “safe spaces” where participants could de-stress and find respite from challenging circumstances. This was especially evident in settings such as Bloomin’ Buds playgroups, where participants were often facing acute pressures including domestic abuse, financial hardship, and caring responsibilities.

One hub lead described the level of need:

“We’re seeing mums at crisis point... Sometimes we just sit a mum in the corner with a cup of tea and watch the children for an hour because she’s at absolute rock bottom. For those families, this project has been a lifeline.”

Hub organisation

These spaces offered not just creative engagement, but emotional support, trust-building, and care.

The regularity of hub activity also played an important role in supporting wellbeing. Predictable sessions, familiar environments, and consistent staff helped create a sense of stability and normality, particularly for those experiencing instability in other areas of their lives.

This structure contributed to increased confidence and willingness to engage more widely:

“The safe spaces... have been so important... participants that wouldn’t normally go out... are now thinking, ‘Oh, I can go into Bradford... I can do more activities’... it’s given them that boost.”

Arts & Heritage Officer

Participation in creative activity supported a growing sense of agency, identity, and self-worth. Through co-creation and encouragement, individuals began to reframe how they saw themselves and their abilities:

“You talk about an artist, and they’re like, ‘well, we’re not artists’—but you are, because you’ve just created that.”

Arts & Heritage Officer

For some, this shift was particularly profound. One example highlights how the project created space for autonomy and self-expression:

“One participant... comes from a very restrictive home environment... Within the project, we were able to offer genuine freedom of choice... that was clearly liberating... It created a space where participants could be vulnerable, both with each other and with themselves.”

Arts & Heritage Officer



Illustration of South Square Centre's Shadow Puppet Workshop in October 2025, by Nadya Girendroheru. Nadya is an artist, volunteer and community evaluator on the project

2. Artists & freelance creatives

2.1 The programme will provide more opportunities for local artists (training and employment). Over 100 additional, diverse artists a year will be supported to develop new creative practices and cultural content. [CDF]

INDICATOR: Increased opportunities provided for local artists.

INDICATOR: Artists recognise ways in which their engagement will benefit their career/professional practice.

The programme created a significant range of paid and developmental opportunities for local artists, while also supporting longer-term professional growth. There were 521 artist engagements with Bradford Arts Centre from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2026 (236 in 2024/25 and 285 in 2025/26), compared to a baseline of 321 artist engagements from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, the last full year before the building closed.

The project enabled artists to take on new roles, expand their practice, and explore different career pathways. This included progression from freelance delivery into more strategic or leadership-based positions, particularly through Arts & Heritage Officer roles.

Notably, some Arts & Heritage Officers had existing relationships with hub organisations. For example, the Bloomin' Buds Officers were previously engaged as artists delivering creative activity, and the project enabled them to step into more senior, developmental roles.

The use of job shares and flexible working models was an important enabler for the Bloomin' Buds AHOs, who were able to balance the role with their own creative practice whilst also developing new skills.

"This was quite a big stepping stone for both of us... we knew that our skills could match up... the job share has been really beneficial."

Arts & Heritage Officer

This flexibility also ensured that artists could continue their own work alongside the role:

"There's a kind of respect for our other practices... we still have that space to create our own things, and we're supported in that."

Arts & Heritage Officer

Artists reported substantial development in skills and confidence, particularly in areas such as:

- Budget management
- Leadership and decision-making
- Project design and delivery

“I haven’t managed a budget anywhere near as big... we’ve learned so much... my confidence as a professional... imposter syndrome is slightly less than it used to be.”

Arts & Heritage Officer

Engagement in the programme also broadened artists’ perceptions of their own potential and future pathways. Connections with Bradford Arts Centre and hub partners increased exposure to new ideas, networks, and opportunities.

One artist described a significant shift in mindset:

“Yeah, 100%... it’s made me more ambitious... I’ve always stayed in my lane as a performer, but now I feel like I can do more... create my own work... they really champion what I do.”

Artist engaged at Bradford Arts Centre

This sense of validation and investment was key:

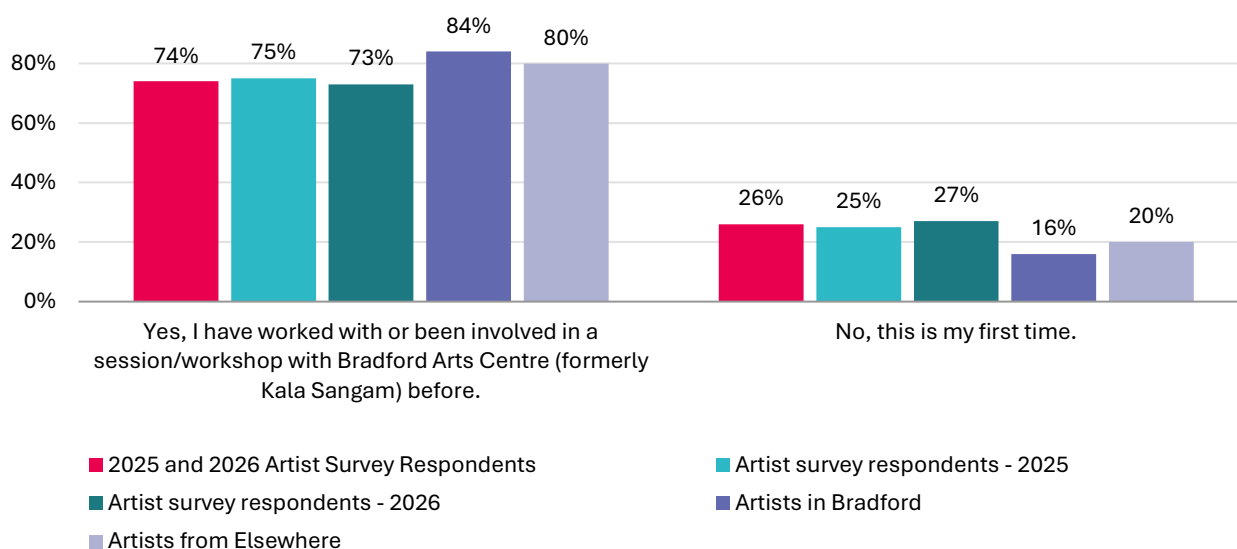
“When you have that support, it makes you want to do more.”

Artist engaged at Bradford Arts Centre

PREVIOUS INVOLVEMENT

Approximately three quarters of artists responding to the artist survey had worked with or been involved in a session or workshop with Bradford Arts Centre before. This was slightly higher amongst Bradford-based responding artists. Half of the artists responding to the survey in Spring 2026, approximately six months after Bradford Arts Centre reopened, indicated that they had performed as part of the programme of events this year.

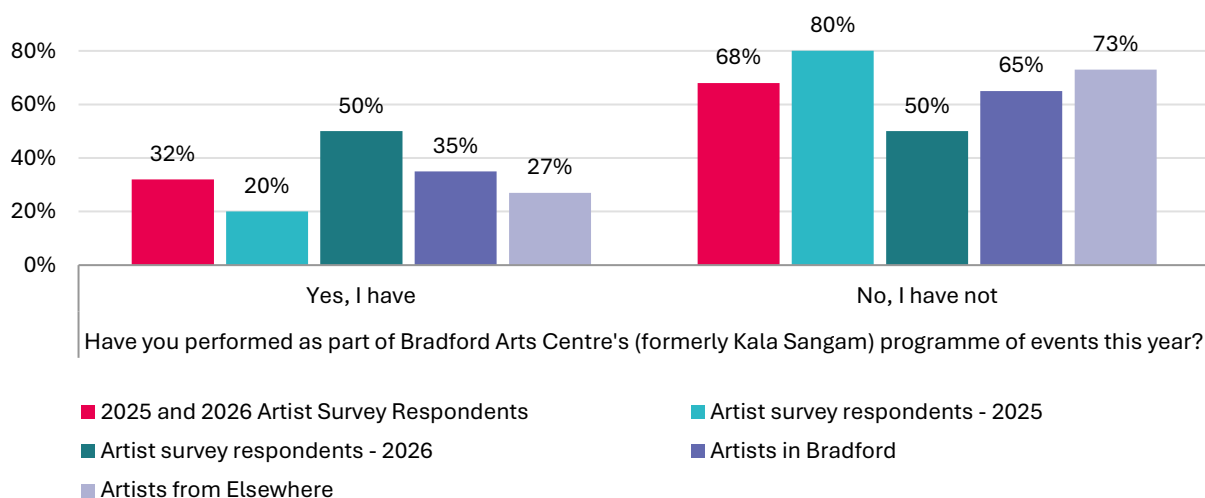
Have you worked with or been involved in a session/workshop with Bradford Arts Centre (formerly Kala Sangam) before?



Base: 35 / 20 / 15 / 19 / 10

Margin of error: 15% / 19% / 22% / 16% / 25%

Have you performed as part of Bradford Arts Centre's (formerly Kala Sangam) programme of events this year?



Base: 34 / 20 / 14 / 17 / 11

Margin of error: 32% / 20% / 50% / 35% / 27%

Artists worked with Bradford Arts Centre in a range of capacities, including programming collaborations, running workshops, using rehearsal space and receiving professional support.

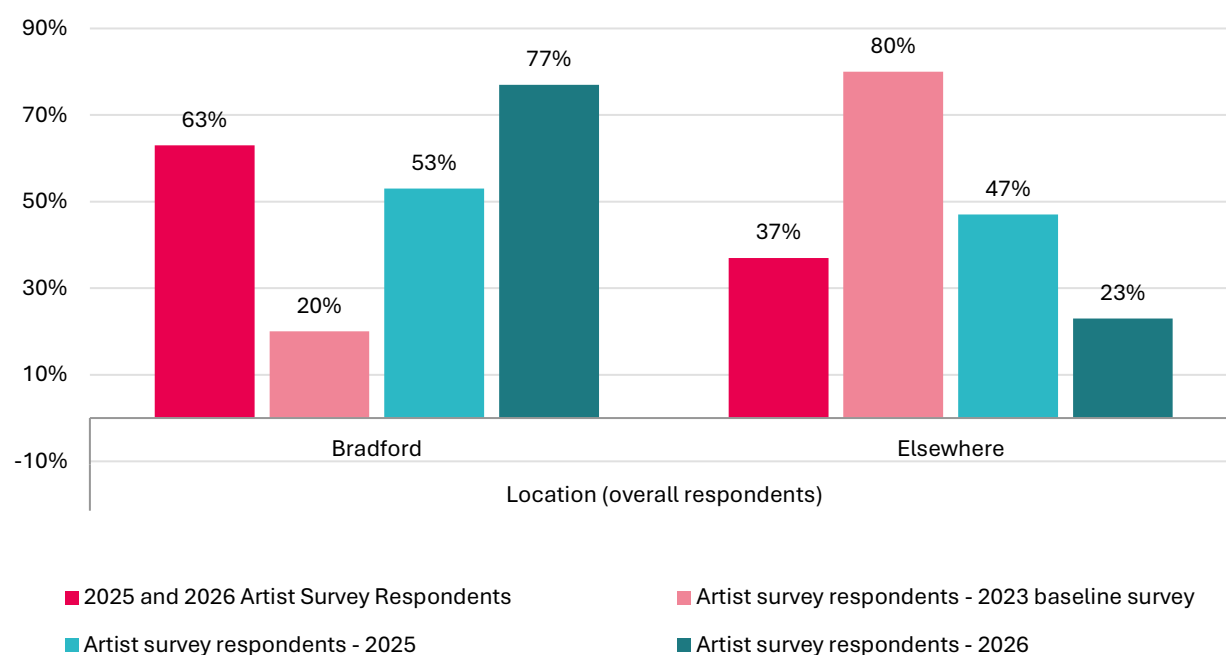
“[Bradford Arts Centre] supported project development by offering space for meetings, workshops and rehearsals, contributing staff expertise and sharing contacts/networks, and it has also programmed our work.”

“Kala Sangam and subsequently Bradford Arts Centre have supported me by offering advice when I was applying for funding and have also hosted my festival. I have also attended lots of performances and events at the Bradford Arts Centre.”

Artist Survey responses, 2026

While respondents to the baseline survey in 2023 were predominantly from elsewhere (80% from elsewhere vs. 20% from Bradford), through the project, Bradford Arts Centre started working with local artists more and the majority of respondents to the Artist Survey in 2025 and 2026 were based in Bradford (63% from Bradford vs. 37% from elsewhere).

LOCATION OF ARTISTS



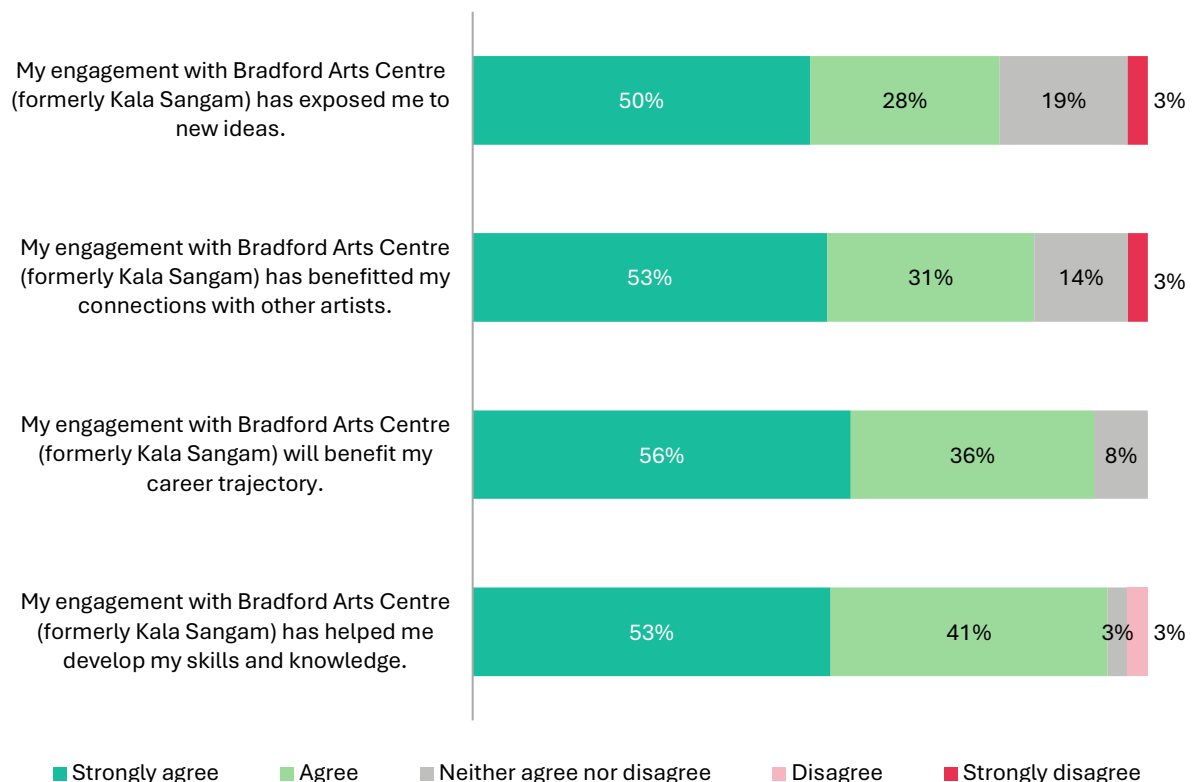
Base: 30 / 20 / 17 / 13

Margin of error: 17% / 18% / 24% / 23%

IMPACTS OF WORKING WITH BRADFORD ARTS CENTRE

Responding artists indicated positive impacts of working with Bradford Arts Centre:

- 94% of responding artists in 2025 and 2026 strongly agreed or agreed that their engagement with Bradford Arts Centre has helped them to **develop their skills and knowledge**. Notably, Bradford-based respondents were more likely to 'strongly agree' with this statement (61% of Bradford artists vs. 50% of artists based elsewhere strongly agreed)
- 92% of responding artists in 2025 and 2026 strongly agreed or agreed that their engagement with Bradford Arts Centre will benefit their **career trajectory**
- 84% of responding artists in 2025 and 2026 strongly agreed or agreed that their engagement with Bradford Arts Centre has benefitted their **connections with other artists**
- 78% of responding artists in 2025 and 2026 strongly agreed or agreed that their engagement with Bradford Arts Centre has exposed them to **new ideas**



Base: 34 / 36 / 36 / 36

Margin of error: 17% / 16% / 16% / 16%

SUPPORT FROM BRADFORD ARTS CENTRE IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS

During the project, artists reported receiving studio time (49%), paid seasonal work (40%), developmental support (31%), support for writing project grants/other funding applications (29%) and other support (17%). Compared to the baseline, more artists indicated that they have been offered paid seasonal work since the project began (40% in 2025 and 2026 vs. 0% in the 2023 baseline).

When artists were asked about how the support from Bradford Arts Centre has benefitted their career, responding artists were incredibly grateful for the time, care and space that they received from the staff. From support on funding applications, rehearsal and performance/exhibition space and connections to other artists or community groups, artists benefitted significantly from their work with Bradford Arts Centre.

“So grateful for the artist space, it's given me freedom to explore ideas and see what I'm capable of.”

“Kala Sangam supported me as an independent artist and throughout the shift into a community interest company. Their support has allowed me and my company to run regular workshops in Bradford, R&D's for work and performance opportunity. Kala Sangam support has been invaluable for my work and career.”

“It's helped widen my contacts.”

“It has helped me gain confidence when delivering and planning my artistic workshops.”

“It has provided me with a new angle to view my working practice and opened me up to new ventures and community groups.”

“It has helped me develop my skills and experience as a facilitator in the realm of socially engaged art practice.”

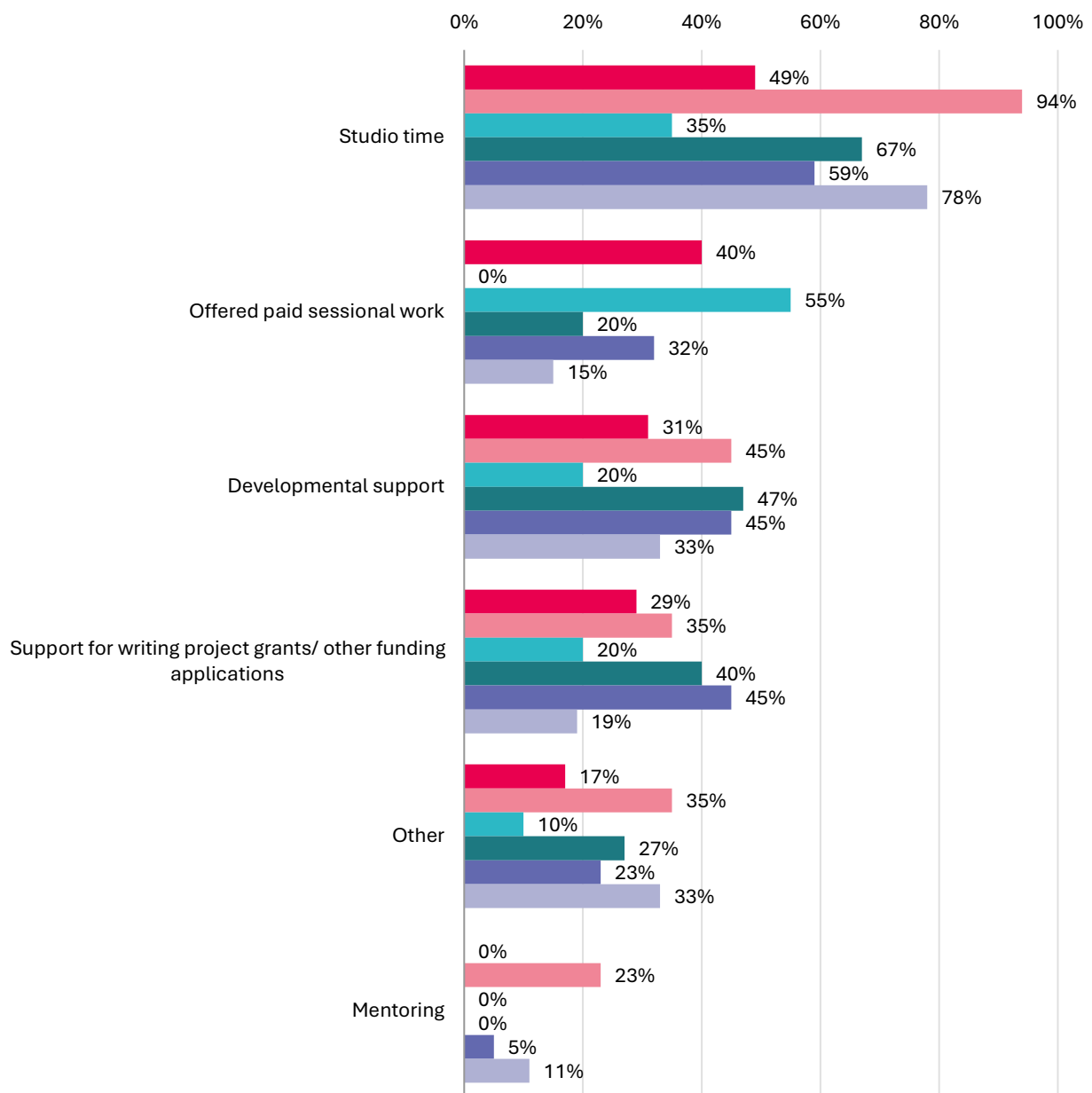
“Astronomically. Kala Sangam really believes and supports my work and are the fundamental reason why I feel like I can make my own work happen.”

“As a result of my connections with the BAC I have had the knowledge and confidence to successfully apply for funding and to complete large-scale projects.”

“Helped me kickstart my development process and work as an artist in finding my own voice.”

Artist Survey responses, 2025 and 2026

What kind of support have you had from Bradford Arts Centre (formerly Kala Sangam) in the last 12 months? (Tick all that apply)



■ 2025 and 2026 Artist Survey Respondents

■ Artist survey respondents - 2023 baseline survey

■ Artist survey respondents - 2025

■ Artist survey respondents - 2026

■ Artists in Bradford

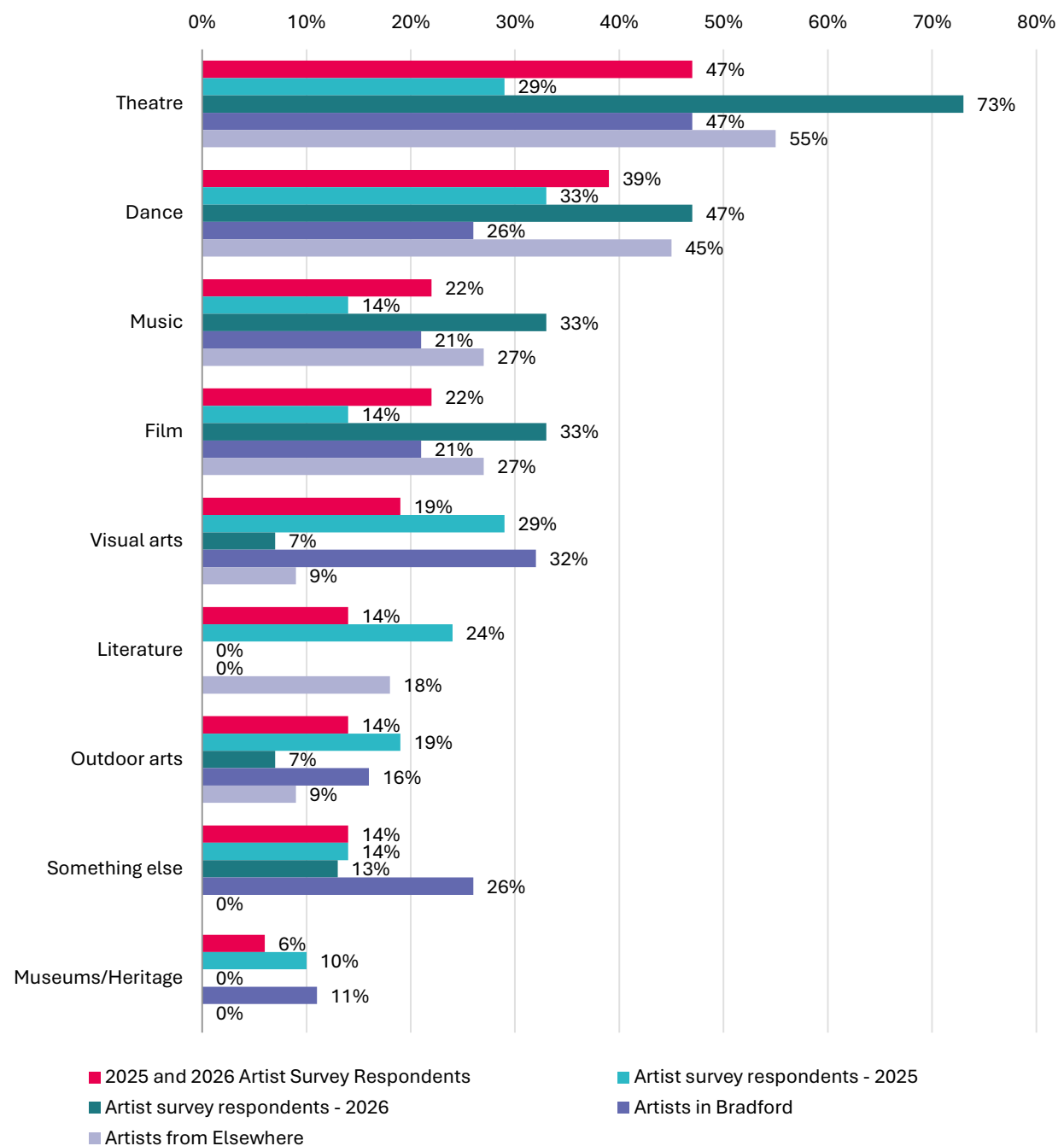
■ Artists from Elsewhere

Base: 35 / 31 / 20 / 15 / 22 / 27

Margin of error: 17% / 18% / 22% / 25% / 21% / 18%

ARTFORMS OF ARTISTS AND CREATIVE PRACTITIONERS

Bradford Arts Centre has worked with artists across a diverse range of artforms. Among survey respondents, 47% used theatre in their practice, 39% dance, 22% music, 22% film, and 19% visual arts. Visual arts practitioners were more likely to be based in Bradford (32% of Bradford-based artists compared with 9% of those based elsewhere), while dance practitioners were more likely to be based outside the city (45% vs. 26% based in Bradford). Smaller proportions of artists worked in literature (14%), outdoor arts (14%), and museums/heritage (6%).



Base: 36 / 21 / 15 / 19 / 11

Margin of error: 16% / 20% / 25% / 22% / 29%

2.2 30+ freelance artists a year will deliver heritage-focused workshops or co-create artistic responses with communities.

INDICATOR: Opportunities for artists to deliver heritage focused workshops/ deliver co-created work.

Across the hubs, the programme created substantial opportunities for freelance artists to deliver heritage-focused workshops and community-based activities, supporting the co-creation of artistic responses with local communities. Between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2026, 169 unique artists delivered sessions across the hub sites, contributing a diverse range of creative skills, perspectives and approaches.

This work culminated in a shared presentation of work at the newly reopened Bradford Arts Centre in January 2026, showcasing two years of collaborative activity, creative development and community engagement within the hub communities.

A wide range of workshops and participatory projects were developed and delivered throughout the programme, encouraging local residents to explore, interpret and respond to their heritage through creative practice. In total, the programme generated 260 days of paid employment for artists, providing meaningful freelance opportunities while supporting high-quality cultural participation across hub communities.

INDICATOR: Artistic responses are co-created with communities.

The extent to which this work was fully co-created varied across hubs and groups. Co-creation was a core ambition of the programme but proved complex and uneven in practice. Many participants were initially unfamiliar with, or hesitant about, shaping creative outcomes themselves. For some, engagement remained closer to participation than full co-creation.

As one Arts & Heritage Officer reflected:

“People just come, do a thing and then leave... especially shorter-term ones... it’s a nice experience at the time, and then once it’s over...”

Arts & Heritage Officer

A key challenge was supporting participants to recognise their own agency and feel confident contributing to decision-making. Arts & Heritage Officers often had to be

explicit in encouraging ownership, particularly where there was scepticism about whether projects were genuinely long-term:

“It’s convincing them that we’re not a fly-in, fly-out project... that we actually care... and they have put themselves into their projects.”

Arts & Heritage Officer

For many groups, co-creation required time, trust, and careful facilitation. Participants were not always used to having creative control, and in some cases, this felt unfamiliar or even intimidating:

“They’ve probably never had that much agency... I think they’re a bit like, ‘What do you mean?’ It’s scary... you’ve never had that much artistic freedom.”

Hub organisation

This was sometimes compounded by previous experiences of more prescriptive provision:

“They’re not used to having the agency... a lot of it is quite prescribed... people assume they wouldn’t know how to make decisions.”

Arts & Heritage Officer

As a result, co-creation often involved a supported or guided approach, where artists and AHOs balanced openness with gentle direction:

“We’re not picking our own art forms... but saying, ‘you clearly enjoy this’... and then they really threw themselves into it.”

“You had to understand the group... and then steer them a little bit... because it could go anywhere.”

Arts & Heritage Officer

This highlights that co-creation was not a fixed model but a continuum, requiring responsiveness to each group’s confidence, experience, and needs.

Where time and consistency were available, particularly over longer engagement periods, there was stronger evidence of genuine co-creation emerging:

“Because we had the time, you could nurture them into that and help them come up with something.”

Arts & Heritage Officer

The final sharing was likely the first opportunity for participants to understand what true co-creation meant and what it looked like across all hub areas and what it could look like in the future. While the ambition for co-creation was not always fully realised in every context, the work demonstrates that:

- Co-creation requires time, trust, and sustained relationships
- Participants may need support to build confidence and agency
- A balance between facilitation and guidance is often necessary

Overall, the evidence suggests that where conditions allowed particularly longer-term engagement co-creation became more authentic, with participants increasingly shaping both process and outcomes. The final sharing was an opportunity for them to celebrate their achievements and reflect on what is next and for many of them this was part of the journey.

2.3 Hub sites will host artists and companies.

INDICATOR: Opportunities for artists to deliver work in hubs.

There were 397 engagements of artists and artistic companies during the activity plan from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2026.

INVOLVEMENT WITH COMMUNITY HUBS

42% of the artists responding to the artist survey in 2025 and 2026 had worked with one of the four community hubs. This was higher amongst respondents in 2025, likely as there was more activity in 2024/25 taking place in the hubs compared to 2025/26 when this activity was winding down.

This involvement at the community hubs primarily consisted of running artistic workshops and sessions:

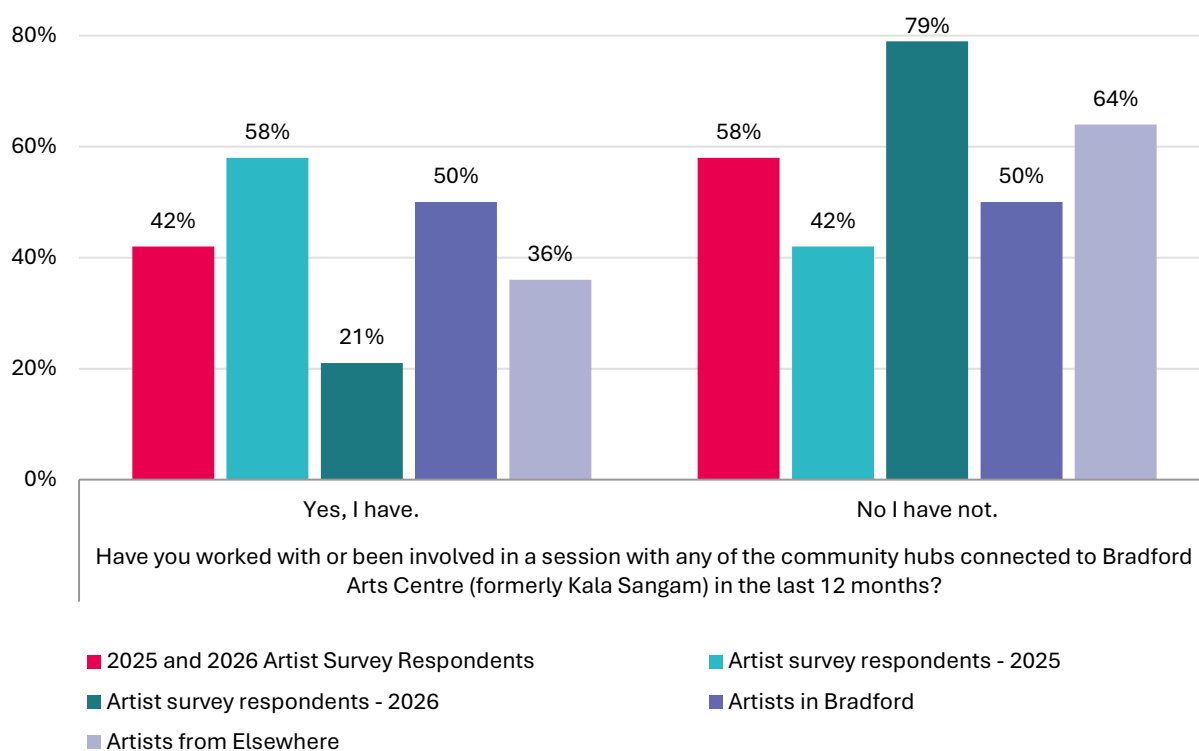
“I have been running weekly sessions with the Roma community European Drom as part of BAC's heritage programme.”

“Performed and ran writing for wellbeing workshops there for community participants, with support from hub staff.”

“I have attended artist crits and ran workshops at all of the above hubs.”

Artist Survey responses, 2025 and 2026

Have you worked with or been involved in a session with any of the community hubs connected to Bradford Arts Centre (formerly Kala Sangam) in the last 12 months?

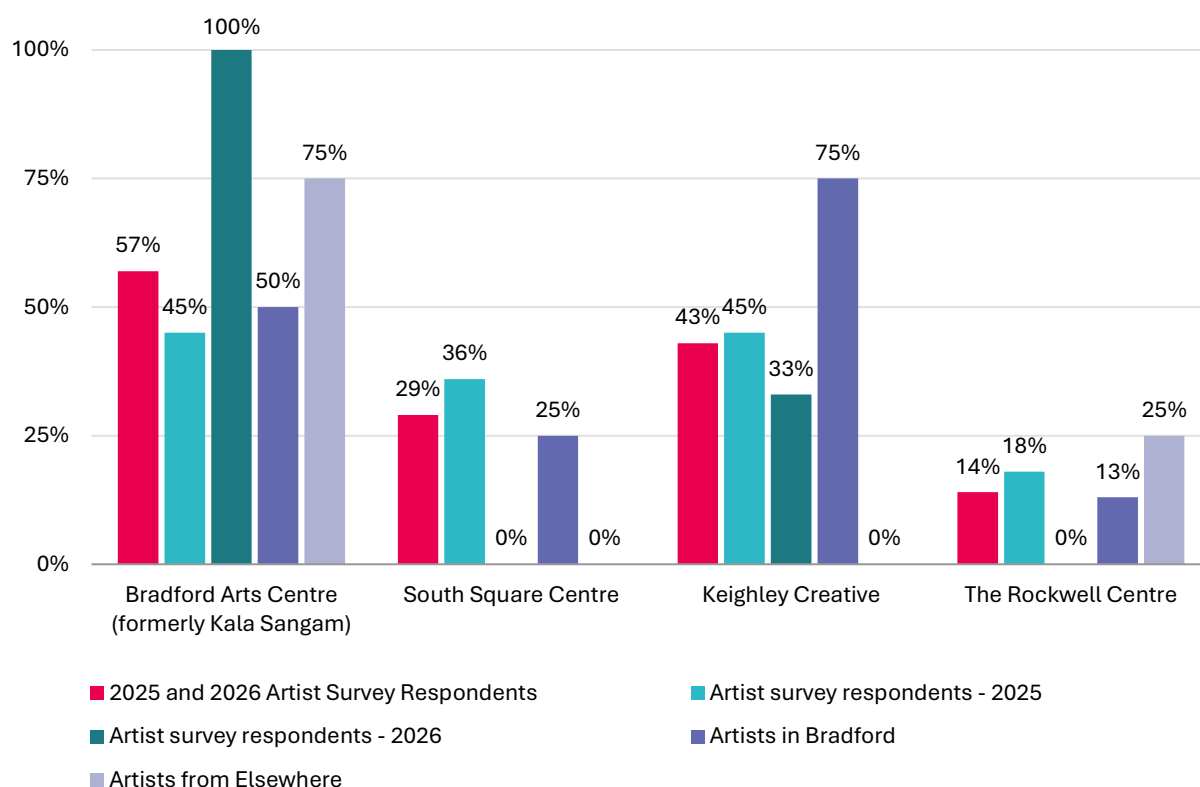


Base: 33 / 19 / 14 / 16 / 11

Margin of error: 17% / 22% / 21% / 25% / 28%

Of the responding artists who had worked with a community hub, 57% (8 artists) had worked with the hub at Bradford Arts Centre, 43% (6 artists) had worked with Keighley Creative, 29% (4 artists) had worked with South Square Centre and 14% (2 artists) had worked with The Rockwell Centre/Bloomin' Buds.

Which hub(s) have you worked with or been involved in a session with in the last 12 months?



Base: 14 / 11 / 3 / 8 / 4

Margin of error: 26% / 29% / 53% / 35% / 42%

2.4 More and higher quality artistic work is produced in Bradford and touring the UK.

INDICATOR: Increased number of touring artistic works are produced in Bradford and toured in the UK.

23 touring artistic works were produced from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2026.

Bradford Arts Centre's opening season featured the world premieres of six new pieces that were created in the company's new studios. This included three Indian classical dance works, an LGBTQ+ contemporary dance, a co-created performance with the Roma community, and an innovative theatre piece based on the experience of growing up in Bradford in the 1990s. Four of these works went on to tour nationally.

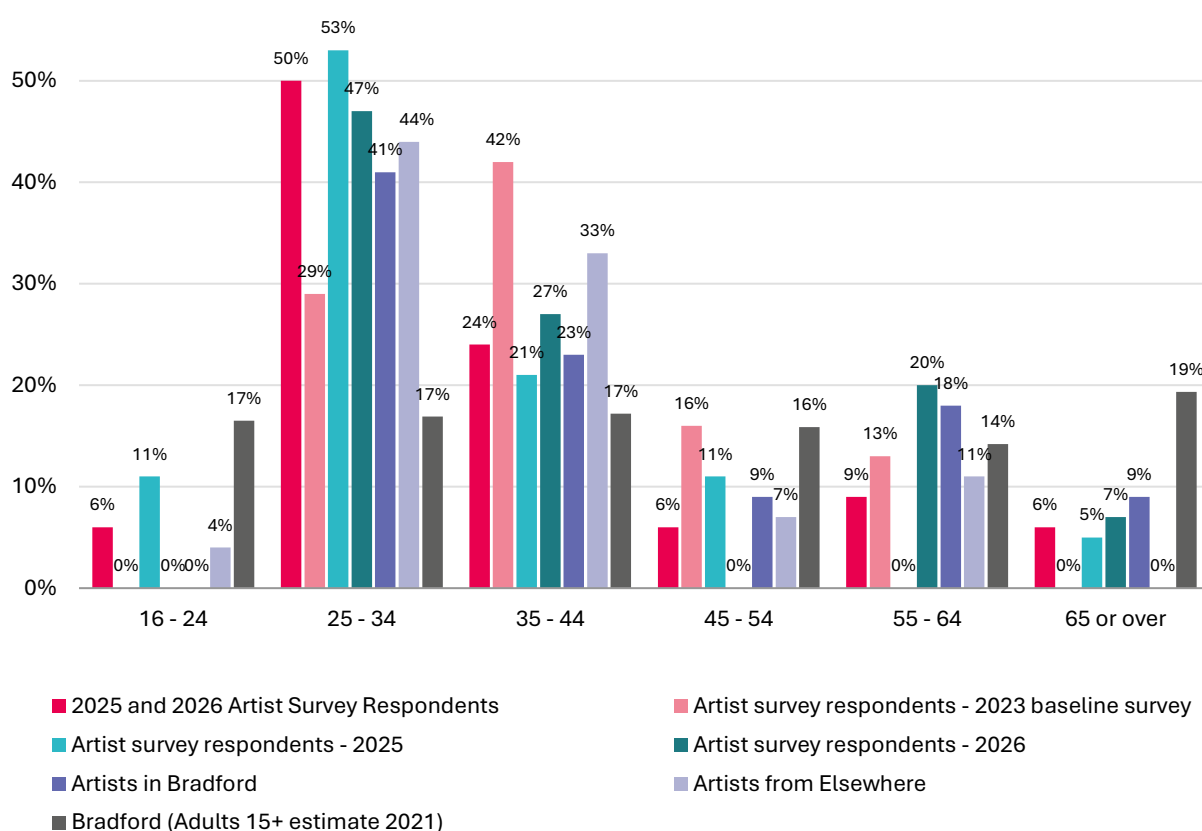
2.5 More artists from diverse backgrounds, representative of local communities are supported and involved in Bradford Arts Centre's work.

INDICATOR: Increased number of diverse artists representative of local communities are engaged.

During the project, Bradford Arts Centre were especially successful in increasing the proportion of younger artists, LGBTQ+ artists, and those identifying as D/deaf or as having a long term physical or mental health condition/illness. There was also an increase in the proportion of artists identifying as Asian/Asian British: Pakistani, Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Black Caribbean, and as Other Ethnic Group: Latin American.

AGE

Through the project, Bradford Arts Centre worked with younger artists, with 56% of the responding artists in 2025 and 2026 being under the age of 34 compared to 29% in the baseline from 2023. They also worked with older artists, with 6% of responding artists being over 65 compared to 0% from the 2023 baseline.

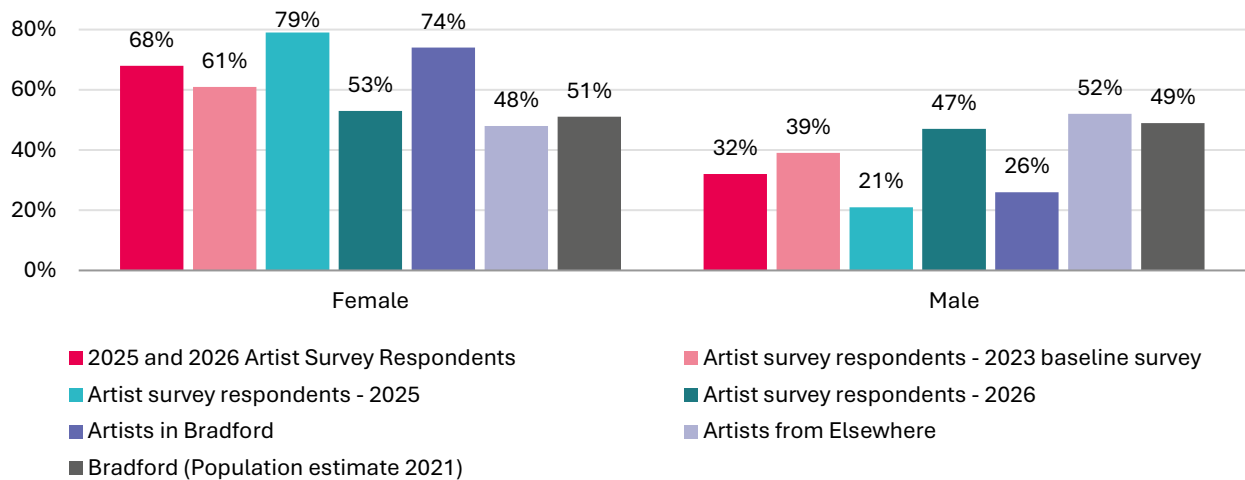


Base: 34 / 31 / 19 / 15 / 22 / 27 / 429, 410

Margin of error: 17% / 17% / 22% / 25% / 21% / 19% / 0%

SEX/GENDER

Similar to the 2023 baseline, responding artists to the artist survey in 2025 and 2026 were more likely to be female (68% in 2025 and 2026, 61% in 2023).

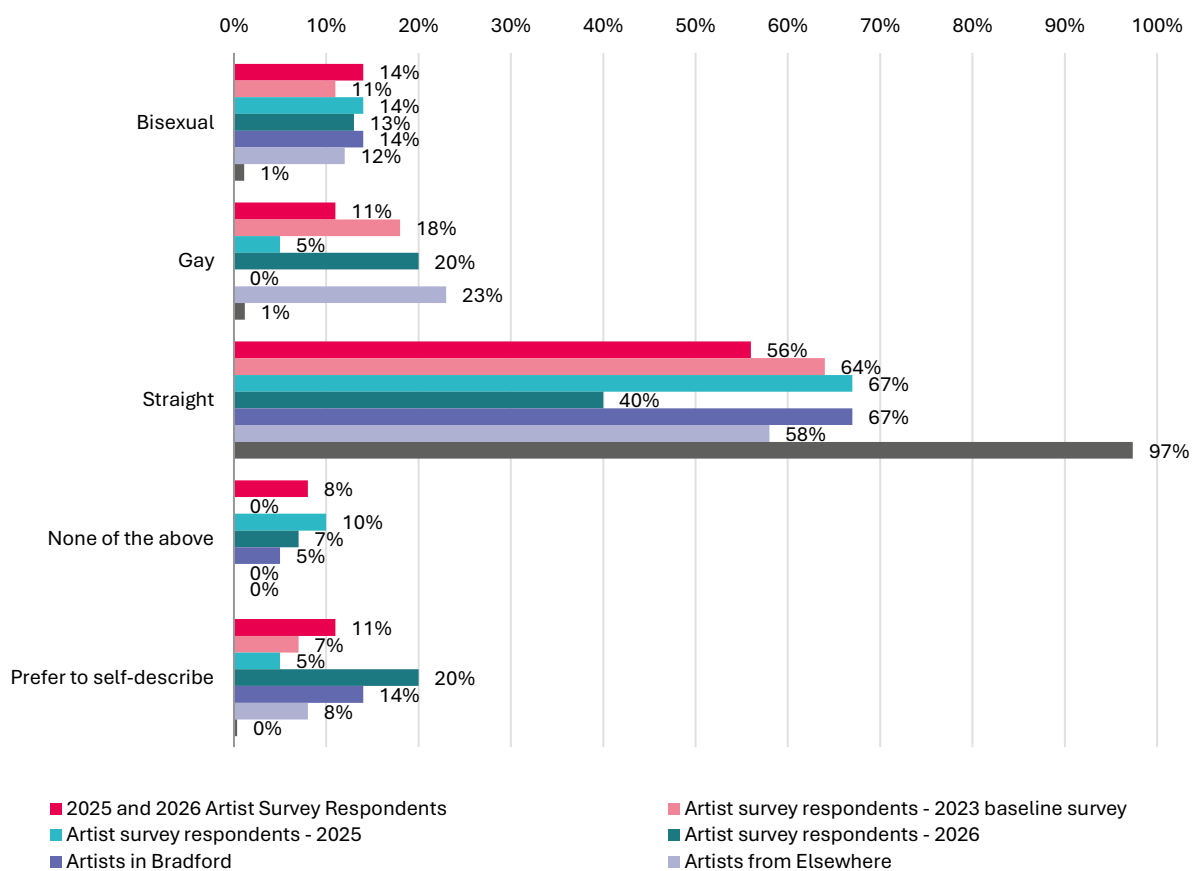


Base: 34 / 31 / 19 / 15 / 23 / 27 / 546, 412

Margin of error: 16% / 17% / 18% / 25% / 18% / 19% / 0%

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Approximately half of the responding artists in 2025 and 2026 identified as straight, compared to 64% in the baseline, indicating an increase in the diversity of artists.

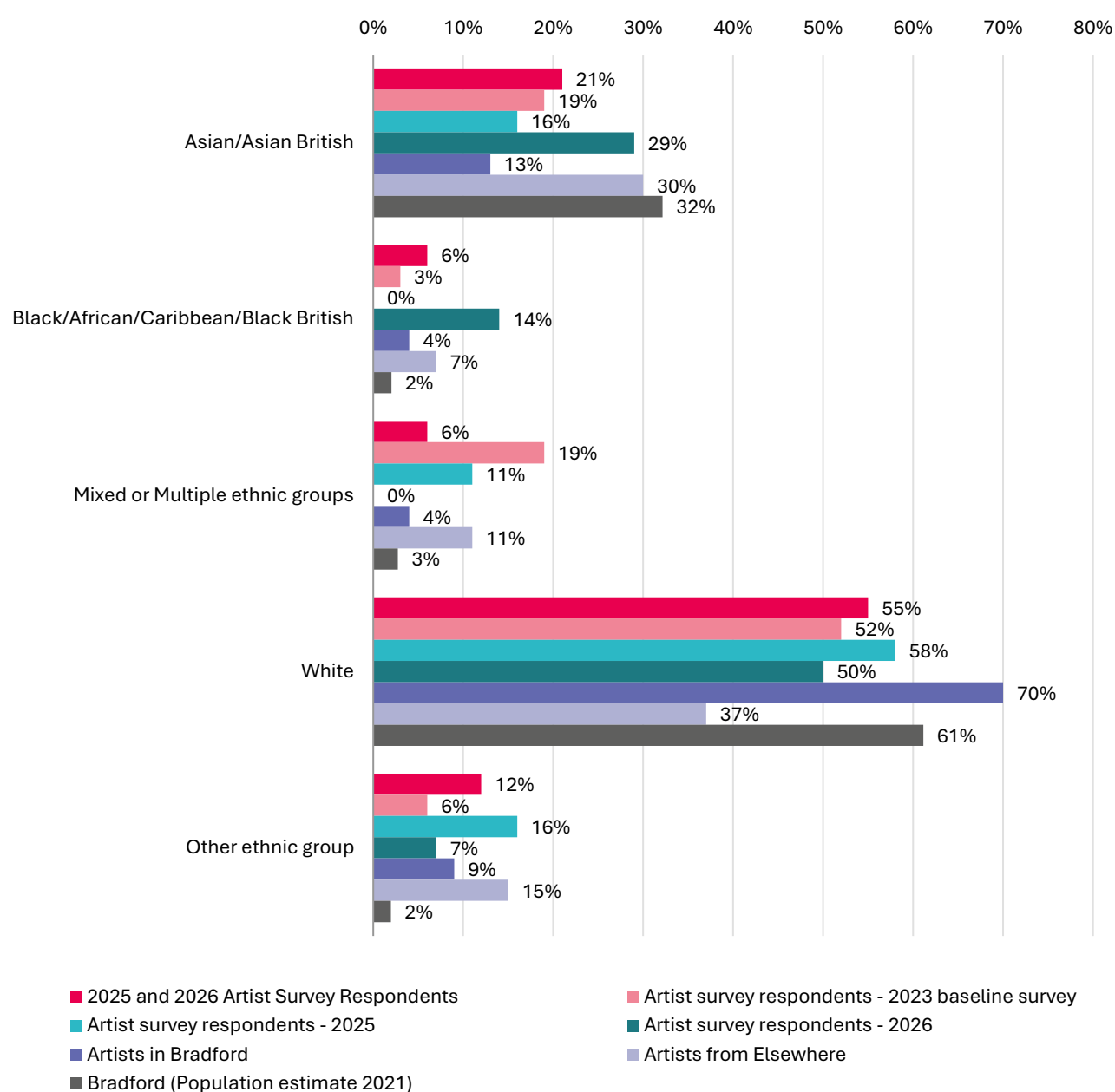


Base: 36 / 28 / 21 / 15 / 21 / 26 / 384,656

Margin of error: 16% / 18% / 20% / 25% / 20% / 19% / 0%

ETHNICITY

The responding artists that Bradford Arts Centre worked with were from a range of ethnic groups, with 55% identifying as White, 21% as Asian/Asian British, 12% as another ethnic group, 6% as Black/African/Caribbean/Black British and 6% as Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups. Compared to the 2023 baseline, more responding artists identified as Asian/Asian British: Pakistani (6% in 2025 and 2026 vs. 3% in 2023), Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Black Caribbean (6% in 2025 and 2026 vs. 3% in 2023) and as Other Ethnic Group: Latin American (3% in 2025 and 2026 vs. 0% in 2023).

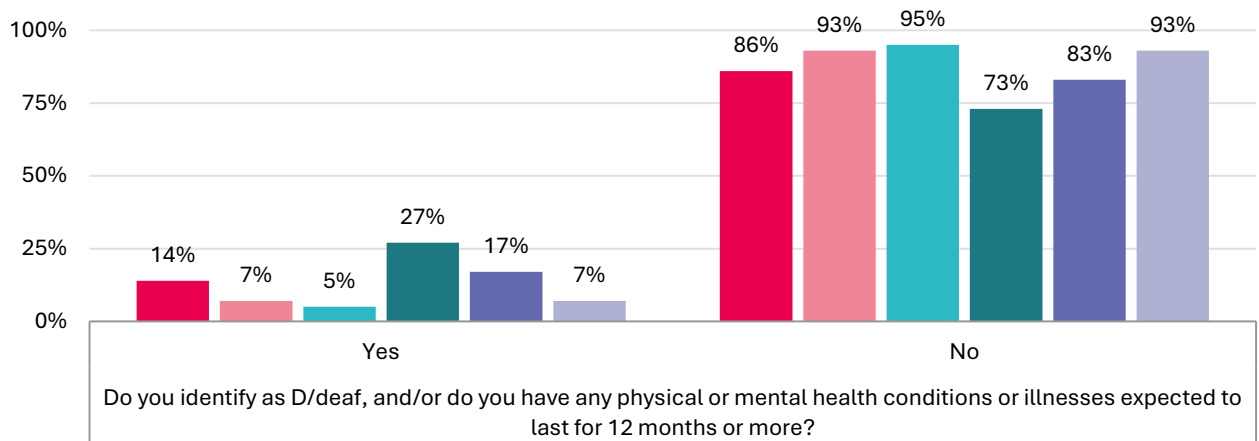


Base: 33 / 31 / 19 / 14 / 23 / 27 / 546,412

Margin of error: 17% / 18% / 22% / 26% / 19% / 18% / 0%

DISABILITY

Compared to the baseline, there was an increase in the number of responding artists working with Bradford Arts Centre that identified as D/deaf or had a physical or mental health condition/illness (14% in 2025 and 2026 vs. 7% in 2023).



■ 2025 and 2026 Artist Survey Respondents

■ Artist survey respondents - 2025

■ Artists in Bradford

■ Artist survey respondents - 2023 baseline survey

■ Artist survey respondents - 2026

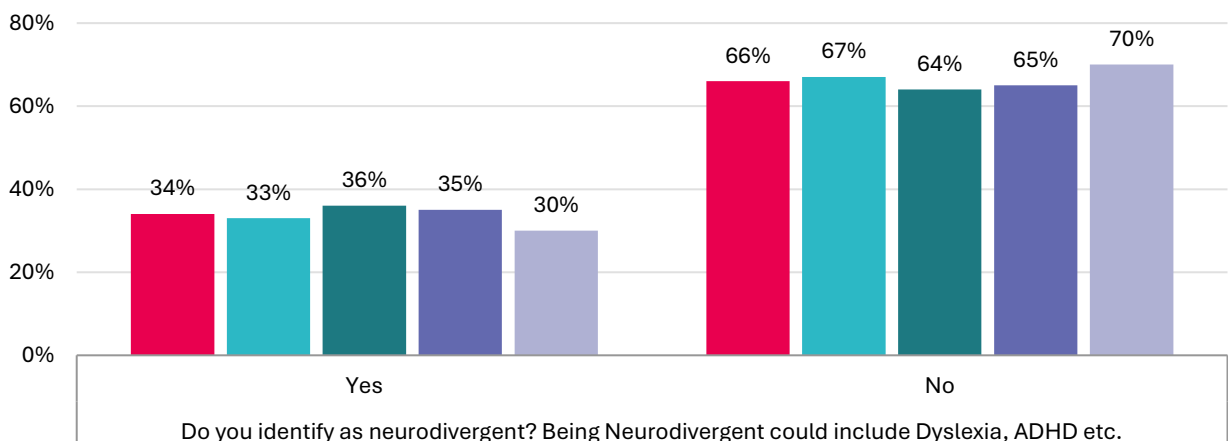
■ Artists from Elsewhere

Base: 35 / 30 / 20 / 15 / 23 / 27

Margin of error: 11% / 9% / 10% / 22% / 15% / 10%

NEURODIVERGENCE

Approximately one third of the responding artists identified as neurodivergent.



■ 2025 and 2026 Artist Survey Respondents

■ Artist survey respondents - 2026

■ Artists from Elsewhere

■ Artist survey respondents - 2025

■ Artists in Bradford

Base: 32 / 18 / 14 / 17 / 10

Margin of error: 16% / 22% / 25% / 23% / 28%

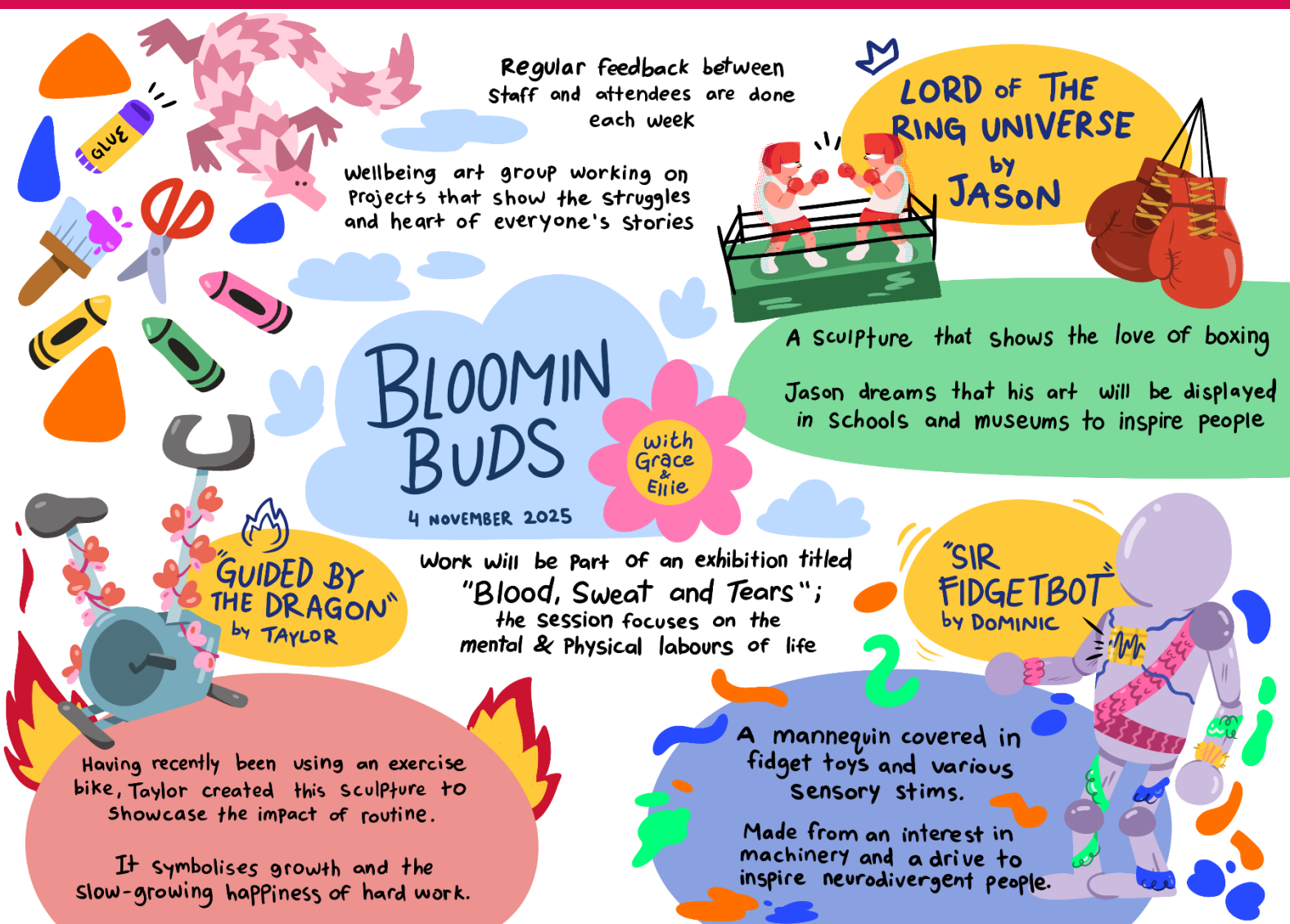


Illustration of a workshop at Bloomin' Buds by Nadya Girendroheru. Nadya is an artist, volunteer and community evaluator on the project.

3. Bradford Arts Centre

3.1 Heritage will be in a better condition.

INDICATOR: Successful completion of capital redevelopment and removal of access barrier/improvements to accessibility and inclusivity. Documentation of the process is captured and learning from all stages of the process is reflected.

The capital redevelopment process is explored in detail in the Capital Evaluation section of this report.

INDICATOR: Restoring historic records, photos and recordings that document the rich history of Bradford Arts Centre and St Peter's House.

The capital redevelopment of Bradford Arts Centre and St Peter's House has been accompanied by a significant programme of archival development and learning, ensuring that the building's heritage is preserved and made accessible to wider audiences and communities across Yorkshire.

While the physical redevelopment has improved access and inclusivity within the building, an equally important strand of work has focused on capturing, interpreting, and embedding the organisation's history within both digital and physical spaces so it is not lost for future generations.

This work employed an archivist, Alex Wilson, who was supported by three young graduates, who have been mentored throughout, contributing to skills development and future workforce capacity in heritage practice.

"For the period we were at Bank House, the archive project genuinely felt like oxygen. There were people there every day, Alex, volunteers, the team and it created real energy. It took on a life I never expected. For that time, it was a massive anchor to what we were and who we were, while also bringing in lots of new people. More than that, it revealed far more than we thought we had, it told a story we didn't expect to find. We discovered we actually had an archive of real depth and interest, preserving material that shows the richness of what was happening, including things that had never been properly recognised before."

Bradford Arts Centre staff member

Significant progress has been made in restoring and organising archival material at scale:

- Approximately 10,000 images digitised
- Nearly 300 hours of video material processed
- Around 2,000–3,000 documents scanned and catalogued
- Over 200 moving image assets made publicly accessible
- Hundreds of duplicate media items (CDs/DVDs) identified, logged, and digitised

The long-term aim remains for the physical archive to be housed with West Yorkshire Archive Service, ensuring its preservation and accessibility for future generations. A key principle underpinning this work has been to **“think legacy”**, ensuring the archive is not only preserved but meaningfully used over time.

There has been a strong shift towards embedding the archive physically and creatively within the new Arts Centre. Plans are underway to:

- Project thousands of digitised images throughout the building
- Install large-scale printed archival materials within the space
- Develop immersive installations using video and photographic content

This approach transforms the archive into a living, visible, and ever-present feature of the venue, rather than a resource accessed only online.

The redevelopment has gone beyond physical improvements to deliver a comprehensive and forward-looking heritage programme. While some ambitions, particularly around full digital integration, remain unrealised due to financial constraints, they have been reframed as part of a longer-term legacy approach.

Through large-scale digitisation, creative interpretation, workforce development, and plans for ongoing access, Bradford Arts Centre has:

- Safeguarded a substantial archive of cultural history
- Increased public engagement with heritage through creative formats
- Embedded archival material within West Yorkshire Archive
- Created a strong foundation for future development and access
- Supported three young archivists to realise their dream in the sector

Crucially, the emphasis on **“thinking legacy”** ensures that this work will continue to evolve, with further opportunities to expand access, interpretation, and use of the archive in the years ahead.

“We have been on that journey where we started this, and we were talking about a heritage building, and now we're talking about intangible cultural heritage, the stories of people going there.”

Bradford Arts Centre staff member

3.2 Heritage will be identified and better explained. [Heritage Fund]

INDICATOR: Audiences engage with heritage artistic outcomes and report feeling more connected with their cultural heritage and/or learning about the heritage of others because of attending events.

At the outset of the archive project, the team anticipated creating a series of films for screening at Bradford Arts Centre. However, as the programme developed, the creative focus shifted towards visual arts and live performance, and these screenings did not take place. Instead, the team developed Archive Adventures, a digital storytelling project that achieved significant online reach.

Through this initiative, over 300 hours of moving image material were digitised and made publicly accessible via the **Bradford Arts Centre YouTube channel**. Archive Adventures has created a rich and accessible digital archive of Bradford Arts Centre's performances and participatory work spanning the past 30 years, ensuring this material is preserved and available to wider audiences.

A total of 26 episodes were produced and released in 2025 across TikTok, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn, generating a combined 55,639 views, with the strongest engagement seen on TikTok and Instagram.

Archive Adventures has just been accepted into the Yorkshire Film Archive, so has now been officially preserved. and was also featured in April 2026 at Yorkshire Film Archives' Screentime Showcase at Yorkshire's largest independent cinema, Pictureville.



Episode	YouTube	Instagram	Facebook	LinkedIn	TikTok
Episode 1: Intro	164	1,064	1519	79	1,292
Episode 2: Ian Beasley	73	585	1,544	52	1,123
Episode 3: Kala Pal	48	852	355	23	803
Episode 4: Upasana and Kala Sangam Murals	69	945	244	18	951
Episode 5: Creative Director - Alex Croft	66	914	264	57	868
Episode 6: Jaivant Patel	75	971	255	23	506
Episode 7: Tony O'Connell	189	271	267	20	981
Episode 8: Arts & Heritage Project with u3a	166	416	293	68	1,834
Episode 9: Bradford Community Broadcasting	20	630	443	57	877
Episode 10: Balbir Singh	246	501	501	80	856
Episode 11: Ifty and Sidra	27	497	314	38	871
Episode 12: Vijay Venkat	238	827	196	29	745
Episode 13: Education and Outreach	34	604	511	19	378
Episode 14: Pavan	45	467	225	52	1,122
Episode 15: Bradford Cathedral	175	637	243	35	838
Episode 16: Rashmi Sudhir	59	1,148	1258	62	450
Episode 17: Razwan Ul-Haq	59	668	297	75	1,081
Episode 18: Zareena Bano	42	547	254		430
Episode 19: Dr Geetha meets the Queen	29	341	1,058	109	255
Episode 20: Helen Linsell (Dance United Yorkshire)	45	989	551	21	293
Episode 21: Dr Shripati Upadhyaya	193	487	157	31	703
Episode 22: Our Time at Bank House	29	835	366	47	472
Episode 23: The Big Build	24	403	746	209	1,346
Episode 24: The Big Build	21	828	134	45	999
Episode 25: In The Beginning...	19	535	165	68	629
Episode 26: A big thank you!	21	844	341	222	914
TOTALS	2,176	17,806	12,501	1,539	21,617

INDICATOR: Audiences engage with heritage of Bradford Arts Centre and St Peter's House and report learning something new as a result of attending events or seeing themselves represented.

Following the opening of Bradford Arts Centre, the hubs' heritage stories became the focus of a major exhibition created in partnership with u3a and WomenZone, which will remain in situ until 2027. Told through visual art, photography, collage, poetry and a wide range of creative forms, the exhibition fills the public spaces of Bradford Arts Centre with colourful and richly layered stories celebrating Bradford's heritage and communities.

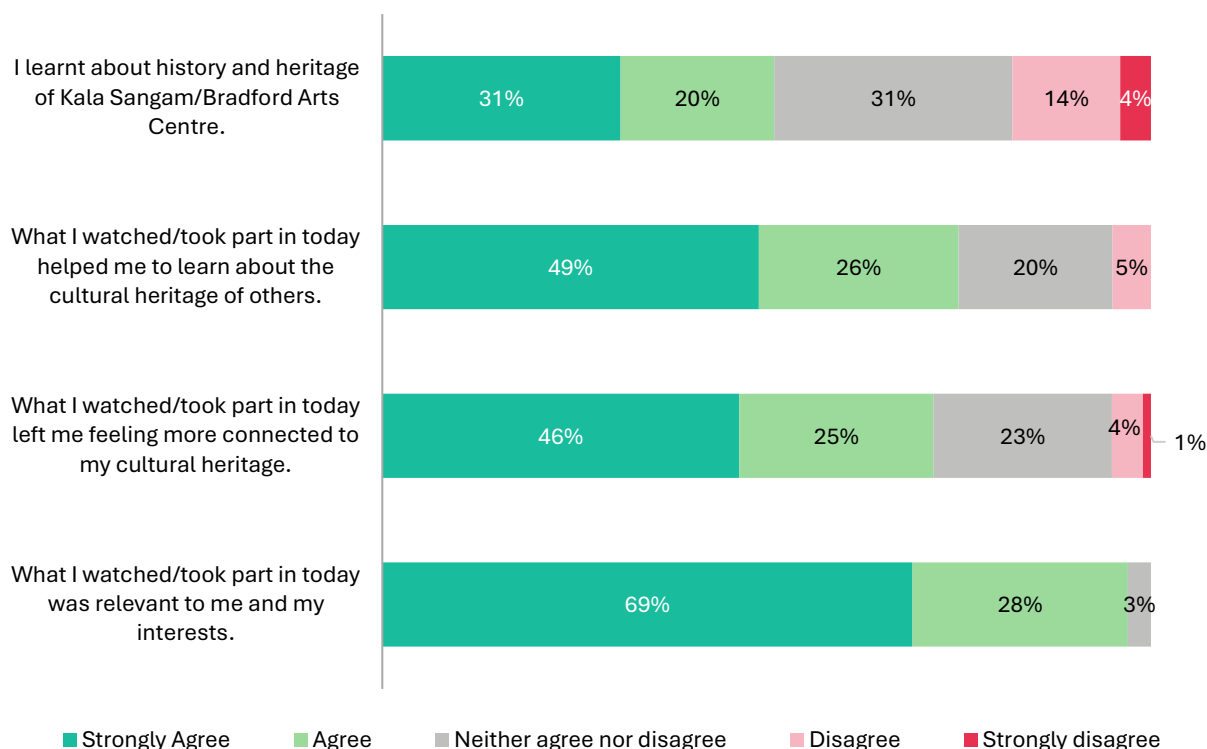
The work creates an opportunity for audiences to experience diverse voices and perspectives from across the district, embedding community heritage at the heart of the building. Since opening, projected footfall figures are estimated at 20,000 visitors, with anticipated audience numbers expected to exceed 100,000 over the lifetime of the exhibition.

CONNECTION WITH HERITAGE AND CULTURE AT BRADFORD ARTS CENTRE SINCE REOPENING

Visitors to the reopened Bradford Arts Centre reported through the visitor survey feeling more connected with their cultural heritage and learned more about the heritage of others.

- 51% of responding visitors learnt about history and heritage of Kala Sangam/ Bradford Arts Centre as part of their visit
- 75% of responding visitors felt that what they watched or took part in during their visit helped them to learn about the cultural heritage of others
- 71% of responding visitors felt that what they watched or took part in during their visit left them feeling more connected to their own cultural heritage
- 97% of responding visitors felt that what they watched or took part in as part of their visit was relevant to them and their interests

Thinking about your recent visit to Bradford Arts Centre, how strongly do you agree, or disagree with each of these statements?



Base: 246 / 268 / 256 / 272

Margin of error: 6% / 6% / 6% / 5%

INDICATOR: Staff describe how the archive communicates and shares the heritage of Bradford Arts Centre and St Peter's House.

Staff describe a clear shift in understanding the archive as not only a record of the building, but as a vehicle for sharing lived experience and intangible cultural heritage. The archive has become central to how heritage is communicated, particularly during the transition from Kala Sangam to Bradford Arts Centre.

“We’ve been on a journey from talking about heritage as the building itself to now understanding it as intangible cultural heritage, the stories of the people connected to it... those stories of people from Bradford have always been there... we’re just much better at recognising and communicating that now.”

Bradford Arts Centre staff member

Staff also reflected that the archive project revealed unexpected depth in the organisation's history, strengthening identity and storytelling:

"We did it. The archive project was another miracle... I didn't really understand it, and it was brilliant."

Bradford Arts Centre staff member

There is a stronger understanding of heritage and how it is relevant to our past and our future.

"If we are making, as we have always done, the claim that we're about being relevant to the communities that we serve, then we have to, at some level, even if it's just instinctive, get heritage, because it has to find its way through the work that we do, otherwise you become irrelevant, and then you go out of business."

Bradford Arts Centre staff member

INDICATOR: Staff and volunteers describe developing new skills and knowledge around heritage interpretation.

Staff and volunteers developed significant new skills in archive interpretation, digitisation, and heritage storytelling. This included working directly with historical materials such as photographs, documents, architectural plans, and institutional records, and translating these into public-facing content.

Key areas of learning included:

- Understanding what an archive is and how it can support organisational storytelling and rebranding
- Developing confidence in using archival material for communications, including video and social media outputs via Archive Adventures
- Emerging skills in file management, digitisation processes, and digital preservation practices
- Increased awareness of heritage interpretation within funding and strategic contexts

The project also enabled skills development among trainees and volunteers through hands-on experience in cataloguing, digitisation, and collection management. Of the three trainee archivists, two have progressed into further professional roles in archives and heritage, demonstrating clear progression pathways supported by the project.

“Hannah went on to a job, crediting this experience as important for her CV. Emma went to Northwest Film Archive for a six-month project, and later worked on oral history and another lottery-funded project. Nathan (artist/photographer) stayed in contact and will be involved in the closing phase and events, including public-facing work.”

Archive team

INDICATOR: Participant co-creators/co-curators report feeling more connected with their cultural heritage and/or learning about the heritage of others.

The archive has played a key role in strengthening connections between participants and local cultural heritage. By surfacing previously unseen or under-recognised material, it has enabled both staff and participants to engage more deeply with the history of Bradford and its communities.

The archive process revealed stories that were not widely known or previously articulated, reshaping understanding of local heritage and identity. This has supported a stronger sense of connection among those involved, as well as greater recognition of the richness of the organisation’s cultural history.

“It was great to work on this project, seeing how it resonated with the general public and helped us reach wider communities through videos like Ian Beesley’s, Bradford Cathedral’s and local artists and our staff. I’d only been here a year when I started the project, so it was a great tool to help me learn about the history of the organisation from the people who lived it before me.”

Bradford Arts Centre staff member

Across staff, volunteers, and participants, the archive has become a central tool for heritage interpretation, storytelling, and identity. It has strengthened organisational understanding of intangible heritage, developed new professional skills across teams, and surfaced previously hidden narratives that deepen connection to place and community.

3.3 Cultural and physical barriers to accessing the building are removed, and the new building feels safe and welcoming to local people.

INDICATOR: Successful completion of capital redevelopment and removal of access barriers/improvements to accessibility and inclusivity. Documentation of the process is captured and learning from all stages of the process is reflected.

All core intended adaptations to the building to increase access and remove barriers have been delivered by the project:

- An enlarged entrance foyer on the ground floor with central access directly off the street
- Provision of new multi-use spaces
- The project delivered five new studio spaces, surpassing the original target of four, which now provide a base for hosting artists, education initiatives, and a range of creative and community activities
- New entrances to improve accessibility to the foyer and an extended fire escape platform to the rear of the building
- A new full passenger (evacuation) lift installed in accordance with existing regulations and standards
- New stairs and lift provided within the same location as the substandard platform lift

The capital process is explored in detail in the Capital Evaluation section of this report.

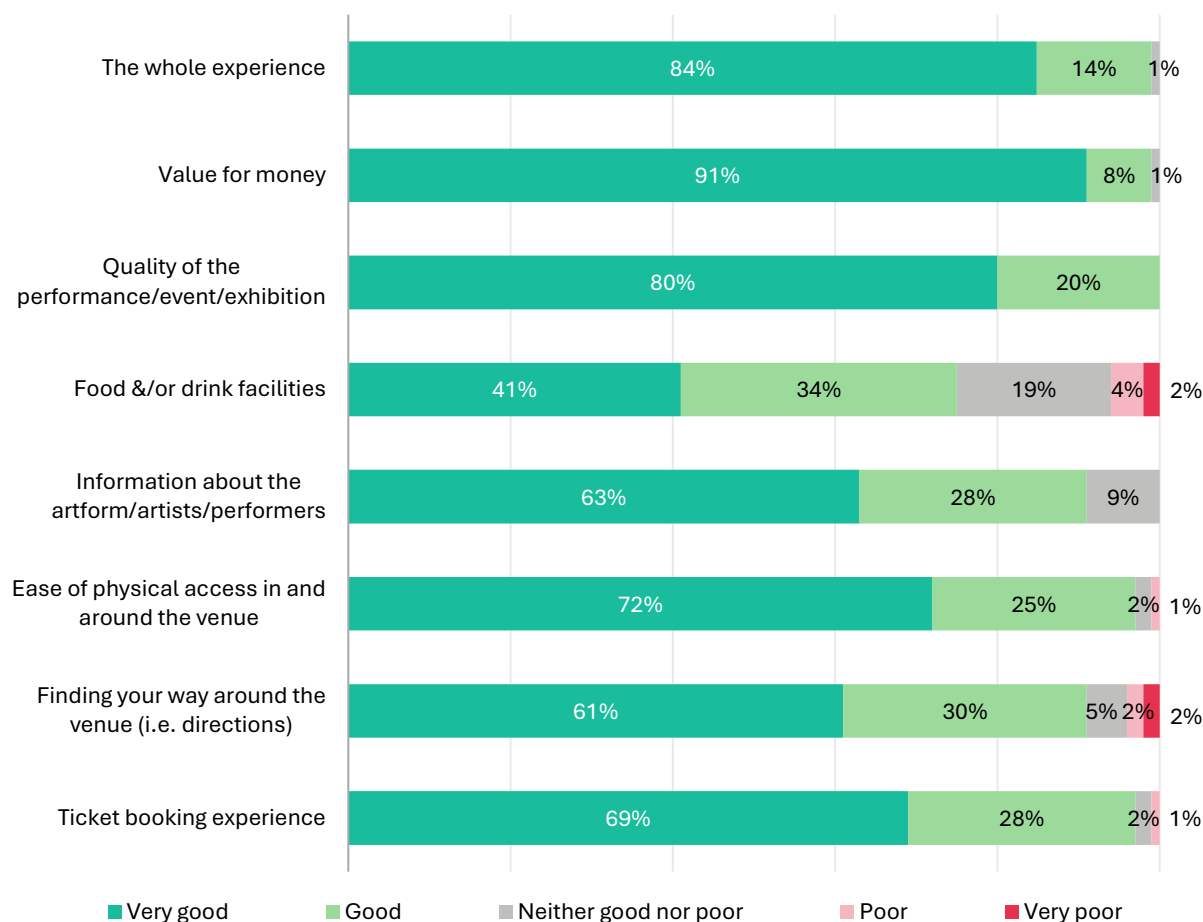
EXPERIENCE AT BRADFORD ARTS CENTRE

Just over half of visitors responding to the survey since reopening were from Bradford (52%) with the rest (48%) from elsewhere. Visitors to the newly reopened Bradford Arts Centre responding to the survey shared positive feedback about their experience:

- 99% felt the whole experience was very good or good
- 99% felt the value for money was very good or good
- 100% felt the quality of the performance, event or exhibition was very good or good
- 75% felt the food and/or drink facilities were very good or good
- 97% felt the ease of physical access in and around the venue was very good or good

- 91% felt that finding their way around the venue (i.e. directions) was very good or good
- 97% found the ticket booking experience to be very good or good

Thinking about your recent visit to Bradford Arts Centre, how would you rate the following:



Base: 270 / 267 / 261 / 204 / 88 / 265 / 264 / 253

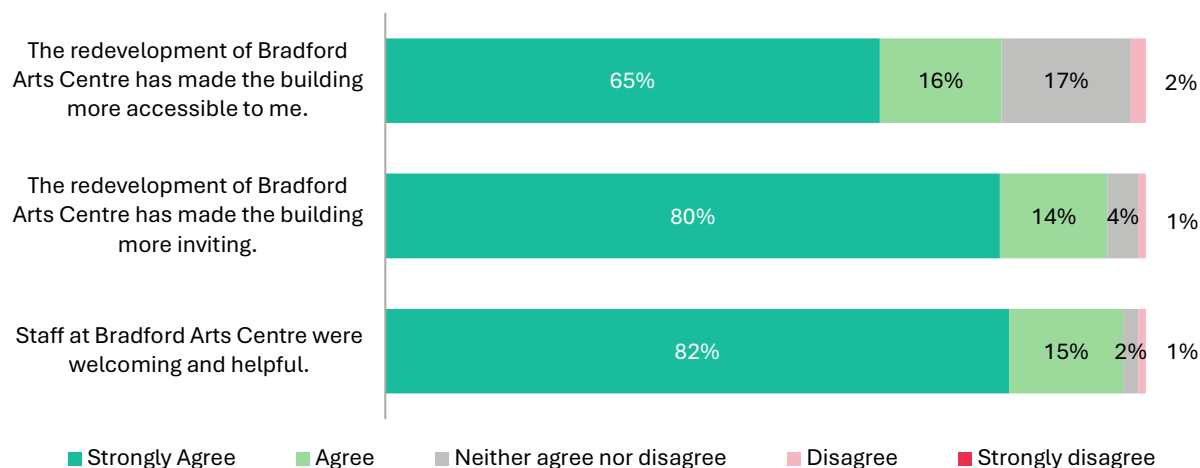
Margin of error: 4% / 3% / 5% / 7% / 10% / 5% / 6% / 6%

ACCESS & WELCOME AT BRADFORD ARTS CENTRE

Visitors felt that the redevelopment has made the building more accessible and welcoming to them.

- 81% strongly agreed or agreed that the redevelopment of Bradford Arts Centre made the building more accessible to them
- 94% strongly agreed or agreed that the redevelopment of Bradford Arts Centre made the building more inviting
- 97% strongly agreed or agreed that the staff at Bradford Arts Centre were welcoming and helpful during their visit

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?



Base: 238 / 250 / 273

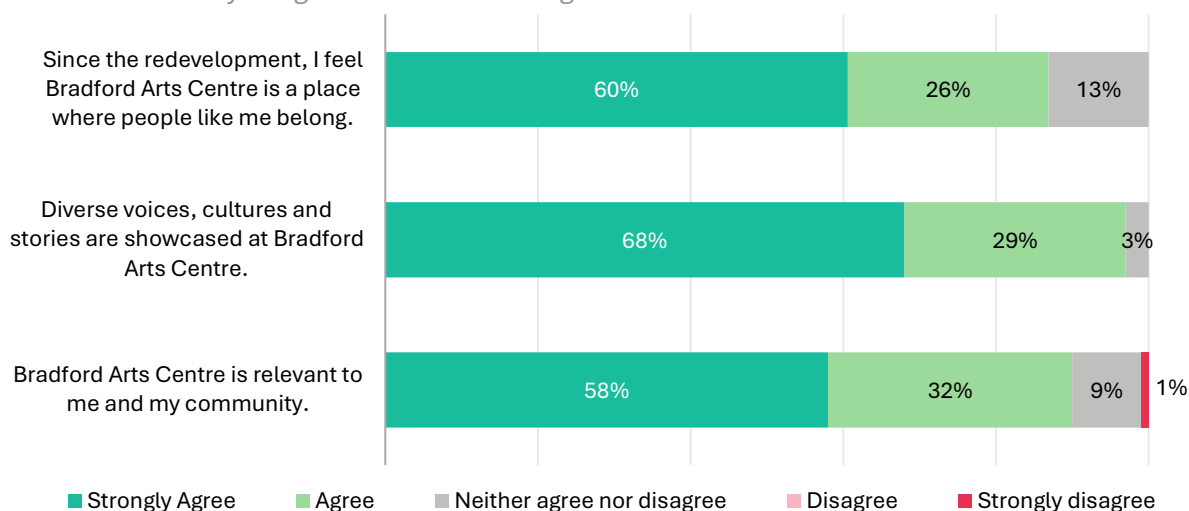
Margin of error: 6% / 5% / 5%

RELEVANCE TO ME AND SENSE OF BELONGING AT BRADFORD ARTS CENTRE

Almost all survey respondents since the reopening of Bradford Arts Centre agreed that they feel a sense of belonging, that the organisation is relevant to them and their community and showcases diverse voices.

- 86% strongly agreed or agreed that 'Since the redevelopment, I feel Bradford Arts Centre is a place where people like me belong'
- 97% strongly agreed or agreed that 'Diverse voices, cultures and stories are showcased at Bradford Arts Centre'
- 90% strongly agreed or agreed that 'Bradford Arts Centre is relevant to me and my community'

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?



Base: 256 / 268 / 255 / 226 / 265

Margin of error: 6% / 6% / 6% / 6% / 6%

INDICATOR: Increased audience/participant engagement with new building.

Visitor footfall at Bradford Arts Centre has been estimated since the installation of footfall counters in November 2025. Estimates put total footfall (minus staff) for the six months from November 2025 to April 2026 at **81,220** and estimated individuals (minus staff) at **74,343**.

Month	Footfall figure (minus estimated visits for staff per month)	Footfall figure for individual people (minus estimated visits for staff per month)
Nov-25	26,366	23,579
Dec-25	8,167	7,325
Jan-26	7,995	6,964
Feb-26	12,166	11,805
Mar-26	14,906	13,629
Apr-26	11,619	11,042
Total	81,220	74,343

The methodology for these estimates is explained in Appendix IV.

In addition to total footfall and visitors estimates, the total number of individual tickets sold per month between opening in October 2025 and April 2026 is as follows. This shows a significant peak in the opening months of October and November 2025 and then a drop with numbers rising again in April 2026.

Month	Tickets sold for events in given month
Oct-25	2,285
Nov-25	1,061
Dec-25	272
Jan-26	109
Feb-26	224
Mar-26	181
Apr-26	429
Total	4,561

Visitor profile at Bradford Arts Centre since reopening

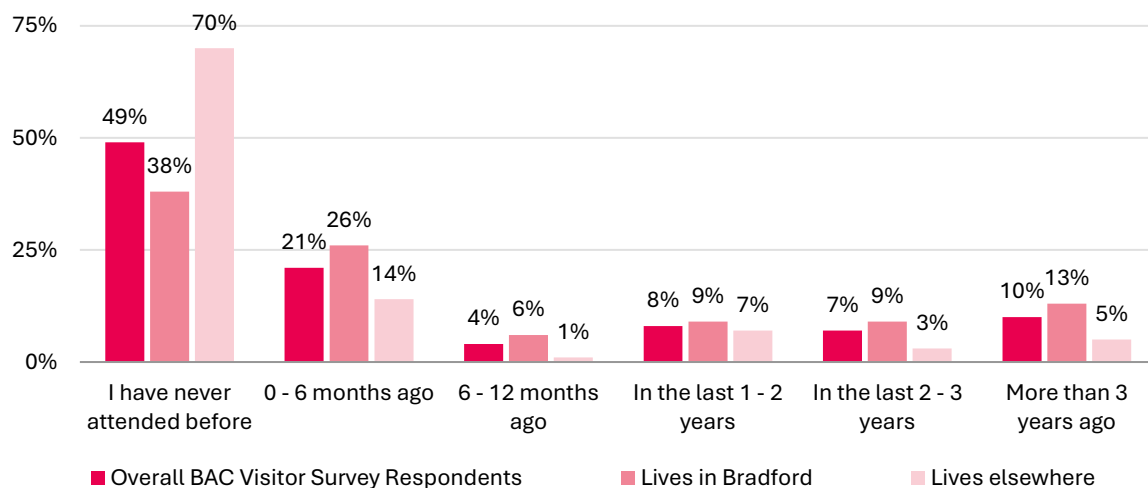
Also supports: 1.3 More than 20k people in total, from least-engaged communities within walking distance of Kala Sangam will engage in heritage activities and outcomes: 10k people will engage directly in one heritage activity. 10k people will engage in heritage outcomes.

[Heritage Fund]

PREVIOUS VISITS TO BRADFORD ARTS CENTRE

Since the building reopening, Bradford Arts Centre has attracted 49% new visitors and 51% returning visitors – suggested a strong mix of existing and new audiences on which to develop. Returning visitors include a mix of those who have more recent visits (21% of visitors had been within the previous six months) and lapsed visitors (17% of visitors had last visited over two years ago).

Before this recent visit, when, if at all, did you previously visit Bradford Arts Centre (formerly Kala Sangam)?



Base: 260 / 94 / 88

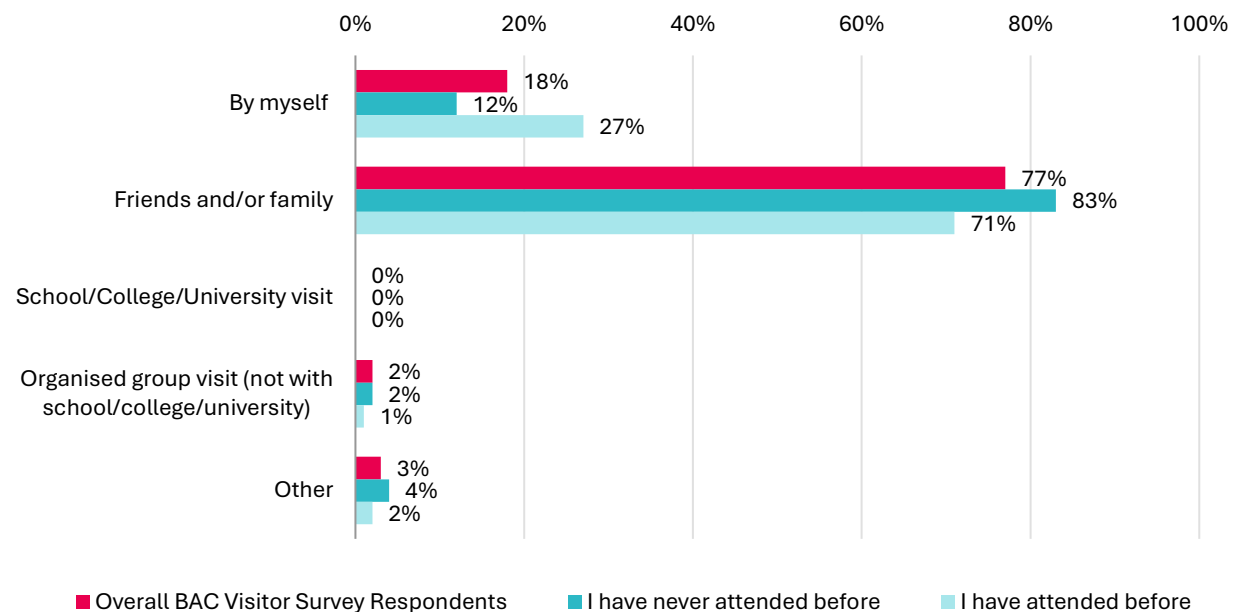
Margin of error: 6% / 10% / 10%

ATTENDANCE GROUP

Visitors were especially likely to visit with friends and/or family (77%) – in particular first-time visitors (83%). 18% visited alone, with repeat visitors far more likely to do so (27%) than first time visitors (12%).

23% overall visited with children. Those who live in Bradford were much more likely to have children in their group (44%) than those who live outside (11%).

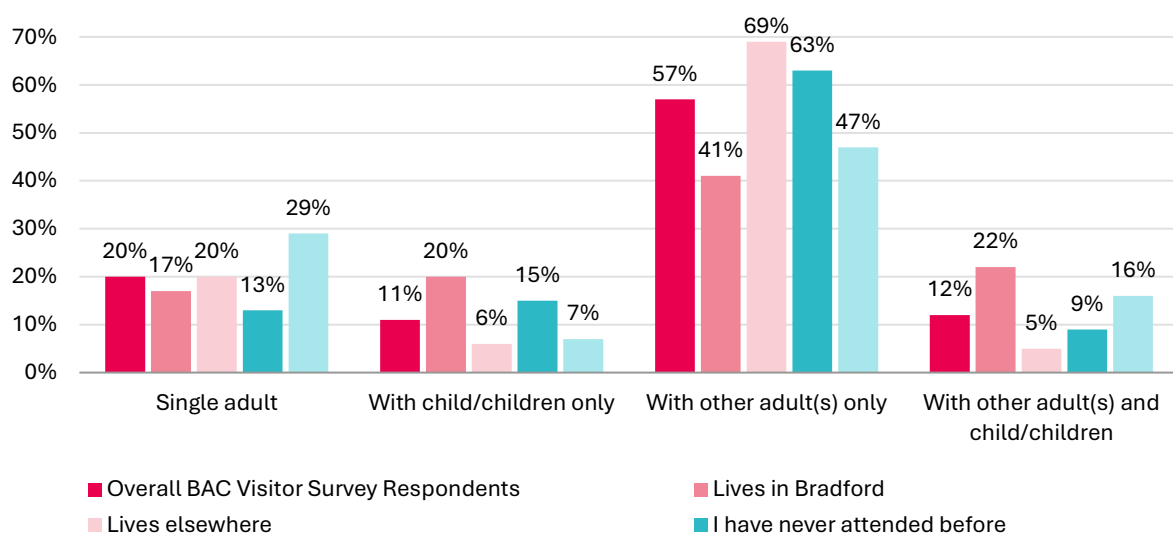
Who did you attend with?



Base: 264 / 114 / 123

Margin of error: 6% / 9% / 9%

Group type



Base: 264 / 93 / 80 / 114 / 123

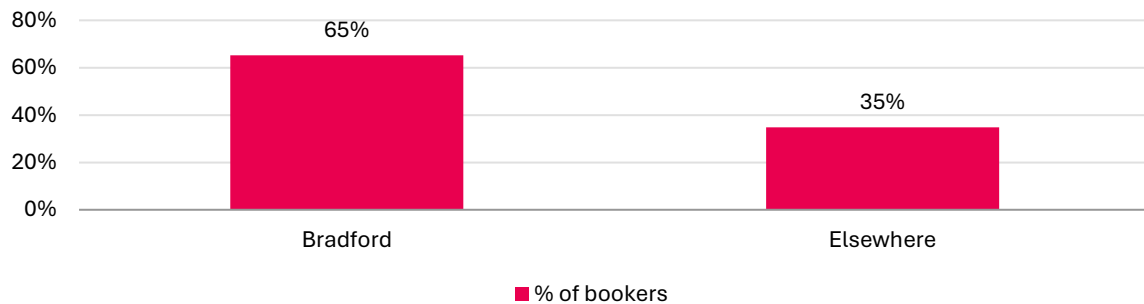
Margin of error: 6% / 10% / 10% / 9% / 9%

VISITOR LOCATION

2% of survey respondents visiting Bradford Arts Centre since reopening live outside the UK.

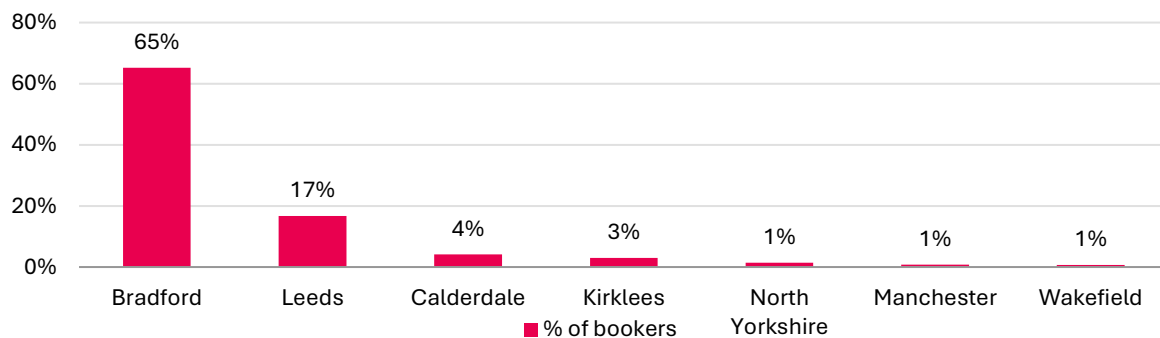
Amongst bookers since the reopening of Bradford Arts Centre (September 2025 to March 2026) 65% live in Bradford local authority and 35% elsewhere, showing a strong local pull. Those from outside Bradford were most likely to live in Leeds. Top Wards were Shipley, City, Heaton, and Bolton and Undercliffe.

Bookers: Bradford vs elsewhere

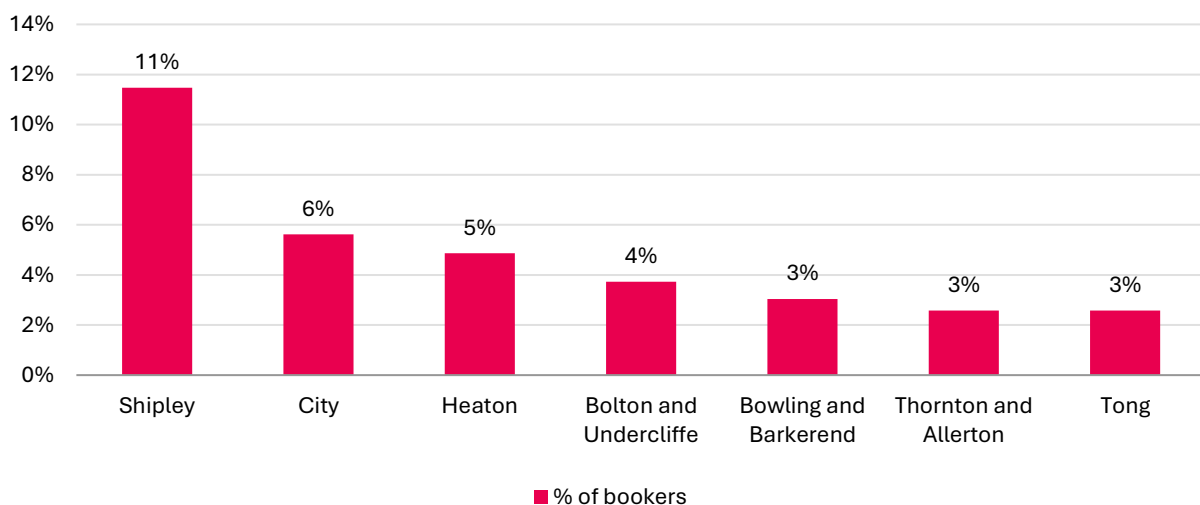


Base: 1,316

Bookers: Top local authorities



Bookers: Top bookers

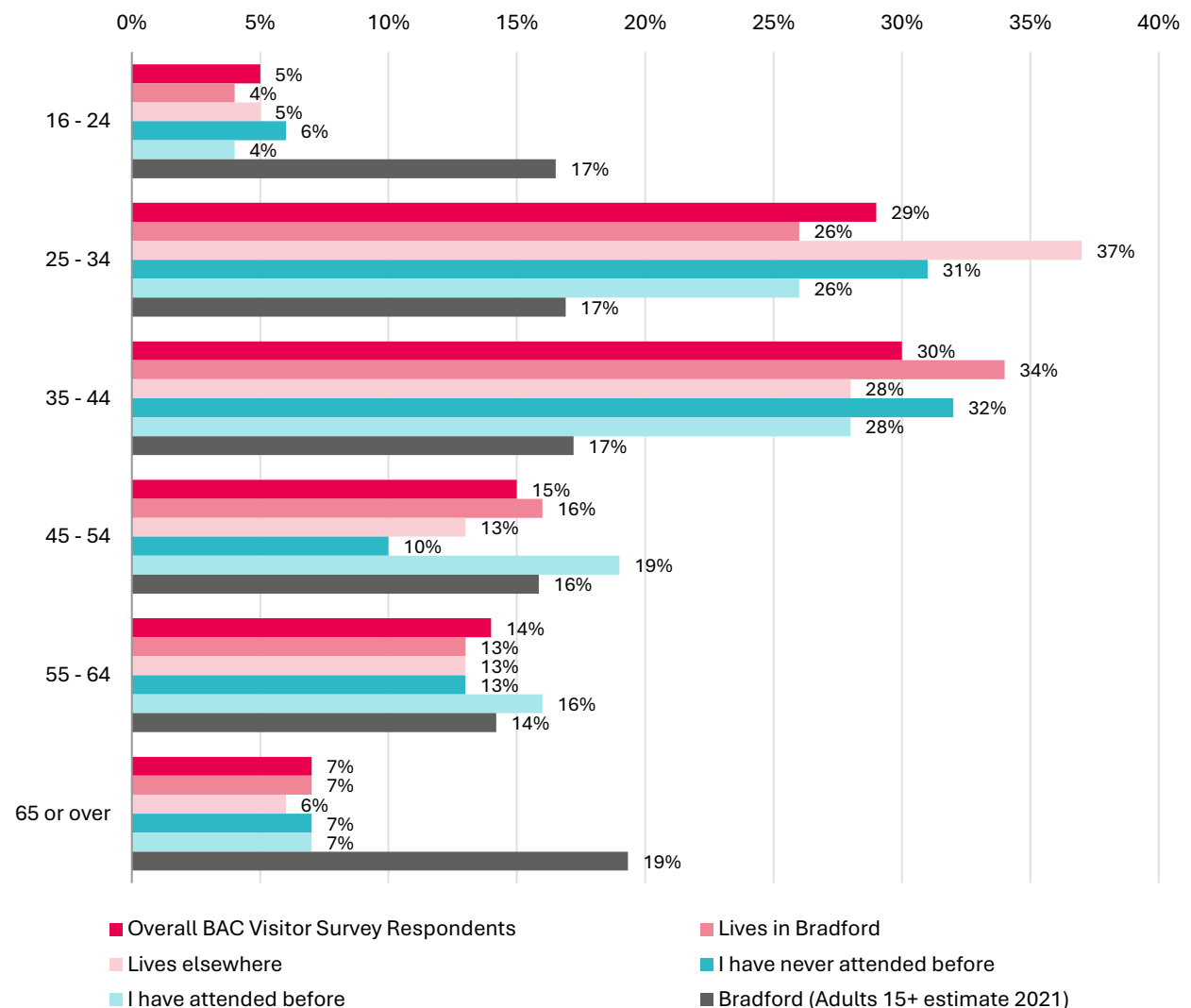


AGE

Responding visitors were most likely to be between the ages of 35-44 (30% of respondents vs. 17% of the Bradford population) or between 25-34 (29% of respondents vs. 17% of the Bradford population). Of Bradford-based respondents, an especially high 34% were aged 35-44. Those visiting from elsewhere were especially likely to be aged 25-34 (37%).

Compared to previous Audience Finder survey data from Kala Sangam for 2022/23, this age profile has shown some significant shifts. Notably, there has been a large increase in the % aged 25-34 (13% in 22/23 compared to 29% here) and those aged 35-44 (22% in 22/23 compared to 30% here). And then a corresponding decrease amongst older groups in % terms: 45-54 (15% here compared to 24% in 22/23), 55-64 (14% here/23% in 22/23) and 65+ (7% here/14% in 22/23).

What is your age?

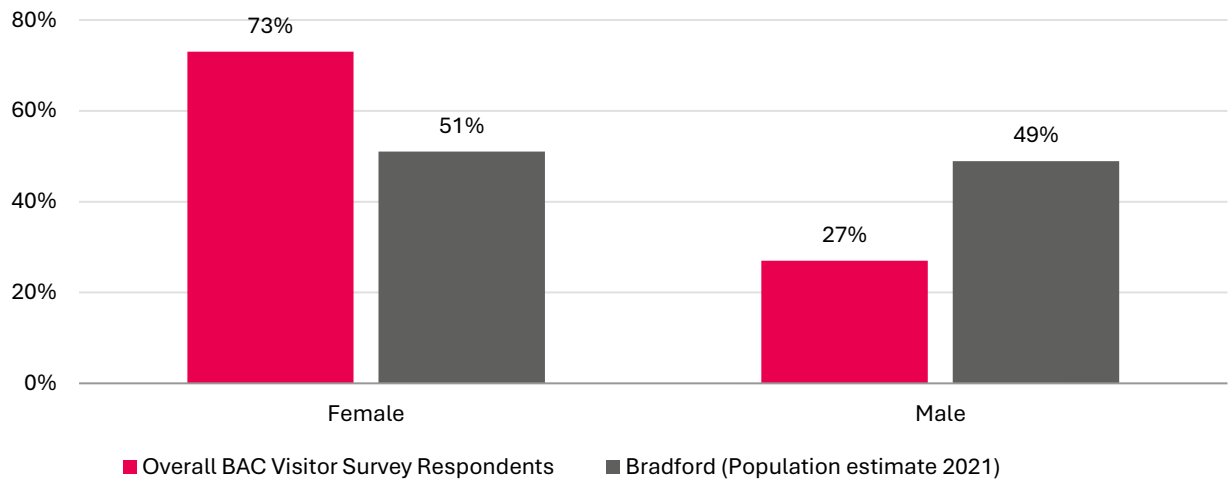


Base: 254 / 94 / 87 / 124 / 123 / 429,410
Margin of error: 6% / 10% / 10% / 8% / 8% / 0%

SEX AND TRANS STATUS

Nearly three quarters of responding visitors (73%) were female (slightly lower than Kala Sangam's 2022/23 Audience Finder results when 78% were female) and 3% did not have the same gender as the sex they were assigned at birth.

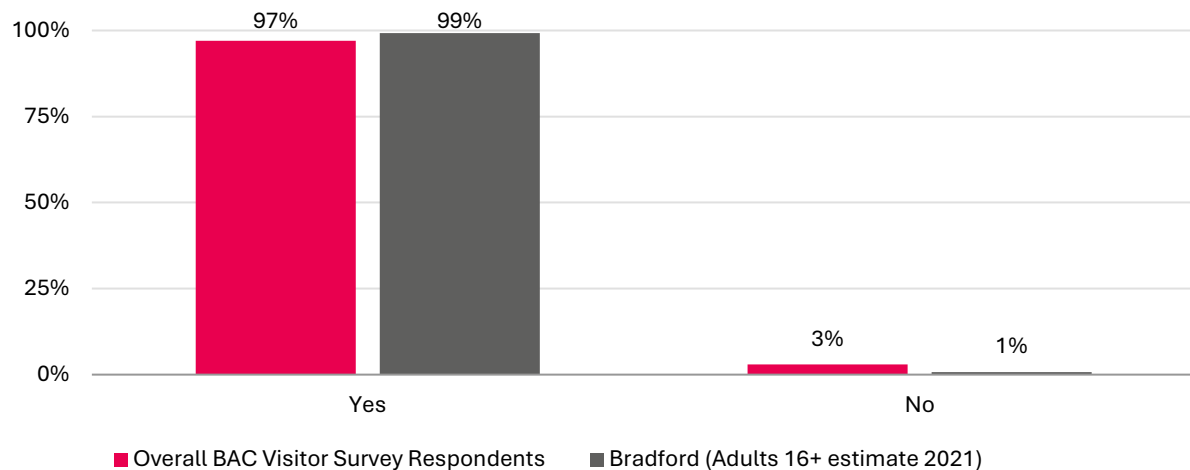
What is your sex?



Base: 253 / 546,412

Margin of error: 5% / 0%

Is your gender the same as the sex you were assigned at birth?



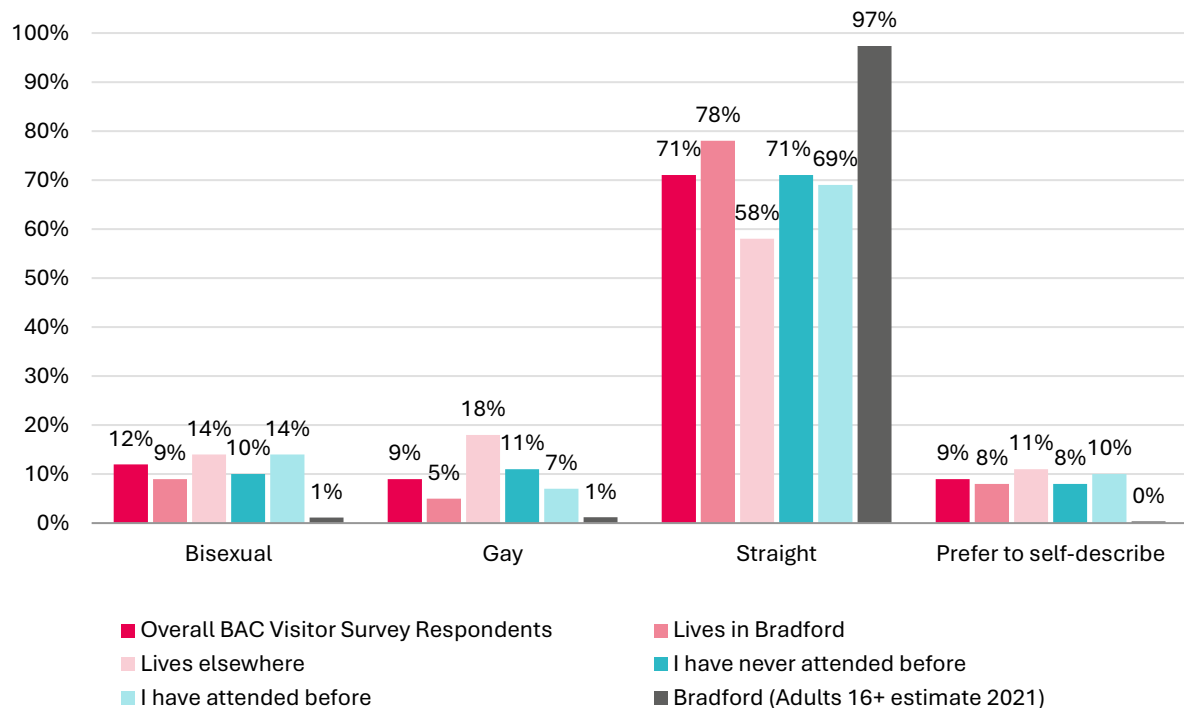
Base: 247 / 389,660

Margin of error: 2% / 0%

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

71% of visitors to Bradford Arts Centre since reopening identified as straight, 12% as bisexual, 9% as gay and 9% prefer to self-describe. Visitors from outside Bradford were less likely than those who live in Bradford to identify as straight.

How would you describe your sexual orientation?



Base: 233 / 88 / 80 / 112 / 117

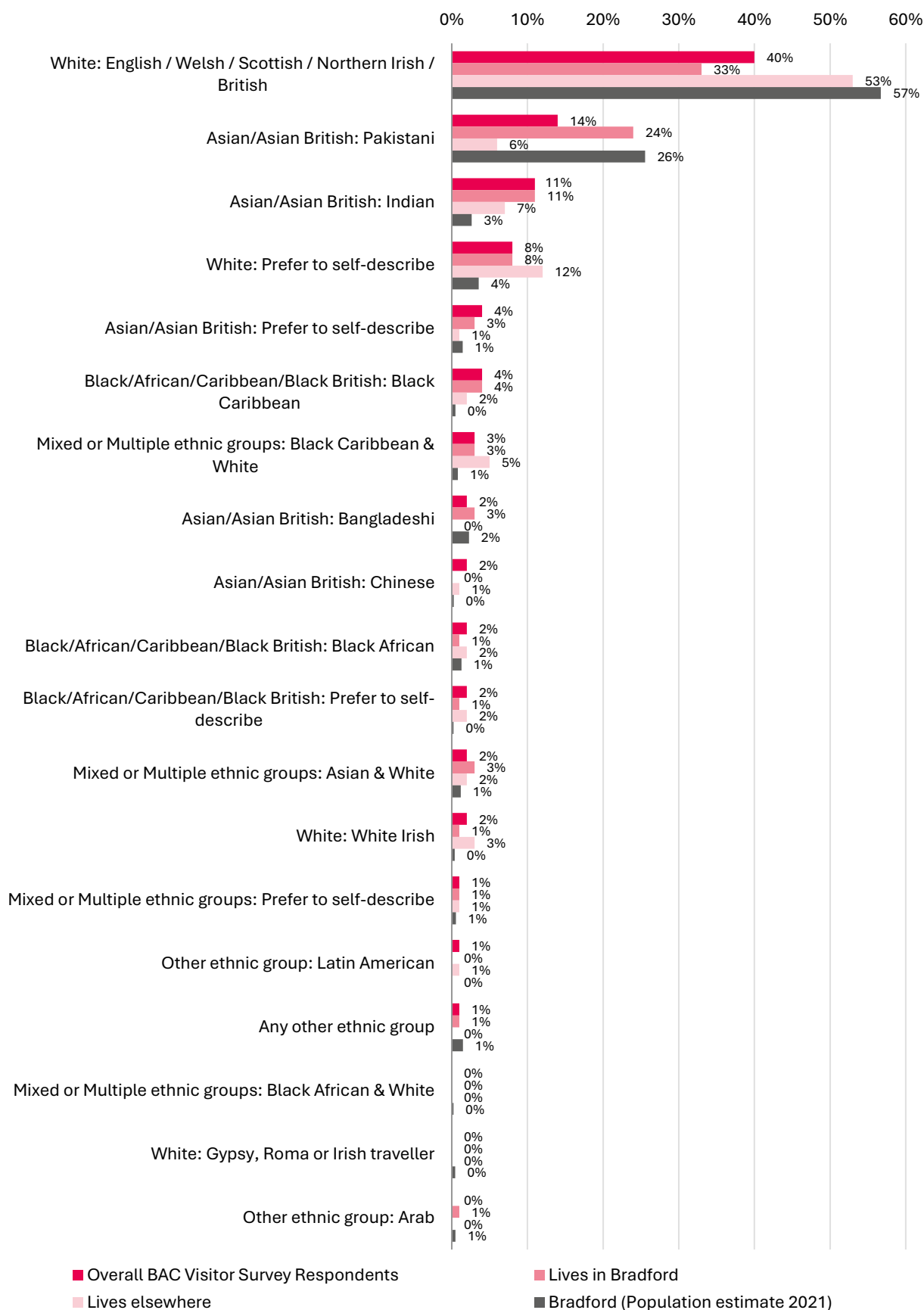
Margin of error: 6% / 9% / 11% / 8% / 8%

ETHNICITY

40% of responding visitors identified as White: English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British, followed by 14% as Asian/Asian British: Pakistani and 11% as Asian/Asian British: Indian. Amongst respondents based in Bradford, just under one quarter of respondents (24%) identified as Asian/Asian British: Pakistani (compared to 26% of the Bradford population).

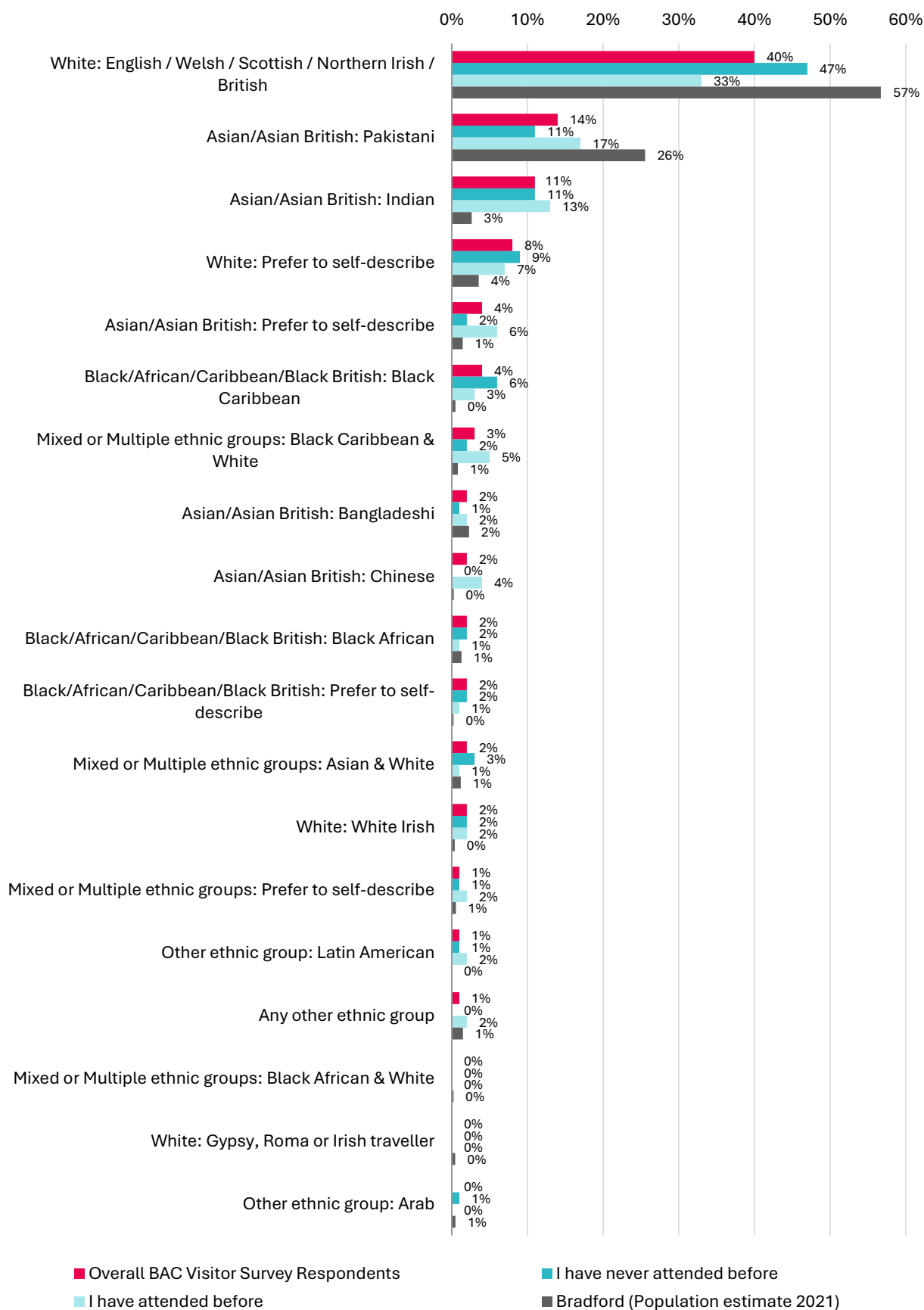
Compared to top level results from the 2022/23 Kala Sangam Audience Answers survey, more ethnic diversity is evident amongst visitors. In 22/23, 22% identified as Asian/Asian British compared to 33% here; and 1% as Black/African/Caribbean/Black British compared to 8% here; with Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups the same in both 22/23 and here at 6%.

With which ethnicity do you identify? (Select one only) – by location



Base: 257 / 96 / 86 / 546,412
Margin of error: 6% / 9% / 11% / 0%

With which ethnicity do you identify? (Select one only) – by previous attendance



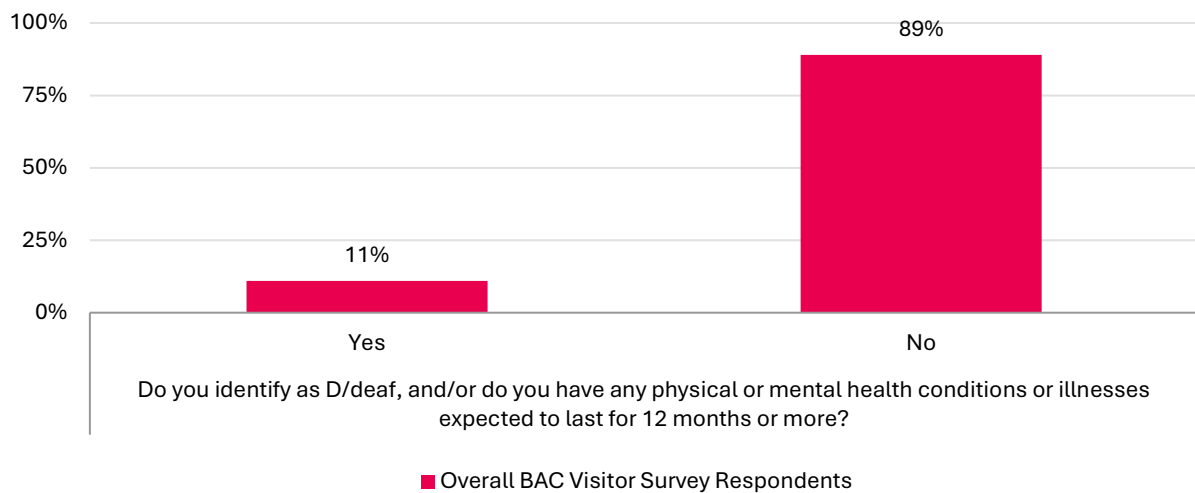
Base: 257 / 123 / 126 / 546,412

Margin of error: 6% / 9% / 8% / 0%

DISABILITY AND NEURODIVERGENCE

The majority of responding visitors to Bradford Arts Centre (89%) did not identify as D/deaf or have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses (similar to 90% in 2022/23). Just under one third (30%) of responding visitors identified as neurodivergent.

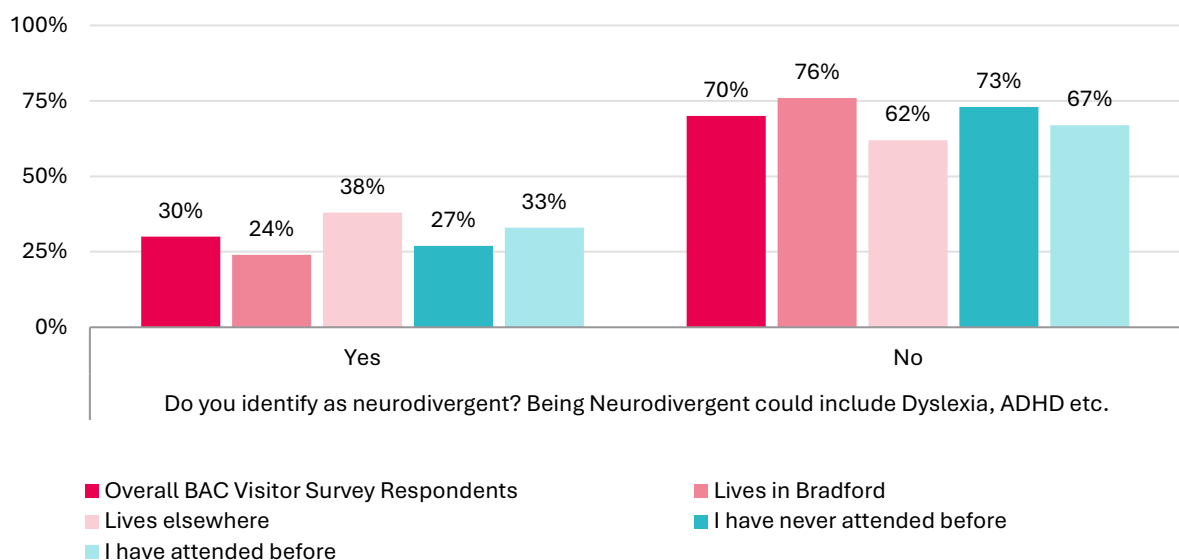
Do you identify as D/deaf, and/or do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses expected to last for 12 months or more?



Base: 245

Margin of error: 4%

Do you identify as neurodivergent? Being Neurodivergent could include Dyslexia, ADHD etc.



Base: 249 / 92 / 85 / 119 / 123

Margin of error: 6% / 9% / 10% / 8% / 8%

AUDIENCE SPECTRUM PROFILE AT BRADFORD ARTS CENTRE SINCE REOPENING

The Audience Spectrum profile of bookers at Bradford Arts Centre (September 2025 to March 2026) has been created using booker postcodes and is shown for overall bookers and just those living in Bradford, compared to the Bradford population.

The profile, particularly for bookers in Bradford, is much more closely in line with the Bradford population than we usually see for an arts organisation, and Bradford Arts Centre is successfully attracting groups from across the lower, medium and higher culturally engaged bands. The most significant groups are:



Trips & Treats, 21% of all bookers, 20% of Bradford bookers – slightly higher than 19% in the Bradford population. Suburban households, often with children, whose cultural activities usually are part of a day out or treat. The largest subgroup booking at Bradford Arts Centre is T1 (14%), modern young families, building a future. *Medium cultural engagement*



Kaleidoscope Creativity, 14% of all bookers, 18% of Bradford bookers – slightly lower than 20% in the Bradford population. Mixed-age urban low engagers preferring free, local, culturally specific arts and festivals. Almost all Kaleidoscope Creativity attending are K1 (12%), settled and diverse urban communities. *Lower cultural engagement*

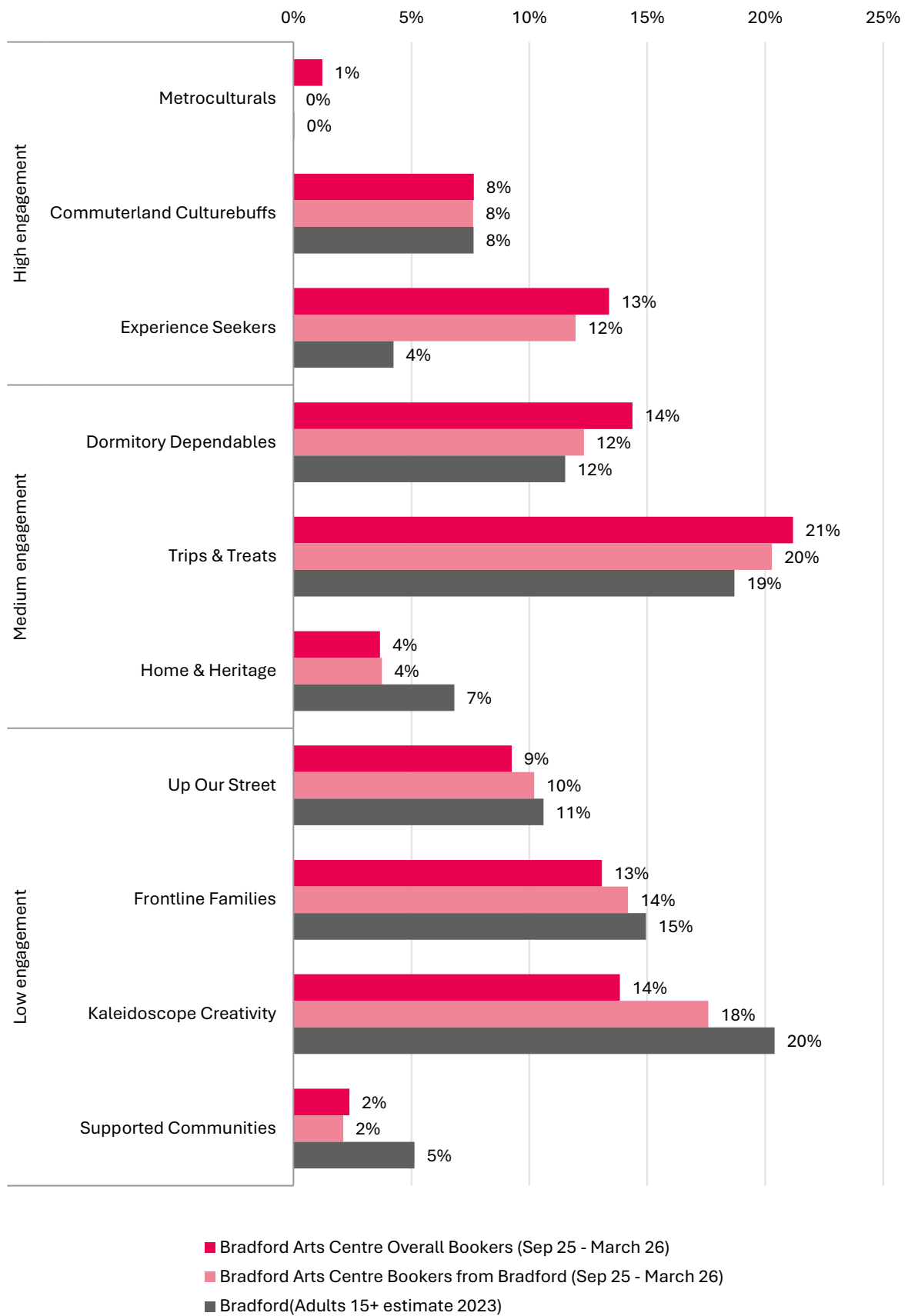


Frontline Families, 13% of all bookers, 14% of Bradford bookers – almost in line with 15% in the Bradford population. Harder pressed suburban and semi-urban households for whom arts and culture plays a small role. There is a fairly equal split between subsegments F1 (6%) older families, getting by despite challenges, and F2 (7%) younger, cash-strapped families and couples starting out. *Lower cultural engagement*



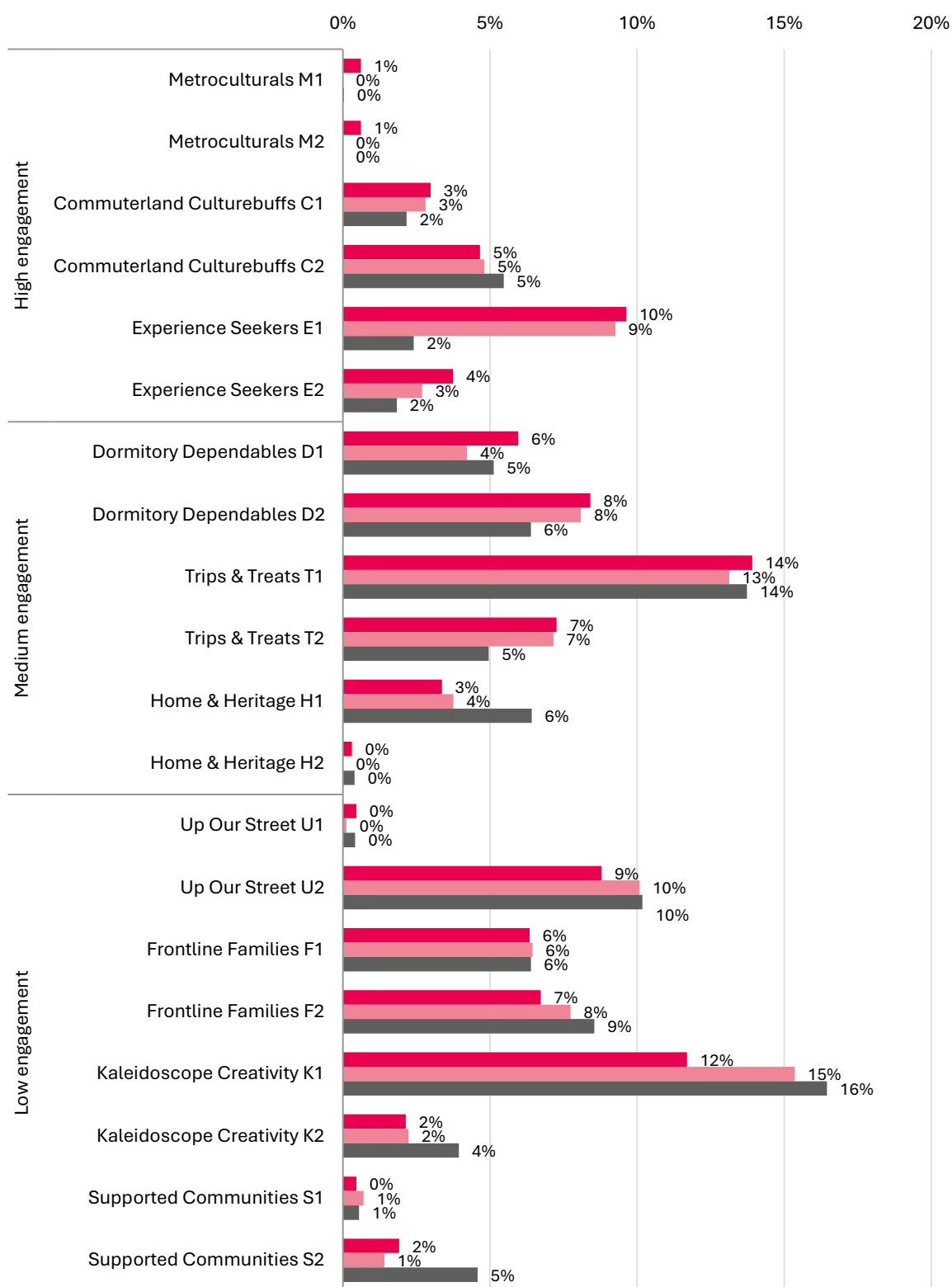
Experience Seekers: 13% of all bookers, 12% of Bradford bookers – significantly higher than 4% in the Bradford population suggesting the Bradford Arts Centre programme has particular appeal to this group. Highly active, younger and social career-minded graduates, they are frequent and eclectic arts engagers. The majority are subsegment E1 (10%) socially minded mid-life professionals with varied artistic tastes. *Higher cultural engagement*

Audience Spectrum profile: Bookers since reopening



Base: 1,308 / 853 / 431,581

Audience Spectrum sub-segment profile: Bookers since reopening



■ Bradford Arts Centre Overall Bookers (Sep 25 - March 26)
■ Bradford Arts Centre Bookers from Bradford (Sep 25 - March 26)
■ Bradford(Adults 15+ estimate 2023)

Base: 1,308 / 853 / 431,581

INDICATOR: Successful implementation of rebrand.

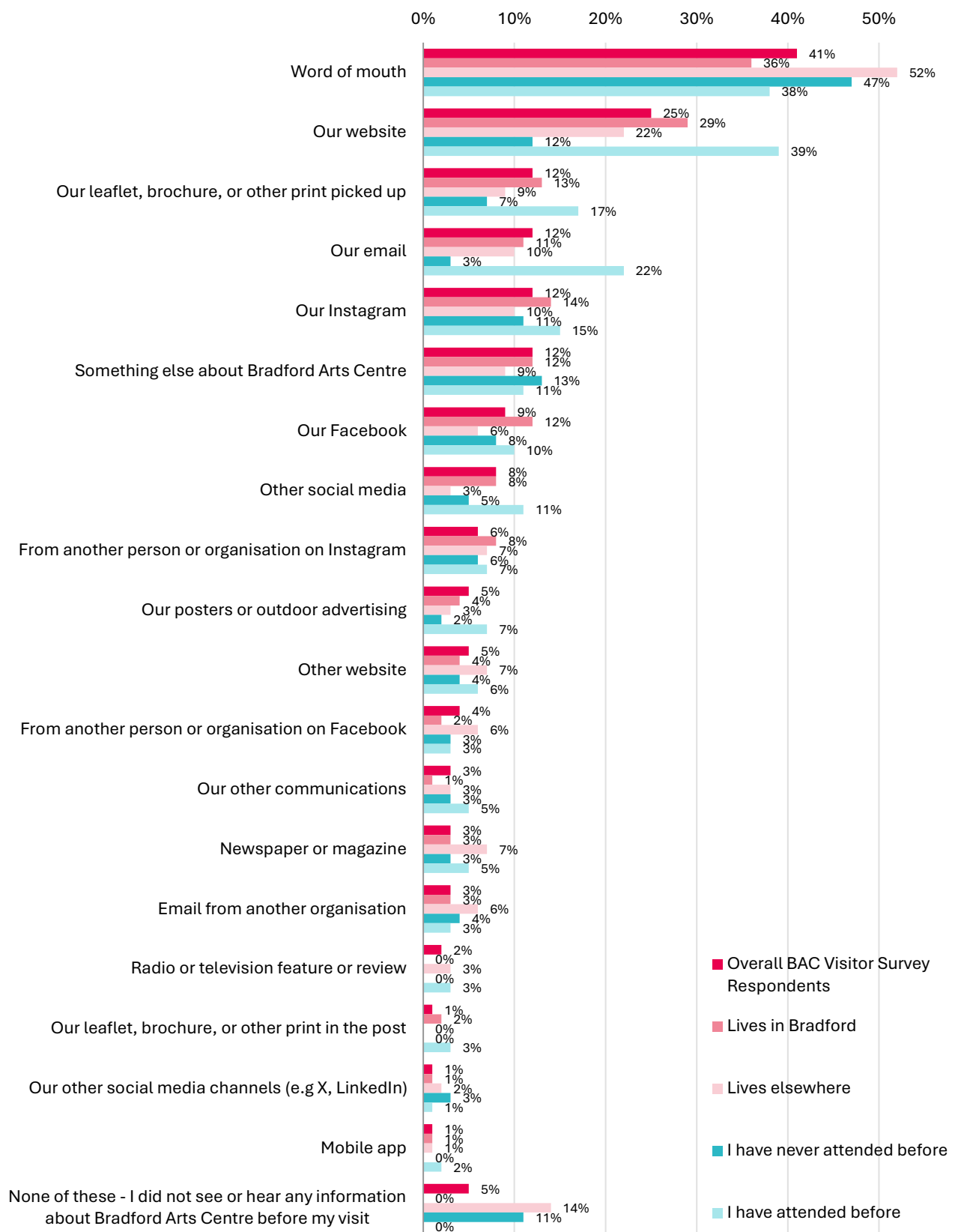
COMMUNICATIONS AWARENESS

Visitors to Bradford Arts Centre since reopening were especially likely to have heard information via word of mouth (41%) - in particular those living outside Bradford (52%) and those who had never attended before (47%).

The newly rebranded website was the next most important information source (25%) – in particular for those who have visited before (39%). Print picked up, Bradford Arts Centre's email and Instagram were all information sources for 12% of visitors – with email (22%) and print (17%) especially important for return visitors.

Results suggest overall that visitors have engaged with a range of Bradford Arts Centre communications channels in the new brand, but that currently many of these are engaging returning visitors better than new visitors, suggesting possible opportunities to push the new branded communications with potential new visitors.

Through which of the following had you seen or heard about Bradford Arts Centre before your visit?



Base: 275 / 92 / 86 / 118 / 128

Margin of error: 6% / 10% / 11% / 9% / 8%

3.4 Become a hub for social activities engaging more people in the work of the building (including the café). [Heritage Fund]

INDICATOR: Increased participation in social activities and greater footfall, including at the café.

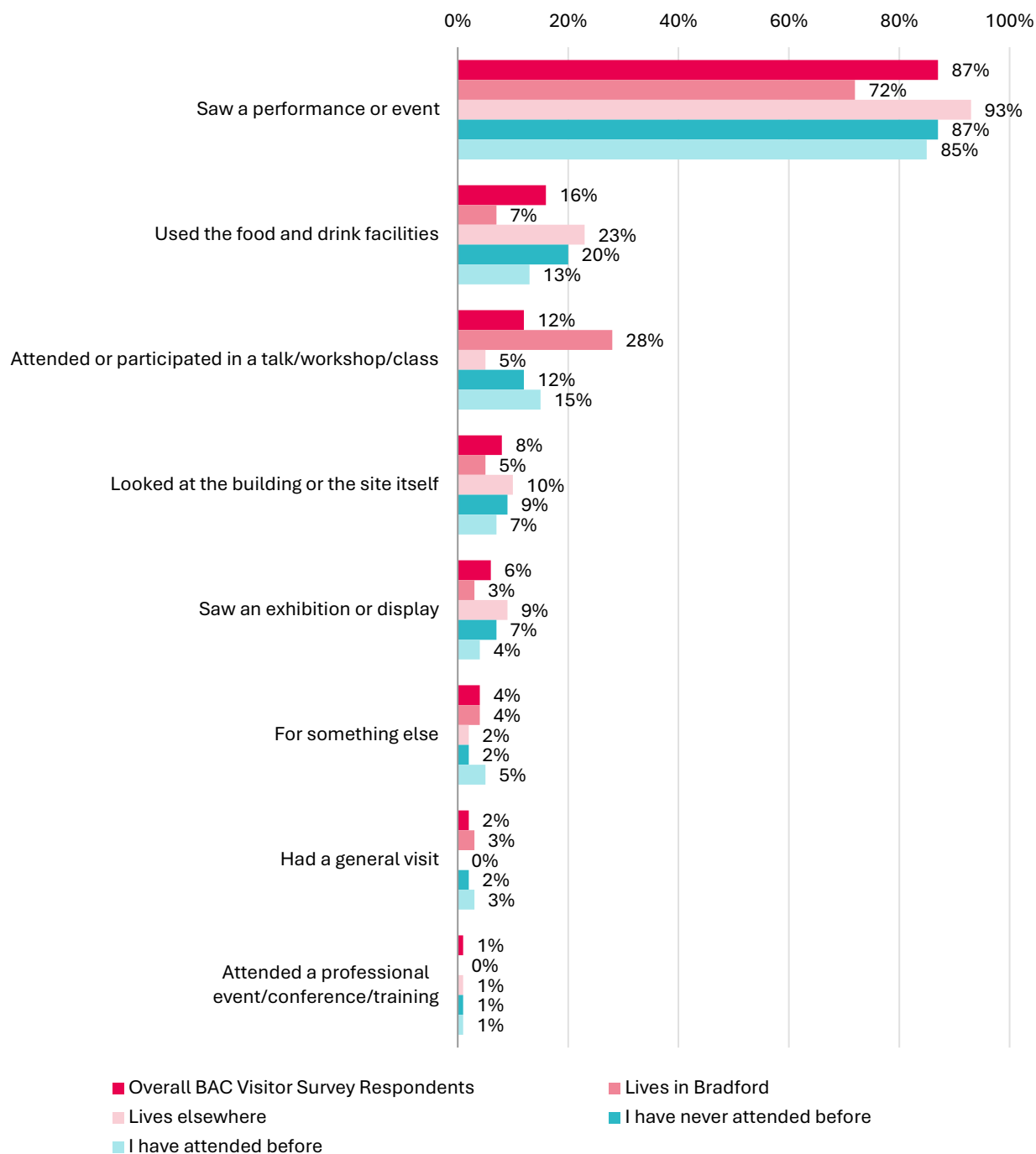
Visitor footfall is explained further under 3.3. Visitor footfall to Bradford Arts Centre has been estimated since the installation of footfall counters in November 2025. Estimates put total footfall (minus staff) for the six months November 2025 to April 2026 at 81,220 and estimated individuals (minus staff) at 74,343. Please see Appendix IV for a description of methodology used to make estimates.

At the time of writing, the café is not yet open and is due to open Summer 2026.

AREAS VISITED AT BRADFORD ARTS CENTRE ON REOPENING

The majority of responding visitors saw a performance or event during their visit to Bradford Arts Centre (87%), which was highest amongst visitors not based in Bradford. Amongst Bradford-based visitors, 28% attended or participated in a talk, workshop or class. There is a bias in this data towards performance attenders, who were more likely to complete the survey, however visitors during this time period were actually more likely to have attended an event/conference. This indicates a possible need going forward for Bradford Arts Centre to look at ways to gain a more balanced audience survey sample across all types of activity.

What did you do during your recent visit to Bradford Arts Centre?

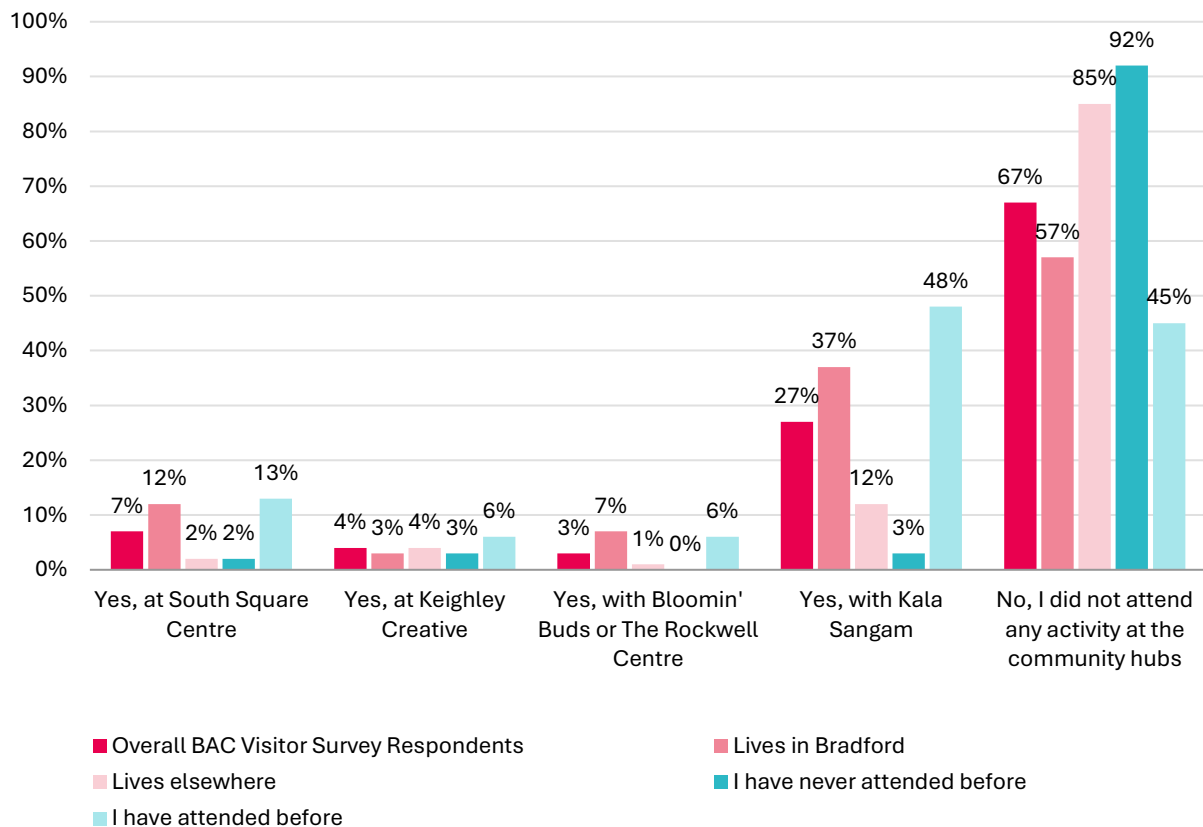


Base: 282 / 94 / 86 / 121 / 130
 Margin of error: 4% / 9% / 9% / 7% / 6%

CROSSOVER WITH HUB ACTIVITY

While two thirds of visitors had not attended any activity at the community hubs, 27% indicated that they took part in the community hub at Kala Sangam, though this may have been misinterpreted as attending an activity prior to the redevelopment. Of Bradford-based visitors, 37% had attended an activity with Kala Sangam, 12% at South Square Centre, 7% with Bloomin' Buds and 3% at Keighley Creative.

Visitors to BAC since reopening: Did you attend an activity at one of the community hubs during the redevelopment of Bradford Arts Centre (from 2024)?



Base: 251 / 91 / 84 / 121 / 127

Margin of error: 6% / 10% / 8% / 5% / 9%

3.5 Bradford Arts Centre will be more resilient.

INDICATOR: Increased commercial space bookings and enquiries.

In comparison to the baseline of 561 external hires and session bookings prior to closure in 2023/24, Bradford Arts Centre increased this figure to 600 in 2025/26, despite the building only reopening in October 2025 and therefore operating for just six months of the financial year.

The value of external hires and session bookings also increased from £103,302 in 2023/24 (full year) to £107,581 in 2025/26 (with only six months of operation following reopening).

Bradford Arts Centre has also increased earned income following reopening, generating £154,946 in 2025/26 (six months; average £25,824 per month), compared to £244,358 in 2023/24 prior to closure (full year; average £20,363 per month).

This represents an increase in average monthly earned income of approximately 27% since reopening, demonstrating strong demand for the venue and an enhanced capacity to generate revenue despite a significantly shorter operating period.

There are a number of ways in which the staff team at Bradford Arts Centre feel they have become more resilient as a result of this work. On reflection, the management team identified that navigating the challenges of a major capital project ultimately strengthened organisational capacity and resilience.

They noted that projects of this scale cannot rely on a single funding source, but instead require a portfolio of funders combining large investments with smaller contributions. In the beginning the key challenge was assembling this mix, particularly securing the initial major investment needed to unlock further funding. This proved especially demanding for a small organisation with limited prior experience of capital development work.

“There are other little smaller chunks of money that we had to bring in, but that... has been the hardest thing... knowing that you needed a portfolio of large-scale investment, and somebody’s got to take that first step.”

Bradford Arts Centre staff member

This complexity also created timeframe pressures, as funding had to be secured, aligned, and managed across multiple streams but in the long term has strengthened

their ability to work in this way and be ready and prepared for future scenarios that also require this approach.

The project has led to significant relationship-building which will continue to impact on their long-term resilience, in particular with the founders of Kala Sangam. Through the archive work and wider engagement, founders were brought back into the organisation in meaningful ways.

A key milestone was hosting the **Kala Sangam Global** event at Bradford Arts Centre, which reconnected founders, artists, and communities. This reflects a broader shift, where previously disconnected groups are now re-engaging, creating opportunities for future collaboration and growth.

The project has significantly raised Bradford Arts Centre's profile and strengthened stakeholder relationships building deeper community connections through hub delivery and on-the-ground engagement, awareness of Bradford Arts Centre has increased across communities:

"They're aware of Bradford Arts Centre now... it's almost like it's reduced the distance."

Bradford Arts Centre staff member

The transition and rebrand from Kala Sangam to Bradford Arts Centre was amplified through community-based work which has increased visibility in localities and neighbourhoods that hadn't been connected before.

"It took the Bradford Arts Centre name out... into those communities... much wider."

Bradford Arts Centre staff member

The organisation is now sharing learning at national events and being recognised as an example of best practice in the sector and in cultural placemaking.

The project has driven significant organisational growth and learning. Staff have developed skills in:

- Managing large-scale funding and investment
- Stakeholder engagement at senior levels
- Delivering complex capital and revenue programmes

“We can now go to a funder and say we need a quarter of a million... because we’ve got a track record... of dealing with millions... it’s helped develop skills... managing stakeholders...its extremely beneficial.”

Bradford Arts Centre staff member

The organisation has become more relevant and accessible to its communities:

“We are more relevant to our communities... what we offer is more co-designed with them... there’s an easier understanding of who we are.”

Bradford Arts Centre staff member

Opening during the Bradford 2025 programme increased national visibility and demonstrated the organisation’s ability to deliver at scale. While City of Culture brought visibility, there was a sense it may reduce future funding opportunities due to perceptions that Bradford has already received significant investment:

“We’re finding... money we might have looked to... has been hoovered up... and there’s no platform yet to replace that.”

Bradford Arts Centre staff member

Delivering a major capital project alongside ongoing programming created pressure across the team:

“it’s almost like two projects. Kala Sangam existed while that capital project was being undertaken, but you all still needed that sort of infrastructure and that support... everything probably parked over there, because, yeah, it was. And in some places, I think that’s worked fine. In other places, I think that did create some difficulties.”

Bradford Arts Centre staff member

Staff experienced:

- Disconnection between capital and programme work
- Increased workload and fatigue
- Limited time for reflection and recovery

→ Operational challenges in transitioning to a much larger building

Although the team has achieved a major milestone, many are still in delivery mode, managing ongoing issues (e.g. snagging, finance, operations) while simultaneously running the building. There is a clear need for time to reflect, regroup, and rebuild as a team.

Despite challenges, the project has created renewed ambition and momentum:

“It’s lit a fire beneath me... what’s the next big challenge... how do we turn it into a £1.5 million turnover building?”

Bradford Arts Centre staff member

Early responses to the new space have been highly positive:

“People are walking around going, ‘Wow... this is amazing... I want to hire your entire building.’”

Bradford Arts Centre staff member

The project has strengthened Bradford Arts Centre’s profile, partnerships, and organisational capacity, while also re-engaging key communities and founders. However, these gains sit alongside ongoing challenges around sustainability, staff capacity, and the post-City of Culture funding landscape, which will shape the organisation’s next phase of development.

4. Economic & placemaking in Bradford

The following project-specific outcomes support the overarching outcomes from the Heritage Fund and Arts Council England's Cultural Development Fund:

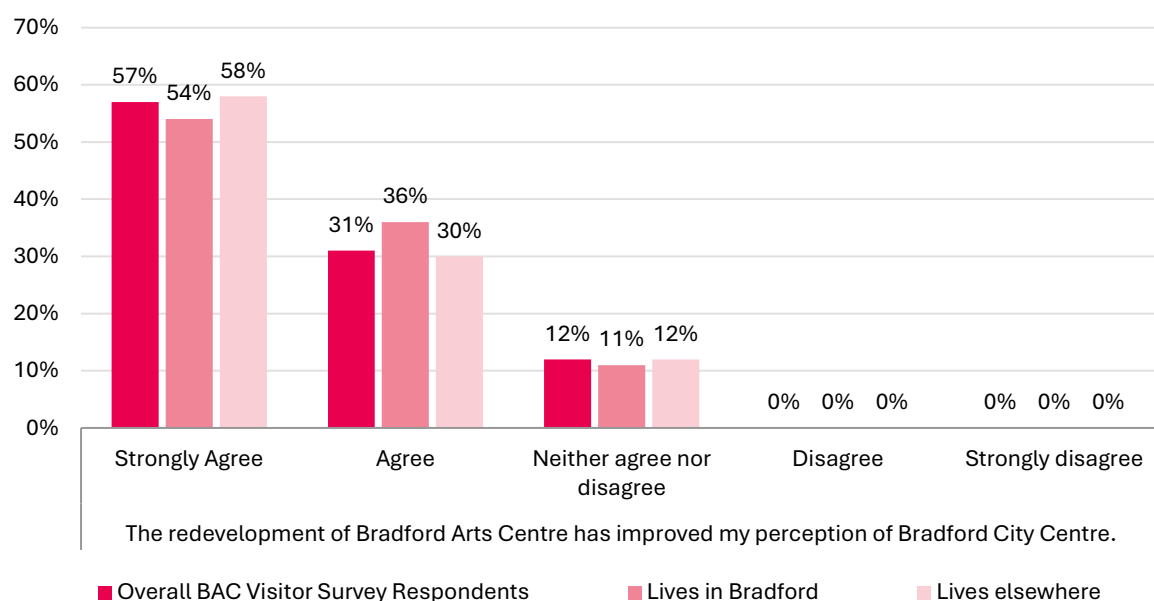
- **Heritage Fund:** The local area will be a better place to live, work or visit
- **Cultural Development Fund:** Make places more attractive to live, work, visit and invest in

3.6 Improved perceptions of the City Centre are reported as a result of communities engaging with Bradford Arts Centre capital redevelopment.

INDICATOR: High proportion of audiences/participants and artists indicate that engaging with Bradford Arts Centre has improved their perceptions of the City Centre.

A very significant 88% of respondents to the visitor survey since the opening of Bradford Arts Centre strongly agreed or agreed that 'the redevelopment of Bradford Arts Centre has improved my perception of Bradford City Centre.'

Visitors to Bradford Arts Centre since opening: The redevelopment of Bradford Arts Centre has improved my perception of Bradford City Centre.



Base: 265 / 95 / 81

Margin of error: 6% / 10% / 11%

3.7 More people feel proud to live or work in the City Ward/ Bradford. [Heritage Fund]

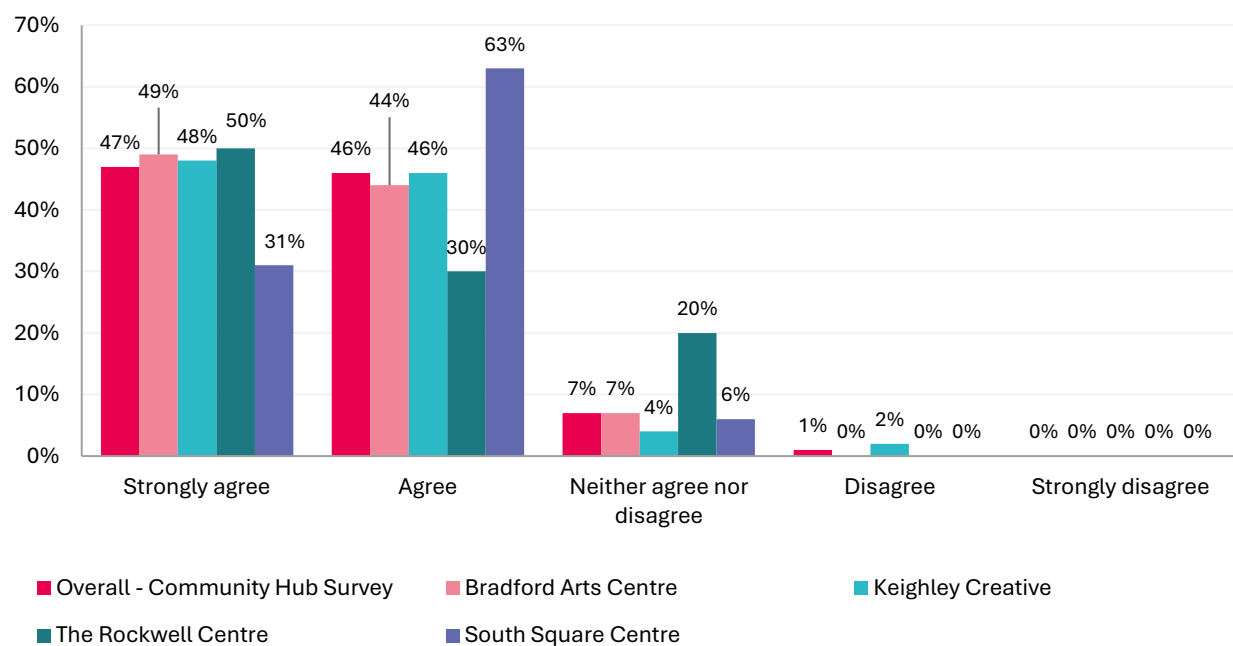
INDICATOR: High proportion of audiences/participants and artists indicate that engaging with Bradford Arts Centre has made them feel proud to live or work in the City Ward/ Bradford.

PRIDE IN BRADFORD

Participants responding to the community hub survey indicated that the activity or event they took part in made them feel proud to live or work in Bradford, with 93% strongly agreeing or agreeing this.

Similarly, 87% of visitors to Bradford Arts Centre responding to the visitor survey since reopening strongly agreed or agreed that ‘my visit to the new Bradford Arts Centre made me feel proud to live or work in Bradford.’

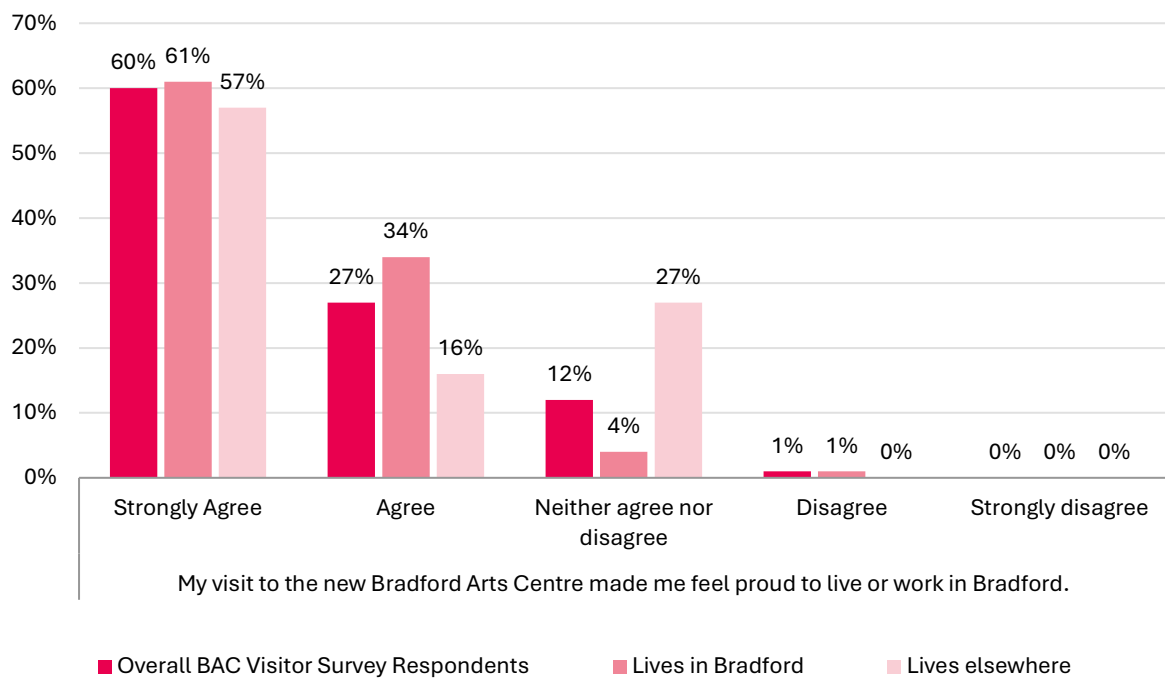
Community hub survey: What I watched/took part in today made me feel proud to live or work in Bradford.



Base: 160 / 86 / 48 / 10 / 16

Margin of error: 8% / 11% / 14% / 31% / 24%

Visitors to Bradford Arts Centre since opening: My visit to the new Bradford Arts Centre made me feel proud to live or work in Bradford.



Base: 226 / 95 / 51

Margin of error: 6% / 10% / 14%

The following project-specific outcomes support the overarching outcomes from the Heritage Fund and Arts Council England's Cultural Development Fund:

- **Heritage Fund:** The local economy will be boosted
- **Cultural Development Fund:** Unlock local economic growth and productivity

3.8 Increased footfall in the city centre and the Capital redevelopment contributes to Bradford City Centre's regeneration. [CDF]

INDICATOR: Improved perceptions of the City Centre are reported (as below) combined with an increase in Bradford Arts Centre visitor numbers.

Changed perceptions of Bradford City Centre were significant as a result of the project, as explored in previous sections.

INDICATOR: Increased footfall in City Centre surrounding Bradford Arts Centre.

FOOTFALL IN BRADFORD CITY CENTRE

- Based on figures provided by Bradford Business Improvement District³, City Centre footfall April 2024 to March 2025 showed an increase of 5.37% compared to the previous year
- Looking at April 2025 to March 2026, footfall showed an increase of 6.39% against April 2024 to March 2025

It has not been possible to date to provide figures for the area directly around Bradford Arts Centre as there are no counting systems in place here. Overall, the figures suggest an overall increase in City Centre footfall over the last two years. Whilst this cannot be attributed to Bradford Arts Centre, it is possible that this increase is in part influenced by increased cultural activity in the city around Bradford City of Culture 2025, with Bradford Arts Centre now a significant part of Bradford's augmented cultural landscape.

Bradford 2025 are delivering a full economic impact evaluation for 2025 which will also reflect the part Bradford Arts Centre has played in increasing footfall, however this is not yet available.

³ Bradford Business Improvement District (BID) collect figures via the Huq system for the BID area (which is largely the city centre). Figures are collected via GPS on mobile phones and, due to the limitations and potential inaccuracies of this method, trends rather than precise figures are reported.

3.9 Increased visitors and spend within hub areas. [CDF]

INDICATOR: Increased visitor numbers combined with increased reported spend in the area, including local cafes, shops, transport etc.

VISITOR SPEND

Visitors to Bradford Arts Centre since the opening spent an average of £27.58 in Bradford during the visit, excluding the cost of tickets. This spend covered an average of 2.23 people.

Visitors to Bradford Arts Centre since reopening: How much did you spend during your visit into Bradford to attend Bradford Arts Centre (NOT including tickets)?

	Count of respondents	Sum	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Average spend per respondent
On local travel (in Bradford only)	92	£746.00	£1.00	£75.00	£74.00	£8.11
At the venue itself (e.g. on food, drink etc.)	77	£658.00	£1.00	£50.00	£49.00	£8.55
On accommodation (if you stayed away from home)	7	£708.00	£18.00	£200.00	£182.00	£101.14
On food, drink, shopping etc. outside the venue	72	£1,705.00	£4.00	£100.00	£96.00	£23.68
On other purchases	31	£541.00	£1.00	£200.00	£199.00	£17.45
Overall	158	£4,358.00	£1.00	£200.00	£199.00	£27.58

Was this expenditure just for you, or did it also cover other people?

	Count of respondents	Sum	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Average
How many others?	95	212	1	7	6	2.23

The following project-specific outcomes support the overarching outcome from the Arts Council England's Cultural Development Fund:

- **Cultural Development Fund:** Strengthen local leadership, partnership and capability

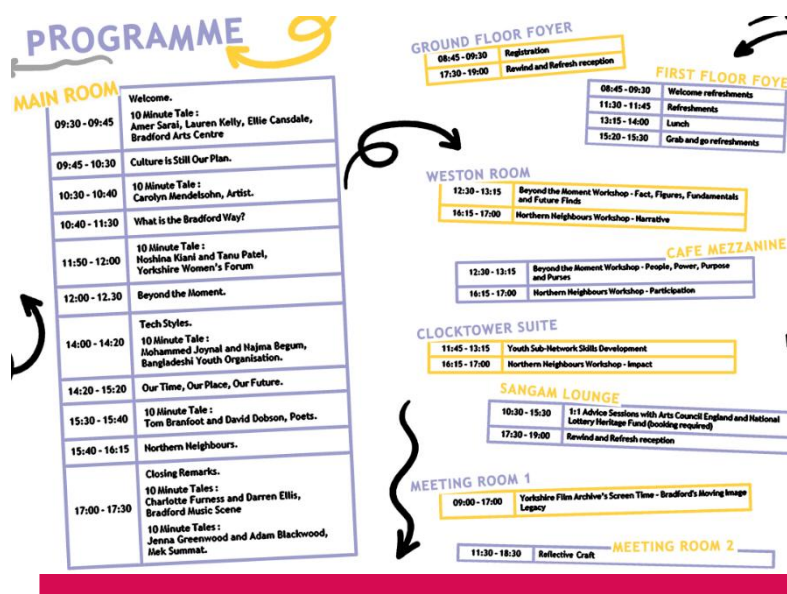
3.10 Bradford Arts Centre's work aligns with Bradford's cultural strategy, supporting and strengthening the City's cultural offer.

INDICATOR: Evidence of strategic alignment of programmes.

Bradford Arts Centre significantly hosted the **launch** of City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council's new 10-year strategy, Bradford Built Different, in January 2026.

Connecting Culture, The Bradford Way took place on Wednesday 25 March 2026 at Bradford Arts Centre, with a welcome and discussion hosted by the Bradford Arts Centre team. The event brought together creatives and cultural organisations from across the wider Bradford ecosystem to look beyond Bradford 2025 UK City of Culture and consider how creative opportunities for Bradford's cultural workforce and communities can be sustained and protected in the long term. Discussions focused particularly on identifying the next steps for Bradford's creative sector and strengthening collaboration across the city.

The team is also actively sharing the successes and learning emerging from Bradford Arts Centre's work through presentations and sector gatherings. At The Cultural Development Gathering, hosted by the Cultural Development Fund, Amer Sarai, Head of Community Engagement, alongside Mohammed Iftikar ("Ifty"), spoke about the importance of the work taking place in Bradford and the positive impact the hub model is having on local communities. Their presentations highlighted the role of Bradford Arts Centre as a key platform for creativity, collaboration, and community connection, while also creating valuable networking opportunities that encourage organisations and practitioners to work together and build new partnerships. Alex Croft, CEO, and Jez Arrow, Head of Finance, also spoke on industry panels at this event.



Programme: Connecting Culture The Bradford Way

Capital Redevelopment

3.1 Heritage will be left in a better condition.

INDICATORS: Successful completion of capital redevelopment ensuring the landmark, Grade II Listed heritage building is left in better condition, including:

- **Reopening access to the ground floor of the heritage space to the public for the first time since the 1960s.**
- **Documentation of the process is captured and learning from all stages of the process is reflected.**

All core intended adaptations to the building to increase access and remove barriers have been delivered by the project:

- An enlarged entrance foyer on the ground floor with central access directly from the street
- Provision of new multi-use spaces
- The project delivered five new studio spaces, surpassing the original target of four, which now provide a base for hosting artists, education initiatives, and a range of creative and community activities
- New entrances to improve accessibility to the foyer and an extended fire escape platform to the rear of the building
- A new full passenger (evacuation) lift installed in accordance with existing regulations and standards
- New stairs and lift provided within the same location as the substandard platform lift

This section of the report explores the capital process from start to finish and is based primarily on two sessions with key Bradford Arts Centre staff involved in the capital development (December 2024 and January 2026) and one-to-one interviews (early 2026) with contractors involved, including representatives from Simpson, the main contractors; Turner and Townsend the project managers; and the architects.

Start up and design, contractor recruitment

FUNDING AND FUNDER PROCESSES

Prior to receiving funding, the Bradford Arts Centre team faced initial failures in attempts to secure funding for the project. Feedback was given by funders around the changes that would be required to ensure a fundable project which, whilst frustrating at the time, led to a much better project in the longer term.

“I think the main failures we experienced during the phase the question refers to were, what in hindsight, if I was talking to my earlier self, I would say they are 100% worthwhile failures...those two knock backs resulted in a much, much better project...”

Bradford Arts Centre staff member

The team were keen to move at speed to secure funding for the project, but this meant some differences of expectation with others, and challenging expectations of what was possible, as well as an enormous amount of senior management time required on the project.

“...the speed at which we expected to go...didn't necessarily align with other people's conventional experience of projects like this...”

“But I think there's also a learning that we are giving the sector about. Now, you can work at this time, this pace, you can work at this speed, but you know, it has involved an enormous amount of senior management team dedication to the project.”

Bradford Arts Centre staff members

Part of the reason for speed was wanting the new Bradford Arts Centre building to be open for Bradford City of Culture in 2025, given the opportunities presented by this – the pressure on the project timetable was related to this, rather than to funder pressure.

Lack of additional funding was highlighted as a risk by Heritage Fund, however adequate funding was secured overall during the development phase through hard work.

Excellent relationships between Bradford Arts Centre and both of the project's principal funders, Heritage Fund and CDF, proved crucial throughout all stages of the project –

evidenced by the willingness of both funders to adapt their standard policies, and to go 'above and beyond' in their support for the project.

- Heritage Fund agreed, at an early stage, to help mitigate cashflow sensitivities by offering drawdown of funds on a monthly-in-arrears basis (compared to its standard quarterly-in-arrears policy). Additionally, Heritage Fund agreed to a £250k uplift request made later in project.
- CDF made the unprecedented decision to agree drawdown of capital grant funds on a quarterly-in-advance basis (compared to the standard quarterly-in-arrears policy on all other projects). This was the singularly most impactful measure that enabled the project to start.

"Our relationship... particularly at CDF...is really positive in a way that I think some other projects don't have."

"Our approach has always been, you know, not to pull any surprises on people, and to be open and transparent about how things are going, which has meant at the few times when we have needed an intervention, particularly where we needed more money from National Lottery Heritage Fund at quite short time, you know, I think there was a trust level there, that there was an acceptance almost immediately, that if we were asking for it, we really genuinely did need [it]."

Bradford Arts Centre staff members

The team did, however, raise frustrations with funder legal processes and acknowledged that they underestimated the time this would take:

"We had underestimated some of the legal processes that would need to be gone through, and as with all legal processes, some of those is down to us, underestimating it, and some exceptionally, frustratingly slow way that funders and other people deal with legal there's no reason why a lot of those legal processes should take as long as they do."

"It is clear now we navigated that process and those legal processes faster than any other CDF project has done, and faster than anybody expected us to be able to do."

Bradford Arts Centre staff members

However, a very significant issue arose with HMRC in the later stages, as they changed their VAT retention rate from 95% to 30%, with all capital related costs now classified as residual and changes in the apportionment method between business and non-business.

This created an unexpected project budget deficit of around £1.2million, a catastrophic change which meant that Bradford Arts Centre was unable to pay final invoices to the main contractor and final snagging was understandably paused as a result. The Bradford Arts Centre team worked hard to challenge this decision, including a need to pass a two-stage test for commerciality which Bradford Arts Centre were confident they met the criteria for. The decision was thankfully reversed in the Spring of 2026, avoiding the potentially disastrous impacts of this unforeseen situation.

EARLY PROJECT STAGES AND CONTRACTOR RECRUITMENT

The project started its initial internal stages in 2018.

A number of roles were appointed early in the project. The architect was brought onto the project in early 2020, with mechanical & electrical (M&E), the structural engineer and the quantity surveyor appointed in 2021 - two years prior to the main contractor appointment.

Some of the contractor recruitment processes were modified to ensure that the main contractor recruitment was as robust as possible. This included introducing a two-stage main contractor recruitment in which two contractors went through to the final stage. Simpson were appointed following the interview stage, with influencing factors including their good understanding of the project, more local (Yorkshire) base and cost lead. The main contractor appointment was felt to be timely in the context of the whole project.

The project received invaluable external advice and support during the main contractor and project manager recruitment processes. The team and Quantity Surveyor were also supported through the complex public procurement process required by the project.

The team at Bradford Arts Centre and the architectural team found that it was beneficial to work together in the initial phases, from early 2020, in a collaborative way to explore opportunities. This was documented formally in the feasibility stage:

“It was incredible that we were able to conceptualise some of the core architectural principles that you see to this day already manifest almost immediately and to have a client that's so receptive to those ideas... our input was actually... reasonably key to defining what that project was.”

“So naturally, at the very beginning, the process is quite fluidic... we need to be able to not be afraid of... scrapping an idea and changing around.”

Contractors

- In future projects, the team would appoint the design team in advance again, but review each contract later in the process.
- In any future project, the team would involve specialist procurement advice earlier.

Delivery phase

PROCESSES, PEOPLE AND CONTRACTOR RELATIONSHIPS

At the start of the delivery phase, the design was behind where it ideally would have been due to parts of the building being inaccessible while still occupied. Whilst in part this was unavoidable, structural engineering during the design phase took longer than anticipated.

“I think there was still a lot of design required...There was a huge amount of information that still needed to be put together...to be fair to the designers...there was some areas that they couldn't really get to to...put a robust package of information together.”

Contractor

Whilst there were a few issues to work through, such as differences in working methods and workflows, and times when decision-making processes could have been clearer, overall relationships between the contractor and client team were, for the most part, very positive, with the project well managed. This was with the exception of the M&E contractor.

“I do think it was on the whole, if you take the M&E contractor out, I think the project team worked really well.”

“There are elements of it where we can unpick, but I don't think we could have asked for a better main contractor...the approach, and... the willingness to work with us and the understanding of the project...”

Bradford Arts Centre staff members

“...there are a few things that maybe could have moved a little bit quicker. Generally speaking... we were slightly behind schedule by the end of the project, but not ridiculously so. And the extensions of time...to my knowledge...were largely justified...I think that it was managed as well as reasonably practicable.”

“Generally...it was a decent team... and obviously we do this day in, day out. So we sometimes we would get a bit more of a rough ride than others....but genuinely...it was quite a decent team. And I would say from the client's

point of view, probably some of the best I've ever worked with... they were really pragmatic. They were incredibly helpful... there was a lot of honesty and transparency and they appreciated what we were doing and we appreciated...that they understood what we were trying to do, which is not always the case.”

“Yes, Simpsons were...the main contractors...and the relationship with them was very good. It worked well...if there was issues that were raised on site, it was quite easy to collaborate and communicate with them.”

“The mechanical and electrical consultants would be given timescales to provide information and they didn't achieve those timescales and it did have an impact on the project, quite a significant impact.”

Contractors

One successful element highlighted was the bringing together of cultural organisational values with a contractor open to embracing these. The deep commitment of Simpsons to the project was recognised, and one way this was demonstrated was through the attendance of many members of the main contractor's team at the launch event, rather than the usual smaller 'expected' attendance typically seen from contractors on project completion – showing a genuine personal commitment from those involved.

“I think one of the reasons why we were able to work so well with Simpsons as a main contractor was because we brought the values of a cultural organisation to a capital project... So I think we probably bought a level of understanding and collaboration right from the off that they may not have ...previously experienced. I think we chose the right contractor, because they had that within them as well. So they...bought into the cultural importance of the build and why they were there and why they were doing it wasn't just a job for them.”

Bradford Arts Centre staff member

The team were considered to have worked well together to manage the project and find solutions to issues uncovered during the build phase. Decision-making was supported by bringing contractors into design team meetings at a critical point.

“So once the issues were kind of opened up and you could see them, the contractor immediately made everybody aware. We then talked through what options there were, the cost, quantity survey, priced it. We looked at the

programme implications. We had to change some of the design, some of the rooms had to be moved around so that we could then work around the structural issue. So we did work well together to resolve the issues...that we were dealing with on a weekly basis on the site.”

“I would say, perhaps not unique, but it was rare, the level of openness and positive discussion about those things that I had the experience of... Everyone was very frank, positive and constructive about it, which is quite good. There wasn't a lot of finger pointing...As you know, unexpected things do happen all the time in this kind of thing. But when stuff did come up, it was very, how do we solve the problem rather than, you know, who's to blame?”

“The design team meetings are traditionally not including the contractors, but we involved them for a period of the project where there were a lot of items to discuss... for that key period they were involved and it did speed up how we operated.”

Contractor

The aspiration and proactive behaviour of Alex Croft and Jez Arrow from Bradford Arts Centre were praised. This drove the project forward and enabled quick and collaborative decisions to be made:

“Alex[’s]...aspirations for the project and his dedication to Bradford Arts Centre shone through everything that he was doing and the same with Jez as well. And what they were wanting to achieve was delivered because of the way that they...were so proactive and involved in the project. They were as a client, they were a lot more involved than other clients that I've worked with. So I think that all of the decisions that needed to be made, they were always very well engaged so that those decisions could be made quickly and easily. But they also did then have discussions internally with various stakeholders to make sure that it wasn't just their decision, it was everybody's.”

“I would say that the main positives were the level of commitment that...certainly the client team were able to provide a contractor. It's very easy for clients to vacate, to stay at arm's length and to then... turn up at the opening and point out everything that they're not quite happy with, but we obviously had a client...who was ever present.”

Contractors

It was highlighted that more direct conversation with BCB, a tenant of Bradford Arts Centre, would have helped to better understand their requirements, particularly for details in the space that others might not have considered.

“...it would have benefitted from a little bit more workshopping with them specifically...So for example, the door was...a good acoustic spec. But then when you've got like a little latch...and the latch is necessary to keep the door closed against its acoustic seals... they pointed out that they weren't that happy with that because...it would get picked up on the mic.”

Contractor

Turner and Townsend were appointed as project managers part way through the project, in early 2024, which was felt to be later than ideal - particularly as it was post-procurement and, as project managers, they had no involvement in that stage or in contract administration. Negotiation was required between roles early on in their appointment to ensure the responsibilities of each party were clear. Turner and Townsend were considered by the client team to have progressed the project in some areas and brought valuable contributions. However, the client team still ended up effectively project managing day-to-day.

“I think in hindsight it's another one where I would advise the client that if they were to appoint a project manager that they would do the contract administration role as well.”

Contractor

The need to ensure alignment between expectations of an external project manager and how this works in practice with the client team was identified as a key learning point. Any difficulties may have been exacerbated by the later appointment of the project managers.

CHALLENGES

Unknown elements were uncovered once there was better access to the building and were the biggest challenge faced by the project during construction. One of the most significant finds was a structural column, which was hidden by a wall, in the middle of the theatre seating space. These issues emerging during the delivery phase were generally recognised as unavoidable, as the expense and difficulty of more in-depth surveys prior to access were not justified; however, one team member felt that more could possibly have been done in advance. The unknown challenges faced by the

project necessitated additional work, put pressure on the budgets and timescales, and required a reactive approach:

“...certainly the construction phase of the project, a reoccurring sort of notion that we kept playing around with was that the building was constantly pushing back. The building itself was trying to fight us and that is not entirely uncommon, and when you're dealing with listed buildings or old buildings or buildings that have gone through so many changes...we recognise that that is a challenge and we recognise that those unknowns will come up and all we can do really is try to carefully advise the client as to how much risk is involved to ensure that there is enough contingency budget set aside....to ask a client to spend a disproportionate amount of money to uncover the secrets of this historic building, to allow the design team to have 100% of all the information of the existing building is not really very feasible.”

“...they had a decent budget. Ultimately, because of the unknowns, that budget did...come under pressure. But that's not unusual, you know. I think the costs were closely monitored, which you'd expect and I think managed quite well throughout.”

“There were a lot of challenges with the building because it was a listed building...a lot of issues that became apparent once the construction work started on site with the demolition. So there were a lot of changes that were needed and necessary with the design that hadn't been understood before that.... we were in a position where we had to be quite reactive to certain things as the project was progressing on site.”

“The building work that had happened [around the Millennium] wasn't built accurately and therefore that work was incorrect and we were having to then remedy the fault of the work that had been carried out on the building before that wasn't exposed until we were doing the demolition and the strip out work.”

“I think that there are certain elements with the procurement of the main contractor having not carried out any surveys to the building before they started work on site, I think those aspects could have been reviewed earlier and considered as to whether, you know, any of that information should have been gathered during an earlier design stage or whether it was the best...route waiting.”

Contractors

“Yeah, so when we found the pillar in the theatre, which was the first major issue, this pillar then that was discovered as part of the tender, that took longer than it should have done for our design team to remedy and rectify that. And actually, you know, the major challenge we're probably going to talk about is our M&E people, and they never really got their heads around that, and that caused knock on effects that...directly caused the overrun of the project, which cost us money and ate into the contingency.”

Bradford Arts Centre staff member

It was recognised that, however frustrating these challenges were at the time, in hindsight they were not beyond the usual for a project like this:

“I think the construction... went...very well, I would say even despite, you know the challenges...I guess you never get used to the challenges when you're in the thick of it. You know, I meet up with a contractor, and we're like...when will this end?... But actually, when you step back and you review it in retrospect, like we're doing now, we can actually see that...everything came together, you know really well. And it took a tremendous amount of effort from everyone involved. You know, we had to...stay at our peak for the whole way through to make sure that happened.”

Contractor

There was a need for close liaison with Bradford Cathedral during the works given their close proximity:

“The Cathedral sits behind the building that we were working on and...we had to be sympathetic towards them and liaise quite heavily with them to make sure we didn't upset anybody. So that I would say...was more of a concern than the front of the building because although it's in the city centre...there wasn't... a large amount of foot traffic around the building at the front.”

Contractor

Quantity surveyors DKP were considered to have worked well overall. There was an instance in which additional costs were presented at double the expected amount and without prior warning. However costs were, in general, felt to be well managed. Strong

financial management was also supported by the active involvement of Bradford Arts Centre's Head of Finance, Jez Arrow. The importance of maintaining some tension between team members was also highlighted, to ensure aspirations and costs are appropriately balanced within the project.

"Bradford Arts Centre had appointed DKP as their cost quantity surveyor and they did an excellent job of listing out any of the variations that were occurring during that construction period... Jez from Bradford Arts Centre, he's obviously the Head of Finance and he was very involved in understanding all of the variations, why they'd happened, what the options were and then having weekly meetings. So that side of things were managed extremely well."

"...tension between client aspirations, architectural aspirations and then this QS who wants to tighten the purse strings every opportunity, that tension needs to exist."

Contractor

An additional unforeseen challenge was the architects going into liquidation in Spring 2025. The project was far enough into the build that plans were largely agreed and key challenges had been resolved. However, this came completely out of the blue and a rapid response was required. The lead architect went freelance and Bradford Arts Centre decided to employ Tom Dutton as Architectural Design Manager directly, with the lead architect in a freelance supporting role – this was possible without a full tender process given the timing in the project and was sorted within a day, ensuring minimum disruption to the project. This was a very unusual situation, and it was necessary to ensure that all the legal securities were in place for the Architectural Design Manager role.

The benefits of having an Architectural Design Manager on site, who was a core part of the team, were recognised. However, it was also noted that senior architectural support becoming a little further removed did cause some challenges.

"....looking back...this project was better off for having Tom working here for that period of the build. So enabling him to be on site from there at the period where we were beginning to think about transition back in, and we had to be much more present on site for all the nitty gritty, little bitty bits, having Tom as part of the team, and he was able to input on signage and way finding, and, you know, finished decor in every room, and what clocks are we going

to buy, and all of these, like, bits and pieces that really carried that architect and brand identity through the rest of it.”

Bradford Arts Centre staff member

“It's quite unusual...I've never heard of it happening before and neither had...I spoke to a few people that I know, directors of other practises and people from the university where I went to previously to get their advice. I also spoke to...the RIBA to get their advice in terms of... a legal standpoint...”

“And then we had a senior architect who...he was there, but he wasn't there on it full time... watching brief, if you like, so that that I would say that was probably the most difficult part of it.”

Contractors

Earlier in the project and build, the ‘M’ of M&E was slow to respond – the work was good quality when it arrived, but always last minute and gave no space for response. This was challenging as Bradford Arts Centre delivered to a quick timetable as a small organisation, but this exposed those who don’t work quickly. The contractor was challenged and this improved.

However later in the project and at handover stage, M&E issues have been significant with a long list of errors including cupboards where the lights stay on but have no light switch, incorrect electrical supply to enable doors to be held open and no Tannoy system downstairs “*despite us sitting down and mapping exactly where the Tannoy system should have gone, because they didn't put any of the cabling in, because it wasn't on any drawings.*” It was identified through discussions that this sort of issue with M&E is unfortunately common, with an acceptance in the construction industry around these sorts of errors (although they were particularly significant in this project) as well as a lack of good M&E contractors to draw on.

- The Bradford Arts Centre team reflected that, learning from this experience, they would have implemented more background checks on contractor experiences of working with different M&E suppliers; and an insistence on more M&E time in the building and with the client team during the planning stages.

CHANGES

There were very few changes to original plans earlier on in the project. Smaller changes implemented as of the end of 2024, before the more fundamental challenges were discovered, were:

- Removal of a door and access point – this means that there is one area with no step free access, but this was structurally not possible to overcome and saved costs
- The Weston Room saw some changes to improve its useability – it was portioned and more storage put in, as well as a washer dryer
- Sangam Lounge evolved during the project – to become a flexible use space with a bar, rather than primarily a bar
- The Faith/Quiet Room was moved – to create larger faith and tech rooms
- The Terraces are an ongoing challenge that will require further changes. It was not possible to remedy the problems here, so a phased approach to reopening these will be needed
- The usage of the basement spaces has been a big compromise – an airflow has had to be moved, and these spaces can't be brought back to full usage without more money as they would need further capital work

Due to the major discoveries as the build progressed there were, later in the project, a disproportionate amount of changes required, although no high level changes to the approach. In particular, the discovery of the column in the theatre space required the removal of a portion of ceiling and changes to the beams on level one, which subsequently failed the fire test, resulting in a need for a new ceiling.

“None of that was on the original plan. So that was a design process and decision that had to be done and had to be done very quickly. And that's what we got the Heritage Fund, additional funding to support.”

Bradford Arts Centre staff member

“...the biggest one...we discovered that the concrete soffit above the theatre wasn't strong enough to take the load of any of the theatre trusses, so all of those had to be wall mounted... which obviously... had knock on effects when

we knocked into walls and discovered that there wasn't anything structural for some of them to fix onto, so we had to amend.”

Contractor

A few smaller changes were implemented, including the use of slightly different materials as part of a value engineering process. However, these were not felt to significantly detract from the final result.

“There was compromises made, but none that I feel are immediately evident....Because I think any of the compromises... I would hope that members of the public would certainly struggle to identify anything...it might be a particular, you know, a small item that was quite important to us at the time. But in the grand scheme of things, it's not detracting from anyone.”

Contractor

HANDOVER

The announcement of the opening programme and the desire to open within the Bradford City of Culture year created a very real deadline for handover which both the client team and contractors worked hard to meet. Whilst this put significant stress on teams, the immovability of the opening date was understood and respected. This meant opening with more snagging issues still in place than ideal, but this was recognised as being the right approach. There was also a staggered handover to ensure the main building was open and operational on time, focusing on that, then coming back to the area housing BCB a little later.

Issues on handover included the lifts breaking down, although this was resolved by the end of November, and drapes for the theatre having not been ordered in time for the opening show. There was also added cleaning required given the building was still an active building site just before opening and the speed of work put very significant pressure on staff, who pulled together to make the opening happen.

“Everything was, every decision...was beholden to that opening day...if we relaxed on that, we could have done things differently, but that was an absolute fixed point in our agenda...And so on a technical level, that meant that the architect...the QS...we were effectively in a partial handover situation, which they would never recommend.”

“So we had...a funder event, opening VIP event on the Tuesday, then we had a world premiere the Thursday and the Friday of a new piece of work. We had people in every single studio rehearsing from the Monday... And then we had a full building takeover by Bradford South Asian Festival on the following weekend, on the Saturday and Sunday...So it was worth it for us getting there. It was worth it for the profile. It's worth it for us being able to say we did it so quickly. We were able to take part in City of Culture.”

“We were understaffed. It was hard. It was hard, hard work.”

Bradford Arts Centre staff members

“But ultimately the client had a building there that they needed to start operating. And you know they had to publicise events so that focused the mind...with discussion with us, they agreed that on a date...once that date was set in stone and they're selling tickets...putting dates out to advertising or whatever, that really does put us under the under the cosh a little bit more...but there's always something...if you're working in the shop, you know they want the tills to be ringing on a particular day. It's no different really.”

“There was a small portion of the works that couldn't be handed over and had to follow like 4 weeks after. That process wasn't an ideal scenario. You would generally want to hand over, practically complete the building all at one time but because the Bradford Arts Centre were wanting to open the building to the public, we spoke with Building Control and were able to complete the key areas of the building so that there was a couple of other areas that then remained to be finished three, four weeks later.”

“So one thing that the contractors and Alex worked on was a plan...Alex sort of drew up a strategy of which bits are crucial to open day, which bits are crucial to a week after, which bits are and which bits can wait, and sort of colour-coded plans based on that, and then the contractors I think they slightly amended their schedule surrounding that to prioritise those areas.”

“I was running around filling up soap dispensers.”

Contractors

Overall success

The project was very stressful at times for the Bradford Arts Centre team who worked incredibly hard to ensure the project was delivered on time, to the opening deadline. Despite this, the project was overall felt to be a big success, delivered on time and within budget secured, and is receiving positive feedback from users.

“Assuming we can close the project out and we can resolve the VAT issue in the way that we need to [now resolved], I don't see how we could have delivered this project more successfully. We opened on time and within the budget that we had secured...When we need a bit more money, we've got that money really quickly, and what we have built is beyond what we could have expected. It's honestly, it's going to be transformational for Bradford.”

Bradford Arts Centre staff member

“It was really well received and I think there was...an appreciation from the client of what we'd done. I think it hit the brief...It flows a lot better now.”

“I think for the budget, I think it's received an excellent result. So I know that the construction budget had to increase because of things that happened on site, as with any project, but I think that the quality that they achieved at the end of that for the size of the building, that budget really did take them very, very far and I think that...they should be proud and the building that they've got works really well for them.”

“I had the opportunity to speak to a lot of my end users, which was really nice. And they had nothing but compliments to give the building. So that was a really nice and positive experience and good to get feedback.”

Contractors

Work on the kitchen and basement were not part of the original scope for the project, but it was hoped that there would be enough left in the contingency budget to complete this work which unfortunately was not the case, causing some disappointment. However, work is now being actively planned for these areas.

There was little inside the building in terms of heritage assets due to earlier changes, but the works have helped to protect the heritage façade and the structure of the

building to engage more people, and have enabled a space for cultural heritage artforms relevant to the people of Bradford.

“I feel much more confident...that this building is going to be standing in 100 years because of what we've done now...It is drawing people in and using heritage space in a way that makes it relevant and viable for future generations....the community engagement revenue programme, the heritage is of our local communities and artists that we work with are throughout this building, there's artworks on every single level...we gave a platform on our stage to some cultural heritage art forms that hadn't been involved in the city of culture...”

Bradford Arts Centre staff member

“We've spent 18 months on it and people will get the benefit from that for years and years to come and that's where you get the satisfaction, I think. You know that's why we do what we do.”

Contractor

Team learning

All members of the capital team expressed that they have learned from their involvement in the project, with learning and skills development being particularly extensive for some. Areas of learning included building and capital development processes, sector language, and hands-on experience; working effectively with others to ensure project success; and heritage construction, informed by both the experiences gained and the challenges encountered during the project.

“I feel like we've learned a different language. That's what it feels like... it's really weird to think you work with them so closely, and then there almost certainly will be no reason for us to work with any of those people ever again, because it's a one off architectural intervention... I think what's important for us now is finding a way to cascade some of that experience out into the cultural sector.”

Bradford Arts Centre staff member

“...a lot of experience, positive and constructive... learnt so much. I think mainly about...building those relationships and the importance of doing that and how much easier that makes everything else.”

“There isn't a day that I go to work and I don't learn something. So you know it's just how it is and that was no different...I suppose from the historical side, as with a number of buildings in that area, there are some, you know, Bradford was a wealthy place back in the day, wasn't it? And the buildings there reflect that. But unfortunately a lot of them now are starting to fall into decline and disrepair and if that's not maintained and looked after then... ultimately some of the buildings there do look a bit sorry for themselves now... it's difficult...in some cases to try and introduce new methodology into the old building and that's a bit of a skill I think.”

“So I've worked on several heritage buildings over the years and I think any heritage building that I've worked on, I always learn something because there's always something in an older building that you're not expecting or that's different to what you thought. So there were definitely things in terms of the building and the construction element that I've learned that I can take forward to other projects in the future.”

“I think working with Bradford Arts Centre as a client...they'd never delivered a building project before. So it was good for them to learn of the construction process, but also for me to learn them as a client with not having that construction experience and me being able to advise them... I think now that Jez and Alex have delivered a project, they could easily do another one in the future if they wanted to do so.”

“Naturally, one expects that every project we deliver increases our overall experience and knowledge of aspects... There isn't a single project, no matter how big or small, simple or complicated, that I don't... learn something from.”

Contractors

Particular areas of learning included insights from the specialist stonemason, an increased understanding of retaining heritage assets, and the importance of not underestimating the specialist knowledge and skill required. Original railings were directed to be retained by a Council Conservation Officer but needed to be moved to another location, resulting in significant additional work and cost.

“...the subcontractor for stonemason on the project... he only did the actual carving of stone. So the front steps...and the restoration of those and then the openings that I think are on the windows as well and the ramp to the back. It was a nice opportunity to chat to him because he obviously knows everything there is to know...He is one of quite a few examples of people that I got to chat to and learn from. So that was a really interesting experience.”

“The level of...work and ultimately cost that...is necessary to simply move a piece of railing back in situ in another place. The building sounds straightforward, but it kind of unravelled into quite an expensive thing... it's very easy to underestimate the gravity of what extent of specialist knowledge and skill needs to be employed in order to preserve and maintain...what should be a straightforward heritage element... we had specialist metal repairs consultants actually come all the way from...near Liverpool and things like this.”

Contractors

Case studies from Community Evaluators

Art on the Cart at Keighley Creative

By Tracy Uren

27 November 2024



This end-of-project exhibition preview and celebration event was designed to bring different community groups together in a neutral space. Following their involvement in the wider project, community groups were invited by Lauren (Arts & Heritage Officer) to attend the event.

The exhibition showcased participants' past project work and included interactive art activities. An inviting art cart provided a variety of drawing materials for self-guided art, while a rotating canvas station facilitated by an arts facilitator enabled children to experiment with painting techniques.

Participant profile

Participants included three volunteers (white, female, aged 50+), four Keighley Creative staff members, a workshop lead, a catering company and a photographer. Visitors were of mixed ages, from 8 to 50+, including both male and female attendees. The

demographic was predominantly white and South Asian. Notably, community groups such as ‘One In A Million’ and Highfield Community Association were present.

Participant engagement

The art cart, stocked with a wide range of materials, encouraged children to engage creatively and make independent choices. Alongside this, an arts facilitator worked with children on a rotating canvas, fostering creativity and self-expression.

Adults mentioned that they had chosen to stay specifically for the event rather than going straight home after work. Children demonstrated self-led engagement, such as decorating their own paper cups and independently seeking art materials.

Girls painted cooperatively, sharing brushes and discussing techniques. Initially, some boys were hyper and ran around; one boy joked with another but quickly reassured him he was only joking after noticing his reaction. Staff members welcomed the boys and invited them to the drawing tables, shifting their energy towards creative focus.

A section of the exhibition was themed around food, prompting children to initiate lively conversations with catering staff. This opened dialogues about food preparation and the Stockroom Cinema. Boys from different schools connected over shared interests, and there was noticeable intergenerational engagement around work and food themes.

One child, after befriending another, asked their friend to pause painting so they could get food together—highlighting social bonding.

Outcomes on knowledge, skills, and wellbeing

Knowledge and learning: A boy discussed the meaning behind his artwork, having used bronze, silver, and gold paints to represent the idea: “You can’t always be first.”

Skills development: Participants explored various painting techniques. One girl experimented with colour washes, tilting the canvas to observe how the paint reacted. The group then used acrylic markers to add detail, demonstrating evolving artistic skill.

Impact on wellbeing: The atmosphere was positive and cooperative. A boy was observed singing and whistling while drawing, indicating comfort and enjoyment. Children engaged in parallel play and collaborated, with girls sharing brushes and cleaning tools for each other. Boys who had previously been hyperactive settled into focused play, mixing glue and paint. One boy sat beside the group drawing on his own phone, enjoying proximity to the social environment.

Connection with place, community and heritage: A South Asian woman shared that receiving a personal invitation from Lauren encouraged her to attend. She expressed feeling connected to Lauren due to her ongoing presence at their centre. Normally, she said, she would not identify with such a space and spoke about prior negative experiences that made her wary, particularly of being out alone at night. Cultural and logistical barriers were also mentioned, including cold weather, dark evenings, and a lack of driving licences among some group members. Reflecting on their patchwork textile piece, one participant noted the initial hesitation from group members overusing good material for art, as creativity in their culture is usually applied to practical outcomes like clothing or home goods. Displaying their work in the exhibition, however, brought a sense of validation:

“Nice feeling to see your work displayed... gives a sense of importance.”

Interest in future engagement: A mother commented, “He’s loved doing this, he likes arty stuff. Are you doing [anything] else?”

Additionally, one of the centre’s community leaders expressed a desire to continue working with Keighley Creative and the HF Community Centre, citing a strong connection with the Heritage Officer.

Insights and opinions

The event was well staffed and filled with engaging, hands-on activities that helped keep children focused. A diverse mix of participants attended, with some integration across communities—though numbers from the South Asian community were smaller.

Food and art activities emerged as key unifying elements. The culturally inclusive menu catered to varied needs and introduced attendees to both new and familiar foods, sparking conversations and connection.

Challenges and areas for improvement

Challenges included limited representation from the South Asian community. Barriers such as night-time events, weather, and transport accessibility were also noted.

Opportunities for growth and development

Future efforts could benefit from increased recruitment of staff and volunteers from South Asian backgrounds to better reflect and engage the local community.

Roma Voices at Bradford Arts Centre

By Ros Garside

27 March 2025



The workshop aimed to prepare the young people for presenting their dances and a story/dance to an audience at a future session.

The main activity was rehearsal of the programme, involving the young people. They were coached and encouraged by adult members of the project group, also from the Roma community, as well as two dance teachers from Leeds and Bradford but not Roma.

Participant profile

Two boys and eight girls, ranging from 7 to 14; 6 adults all from the Roma community. Two additional adults from Leeds and Bradford – a teacher of dance and her student. One adult facilitator on behalf of Kala Sangam and one observer/author of case study. Most of the Roma adults and children had good facility in both English and Roma (which one of the girls referred to as Gypsy). A couple who observed throughout only spoke Roma in the session.

Participant engagement

The session began with the sharing of food, made by one of the adults. This sharing of food from the group's cultural heritage encouraged mixing and was clearly important to members of the group. One dish was a biryani, and the Indian roots of the Roma community were something that one of the adults referred to, amid concerns that the

younger generation were less aware of their history and language. The dancing involved all the girls with boys sitting out and occupying themselves.

The story towards the end of the session about a good and bad dragon had been written by the younger boy and both boys joined in the telling while the girls performed a dance involving fabric strips representing a tent.

In spite of the wide range of ages, there was a positive atmosphere reflecting a common purpose, with all seeming comfortable in the surroundings. Engagement behaviours included the sharing of food, willing participation from the children, though some told me they were nervous. Adults were encouraging and showed appreciation through applause and comments, mainly in Roma.

One adult led the input on the dancing including some demonstration. She almost exclusively used Roma, having told me earlier how important it was that the young people knew their own language. The dance teacher and student who were white British⁴ encouraged but had a limited input on the dances themselves.

There was strong collaboration among the young people, particularly the girls in spite of age differences. Some of the dancing involved a pair dancing in front of the others and they all took their turn with this aspect of the performance.

The girls wore traditional long full skirts in red satin or red and black striped satin. Some also had belts with small coins attached. The girls changed immediately on arrival and the costumes gave them additional confidence and enabled them to be part of something that was culturally specific and also bonded them as a group.

The adults bonded well over food and through their shared language and culture. Some of the girls knew each other through family or community connections but they all bonded well, whether or not they had known others before the project. The boys were very different ages from each other but interacted well together. They were isolated from the group for most of the session until it was time for them to take on their storytelling roles. They were however comfortable in the environment and mostly sat on the sidelines drawing.

Outcomes on knowledge, skills, and wellbeing

Knowledge and learning: Adults brought their prior knowledge of traditional dances to the session and shared them with the young people. They also brought pride in their

⁴ This is an observation from the community evaluator, not a self-identification of ethnicity.

heritage and language. They showed confidence in using two languages and code switching during the session.

Skills development: The young people's knowledge of the dance steps improved with practice. Their skills in carrying out the moves, coordinating with other dancers and moving in time with others also improved. The boys' storytelling and the coordination of the storytelling with a tent dance improved with adult input and practice.

Impact on wellbeing: The bonding between participants and the way they all felt at home in the setting contributed to wellbeing. The sharing of traditional food created a good atmosphere among the adults. Talking to the young people, it was clear they generally felt secure in the project setting but less comfortable sharing their heritage and language in their mainstream schools.

Connections to place, community and heritage: As above, adults and children all felt comfortable in the setting. They also took ownership of the space, for example moving around with confidence, moving chairs to where they needed them. The focus of the session was very much about pride in cultural and linguistic heritage. It was valuable to participants to have a space where they could share freely without feeling self-conscious. The adult use of a mixture of English and Roma was unselfconscious, though the young people mostly used English.

Adult: 'I am proud of my Roma heritage. I want children to be aware'.

Young person: 'Dancing has been my thing since I was a baby'.

Young person: 'I take my dancing very seriously ...important skill to have in life. Cultural dancing (is) important'.

Young person: 'I speak Slovakian, Czeck, English, Gypsy'(sic).

Not all were totally confident:

Young person: 'Sometimes it's embarrassing. People are staring'

Interest in future engagement: All were conscious they were rehearsing for a performance in the future. The project is important to them. Attendance is not the same each time but overall, the participants expressed an interest in seeing it through. The

young people seemed less secure about talking about their heritage in mainstream school.

Insights and opinions

Participants in all their various roles enjoyed the session and contributed in their own ways from watching and commenting to active participation throughout. The confidence in being at home in the space and using it for themselves was a clear strength. There was a strong sense of wellbeing through being able to express culture, heritage and language in ways that are not regularly open to participants.

There was clear skills development and increasing confidence among the young people who were the focus of the session. There was significant resilience from the young people who accepted the need to practice and rehearse over a period of about an hour. The two boys were only included for a short while.

Challenges and areas for improvement: There appears to be somewhat irregular attendance, though it was hard for me to judge the scale of this. It would be good to find ways of including the boys more. It would be good to have explicit discussion about how the experiences and skills that have been developed in a safe space can inform behaviour in other settings, e.g. what would give the girls greater confidence to talk about their heritage and considerable linguistic experience in mainstream school?

Willow weaving at The Rockwell Centre

By Shannon Beale

15 January 2025

Participant profile

The group was all female of an age range of 25 to 78. There were seven participants.

Participant engagement

Participants were enthusiastic about the session, some participants had more knowledge than others which was helpful as this meant they would help others. It was a hands-on workshop where everyone worked collectively.

The task of making a handmade basket meant there were lots of steps, participants showed their creativity and focus by asking questions and helping each other. This could be if a participant was unsure of the next step another participant would be hands on to help or use words of encouragement. There were also questions about the techniques and materials which were used. There was a lot of concentration which made people focus on the task and not talk at times. Participants also helped with sharing ideas and tips to improve the technique of weaving. There was a lot of satisfaction and accomplishment from participants throughout.

There was lots of verbal encouragement and bonding with supporting each other. There were a lot of mixed skills in the group, although everybody agreed some parts were a struggle. They also bonded over the enjoyment of learning.

Outcomes on knowledge, skills, and wellbeing

Knowledge and learning: Participants learnt about the historical roots and cultures which led to discussions. A conversation between two participants came from learning that aspirin comes from willow. The younger generation learns from experiences of the older generation. There were also lots of conversations about the Rockwell Centre and how it has helped so many people socialise, covid was also spoken about. Many participants felt isolated, coming to the Rockwell to engage in activities has helped their mental health due to socialising.

Skills development: Participants developed their skills throughout, they learnt to make a basket. There was lots of teamwork. A participant struggled to remember steps in making the basket, others helped each time to show or remind her. Other participants

said they felt confident in learning the new skill. One participant said she felt like she made an achievement.

Impact on wellbeing: During the session there was calming music and a relaxing atmosphere. There was lots of laughter which made everybody feel happy.

Connection with place, community and heritage: Participants felt comfortable coming to the Rockwell Centre as it was familiar and local to them. Participants said they enjoyed the people who work there and have made lots of friends which gave them a sense of belonging. The event provided a space for participants from different age groups and a diverse background to come together and share experiences and build relationships. This strengthens the community bond and creates understanding among different cultural groups.

Interest in future engagement: Every participant explained they would like to do this event again, there had been snow in the weeks before meaning participants stayed inside, they explained they enjoyed socialising and would really enjoy doing it again. All participants visit the Rockwell Centre on a weekly basis and will continue to participate in the other sessions.

Insights and opinions

The willow weaving session was successful as participants learnt a new skill, to weave. This created a sense of accomplishment and encouragement to want to explore other artistic activities. Participants will continue to engage in other sessions at the Rockwell Centre.

Participants made them feel that the session made a sense of community and brought them together to share their experiences. The act of the willow weaving itself was said to be relaxing. All benefit from mental health benefits.

Challenges and areas for improvement: Participants would prefer for there to be more than one session as they expressed it felt rushed trying to finish the basket in one day. Participants also had different skill levels, as some found it difficult to follow instructions, providing visual aids or handouts might help for the future.

Opportunities for growth and development: Participants explained that free sessions for willow weaving are fully booked and they don't get the opportunity due to the price being expensive. Implementing feedback forms after sessions could gather more insight from participants about what they did and did not enjoy. By introducing a theme such as seasonal decorations or cultural designs. Also, combining willow weaving with other crafts such as pottery or painting could attract and keep participants interested.

Rasi / Twine Together at South Square Centre

By Asma Firdows

17 February 2025

The purpose of this workshop was to connect participants with the history and practice of natural dying and hand embroidery. Key activities including demonstration of dye extraction from onion peels, instruction in basic embroidery stitches and hands-on creation of naturally dyed and embroidered textile art.

Participant profile

Participants included a diverse group of ESOL group of local community participants, all women, representing a diverse range of all ages. This created a welcoming and supportive environment for sharing knowledge and skills, related to embroidery and natural dying techniques. The varied life experiences and perspectives of the women enriched the learning experience for all involved.

Participant overview

The workshop featured hands-on learning, starting with step-by-step embroidery instruction and stitch practice on fabric swatches, followed by a natural dying demonstration using locally sourced plant material. Workshop organiser actively assisted participants, offering personalised guidance and demonstrating techniques to ensure everyone could successfully dye fabric samples and immediately apply what they learned.

Participants actively engaged, asking insightful questions about fabric choices, dye, properties and sustainable sourcing, demonstrating a genuine interest and commitment to mastering the crafts. Workshop organisers helped learners overcome challenges, as evidenced by their meticulous approach to each stitch and dye experiment.

The workshop fostered a collaborative environment where participants supported each other, shared crafting experiences and even collaborated on a group project, strengthening bonds and creating a supportive learning community. Workshop organiser facilitated these interactions by encouraging participants to share tips and assist one another, further enhancing the collaborative atmosphere.

“To dye with flower is to capture the fleeting beauty of nature and imprint it onto fabric, creating a lasting memory of the season.”

Outcomes on knowledge, skills and wellbeing

Knowledge and learning: Participants gained significant insight into the heritage of textile arts, learning about traditional embroidery techniques and the historical use of natural dyes in local cultures. Several participants connected the workshop to their prior knowledge of gardening, recognising plants used for dying, while others shared stories of family members who practice similar crafts, creating a rich, shared understanding of cultural traditions.

“I was amazed at the range of colours you can achieve with simple ingredients like onion peels! It was such an experimental process and the results are always a surprise.”

“I am intrigued by the historical tradition of natural dying. Embroidery is a great way to connect with nature and I learned a lot in the workshop.”

Skills development: the workshop facilitated the development of artistic techniques, such as embroidery stitches and natural dyeing methods, along with enhancing communication skills through the collaborative projects. Participants visibly progressed in their embroidery skills, with initial hesitant stitches evolving into confident patterns. Feedback with one participant noting:

“I never thought I could create something so beautiful with just a needle and thread.”

Impact on wellbeing: the workshop was really beneficial for mental wellbeing. Participants experienced increased relaxation and enjoyment, with many expressing that the repetitive nature of embroidery was meditative and stress-reducing. Feedback indicated positive changes in mood. The workshop provided a creative outlet that significantly improved overall wellbeing.

“I came feeling overwhelmed, but now I feel calm and inspired.”

“Embroidery is a form of meditation in motion, a way to quiet the mind and find solace in the rhythm of the needle.”

“As someone with stress, embroidery has been a game-changer. It helps me focus my energy and quiet the racing thoughts in my head.”

Sense of place and belonging: The workshop fostered a stronger connection to the location, with participants expressing increased familiarity and comfort in the space. Actions such as lingering after the workshops, sharing personal stories related to the area and expressing appreciation for the venue indicated a growing sense of belonging and attachment to the local.

Connection with community and heritage: The workshop successfully fostered a sense of connection to the local community and cultural heritage. Participants shared comments about local identity and community pride, discussing the importance of preserving traditional crafts. One participant remarked:

“It’s wonderful to see these old traditions being kept alive in our community.”

“Using plant-based dyes has connected me to nature in a whole new way. I feel like I’m part of a long tradition of artisans who have harnessed the power of plants to create beautiful textile.”

Interest in future engagement: Many participants expressed a desire to attend similar events, revisit the space and stay connected to the heritage project. Discussions arose about how participants intended to apply their newly acquired skills in their communities, with some planning to start local crafting groups and share their experiences with others.

Insights and opinions

The workshop had a significant positive impact on participants, fostering engagement, knowledge acquisition skill development and overall wellbeing. A recurring theme among participants was a renewed appreciation for local heritage and a stronger sense of community. The workshop served as a catalyst for personal growth and increased interest in future community involvement.

Challenges and areas for improvement: One challenge was the limited time available, which constrained the depth of exploration in certain areas.

Opportunities for growth and development: To foster growth and development in the project, consider offering more technique workshops. For the future, it is necessary to

arrange more workshops so that the tradition of sitting together in the community continues and participants keep themselves busy because this type of workshop is good for wellbeing and these initiatives can levant the programme, attract diverse participants and strengthen community bonds.

Dream Catchers Workshop with Keighley Creative

By Olha Zhydetska

10 July 2025

Overview

This session was held at the Sue Belcher Centre. The aim of the workshop was to engage a group of schoolchildren in a creative hands-on activity by making decorative dream catchers. During the session, participants created their own dream catchers using paper plates, string, beads, coloured paper, and other craft materials. The activity encouraged imagination, fine motor skills, and teamwork, while also contributing to the decoration of the interior of a community creative bus.

Participant profile

The workshop was delivered for an established group that usually consists of 16 children. However, on this occasion, only five participants attended – four girls and one boy. The children, aged between 7 and 12, live locally and are regular attendees, with the exception of one girl who joined the group for the first time.

Participant engagement

The children appeared very engaged in the activity and stayed focused for nearly the entire 1.5-hour session. Most of them spent the whole time carefully creating their dream catchers. One boy finished his craft quite quickly and then lost interest in the activity. He chose to play with a ball and was a bit playful, but his behaviour did not disrupt the rest of the group or affect the atmosphere negatively.

The children listened carefully to the facilitator and other adults, followed their advice, and also came up with their own creative ways to decorate their dream catchers. While there was little direct interaction between the participants, they often observed each other's work and took inspiration from one another. The group remained focused on their tasks and responded willingly when asked about their creations, showing interest and pride in their work.

The children's interaction during the activity mainly involved sharing and passing materials to one another. While they did not collaborate directly on the crafts, they engaged in informal conversations about their lives and interests. One girl remarked, "We're all friends here," which reflected the warm and friendly group atmosphere. There

was no sense of competition among participants – the overall mood was positive and supportive.

Outcomes on knowledge, skills and wellbeing

Knowledge and learning: Several participants mentioned that they had seen dream catchers before and were interested in making one themselves. The workshop gave them the opportunity to learn how such decorations are made and to explore the materials and techniques involved. This hands-on experience helped them connect the craft with something they were already familiar with, deepening their understanding through personal involvement.

“I like learning new stuff.”

Skills development: The children developed several new skills during the workshop. These included using a hole punch, threading yarn through holes in cardboard, working with glue and tissue paper, and decorating their finished pieces. They also learned the importance of following steps in the correct order when making a craft. For example, while most of the children were unfamiliar with how to use a hole punch at the beginning, by the end of the session they were confidently making holes in the cardboard on their own.

“Now I can make my own dream catcher at home.”

“It was my first time I used a hole punch. It was a bit difficult as you have to know how to insert the paper properly.”

Impact on wellbeing: The children appeared very relaxed and content throughout the workshop. As part of the activity, they wrote positive messages on their dream catchers using markers. One participant wrote, “Happy hours are good hours,” and when asked if she was referring to the time spent during the session, she smiled and replied “yes.” This suggests that the workshop had a positive impact on her mood and overall emotional experience.

“It’s not tiring when you are doing things you like.”

“I am happy when I am here.”

Sense of place and belonging: Overall, the children expressed very positive feelings about both their previous and current experiences at the Sue Belcher Centre. Most of them are regular attendees and clearly feel comfortable and familiar in the space. One girl said, “I’m happy when I’m here,” which reflects a strong sense of belonging and emotional connection to the centre.

Connection with community and heritage: This workshop was part of a wider series aimed at creating decorations for a creative bus that will represent the local community. At the start of the session, it seemed that the children were not fully aware of the overall goal. However, when they were reminded of the purpose, they were happy to leave their creations to be included in the project. They recognised it as a shared effort and expressed pride in contributing to something that would belong to and represent their community.

Interest in future engagement: The workshop sparked curiosity and enthusiasm among the children, and several expressed interest in taking part in similar creative sessions in the future. The familiar and welcoming environment of the Sue Belcher Centre seemed to encourage a sense of comfort and return. While there were no detailed conversations about applying the experience beyond the session, the children’s willingness to contribute their artwork to a shared community project suggests a growing sense of connection and pride that could inspire future involvement.

Insights and opinions

The workshop had a clearly positive impact on the children who took part. They remained engaged and focused throughout the session, showing genuine interest in the creative process. Participants gained new practical skills, such as threading, using a hole punch, and working with various craft materials. The activity also encouraged self-expression and decision-making.

In terms of wellbeing, the atmosphere was calm and joyful, with several children expressing happiness and comfort in both the activity and the space. A strong sense of place was evident, particularly among regular attendees who described the Sue Belcher Centre as a familiar and enjoyable environment.

A recurring theme was pride in contributing to a shared community project, especially once the children were reminded that their dream catchers would help decorate the creative bus. This sense of contribution and belonging supported both emotional engagement and a growing connection to the community.

Challenges and areas for improvement: One minor challenge observed was the difference in pace among participants. While most children remained engaged for the

full duration, one child finished early and became restless, which led to some distraction. Although this did not disrupt the group, it suggests a need for optional follow-up activities to keep early finishers occupied and engaged. Especially taking into account that the boy's behaviour could have become more of an issue if there had been more children present, particularly those with livelier temperaments or shorter attention spans. Additionally, at the start of the session, the overall goal of contributing to the creative bus project was not clearly understood by all participants. A brief introduction or visual reminder at the beginning might help children feel more connected to the wider purpose of the activity from the outset.

Future sessions could benefit from more flexible structures to accommodate different attention spans and levels of ability, as well as clearer framing of the workshop's context within the broader project.

Opportunities for growth and development: This workshop highlighted the value of creative activities in fostering community connection, especially when tied to a shared goal like decorating the creative bus. There is potential to build on this by offering a series of themed workshops that allow children to explore different materials, techniques, or cultural inspirations while continuing to contribute to the project.

One area for development could be to include more background and storytelling around the items being made. For example, sharing the origins and cultural significance of dream catchers and who created them, why they were used, and how they became popular. It might help participants connect more deeply with the activity and spark further curiosity.

Future events might also include opportunities for participants to share their creations with family members or the wider community, such as through a small exhibition or open day, further strengthening intergenerational and neighbourhood ties.

Expanding the programme to include elements like storytelling, music, or local heritage themes could enrich the experience and offer new ways for children to explore and express their identities within the community context.

Understanding and representing Bradford's heritage buildings with Bradford Arts Centre

By Ros Garside

22 July 2025

Work on heritage posters depicting four iconic Bradford buildings and their history. Participants had been previously assigned to groups which had each created photographic and artistic representation of specific Bradford heritage buildings. Following on from the previous session when all of the groups made progress in their posters/collages, this session gave the opportunity for further work on selecting and placing images. All groups were working on their art pieces, most reaching the point of having a product ready for mounting by the end of the session.

Participant profile

There were 15 participants in the session, a high turnout compared with some other sessions. The session was facilitated by a member of Kala Sangam staff and a local artist, both known to members through their facilitation of previous sessions.

u3a members are retired but active members of the community. Many have lived in the area a long time or even all their lives. They know the city centre and its buildings well and have experienced significant changes to the area and to the use of the buildings over time. Others have come to Bradford more recently but are familiar with all the selected buildings.

Participant engagement

The session began with discussion of future dates and the likely date when Kala Sangam's new building would open. This led to questions about whether the artwork from u3a would be displayed as soon as the building opened. The main activity of the session, working on art pieces was hands on. This allowed for sustained engagement over a couple of hours or more. The project has relied on good quality group work, which was clearly evidenced in this session. Groups who had finished their artwork supported others or worked on biographical and historical information to be displayed on boards linked to the work.

Some members felt that the administration at the start of the session took too long when members really wanted to carry on with their artwork. All members of the groups were engaged in the main activity with clear collaboration between members of each

group. There was a lively buzz of conversation and discussion within, and to some extent across, groups to reach consensus on the final pieces. This lasted throughout the session including the lunch break until group members began to drift away from about 1.15 pm, about three hours after arrival.

Most groups engaged well with facilitators, valuing their opinions, though some were more ready to listen to advice than others. All were actively participating in the hands-on aspects with useful conversations taking place to shape each group's final product and/or linked wording for information boards.

The hands-on part of the session which took up most of the time provided clear opportunities for collaboration and learning from each other. In some instances, discussion within the group led to a change of direction, e.g. one group had intended to create a jigsaw effect with their photos but trial and error plus discussion convinced them this would not work. The decision was agreed by the whole group through trying out different techniques and discussing them.

The group that spent most time working on their information board worked well together in considering what to write, drawing on writing skills within the group. Members of another group that had finished supported the group that was furthest behind. This group was not as far on as others due to previous unavoidable absences of group members.

Outcomes on knowledge, skills and wellbeing

Knowledge and learning: The project has enabled sharing of knowledge of Bradford's heritage and history. This session drew on previous sharing of knowledge, but this stage of the project was not about acquiring new knowledge about the buildings being depicted. There was continuing development of understanding and learning about how best to present artwork and photos that had begun in previous session.

Skill development: Participants drew on existing communication, writing and spatial awareness skills and continued to develop these through collaboration.

Participants had learned and were still learning about how to display their chosen images to greatest effect. Most felt positive about what they had achieved but there was some frustration about whether works would be finished in time.

Impact on wellbeing: Over the project, wellbeing has been developed through participants working together and getting to know one another. Most people did not really know each other at the beginning of the project but have developed good working relationships and friendships. Some have found this more challenging as their group

has not gelled as well or unavoidable absences have hampered the development of friendships borne of regular collaboration. Examples of friendship were evident in this session through animated discussion and demonstrations of concern about what else is happening in people's lives.

'I've enjoyed getting to know the others [in the group]. I hardly knew the people in my group before. Now I feel we are opening up to each other.'

Sense of place and belonging: The Kala Sangam venue is now well known to participants. As older people, several have expressed appreciation of the access arrangements and the hospitality. Members clearly felt comfortable helping themselves to drinks, taking comfort breaks when needed and using the space in the session. They also appreciated that lunch was provided and sensitivity to dietary requirements.

The markings on the floor to show the size of the spaces for the artwork and to allow its use as a layout area were seen as very helpful.

There was initial surprise on entering the venue that it had changed (e.g. extra furniture in the main hall) due to Kala Sangam being in transition to another venue. It could have been helpful to assign a table to each group to make expectations clear on joining the session, rather than some people having a wobble because the space looked different.

'We are now doing three stories for the info board. It will show each person's link to Bradford. There will also be stories with the artwork'.

Connection with community and heritage: The explicit focus on heritage took place in earlier sessions. Discussion sessions and the Rap session enabled the sharing of experiences and of members' own history in relation to Bradford. This supported members in reaching a greater understanding and empathy for each other's experience. It also enabled members to express a sense of belonging to Bradford and to show their understanding of the community, developed over 70 years or more in some cases. This sharing has continued informally, and members have brought in relevant books, images and other documents to share with their groups. However, there is a degree of frustration that the depth of understanding of Bradford's heritage will not be captured in the final exhibition.

Interest in future engagement: Participants were keen to complete the project. A few expressed concerns about how many future sessions there would be and when.

Some who had not engaged in any form of art for many years would like opportunities to carry on with this in some way.

Insights and opinions

The project has provided excellent opportunities for a self-chosen group from within u3a to develop and practice art skills and to reflect on their knowledge of Bradford. All enjoyed the range of art genres which were offered in the project's first phase and valued the opportunity to try new activities. It was good to work with a range of practitioners most of whom had good artistic and teaching skills.

There was considerable learning from experts in different art forms. There was also significant learning from each other through collaboration and discussion.

The long-term nature of the project contributed to the forming of relationships, the sharing of issues both within and outside the project and the sense of wellbeing provided by collaborative activities. The hands-on nature of most aspects of the project created strong engagement across all participants. There was a marked willingness to try new things and mostly a sense of satisfaction in the end products, though occasionally there was some frustration when the final product was not as good as individuals had hoped for.

Challenges and areas for improvement: A couple dropped out before the second phase due to time constraints or because they would have preferred a different art form to have been selected for the final product.

Some members would have liked greater clarity in relation to the overall plan, the number of sessions involved and the purpose of each session.

In a couple of cases, the tutors were less effective because they did not understand or listen to the group or because they did not have such good teaching skills in relation to beginners, e.g. the lino cutting (which was nevertheless really enjoyed by some people).

It would be good to consider different ways of handling admin issues, eg future dates. There was some frustration when this took up time at the beginning of a session when participants wanted to spend time on the activities. Maybe admin could be done through dialogue with each group or during a coffee break.

Greater clarity might be needed about next steps, particularly in relation to finishing unfinished work and in relation to the opportunities for information boards.

There has also been a degree of frustration that the depth of understanding of Bradford's heritage will not be captured in the final exhibition

Opportunities for growth and development: A number of participants are committed to building on the rap session with a future spoken word session.

A launch event could provide opportunities for public speaking and reading aloud original pieces of writing, as happened at an earlier sharing event. Once it is up and running, it would be good if Bradford Arts Centre could facilitate an ongoing u3a art project. It would be good to have another joint event for all the groups that took part in the overall project as the sharing event led to learning across communities.

Drama & dance workshop with South Square Centre

By Anne Marie Fielding

26 November 2025



The workshop took place with the Soul Girls group at St Francis Community Hall, Allerton, Bradford. The Drama & Dance Workshop with puppet making was in preparation for a Performance in February 2025 for BD25.

Participant profile

Soul Girls Community Group run by Rooted In charity. The group is for schoolgirls aged between 10 and 12 years.

We have three volunteers running the group aged between 39 and 76 years old with a teenage volunteer age 16 years who used to participate in Soul Girls when she was younger.

Each week it has been organised for several people to visit and help the girls put a performance together. Today we have [a] Drama-Co-ordinator helping the girls put their performance together.

Participant engagement

Each of the workshops began with activities at a table. We set up a long table, so all the girls, volunteers and visitors are around it. This is so we can engage with each other, catch up about the session before and then discuss what we are doing that evening and introduce any new visitors to the group who will be helping us.

The girls also have tea around the table, like a family meal and play games like Uno, colouring and making bracelets. It gives the girls chance to relax and talk to us before we begin the drama workshop with Hope the Drama Co-Ordinator.

This week the girls are very chatty with each other and the adults in the room. They ask about each other weeks and continue to discuss the workshop ahead. [The workshop coordinators] go around the girls collecting ideas and thoughts for the session's performance.

The girls split off into small groups and are encouraged to work with different members each week, so when it comes to our final performance, they are comfortable working as a team. There is lots of smiles this evening and enthusiasm sharing ideas.

The girls are all around the same age and some attend the same school, so they are all very familiar with each other, they speak about school experiences, hobbies etc. They have a lot of shared ideas of what to incorporate into their drama sketches of the evening using their own personal/family experiences. The girls take turn speaking and share conversations taking on board each other's suggestions.

Outcomes on knowledge, skills and wellbeing

Knowledge and learning: The girls speak about their local area, school and family life and what it means to them being from Bradford, discussing what makes them proud of their city. The girls have incorporated life experiences of those and their family in their performances. This evening one girl has chosen to put in a scene in a performance about some confrontation her mum had at work due to a cultural difference. This was nice this idea was shared and to hear points of view.

Skill development: Over the weeks our Drama Co-Ordinator has developed the girl's knowledge in storytelling, incorporating their feelings in the sketches and communicating with actions and gestures to get messages across to our audience. There is usually a lot of laughter in our sketches through the girls being nervous/shy. This is now fading, and they are becoming confident in performing and working more on engaging with their audience.

Impact on wellbeing: There is lots of enjoyment and laughter in each session. The girls are not forced to perform and would only do so if they feel comfortable. We have every girl taking part, sharing ideas with excitement and enthusiasm. Upon speaking to one of our participants, she described the group as a place where she can be herself. Others have said they do not feel judged but feel encouraged and empowered.

“I feel represented and feel like I have been able to be myself. It has been nice to express my feelings/thoughts through drama. I have enjoyed being able to be a bit silly and make my friends laugh.”

“I have loved doing the drama workshops, I have been able to add in bits of my family life to my performance. For example, I performed a disagreement I had with my twin sister. It is wonderful to be creative through drama.”

Sense of place and belonging: After observing the girls over several weeks it is so lovely to see them bonding. One girl said Soul Girls was her ‘safe space’. Another said it was ‘homely’ due to the way we engage over dinner and the way we encourage each other in any activity we do. It was discussed that it is a warm familiar environment due to having the same space and same volunteers each week.

“St Francis and our volunteers is our safe space, it is accessible to us all and it is a welcoming place to be with friends and have our tea. We are lucky to be able to experience these workshops.”

Connection with community and heritage: The girls spoke about the connection that they have with our community building we use. When they walk past daily going to school, having walks or going to the shop, they think of it as ‘their building’. A familiar safe space and a place in our community that makes them smile. The girls are very excited to be doing their performance in their home of Bradford. They are very excited to see where they are performing. We also spoke about the Art Trail that [the Arts & Heritage Officer] organised with the girls in the summer. It brought our community together with Art that they had created and made them feel proud.

“I have made new friends from other schools who live in the same area as me. It has been nice to meet them and share our interests every week.”

Interest in future engagement: The girls are very keen to do more performances for the community and have built up confidence to do so. They have said they would like to perform in our community hall at St Francis or another local space. We discussed doing a fashion show with a catwalk. Lots of ideas including making outfits and costumes. Possibly selling tickets and raising funds for Rooted In.

Insights and opinions

The workshops have been brilliant for the girls, I have observed and taken part with them over the weeks. Sitting back to do this observation today has made me realise how far the girls have come. The confidence they have built up is amazing; the knowledge they have gained on how to story tell and perform is brilliant.

It has been so lovely to see them working together and encouraging each other to create a piece of drama they are all proud of.

Challenges and areas for improvement: One of the challenges we faced at the start of delivering these workshops was getting the girls attention. They were all excited, had lots of ideas and wanted to speak at the same time. We created our own guidelines how to listen and speak to each other which really helped. Also playing a few warmup games helped before doing our mini performances so the girls became focused. In future workshops it would be nice to see the guidelines started at the beginning, so the participants know what is expected of them.

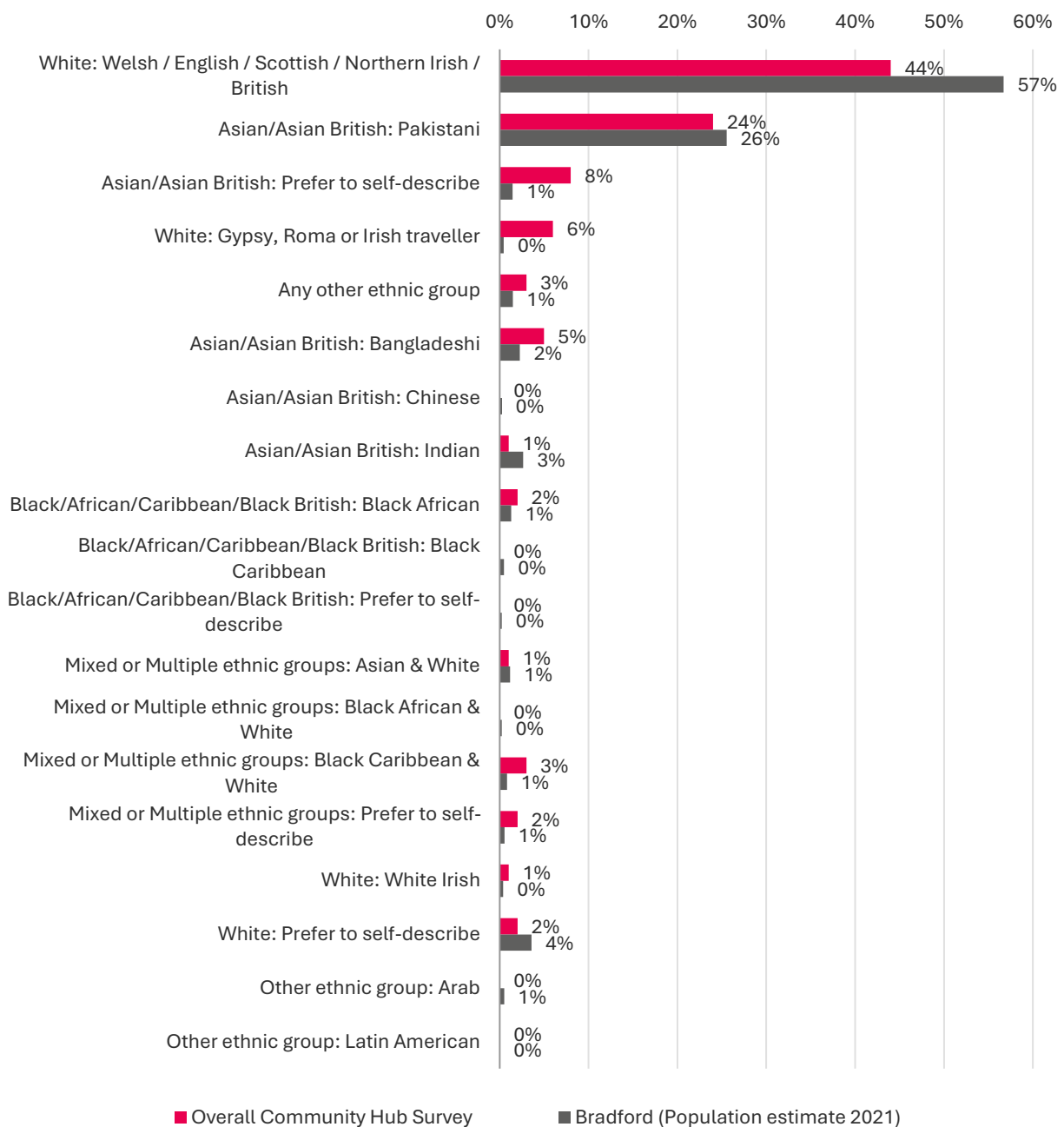
Opportunities for growth and development: It has been discussed with the participants about what they want to see in future workshops and what events they want to do in the future, one thing that came from it was they want to engage more with the local community and meet people so they feel their fashion show will be a good starting point. It was suggested doing a community picnic in the local park and showing their performance there with local people.

Appendices

Appendix I: Additional Community Hub Survey Results & Literals

UNGROUPED ETHNICITY: OVERALL & BRADFORD

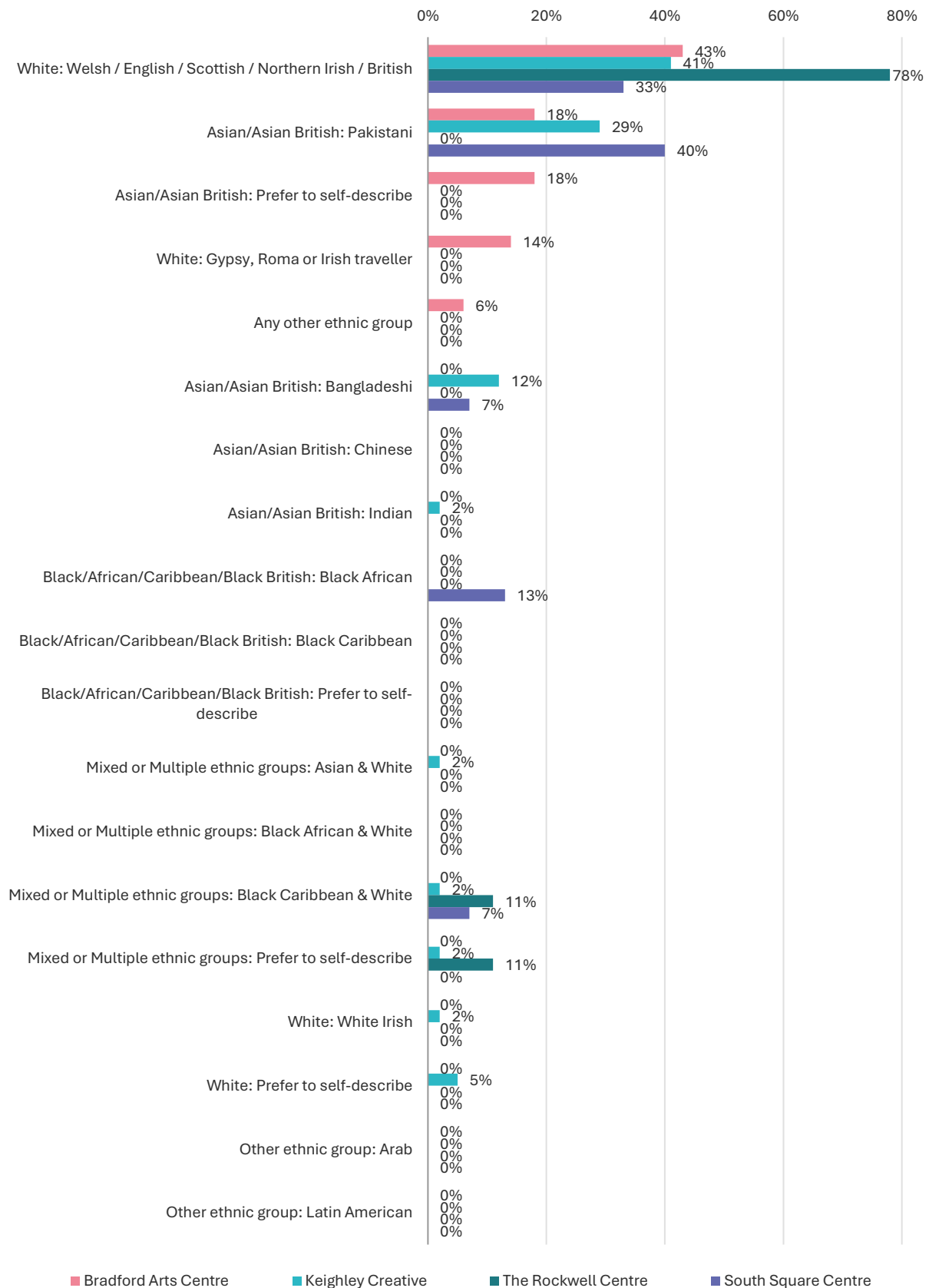
With which ethnicity do you identify? (Select one only)



Base: 114 / 546,412
Margin of error: 9% / 0%

UNGROUPED ETHNICITY – BY HUB

With which ethnicity do you identify? (Select one only)



Bradford Arts Centre

Keighley Creative

The Rockwell Centre

South Square Centre

Base: 49 / 41 / 9 / 15

Margin of error: 14% / 15% / 27% / 25%

Literal responses

Please explain your rating for '[hub name] is welcoming and accessible'

Base: 65

(Participant has ticked is welcoming and accessible option strongly agree 4 times). It is good and anybody can join.

All staff are very welcoming always.

Always friendly

Because it's growing my skillset, makes me feel really clever and I like art group.

Because that's how I feel.

Building welcoming & has lift. Good light room.

Calm atmosphere - has lift.

Claire and Gemma are always kind and listen to us

Diverse group of people, friendly and welcoming atmosphere, different cultural preferences in the art, food for all!

Easy to find. Lift if needed. Staff all welcoming & most (but not all) tutors very welcoming.

enjoyable but had never heard of keighley creative before

Everyone makes you feel so welcomed and included and visitors were truly enjoying themselves and having fun. Keighley Creative always has lots going on for so many people, there is always something of interest

everything was explained to you, I enjoyed myself.

Friendly receptionist and BAC staff. Always welcoming.

Fully accessible building with very friendly staff, nothing is too much trouble

Good accommodation (though not for all sessions). Toilets accessible. Lift access. Dietary requirements addressed.

Great exhibition, great space in town for Keighley, event was well structured and food and refreshments were delicious!

great to see a multi-cultural event at the National Trust

Great welcome, food, activity, friendly

Greeted at the door. Good facilities. Offered refreshments. Friendly staff.

Had a great chat with the staff, they were also very kind and welcoming to my family

I always feel welcome

I have put this because anyone can get here and will be welcomed as well as the centre being easily accessible

I really like to come here and meet my friends and enjoy every session.

it gets me out of the house, and I enjoy the groups I go to and I like the people there

It was lovely to see the Highfield womens group work displayed and see the Bangladesh (community) represented

It's a group where I have an opportunity to express myself. It's given me the opportunity to express my emotions, meet new people and I feel safe to go through a mixture of emotions.

its accessible because there's no steps. There's patio doors into the garden. There's always someone here welcoming you with a smile ,a cuppa and an ear

It's nice being here each week with Claire and nice learning to garden

It's open to the community and everyone is kind.

I've been to a few of the workshops before and they are always well attended with friendly people

KS staff always friendly & welcoming.

Lauren has been very friendly and helpful through the project !

Lift, great spaces, hospitality

lovely launch event, great food, was nice to see the young people celebrate their work

nice event, busy, nice atmosphere

nice staff, very welcoming and kind

Not Bradford, Keighley! Love Keighley Creative, really nice space, felt very welcomed in and treated not totally accessible because it's tucked away, a lot of people don't know where it is as it's difficult to get to. Tell people about it but nobody has an idea where it is

Participant did not fill in this page as they had never visited Kala Sangam before

Physical accessibility not ideal; welcoming part is true.

Right in the city centre, so easy transport, a lift is available. Friendly people and helpful.

Staff friendly, accessible lift.

Superb, staff is always friendly and enthusiastic

Thank you for the sessions. They make my week happier

the artwork was very nice to see at the hall and the staff were very friendly

The centre creates a friendly and inclusive environment for visitors. These equalities contribute to a positive experience for individuals interacting.

The doorman always has a welcome + smile

The food was so tasty! They let us take loads back for our family

The new building design helps: ease of access, bright and airy. Staff are friendly.

the people here are very welcoming and its got a good atmosphere.

The people were nice and they made room for me and my daughter even when the workshop was full

The sessions were very nice and relaxed

the space is really cool and the bus is so fun!

the space is warm, comfortable and accessible

The staff have always been very friendly and helpful.

the workshop people were very nice and friendly

The workshop was free to join in and friendly people

was given a leaflet about other events in the summer, great things on offer for school holidays

We are greeted on arrival and told where we should go.

We feel welcome, friendly environment

We had a big room for our activities, which works better and so meets our needs. Staff are great.

Welcoming because the people are friendly and fun to talk to

Welcoming staff, pleasant premises, very accessible.

Yes

Please explain your rating for 'Quality of the work that takes place at the workshop/event'

Base: 81

(Participant has ticked very good rating 4 times) Very good because it is so big, food and clean.

?

A couple of times it has deviated from planned agenda. This has lowered the planned event.

Any work is only as good as the contributors. Sometimes there are a few dominate people who do most of the talking (as ever).

artist leading the workshop was very skilled and helpful

Because it's really excellent

brilliant exhibition, executed well, well done team! And special thanks to the caterers!

brought my family to the park for the day, it was nice to see their was something different on offer

Claire knows lots of things which she shares with us

Enjoyed drawing/pastels but I'm not very good at it.

Enjoyed meeting it was very interesting

Event efficiently ran.

everybody is very friendly and understanding that you can talk about anything that bothers you.

Exhibition was incredible and very good quality, an inspiring group of young people!

Food was delicious and we got to take pictures with our bus, the space was very nice

For me I have found it interesting and a learning experience.

Good

Good booklet but there were some names missing

Good support within group and from consultant artist.

Good tutors and equipment.

great book launch, learnt about about Bangladeshi culture, the food and booklet were amazing

Have enjoyed the work and the experience.

Helpful & friendly staff.

High quality and range of materials, we get given lots to take home too to encourage our create development

I enjoyed the self portrait session and was proud of how I displayed my work. It feels good to mix with people and do something for myself.

I enjoyed the statues

I enjoyed the work we did but sessions could be a bit tighter and more focused.

I get to do new things

I have very good feeling about this

I learn and do many things. I want this programme to continue and I am very satisfied and want such programme to keep going. Thanks

I love our bus and Lauren and Sian

I really enjoyed the self portrait session. I also loved the painting, it was a new thing in my life which has been granted to me. A good step. I would like to try poetry in the future

I was helped by staff and members to be more creative than I thought I could be which was something new that I discovered about myself.

If I had another chance to do it again I would. I learned new things and had fun. Thank you!

If I had the opportunity, I definite to do this.

It is all encompassing.

it was a lovely day and the cart was something fun and different

It was brilliant to see the community represented and such fantastic, creative work

It's interactive for all ages for such as the painting there was a sense of community and we all painted, spoke and ate cake.

Listening to others with a different opinion is productive and educational, giving me a broader insight to many subjects.

Loved this project with Lauren and Keighley Creative, the young people have loved it, hopefully more to come!

Lovely event, lovely atmosphere, busy, friendly, welcoming, beautiful and inspiring artwork, fab food!

Made me feel like I fit in!

Most sessions excellent but a couple of disappointing ones. Some issues with overall focus + clarity of purpose.

Most workshops were good or very good but one I attended was disappointing.

my first time trying embroidery and I learnt a lot

My kids learnt how to stitch, very good event, we enjoy coming to Highfield Center outings

my rating is good as they are easy to participate in even though I have only done a few

nice to see ERH branching out and putting on event for South Asian community, workshop was great but event could've been bigger

organised but nothing is perfect!

People create different things and in interesting ways

planned but also flexible - facilitating

Really like this group and would like to join if we do it again.

So great to see what everyone in Keighley is up to!

Something I wouldn't do normally.

strongly agree

strongly agree

Super interesting always great new ideas to try something new and fun

The artwork at the workshop was really exciting and good quality, my children really enjoyed it!

The calligraphy and the quilt and the pots were very beautiful

The facilitators are friendly + professional

The facilitators support and guide but allow us to direct our part of the project.

The lady taught me some new stitching skills and we saw some of then examples and they were very good quality

The participant ticked all of the above boxes for the question about quality of work.

The tree and the cart were really interesting and creative

The weather affected the overall event but Keighley Creative still managed to put it on despite the rain and the heritage garden was beautiful

The workshop was high quality. Work produced by participants embody creativity and skill, we learned new things in the workshop.

The workshop was led very well, there was lots of activities for people to get involved with

There are a lot of activities that I enjoy

V. enjoyable.

Very good

Very welcoming and clean

was other things on in the park which was nice but this workshop was something different to the others

we do our best.

we get to do things we would've never been able to do without the Rockwell Centre. You never know what new things are going on and it is always a great surprise

We have made 4 displays

We took part and learned lots of new things - we want more!

Well explained

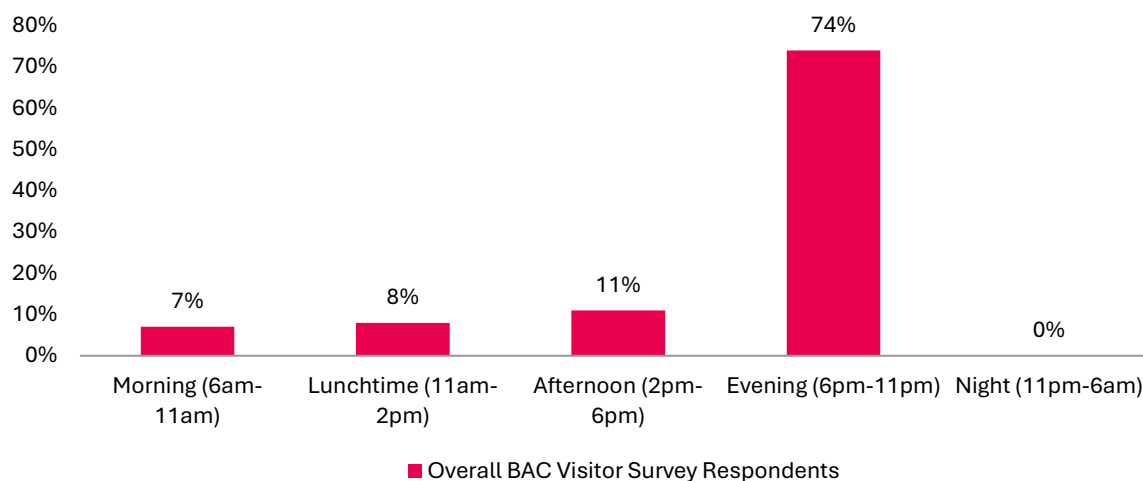
Well thought through Offers creative opportunities

What I loved is the professional way that work is displayed and the work itself was fantastic

workshop and games were good, artword was good, could have been more stuff to do at event

Appendix II: Additional Visitor Survey results

At which time did you attend?



Base: 296

Margin of error: 5%

Appendix III: Artist Survey literal responses

Please explain what else best describes your work as an artist.	Survey	Location
<i>Base: 5</i>		
Rap workshops themed around creative writing for good mental health	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Bradford
I am a print maker, using mainly lino cut. My work is based in drawing and documenting people and their stories.	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Bradford
Therapeutic interventions	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Bradford
Festival	Final report data (2026 survey)	Bradford
Audio visual performance	Final report data (2026 survey)	Bradford

Can you please describe your involvement/work with Bradford Arts Centre (formerly Kala Sangam):	Survey	Location
<i>Base: 24</i>		
Crown contemporary dance workshops And making use of the artist space	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Elsewhere
I have delivered and ran workshops at Kala Sangam for my company.	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Elsewhere
Exhibition and Workshops	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Bradford
Previously worked with Kala Sangam a long time ago now	Interim report data (2025 survey)	
I have run several rap workshops for them across different venues over the last 2-3 years	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Bradford
I have done freelance artistic sessions with Kala Sangam	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Bradford
I have facilitated lotus book making workshops with primary school children and a lino cutting workshop with a u3a group.	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Bradford
I lead a Rap Workshop as part of a Women Zone workshop in November.	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Elsewhere
I have done various projects with Lauren and Keighley creative	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Bradford
I facilitated to workshops around photography as part of the arts & heritage programme. One with Womenzone and the other with U3a	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Elsewhere
Received 'back to the studio' grant to return to my practice post-covid. I have also been a performer in other people's projects supported by Kala Sangam	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Bradford
Supported/hosted two of my shows. Currently in development with them.	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Bradford

I have worked with Heritage Officer at Keighley Creative on a variety of community workshops	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Bradford
i was part of dancing with words	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Elsewhere
Rehearsal space often and performance opportunities as well as Nayak teaching programme space.	Final report data (2026 survey)	Bradford
BaC supported project development by offering space for meetings, workshops and rehearsals, contributing staff expertise and sharing contacts/networks, and it has also programmed our work	Final report data (2026 survey)	Bradford
Bradford Arts Centre have been supporting my work since 2021 and now are partners of my work.	Final report data (2026 survey)	Bradford
Over the last 4 years (in Kala Sangam days and into the BAC relaunch) I have been involved in the research and development of a theatre show called Otherhood. This involved at least 2 periods of RnD held at BAC (or in temporary space that they used while the refurb was being done.) Then in autumn 2025, when we launched our theatre company (Old Bird) and Otherhood was our first show (part of Bradford City of Culture 2025 programme), BAC was a key venue during the tour of Otherhood around Bradford and District.	Final report data (2026 survey)	Bradford
Kala Sangam and subsequently Bradford Arts Centre have supported me by offering advice when I was applying for funding and have also hosted my festival. I have also attended lots of performances and events at the Bradford Arts Centre.	Final report data (2026 survey)	Bradford
Bring it Back	Final report data (2026 survey)	Elsewhere
I did some nfts workshops	Final report data (2026 survey)	Bradford
I have worked with BDAC as a visiting artist	Final report data (2026 survey)	
My play KAILEY was a part of the off site programme in 2024	Final report data (2026 survey)	Bradford
Latterhand performed our work From Stone in collaboration with dancer Chemaine Cook in 2022	Final report data (2026 survey)	Bradford

What other support have you had from Bradford Arts Centre (formerly Kala Sangam) in the last 12 months?	Survey	Location
<i>Base: 16</i>		
Got money contribution to support the delivery of the project as well as support on the day and the build up for the show I was touring that was develop with Kala Sangam support	2023 Baseline survey data	Elsewhere
managing grant i.e. liaising with funders	2023 Baseline survey data	Elsewhere
In kind funding application support	2023 Baseline survey data	

Support in accessing community groups for R&D for a new performance project (about childlessness) and space to run the session in. Hosted a work in progress sharing event.	2023 Baseline survey data	
Cash support	2023 Baseline survey data	Elsewhere
Performance space	2023 Baseline survey data	Elsewhere
Digital live streaming for outreach activity	2023 Baseline survey data	Elsewhere
Back to the studio programme post covid	2023 Baseline survey data	Elsewhere
Performance opportunity	2023 Baseline survey data	Bradford
Financial	2023 Baseline survey data	Elsewhere
Fundraising support, support in kind, acting as a 'critical friend' when developing new ideas.	2023 Baseline survey data	Bradford
Commission fee Technical support during performances	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Elsewhere
N/A	Interim report data (2025 survey)	
Cash for match funding	Final report data (2026 survey)	Bradford
Venue support for festival	Final report data (2026 survey)	Bradford
Over the last 4 years (in Kala Sangam days and into the BAC relaunch) I have been involved in the research and development of a theatre show called Otherhood. This involved at least 2 periods of RnD held at BAC (or in temporary space that they used while the refurb was being done.) Then in autumn 2025, when we launched our theatre company (Old Bird) and Otherhood was our first show (part of Bradford City of Culture 2025 programme), BAC was a key venue during the tour of Otherhood around Bradford and District.	Final report data (2026 survey)	Bradford

Can you please describe this work or involvement with the community hub(s) specifically:	Survey	Location
<i>Base: 13</i>		
Paid workshops with young people - mural painting, cardboard sculpture	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Bradford
Poetry workshops within the southasian communities with south square	Interim report data (2025 survey)	
Photography and Poetry Exhibition at South Square and a spoken word launch performance. Community session on writing heritage with Soul Girls for Kalasangam.	Interim report data (2025 survey)	
I have run a rap workshop at Kala Sangam and also attended an event, and I have worked as a partner with Keighley Creative on a project	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Bradford
I have attended artist crits and ran workshops at all of the above hubs	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Bradford
I have delivered workshops at Kala Sangam as part of the schools takeover week and at Women Zone in Bradford.	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Elsewhere
Working with Lauren and the one in a million group at the Sue Belcher centre to work towards a final show. Craft workshops in the community.	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Bradford

As I mentioned I facilitated workshops with Womenzone and U3A	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Elsewhere
Worked as a performer in a project supported by Keighley Creative	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Bradford
Community workshops - pledges to the landscape event, eid on the green, halloween and christmas workshops	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Bradford
youth group	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Elsewhere
Performed and ran writing for wellbeing workshops there for community participants, with support from hub staff	Final report data (2026 survey)	Bradford
I have been running weekly sessions with the Roma community European Drom as part of BAC's heritage programme.	Final report data (2026 survey)	Bradford

How has the support you have received from Bradford Arts Centre (formerly Kala Sangam) benefitted your work/career?	Survey	Location
<i>Base: 60</i>		
Being connected to the organisation give creditability to my profile	2023 Baseline survey data	
it supported time and space for research and development, exploring ideas, and clarifying some concepts i was able to share with others as a small scratch performance.	2023 Baseline survey data	Elsewhere
It has in deed! thanks to Kala sangam support my career has continue developing and enable me to successfully deliver a very ambitious project	2023 Baseline survey data	Elsewhere
developed producing skills esp partnership building and networking.	2023 Baseline survey data	Elsewhere
The studio space available has been detrimental to my own career and development. Being able to hold space for R+D's and workshops in a professional environment has been so key to actually going on to make the work, and this support has been so appreciated.	2023 Baseline survey data	
I was able to rehearse an experimental project in the early stages of developent with no budget which would have not happened elsewhere	2023 Baseline survey data	
The partnership with KS enabled us to gain different perspectives on the issue we were researching for a new performance piece, gave visibility to the project and enabled us to share work in progress and gain valuable feedback from participants to inform the next stage of project development.	2023 Baseline survey data	

Kala Sangam's support has been incredible. The opportunity to run our R&D weeks in a safe and nurturing environment has allowed me time and space to take risks in my practice, and to have time to experiment and explore. It has definitely benefitted my career and helped develop my creative practice as well as everyone that has joined me in the space.	2023 Baseline survey data	
Enabled me to keep practicing though a quiet period of employment during Covid lockdown	2023 Baseline survey data	Elsewhere
It has supported the development of the company.	2023 Baseline survey data	Elsewhere
The support we have received has been integral to our development as an organisation	2023 Baseline survey data	Bradford
Most definitely.	2023 Baseline survey data	Elsewhere
It provided us and our Rhythmosaic Dance Company with the support necessary to mount its creative work	2023 Baseline survey data	Elsewhere
Umdificult to say...as the work I make can be seen as noncommercial and nonconformist.	2023 Baseline survey data	Elsewhere
I would have not been able to research and and create my work without the support from Kala Sangam. Having studio time and development support from them has meant that I could continue making work at a time when there were very few resources and support available.	2023 Baseline survey data	Bradford
It helped me massively in ACE funded bids as we were given space in kind as well as a lot of support for the future of the performance	2023 Baseline survey data	
Kala Sangam has provided me with two residencies that has contributed to my development and training as a dance artist.	2023 Baseline survey data	Elsewhere
engaged with new audience outside of our area, connect with new artists and sector leaders, opportunity for our dancers to perform	2023 Baseline survey data	Elsewhere
Their support has been crucial in us securing funding for our touring productions, in developing new work and place-making in Bradford.	2023 Baseline survey data	Elsewhere
Excellent	2023 Baseline survey data	Elsewhere
Back to the studio - was such an important offer, the timing to have this pressure free time and space to get back into the studio post covid was vital. The proffesional photography was also such a great addition as it meant a marketing boost as well putting me on people's radars. Performing my solo show for the first time at KS has had a direct and huge impact on my career. Audience members included Leeds Playhouse and Dance Base scotland. Having the opportunity to perform at KS and be seen by the likes of those top flight venues had directly lead to doors opening which were once firmly closed.	2023 Baseline survey data	Elsewhere

Kala Sangam support enabled us to make a successful council small grant application, gave us rehearsal space and technical help leading up to a performance . It was our first theatre space show and gave us experience confidence to make new work and seek larger funding	2023 Baseline survey data	Bradford
Access to space and resources when developing creative work. Support and advice in writing funding applications that have proved successful. Ongoing mentoring to give direction to the company.	2023 Baseline survey data	
As a result of having in kind space I have recieved ACE funding both DYCP and project grants	2023 Baseline survey data	
Hugely. My studio time allowed me to experiment with some complex technical elements of my show that I wouldn't have otherwise found the freedom to explore.	2023 Baseline survey data	Elsewhere
The support from KS has been invaluable in allowing our company to develop new work and reach new audiences in our home town. The space itself is a huge asset to Bradford, and its open access approach to supporting artists allows us to test ideas, bring people together in a creative environment and make work happen. To have a space which is fit for purpose, well maintained and well run, is in itself fantastic, but would not be anything without a staff team who understand and support the creative process and the needs of artists. It's not just bricks and mortar that make KS so important to the creative community in Bradford. It's the willingness to support artists across the board in every way possible, from having creative chats about new ideas, to plugging people into networks; offering space for developing ideas to trying new ways of working which enhance and embrace the artists ambitions. The team also really understand the challenges that artists face, e.g. in terms of funding, and offer appropriate, vital support such as support in kind and financial commissioning support. As an artist, to be able to have this support from our local venue is huge and has most certainly helped us be successful in funding applications which has seen new work being developed in the town. Our last piece, which KS supported from the word go, went on to tour nationally and won a national award for Best Production. Without the support from KS, this would just not have been possible. Alongside this, the space is so welcoming for audiences, particularly new audiences or those who may be tempted to try something new. This first point of contact for audiences is so important, and the team at KS always make people feel at home, welcome, respected and cared for. It might not sound like much for a venue to do this, but as a touring company, we have had experience of so many venues who just don't (or can't) do it, and KS really do make people feel they belong there.	2023 Baseline survey data	Bradford

I was a recipient of the Back to the Studio support package in 2020 - the money and studio space were an immense help in allowing me to explore my ideas whilst sustaining myself throughout covid. I then received my first project grant from the arts council in 2021 to develop my ideas, and my work was later selected for a choreographic programme in Leeds (2022), which gave me further funding, mentorship, and a public platform to show what I'd made.	2023 Baseline survey data	Elsewhere
Kala Sangam has been there to support us throughout our time developing the company. They've offered us inkind studio space, commissions and advertisement. They've also offered us free weekly desk space which was especially beneficial in creating a sustainable and healthy working practice for the company. Kala Sangam and Alex Croft in particular have supported the development of our company by holding regular check-ins to discuss our next steps and how to strategise to get the best opportunities and working model for the company.	2023 Baseline survey data	
So grateful for the free artist space, it's given me freedom to explore ideas and see what I'm capable of	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Elsewhere
Kala Sangam supported me as an independent artist and throughout the shift into a community interest company. Their support has allowed me and my company to run regular workshops in Bradford, R&D's for work and performance opportunity. Kala Sangam support has been invaluable for my work and career	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Elsewhere
It's helped widen my contacts	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Bradford
I learned a new skill and the work will be on display	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Bradford
N/A no support recieved	Interim report data (2025 survey)	
Becoming known for the sessions I can offer in the area.	Interim report data (2025 survey)	
It has given me a platform to meet people and to work with different groups including U3A and One in a Million Free School	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Bradford
It has helped me gain confidence when delivering and planning my artistic workshops	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Bradford
Kala Sangam has given me employment as a freelance.	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Bradford
I have been given great opportunities to deliver my workshops to schools, been able to work on exciting projects and also had the opportunity to facilitate a workshop at WomenZone Community centre in Bradford. I've met a lot of other artists and creatives. It's been brilliant to work with Kala Sangam. I also created a Rap for their Schools Takeover Project, which I had a lot of fun creating and it was shared on social media.	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Elsewhere

It has provided me with a new angle to view my working practice, and opened me up to new ventures and community groups.	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Bradford
It has helped me develop my skills and experience as a facilitator in the realm of socially engaged art practice	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Elsewhere
Kala Sangam's ongoing support has strengthened my confidence in dreaming big and taking new, exciting steps in my career.	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Bradford
Kala Sangam have helped us with studio space for multiple creations and rehearsals and have supported us with regular meetings to help strategise and plan for the future of our company.	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Elsewhere
Astronimically. Kala Sangam really believe and support my work and are the fundamental reason why i feel like i can make my own work happen.	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Bradford
It has supported my development of future ventures and confidence. It has opened opportunities and perpsective within the creative industries	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Bradford
Our show was able to tour across 13 different venues in England, including Kala Sangam. This was crucial to achieve our goals of engaging underrepresented audiences and engaging with our targeted audiences too.	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Elsewhere
its great to get experience facilitaing in different settings	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Elsewhere
Peer conversations artistically, strategically and arts sector. Invaluable use of rehearsal space. Regular catch ups and support as a funded organisation. Profile and performance opportunities. An invaluable resource with lovely caring staff.	Final report data (2026 survey)	Bradford
Connected me strongly to the local community and arts ecology; provided essential in-kind support that has acted as a lever for funding; championed and provided a valuable platform for our work.	Final report data (2026 survey)	Bradford
To be able to continue my work in an affordable, friendly and safe environment.	Final report data (2026 survey)	Bradford
It has given my newly founded company a home and the possibility of funding and premiering my first work.	Final report data (2026 survey)	Bradford
Larger venue access supported the growth of our festival	Final report data (2026 survey)	Bradford

BAC have shown a continued interest and support in the ideas Deborah and I (together we are Old Bird) have been developing and producing. This support has shown itself in several different ways. Its been in the form of support in kind (helping us with space to rehearse). Its been in offers of support with applications (thinking time and also practical things like offering letters of support to attach to ACE applications). It's been in the form of providing a great venue for one of our performances of Otherhood (and also of showing support for a future tour by being up for being a partner venue when Otherhood retours in 2027). Since our company launch during 2025, its been in the form of two meetings about future plans and new work ideas. Alex Corwin, Amer Sarai and Fay Beesley have all been incredibly generous with their time. It's much appreciated.	Final report data (2026 survey)	Bradford
As a result of my connections with the BAC I have had the knowledge and confidence to succesfully apply for funding and to complete large scale projects.	Final report data (2026 survey)	Bradford
Helped me kickstart my development process and work as an artist in finding my own voice	Final report data (2026 survey)	Elsewhere
So helpful to have organisations support theatre projects with space that is affordable	Final report data (2026 survey)	Elsewhere
BAC has been a place my work can exists and flourish for the past 6 years. from studio space to rehearse to programming they have always been there to host my work meeting audiences and always an open door where I can ask questions and gain support to write applications for ACE and beyond. I am very grateful to them.	Final report data (2026 survey)	Elsewhere
I was given a space for £5 for my short film actors workshop. And i attended the nfts workshops which where amazing	Final report data (2026 survey)	Bradford
Studio space for my new show	Final report data (2026 survey)	
Bradford Arts Centre has been fundamental in the progression of my career as a producer and theatre-maker as they have been nothing but support as well as providing me with such valuable advice throughout my career.	Final report data (2026 survey)	Bradford
A week of studio time allowed us to develop the music/audio side of a new performance piece	Final report data (2026 survey)	Bradford

How would you describe your sexual orientation? Please self-describe.	Survey	Location
Base: 3		
Queer	2023 Baseline survey data	Elsewhere
polyamorous	2023 Baseline survey data	Elsewhere
Queer	Final report data (2026 survey)	Bradford

With which ethnicity do you identify? Please self-describe: <i>Base: 11</i>	Survey	Location
Czech	2023 Baseline survey data	Elsewhere
Latinx	2023 Baseline survey data	Elsewhere
French	2023 Baseline survey data	
Mediterranean	2023 Baseline survey data	Bradford
Hispanic	2023 Baseline survey data	Elsewhere
White and middle eastern	2023 Baseline survey data	Elsewhere
White Polish	2023 Baseline survey data	
British Punjabi	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Elsewhere
Iranian	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Elsewhere
White Polish	Interim report data (2025 survey)	Elsewhere
Mediterranean	Final report data (2026 survey)	Bradford

Appendix IV: Visitor footfall methodology

Methodology for calculating estimated visitor footfall and individual visits to Bradford Arts Centre post reopening is explained here.

Overall footfall has been measured by the footfall counters installed since November 2025.

We needed to understand staff footfall levels to remove this from the overall footfall so that we could estimate visitor footfall, and identify a stable baseline within the data to understand staff footfall.

To do this, we used the month with the lowest footfall and assumed that this had the lowest visitor activity, meaning the footfall was mostly staff. Staff footfall will be more consistent than visitor traffic, therefore using the month with the lowest footfall provides a starting point for understanding staff levels.

We also looked at current staff that appear on the Bradford Arts Centre website and Bradford Community Broadcasting staff and volunteers, to decide on a reasonable range of people that may be entering the building each day.

The decision was made that using 20% of the lowest footfall month, returned a sensible estimated number of staff in the building each day:

- Using the days open each month.
- Assuming that each staff member would be counted 2.5 times a day by the footfall counter (most common general estimate).

Then we subtracted the estimated visits for staff per month from each month to return the estimated visitor footfall each month.

Using the ticketing data, we can see the average orders per customer for each month of events, which indicates how many visits each customer made on average each month.

Therefore, we divided the monthly footfall by its average orders per customer, to estimate the visitor count for each month.



The Audience Agency

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