Dublin North-Central

Arts and Cultural Infrastructure Research

November 2024

Comhairle Cathrach Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City Council

the arts council an chomhairle ealaíon
funding the arts

Turley thrive making culture count

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Turley thrive making culture count

Foreword

Turley in partnership with Thrive was commissioned by The Arts Council of Ireland & Dublin City Council Partnership Framework to undertake research into Dublin North-Central Arts and Cultural Infrastructure.

The Arts Council / An Comhairle Ealaíon and Dublin City Council are committed to working together in partnership to promote and develop the arts in Dublin City in an integrated manner.

They believe that by working more closely together we can strengthen the arts and improve public participation in the arts. The partnership identified that Dublin City is divided into five administrative areas and that the North Central and North-West Administrative Areas of the city received the least amount of financial investment from both agencies.

The Partnership Framework agreed a strategic action, to learn about arts practice, participation and audience development in administrative areas, particularly in areas of deficit without arts infrastructure and targeted funds.

Dublin City Arts Office has been working with Turley and Thrive towards designing a methodology for building an Administrative Area based approach to researching arts development across the city. This report represents a pre-development phase of the methodology which offers baseline evidence to support key actions and insights and explore possibilities such as capacity building, effective communication and resourcing for hard and soft infrastructure and sustainability.

Executive summary

1. Turley Strategic Communications and thrive have undertaken a research project exploring the provision of arts and cultural infrastructure in the Dublin North-Central Area on behalf of Dublin City Council's Arts Office.

2. The study sought to find out more about the provision of arts and culture infrastructure in the area, as well as artists and audiences' perceptions, experiences and thoughts around arts provision in their locality. It allowed us to identify barriers to arts engagement and generate new ideas to improve arts infrastructure for the area in the future.

3. The study consisted of desk-based research, an online survey and a series of focus groups.

Methodology

4. Between 3 March 2022 to 3 April 2022, a survey consisting of 16 questions was live and actively promoted.

5. During this period, 587 people fully or partially completed the survey, giving our results a confidence level of 95% at a 5% margin for error.

6. A series of 13 in-person and online focus groups were also held, bringing together 51 participants.

7. Additionally, the option was given to anyone who had signed up to take part in the focus groups but was not able to attend, of giving written feedback to the questions via an online survey platform. This generated 39 responses, bringing the overall number of participants to 90.

8. Respondents were not selected based on, or ask them for any demographic information. As such, we are unable to assess how closely the results mirror the actual demographics of the area.

9. Within the body of the report, we have set out a number of measures that could be taken to address these limitations and build upon this research's findings. Despite this, however, the results nonetheless provide a statistically rigorous basis for the design of future arts and culture provision in Dublin North-Central.

Key findings

Arts Provision

10. There is a widely held perception by both audiences and artists connected to the North-Central Area community that there aren't enough arts and culture spaces located in the North Central area. This is backed up by previous mapping reports which show lower levels of these spaces in North Central compared to other areas. There is also an emergent viewpoint that spaces located elsewhere in the city are displacing arts engagement levels in the North-Central Area.

11. In the survey, increasing the provision of arts and cultural spaces within future developments was seen as essential for greater

audience participation and attendance. However, artists and audiences differed when it came to the type of spaces they thought North Central needed most. Artists believe the North-Central Area principally needs artist workspaces, purpose-built workshop and educational spaces, as well as small-scale performance and events venues. On the other hand, the survey showed that audiences primarily engage with local arts by attending live performances.

12. Focus groups, however, depicted a different picture. When asked where they engaged in the city, participants often referred to venues situated in Dublin North Central. Examples given were a mix of traditional venues, outdoor spaces and local community centres, schools, libraries, churches and sports centres.

13. Looking specifically at the behaviours of artists connected to Dublin North-Central, a notable number of respondents in the survey were artists who live in the area but work outside of the North-Central Area. However, it is evident there is demand for increased artist workspace provision in the North-Central Area, suggesting there is interest from this cohort to work in the communities in which they reside.

Arts Engagement Patterns

14. In the survey, music is referenced as the artform that most interested audiences, but artists felt this artform had the least amount of provision in the North-Central Area. Other artforms that were amongst the most popular included theatre and visual arts.

15. Although the survey found that audiences primarily engage by attending live performances, the focus groups showed that people also regularly participate in art classes and workshops, at home, online or in their local area. Types of classes mentioned covered music, dance, painting, drawing and craft such as knitting, sewing or pottery.

Barriers to Arts Engagement

16. In the survey, music is referenced as the artform that most interested audiences and respondents felt this artform most needed additional provision in the North-Central Area. Other artforms that were amongst the most popular included theatre and visual arts.

17. Although the survey found that audiences primarily engage by attending live performances, the focus groups showed that people also regularly participate in art classes and workshops, at home, online or in their local area. Types of classes mentioned covered music, dance, painting, drawing and craft such as knitting, sewing or pottery.

1. Area Context

Dublin North-Central

1.1 Dublin North-Central is an administrative area within Dublin City Council. It comprises the Local Electoral Areas of Artane-Whitehall, Clontarf and Donaghmede.

1.2 Despite becoming one of the fastest growing administrative areas in Dublin, there is a perception that the provision for arts and cultural infrastructure in Dublin-North Central has been slow to develop at the same rate as other areas of the city.

Demographics and Socio-Economic Indicators

1.3 The population of the area at the 2022 census was 156,174.[1] Within this, the age distribution of the population broadly follows the state average, albeit with a slightly lower proportion of under-16s (18.24%, compared to 21.03% for the state), a higher proportion of those aged 25 – 34 (14.67% compared to 12.20% for the state) and a higher proportion of over-75s (8.85% compared to 6.51% for the state).

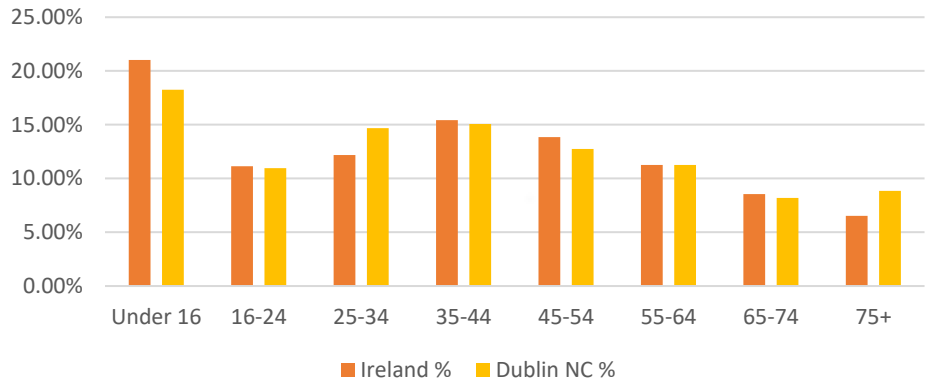


Figure 1.1: Age profile of Dublin North-Central

1.4 In 2022, Dublin North-Central had 75,188 (48.14%) who identified as male and 80,986 (50.58%) who identified as female. This gender imbalance is slightly more pronounced than the equivalent figure for the state as a whole (49.42% male and 50.58% female).

1.5 The percentage of the population with no formal education – normally a useful socio-economic indicator – is lower for Dublin North-Central at 2.07% than for the state as a whole (2.40%). A lower percentage can indicate lower levels of deprivation.

[1] All Census statistics, unless otherwise stated, are drawn from the CSO 2022 Census, which can be accessed via https://www.cso.ie/en/statistics/population/censusofpopulation2022/

1.6 The proportion of Dublin North-West's population that was born in Ireland is slightly higher than the state average, at 81.62% compared to 79.99%.

1.7 The Pobal HP Deprivation Index, which provides an overview of the levels of socio-economic deprivation in an area based on census indicators, characterises Dublin North-Central as relatively affluent. Much of the Clontarf area is characterised by Pobal HP as being 'affluent' (highlighted blue on the map below), or as being 'above average' (highlighted green).

1.8 At the same time, Pobal identifies an area overlapping the Artane-Whitehall and Donaghmede Local Electoral Areas, that has higher levels of deprivation. This area encompasses north Beaumont, Kilmore, Darndale, Coolock and Edenmore. Within this area, the area between Darndale and Kilmore is most deprived, with much of this described as 'disadvantaged' (orange on the map below) or 'very disadvantaged' (darker orange).

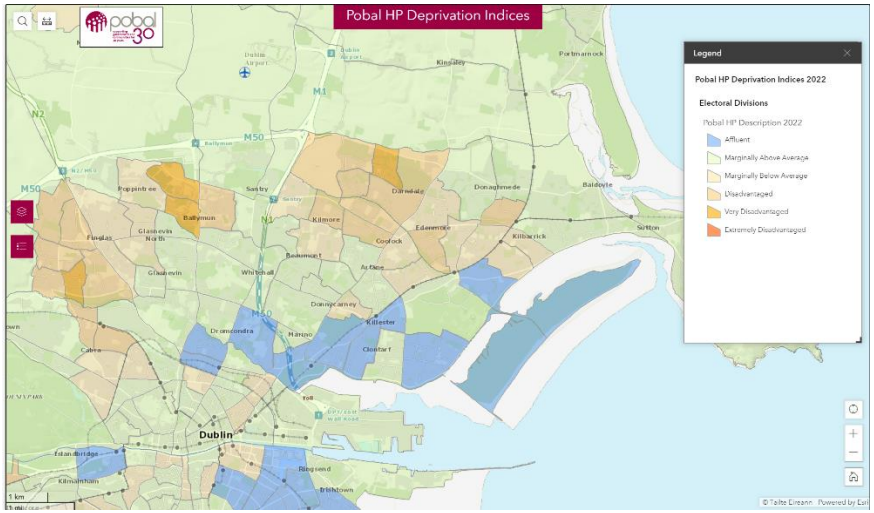


Figure 1.2: Pobal HP Deprivation Index Mapping (areas marked in orange are considered to be more deprived)

Artane-Whitehall



Figure 1.3: Map of Artane-Whitehall area

1.9 Artane-Whitehall has a population of 52,137

1.10 The age profile of Artane-Whitehall's population is broadly quite similar to that of the state as a whole, although only 17.80% of the population are aged under the age of 16, compared to 21.03% within the state. Additionally, 10.06% of the population is aged over 75 years of age, compared to an equivalent figure of 6.51% for the state as a whole.

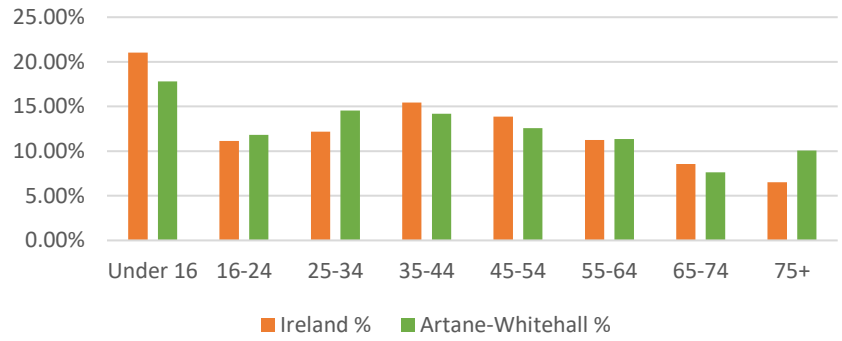


Figure 1.4: Age profile of Artane-Whitehall

1.11 The proportion of Artane-Whitehall's population born within Ireland is slightly higher, at 83.36%, than the proportion of the state as a whole (79.99%). In addition, Artane-Whitehall's population born in the UK and EU are both slightly lower than the equivalent figure for the state as a whole, while the proportion of the population born in the rest of the world (8.45%) is slightly higher than the state figure (7.80%).

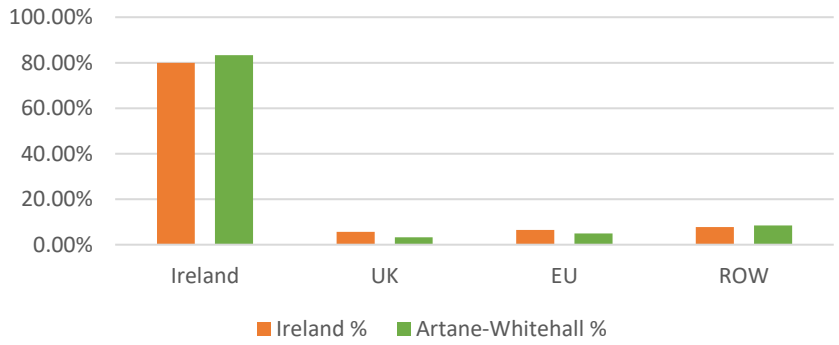


Figure 1.5: Birthplace of Artane-Whitehall residents

1.12 Artane-Whitehall has a larger proportion of single people (56.43%) than the state as a whole (53.86%), It also has a higher proportion of people who are widowed (5.82%) than the state as a whole (4.08%).

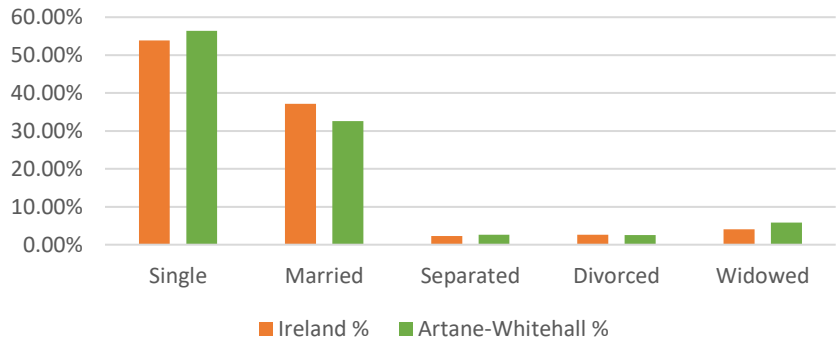


Figure 1.6: Marital status of Artane-Whitehall residents

1.13 Whitehall-Artane is largely quite affluent, with much of the area characterised by Pobal HP as 'marginally above average' in terms of affluence. However, the North-East of the Local Electoral Area, centred around Kilmore and Darndale, includes the most deprived areas within Dublin North-Central. In particular, the Priorswood B Electoral Division, encompassing the Belcamp and Moatview housing developments, is described as 'very disadvantaged' by Pobal HP.

Clontarf

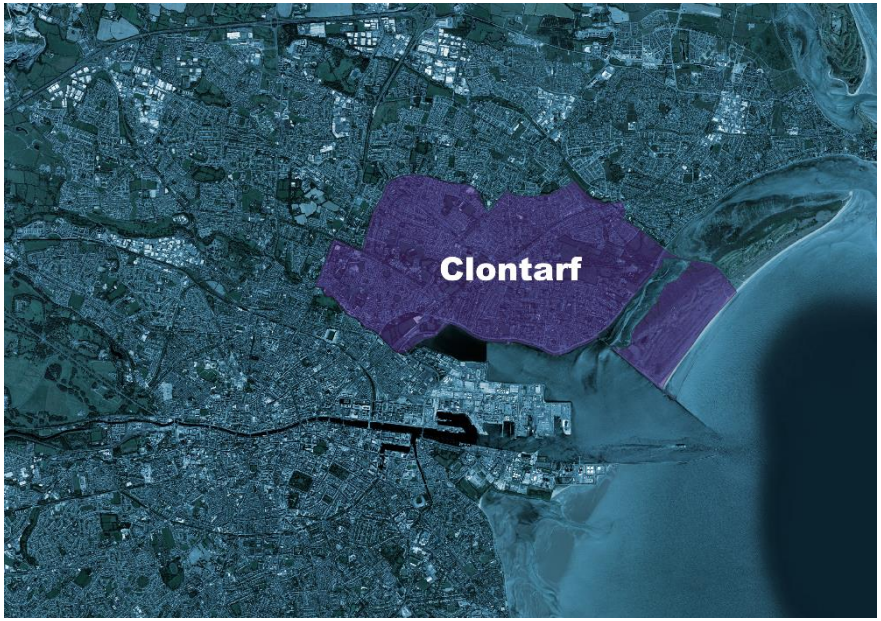


Figure 1.7: Map of Clontarf Area

1.14 Clontarf has a population of 56,957.

1.15 Clontarf's age profile is broadly similar to the state as a whole, albeit as with Artane-Whitehall, the area does have a slightly lower proportion of its population aged under 16 (17.38% compared to 21.03%) and a slightly higher proportion of its population aged over 75 (8.29% compared to 6.51%) than the state. In addition, Clontarf's population aged between 25 – 34 (14.93%) is noticeably higher than the state as a whole (12.20%).

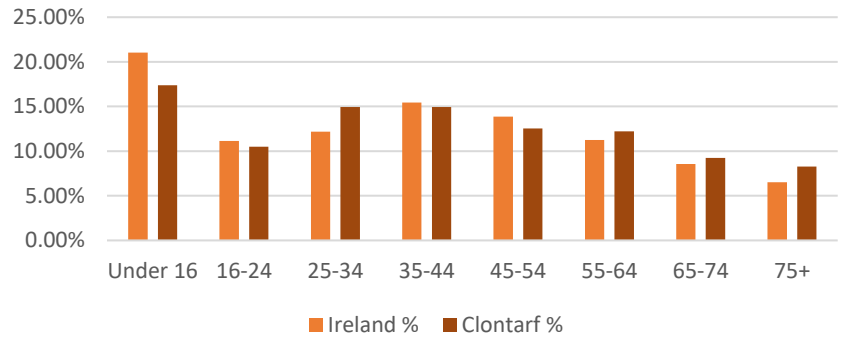


Figure 1.8: Age profile of Clontarf

1.16 The proportion of Clontarf's population born within Ireland is slightly higher, at 81.21%, than the proportion of the state as a whole (79.99%).

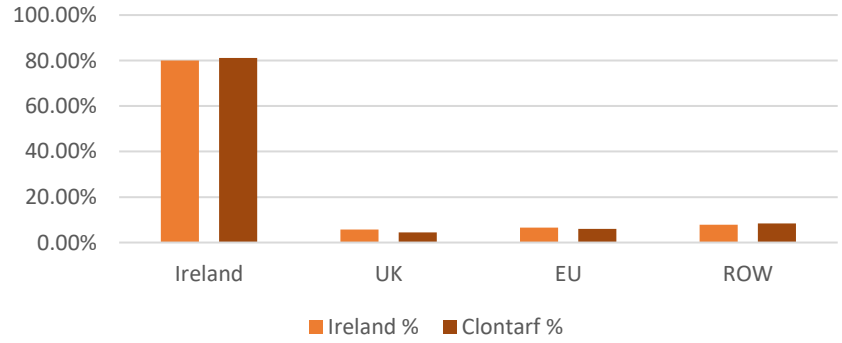


Figure 1.9: Birthplace of Clontarf residents

1.17 Clontarf's marital status figures mirror very closely the figures for the state as a whole.

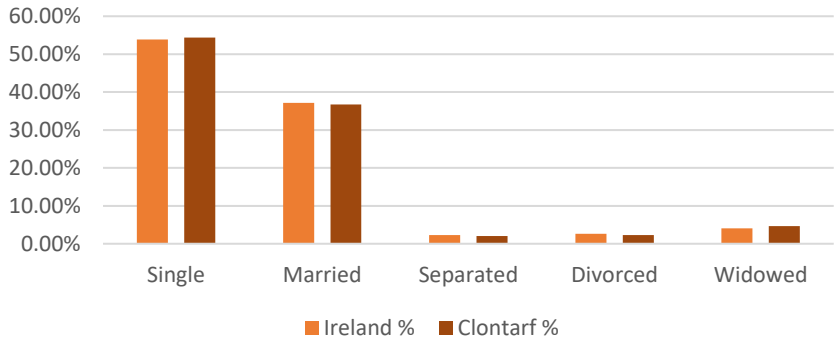


Figure 1.10: Marital status of Clontarf residents

1.18 Clontarf is an affluent area, with most of the area characterised as being either 'marginally above average' (in terms of affluence) or 'affluent' by Pobal HP. In particular, the Drumcondra South A, Clontarf West D, Clontarf West C, Clontarf East D, Clontarf East B, Clontarf East E and Clontarf East B were all described as 'affluent'.

Donaghmede

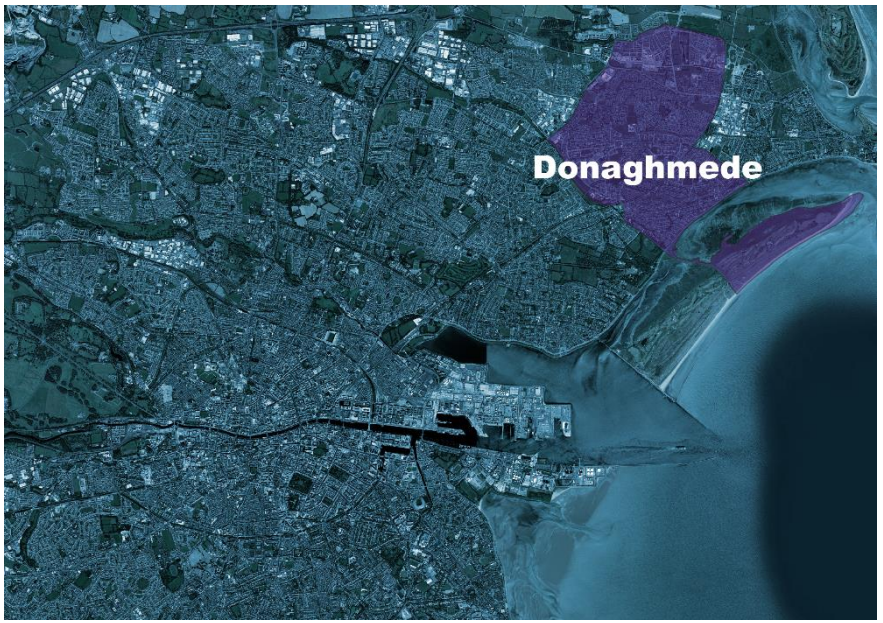


Figure 1.11: Map of Donaghmede area

1.19 Donaghmede has a population of 47,080, making it the smallest of the three Local Electoral Areas within Dublin North-Central.

1.20 Donaghmede's age profile is broadly similar to the state as a whole, with no really substantial differences, though it does once again have a higher proportion of residents over 75 years of age (8.19%) than the state as a whole (6.51%).

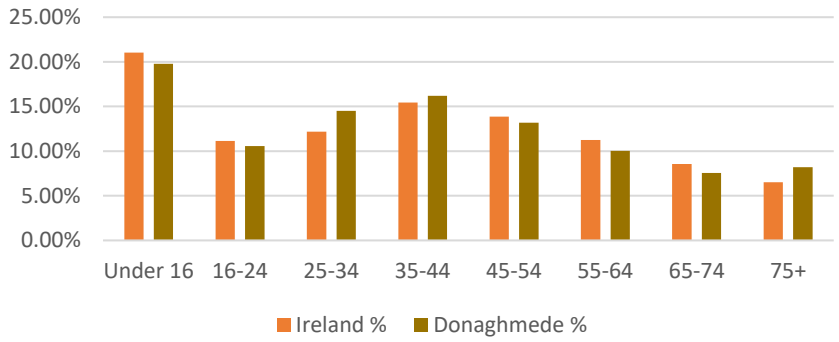


Figure 1.12: Age profile of Donaghmede

1.21 Donaghmede's population birthplace figures are broadly quite similar to the state as a whole, albeit with a slightly higher proportion (9.20%) of people born in the Rest of the World than the equivalent figure for the state as a whole (7.80%).

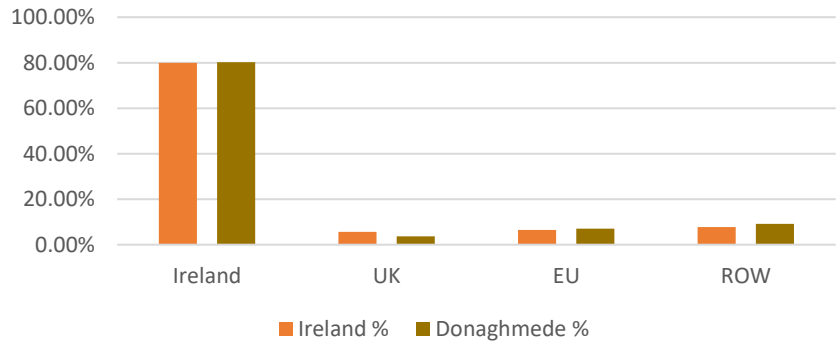


Figure 1.13: Birthplace of Donaghmede residents

1.22 Donaghmede's marital status figures mirror very closely the figures for the state as a whole.

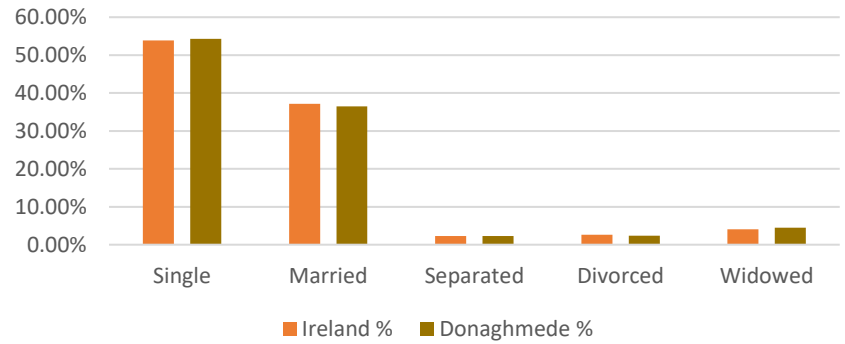


Figure 1.14: Marital status of Donaghmede residents

1.23 Donaghmede is quite a mixed area, with the area of Raheny-st. Assam and the area around Donaghmede in particular being characterised as above average or affluent by Pobal HP. However, there are also some areas of deprivation, with the area around Edenmore in particular being characterised by Pobal HP as being more deprived.

2. Methodology

Survey methodology

2.1 A quantitative-led survey was designed by Turley, consisting of 16 questions. Four of these questions were limited to submissions from respondents profiled as artists or arts professionals.

2.2 The survey was hosted primarily online and was in field from Wednesday 02 March – Sunday 03 April 2022. The survey is available to view again here.

2.3 The survey findings supported discussions at focus groups facilitated by research partners, thrive. A digital-led promotional campaign was launched aimed at recruiting survey respondents. This activity included:

- Project website (www.dublinnorthcentral.ie) which hosted 1.5K new users and 2.5K page views during the campaign period
- A sponsored social media campaign which resulted in 18,497 users reached
- A e-bulletin campaign consisting of two mailers via the Dublin City Council's Arts Office Direct Mail channel resulting in collectively 2,728 total opens and 144 total click-throughs
- Press release issued to national and local media by Dublin City Council's Press Office



Figure 2.1: Example of Survey Advert

Focus groups

2.4 The focus groups were designed and facilitated by thrive, to compliment Turley's work and survey.

2.5 In total, 13 focus groups were held between Tuesday 26th April and Monday 30th May 2022, bringing together 51 participants. 7 sessions took place in person, in various venues located in the Dublin North Central area. 6 sessions were held online, via video webinar.

2.6 Additionally, the option was given to anyone who had signed up to take part in the focus groups but was not able to attend, of giving written feedback to the questions via an online survey platform. This generated 39 responses, bringing the overall number of participants to 90.

Focus group recruitment

2.7 The following steps were undertaken:

- Included a question at the end of Turley's survey, asking respondents whether they would be interested in taking part in further conversations. In total, 139 agreed to participate and shared their contact details.
- Sent an online form to the 139 respondents for them to sign up for a date and time that suited them.
- Shared the same online form on local Facebook groups to reach people from the area who had not necessarily completed the survey.
- Created an online survey featuring the same questions we asked as part of our discussion guide for the focus groups, enabling people who could not attend to give written feedback.

Survey Accessibility

2.8 During the survey design, the survey went through a robust editing process to ensure it complied with NLA's Plain English Guidelines and was written as simply and clearly as possible to maximise accessibility across all respondents.

3. Study Limitations

3.1 Our survey respondents included a high proportion of individuals with an active personal or professional interest in the arts in Dublin. This has led to the study providing a comprehensive overview of the views and attitudes of the section of the population with the greatest stake in the arts.

3.2 Although the profile of our focus groups participants aimed to rectify this imbalance, it was still a small sample. As such, the study does not provide such a strong insight into the views and attitudes of those less invested in the arts. It may be worth undertaking further research to provide a greater understanding of how to increase participation in and the popularity of the arts in Dublin North-West.

3.3 We did not select or screen for age as part of our research, although all of our focus group participants were aged at least 18 years of age. As such, this report of findings does not offer a breakdown of arts and culture activities for different age groups. Indeed, the aim of this report was focused on the current offering in Dublin North-Central and people's general arts engagement patterns. More research could be carried out in the future to identify levels of engagement and gaps per age group.

3.4 As outlined in **Chapter 1 – Area Contexts**, there are areas within Dublin North-Central that suffer from higher-than-average levels of socio-economic deprivation, according to the Pobal Deprivation Indices. This is worth considering, as socio-economic background is considered to be a potential barrier to accessing the arts by the Arts Council.[2] However, there is no specific research providing an understanding of how socio-economic deprivation impacts on access to the arts in Dublin North-Central. To provide a full picture, it may be worth undertaking research on this topic either solely within Dublin North-Central, or as part of a larger study across the Dublin City Council area.

3.5 Many of these limitations can be traced back to the digital-only nature of the survey, which tends to favour certain demographics (although these limitations can often be overcome given sufficient time and resource). In addition, access to the internet is another issue that can be exacerbated by socio-economic deprivation.

3.6 To address these limitations, we would suggest that further study could be carried out, utilising a variety of methods including:

- Postal surveys
- Telephone surveys
- In-person surveys, carried out by researchers 'on location' in public places (eg on the high street, outside arts venues etc)

3.7 Undertaking a survey approach which utilises a range of techniques can lead to a more balanced output. In particular, by

[2] The Arts Council, *Making Great Art Work: Three Year Plan 2020 - 22*

undertaking in-person surveys in a public place, future researchers could substantially offset the overrepresentation of those with a strong pre-existing interest in the arts, taking a more authentically representative sample of the Dublin North-Central population.

4. Respondent profile

Respondents' connection to the arts



39%
Artists or Professional Interest in the Arts



61%
No Formal Connection

Respondents' connection to Dublin North-Central



83%
Residents



35%
Recreation in the area



32%
Socialise in the area



19%
Work



19%
Create / Produce art here



9%
Volunteer in the area



9%
Take part in sports in Dublin North-Central



2%
Students



3%
Other

Survey Respondents' Top Artistic Interests



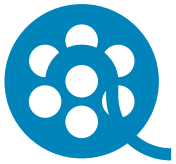
73%
Music



70%
Festivals and Events



67%
Theatre



56%
Film

How our Survey Participants Engage with the Arts



79%
Attend Live Performances



73%
Visit Art Galleries



52%
Browse art-related content online



48%
Buy artworks from local artists / art shops / makers



44%
Follow and interact with artists etc on social media

4.1 This profile of artistic interests was echoed during focus groups. When asked what type of arts or culture activities participants engaged with, most art forms were mentioned. The most mentioned were Theatre, Music and Visual Arts.

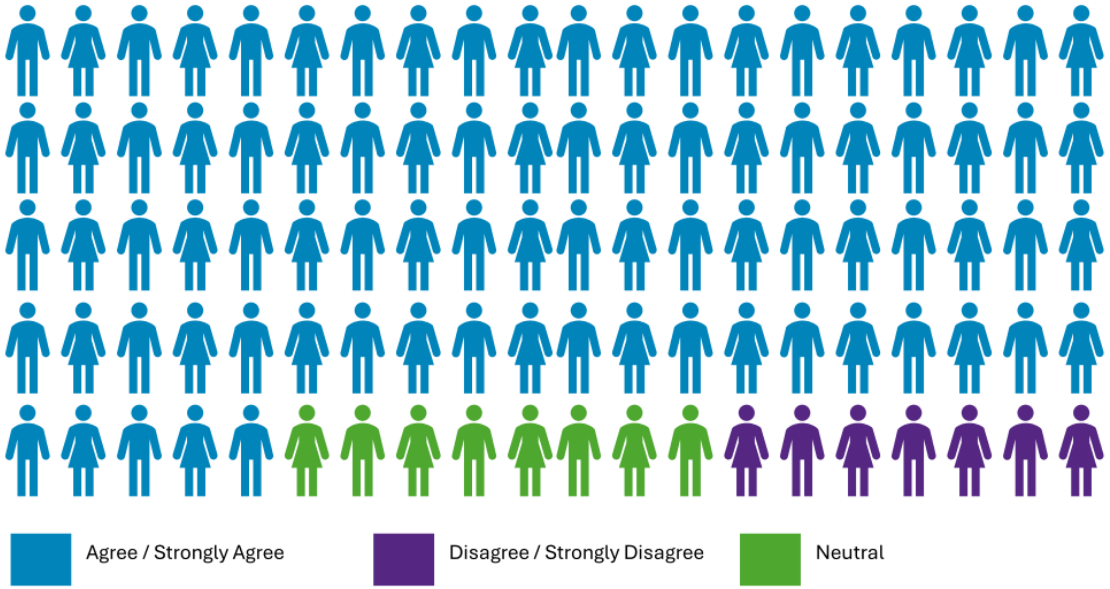
4.2 Respondents often separated attendance and participation – activities they went to and enjoyed in a passive way, and others they were actively involved in. Art classes and workshops were often mentioned and covered music, dance, painting, drawing and craft such as knitting, sewing or pottery.

4.3 Other art forms included:

- Cinema
- Literature (book clubs, creative writing classes, public readings)
- Opera
- Dance (attendance and participation)
- Comedy
- Circus
- Museums

5. Research findings

Dublin North-Central currently does not offer enough arts and cultural activities



85%

Agreed / Strongly Agreed

5.1 There was strong agreement that Dublin North-Central doesn't currently offer enough arts and cultural activities, with 85% agreeing or strongly agreeing, 9% neutral and 6% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

Dublin North-Central offers a wide variety of arts and cultural activities

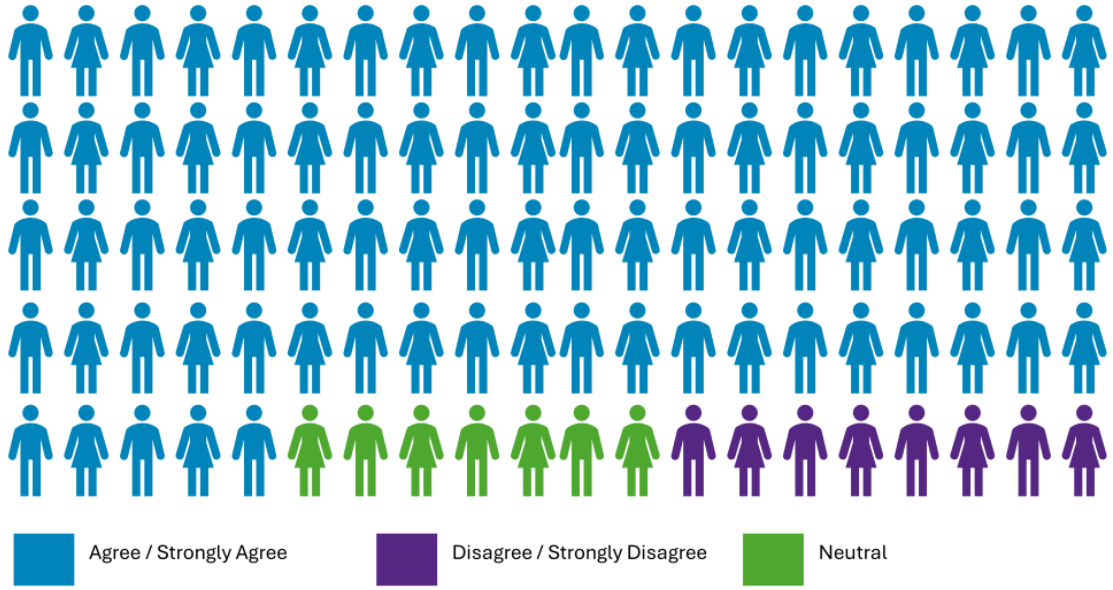


66%

Disagreed / Strongly Disagreed

5.2 Similarly, the majority (66%) of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that Dublin North-Central offered a wide variety of arts and cultural activities, with 24% neutral and 10% agreeing or strongly agreeing.

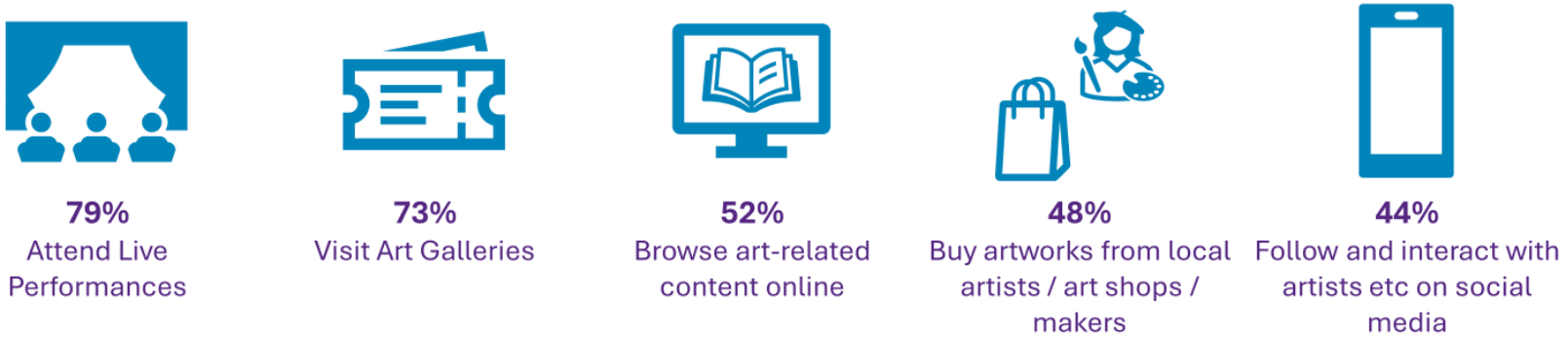
Arts facilities located in Dublin City Centre should set up local facilities in Dublin North-Central





5.3 There was strong agreement that arts facilities located in Dublin City Centre should set up local facilities in Dublin North-Central, with 85% agreeing or strongly agreeing, 8% neutral and 7% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

Top ways to engage with the arts in Dublin North-Central



5.4 Attending live performances (79%), visiting art galleries (73%) and browsing art-related content online (52%) were the most popular ways to engage with the arts in Dublin North-Central

5.5 When asked where people engaged during focus groups, responses varied. The majority said they tended to engage in venues in the city centre and that there was very little on offer in their local area. However, when analysing the list of venues they attended, it was noticeable that many are situated in Dublin North Central:

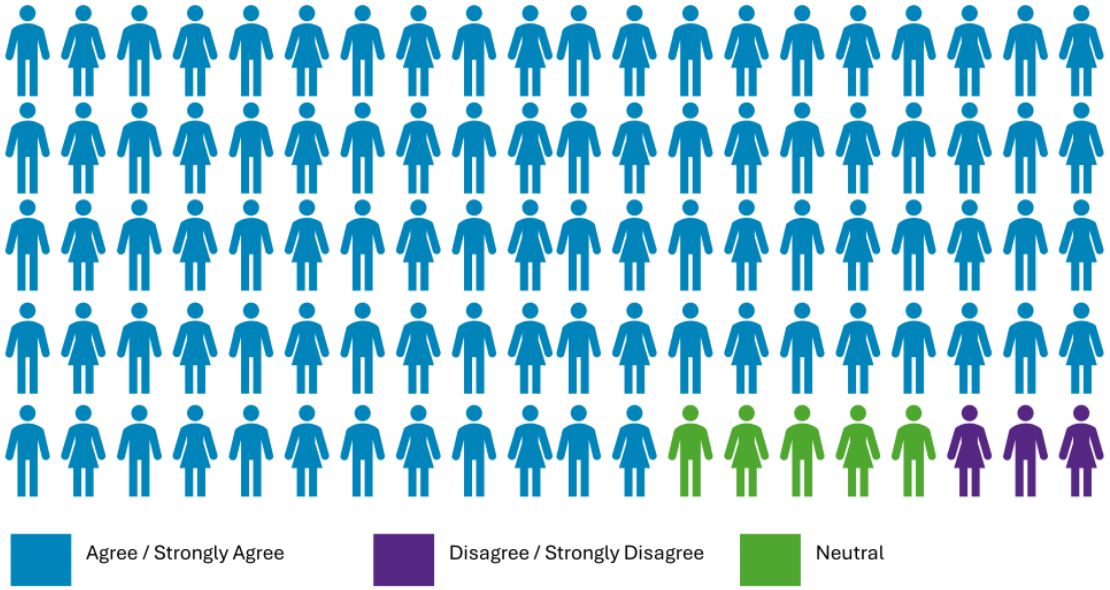
- The Red Stables
- The Helix
- The Viking
- Sean O'Casey Community Centre Theatre
- The Shed, Clontarf

- Axis Ballymun
- Casino, Marino
- Artane School of Music
- Local parks (St Anne's, Fairview and Rockfield were mentioned several times)
- Local community centres (Sphere 17 Darndale was mentioned)
- Local churches
- Local schools
- Local libraries
- Local GAA clubs

5.6 Other aspects of people's arts engagement patterns came to light during focus groups:

- People had different understanding of arts and culture. As such, many activities mentioned would be considered culture rather than arts, such as gardening, food and drink, green events, family activities or chess.
- Who participants engaged with when attending or participating in arts and culture depended on the type of event they went to. Most said they went with their partner, friends, or family. A large number of respondents also said they often went to some events by themselves.
- People interviewed were frequent attenders. Most said they engaged daily, weekly or monthly. They either engaged in person in venues located outside of the NORTH-CENTRAL AREA; locally, in some of the venues mentioned above; or at home. At-home activities often involved arts and craft, like knitting, drawing or painting, and were carried out alone or as part of an online class.

New housing projects in Dublin North-Central should be designed with an arts and culture aspect included

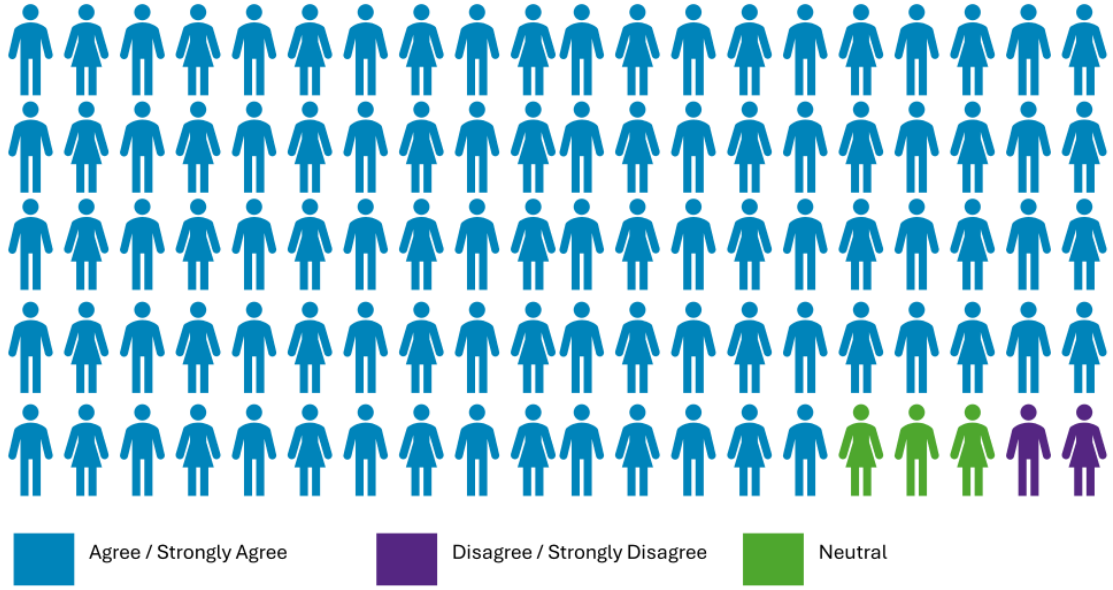


92%

Agreed / Strongly Agreed

5.7 Respondents were strongly in favour of including an arts and culture aspect within new housing projects in Dublin North-Central, with 92% agreeing/strongly agreeing, 5% neutral and 3% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

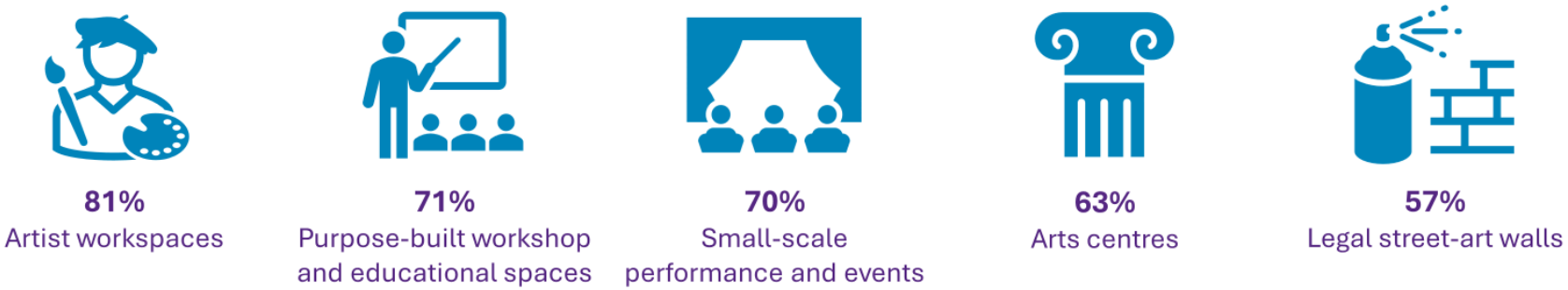
New business developments in Dublin North-Central should be designed with an arts and culture element included





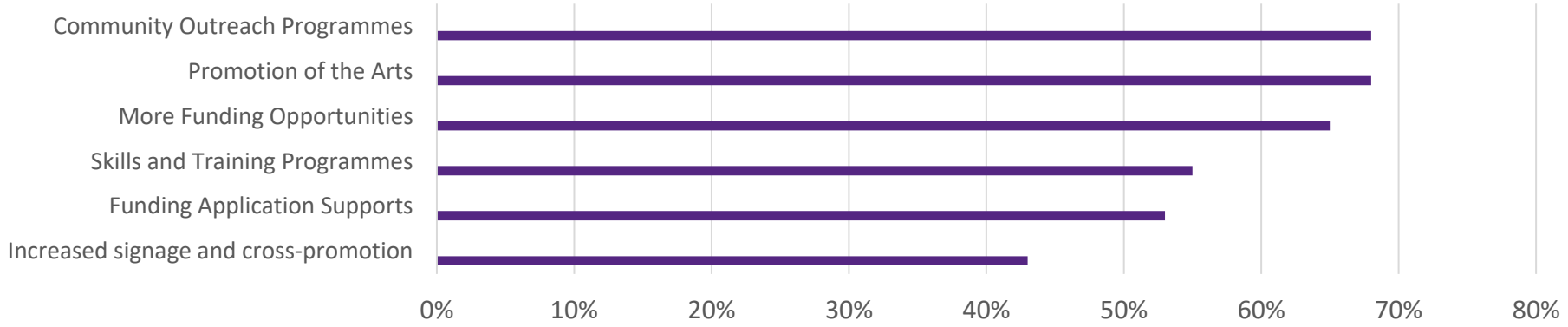
5.8 Similarly, respondents were strongly in favour of including an arts and culture aspect within new business developments in Dublin North-Central, with 95% agreeing/strongly agreeing, 3% neutral and 2% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

What types of arts and cultural spaces does Dublin North-Central need most?



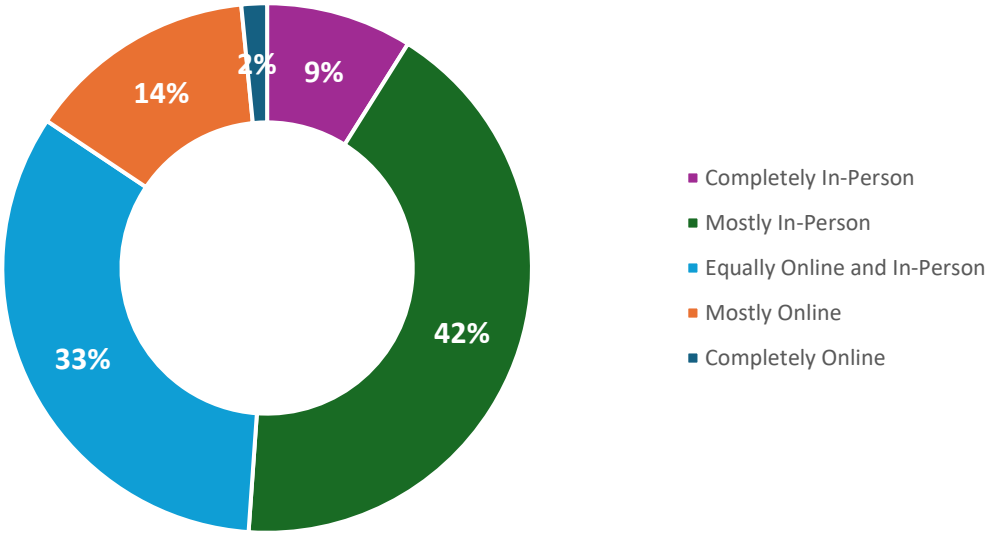
5.9 Artists' workspaces (81%), purpose-built workshop and educational spaces (71%), small-scale performance and events venues (70%), arts centres (63%) and, perhaps surprisingly, legal street-art walls (57%) were seen as the arts and cultural spaces most needed by our survey respondents.

What would have the largest impact on how people view arts and cultural activities in Dublin North-Central?



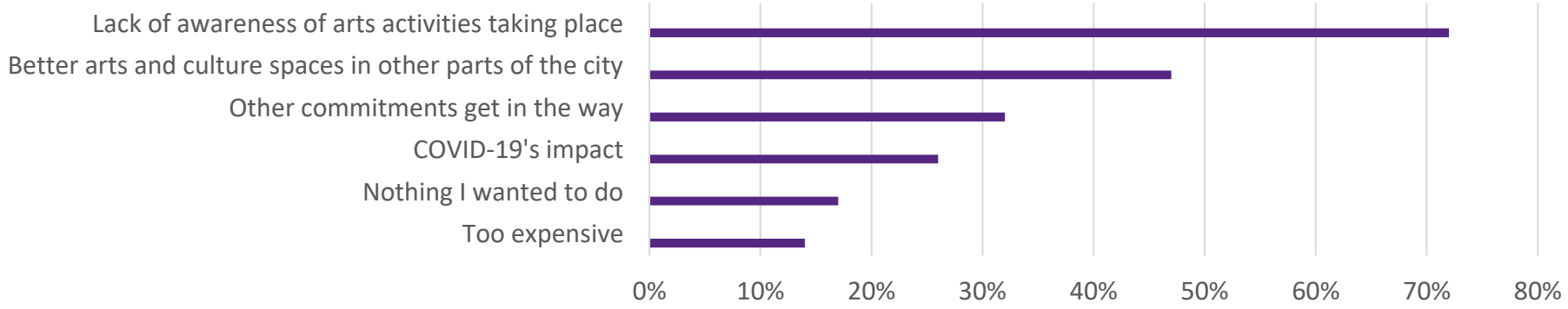
5.10 Promotion of the arts (68%), community outreach projects (68%), more funding opportunities (65%) and skills and training programmes (55%) were seen as having the greatest potential positive impact on how people view the arts in Dublin North-Central.

To what extent do you engage with the arts online?



5.11 Overall, the majority of respondents (51%) said they engaged with the arts mostly or completely in person. However, this leaves 49% of respondents for whom at least half of their engagement with the arts takes place online. Given wider contemporary trends, it seems reasonable to expect this proportion to increase over time, so this section of the community should not be discounted when developing proposals to support Dublin North-Central's arts and culture scenes.

What limits your participation in Dublin North-Central's Arts Scene?



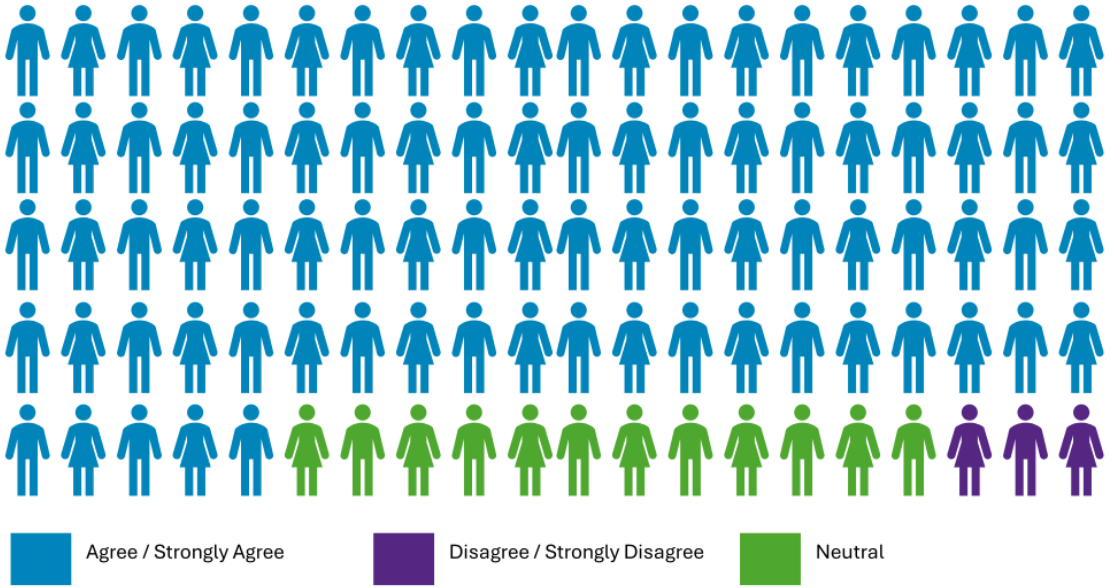
5.12 Respondents felt that a lack of awareness of upcoming events (72%) was the single most important factor limiting their participation in Dublin North-Central. The second most important factor was a perception that there were better events elsewhere in the city (47%). The fact that lack of awareness was by far the most popular choice is interesting, as this is, in theory, relatively easily addressed through improved marketing.

5.13 Focus groups broadly agreed with this characterisation, citing the following barriers to participation:

- The lack of offer, events and venues in the area was the most mentioned
- Lack of awareness came second
- Public transport
- Pricing
- Accessibility
- Confidence in attending or participating in activities that do take place in the area

- For artists and people working in arts and culture organisations, there were additional barriers directly linked to their practice:
- Lack of studio space
- Bureaucracy around funding applications that the majority finds too complicated, not streamlined, in a language they don't necessarily understand. Many also said they're often unaware of funding opportunities.
- The design of funding that already exists. Some mentioned the desire to see multi-annual funding rather than project-based in order to maintain and nurture relationships between different areas of the city.

I would participate in the arts more if venues and spaces were located in Dublin North-Central



85%

Agreed / Strongly Agreed

5.14 Respondents felt strongly that art venues and spaces located in Dublin North-Central would increase their participation in the arts. Only 3% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

5.15 Although barriers were extensively looked at, it was beneficial to investigate people's motivations for engaging with arts and culture in the first place and what this engagement brings to their lives. Focus groups participants engage with arts and culture on a regular basis for various reasons. Most focused on the impact arts and culture has on them and the benefits it brings them:

- An opportunity to connect with others. Those were interested in the social aspect and the shared experience with other like-minded individuals.
- Learning and experiencing something new
- Curiosity
- Feeding the soul
- Wellbeing
- Happiness and enjoyment
- Relaxation

5.16 When asked about what arts and culture meant to them, all participants said it had an incredibly important place in their lives. These are some of the things they said:

> *"They enable to enter into people's minds. It's about engaging, enjoying the experience. It inspires me to do things differently. It entertains me. It makes life more enjoyable."*
>
> *"It's a real appreciation of someone else's skills. You don't get that often in your daily life."*
>
> *"The arts has the power to change people and change lives."*

“The joy of seeing people who think they have nothing to offer and seeing them changed by the experience of going out in front of an audience.”

“People think it’s a hobby, but it’s more than that. It’s everything to me. It’s an extension of my personality.”

“It’s about trying to connect. With cinema, I enjoy going alone but with live music you’re connecting with the crowd and the atmosphere that is there. Connection is a big thing for me.”

Dublin North-Central has a strong arts and culture scene

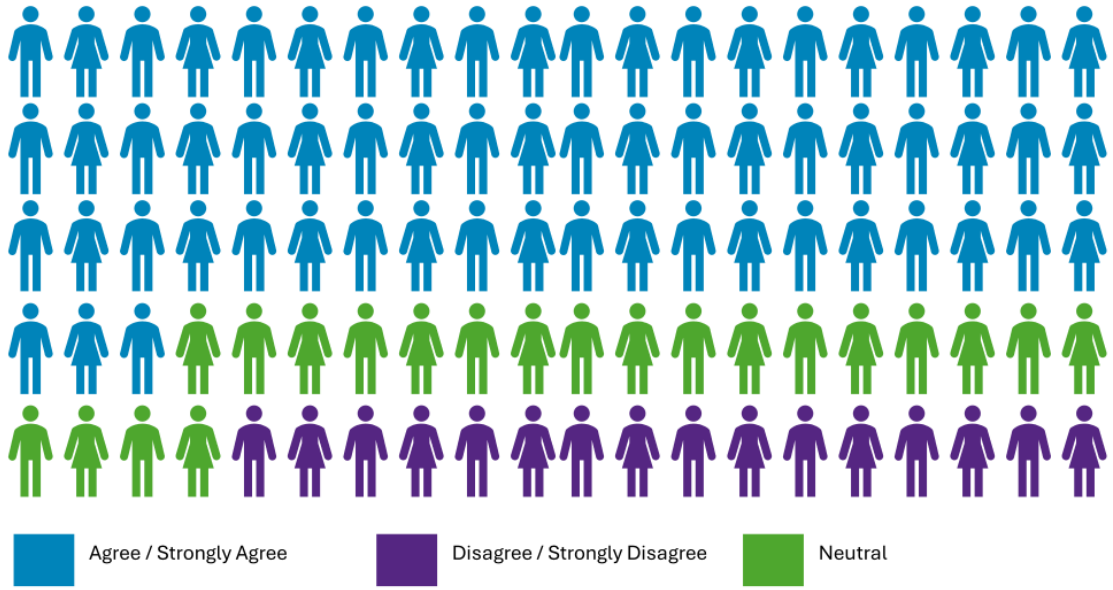


47%

Disagreed / Strongly Disagreed

5.17 47% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that Dublin North-West has a strong arts and culture scene. However, there was a higher degree of disagreement on this question than on other similar questions in the survey, with 35% saying they were neutral or didn't know and 18% saying they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

I don't know where to find information on arts and culture events taking place in Dublin North-Central



5.18 The majority of respondents (63%) agreed or strongly agreed that they didn't know where to look to find information on arts and culture events taking place in Dublin North-Central. Again, however, over a fifth (21%) said they were neutral and 15% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

5.19 During focus groups, participants were asked how they usually find out about activities to do or to attend, and responses were diverse. The majority find out through word of mouth or social media. Facebook was the number one platform they used for this purpose, especially local community or residents' association groups. Other resources included:

- Newspapers (the Irish Times, Sunday Times were mentioned often)
- Radio (Arena on RTE 1)

- Online (Google, Journal of Music, Meetup, LovinDublin)
- Newsletters from specific venues
- Notice boards, flyers or posters in local shops or venues
- Outdoor advertising
- Whatsapp groups
- Going physically to local community centres to ask what's on
- Two people mentioned the Culture Club by Dublin City Council Culture Company.

5.20 Some participants said they were subscribed to the Dublin City Council's newsletter, but the majority was not aware it was available.

Describe the Dublin North-Central community in 3 words



5.21 When asked to describe the Dublin North-West community, a number of positive words came up regularly, including:

- Friendly
- Vibrant
- Diverse
- Community
- Potential

5.22 At the same time, however, there were also a number of negative words that were frequently cited, including:

- Underfunded
- Ignored
- Conservative
- Forgotten

5.23 During focus groups, participants were able to share their thoughts about Dublin North-Central. When asked about the things they liked and disliked in Dublin North-Central, participants said they liked people in the area, the outdoor opportunities and natural beauty (parks, sea front in Clontarf, the coastline), as well as its diversity. Things they disliked included how the area is disconnected within itself and from the rest of the city, the litter, antisocial behaviour, lack of restaurants and things to do and its 'bad reputation'.

How do you engage with the Dublin North-Central Community?



5.24 The most common way to engage with the local community in Dublin North-Central was to attend events in the area (68%).This was followed, at a substantially lower level of frequency, by volunteering (19%), creating art (15%), and donating money to local causes (13%). 10% said they do not participate in the Dublin North-Central community.

5.25 In our focus groups, participants were asked whether going to arts or culture events make them feel part of the community. All agreed that arts and culture in general make them feel part of the community. However, they didn't think the potential of this was realised in Dublin North-Central because of the limited events offering in the area.

6. Conclusions / Recommendations

6.1 Although it is commonly perceived that there is a lack of provision of arts and culture spaces in Dublin North Central, people who live or work in the area still engage very often and locally.

6.2 Places they visit or participate in are not necessarily traditional arts spaces.

6.3 Audiences seem to prefer attending live performances, with a specific appetite for music, theatre and visual arts. Artists rank 'small scale performance and events venues' as the top third type of space needed by the NORTH-CENTRAL AREA (120 artist respondents), and 'large scale performance and arts venues' as the type of space least needed (47 artist respondents).

6.4 Improving promotion of the arts could be a significant opportunity to increase audience engagement with the arts in the North-Central Area as a high proportion of audience respondents agree they do not know where to find information on arts and culture events or initiatives taking place in Dublin North-Central.

6.5 A majority of focus groups' participants suggested this could be addressed by creating a centralised online platform that would feature information about all the events and things to do in different parts of the city.

6.6 Artists and arts organisations expressed the need for additional support from Dublin City Council around funding applications. Many said they felt they didn't have the skills to complete applications and that the criteria often didn't work for small scale local projects.

6.7 Audiences and artists alike would like to see their local art community more connected. Some suggested it could be someone's role within Dublin City Council.

Appendix 1: Detailed survey results

Respondent profile

The survey ran from Wednesday 02 March – Sunday 03 April 2022 and 586 individuals engaged with the survey during this time. Of these 586 submissions, 67.4% (395 responses) of responses were full survey responses, with 32.4% (190 responses) submitting semi-complete responses.

39% of survey responses (229) received were from people who identified as artists or as having a professional interest in the arts.

In the last Republic of Ireland (ROI) Census, carried out in 2011, the population of Dublin North-Central was estimated to be 74,501 with the number of persons aged 18 or over sitting at 59,529. Using these figures in tandem with a 5% margin of error with a 95% confidence level, the minimum necessary sample size for the survey would be 382 respondents. In total, 586 people engaged with the survey.

A selection of survey questions were limited to submissions from respondents profiled as artists or arts professionals. These respondents who self-identified in either of these categories are referred to as 'artist' respondents in the following findings report. The cohort of respondents who self-identified as non-artists are referenced as 'audience' respondents.

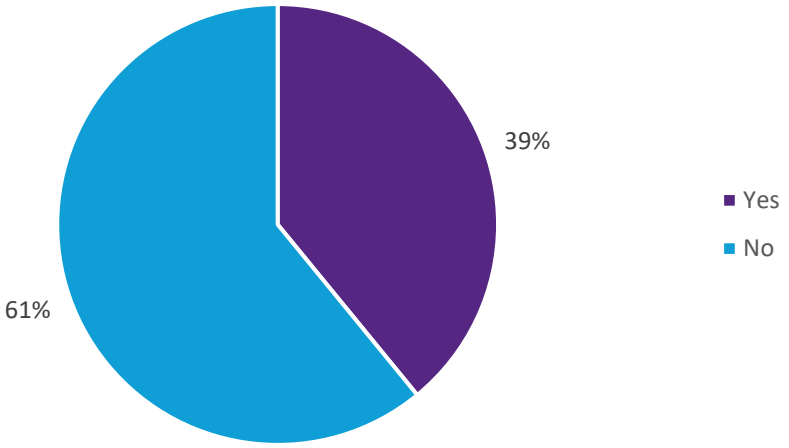


Figure 1.1 Responses to 'Are you an artist or do you have a professional interest in the arts?' (No. of respondents: 586)

The survey sought input from a range of people with a connection to Dublin North-Central.

Over a third of respondents (39% / 229 respondents) self-identify as artists. 113 of these artists also live in Dublin North-Central and 62 of these artists create/produce their art in the NORTH-CENTRAL AREA.

More than two thirds (61% / 357 respondents) self-identify as non-artists and are therefore classified as within the audience sample. 62.1% of audience respondents (222 respondents) said they live in Dublin North-Central.

Audience members who live in the area primarily relax/pursue interests/take part in hobbies in Dublin North-Central (39.6% / 88 respondents). Respondents who socialise in Dublin North-Central (38.2% / 85 respondents) are the 3rd highest grouping.

Please note respondents were permitted to select multiple connections:

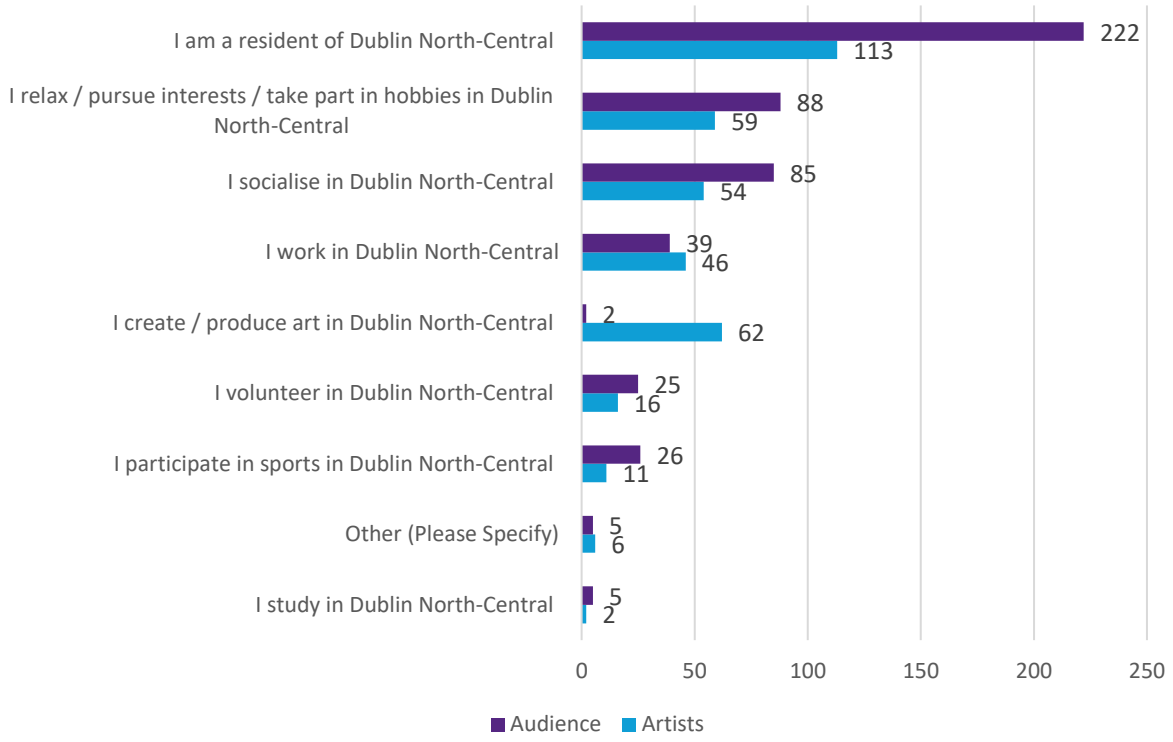


Figure 1.2 Responses to 'Which of the following best describes your relationship or connection to the Dublin North-Central Area?' (No. of audience respondents: 264, No. of artist respondents: 154)

Arts provision vs. arts engagement patterns in Dublin North Central

The following section presents responses in relation to development considerations of infrastructure for arts and culture within Dublin North-Central.

Current artform provision and engagement

Artists and audiences have different opinions about the current provision of arts infrastructure for different artforms.

The artforms which artist respondents believe to have the most amount of current provision in the NORTH-CENTRAL AREA was for Festivals (11.7%, 29 responses), Theatre (10.1%, 25 responses), and Visual Art / Fine Art (10.1%, 25 responses) (Figure 1.3).

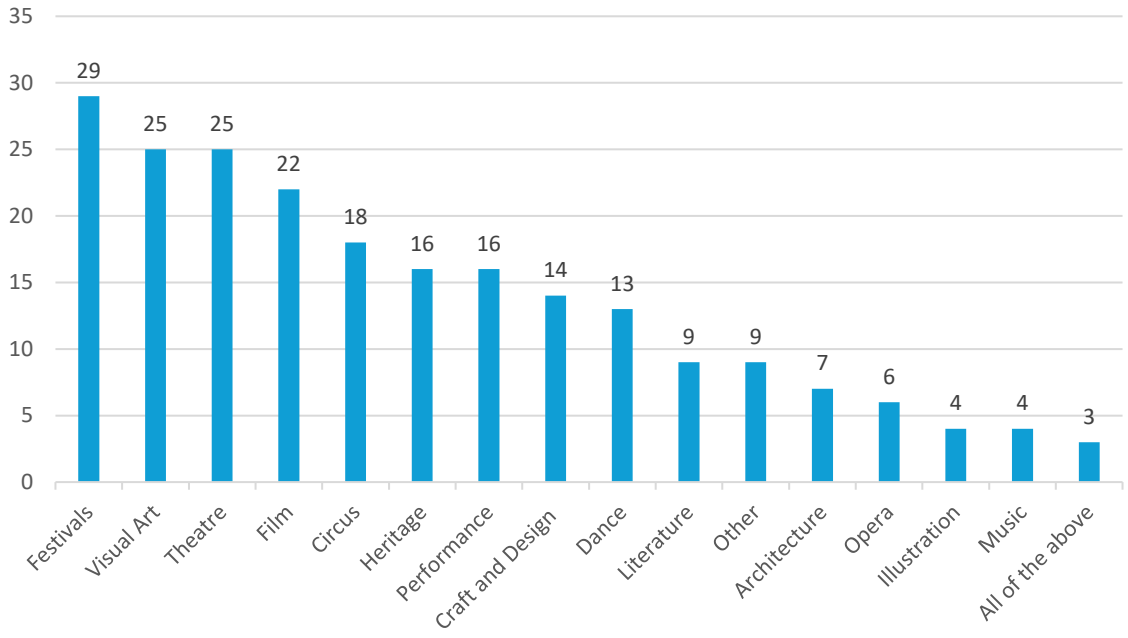


Figure 1.3 Which of the following art forms do you think currently have adequate provision in Dublin North-Central? (Total Respondents: 156)

Artists cite Music as one of artforms with the least adequate provision in North-Central, despite Music being the artform audience members are most interested in (224 respondents).

Festival and Events (217 audience respondents) and Theatre (205 respondents) were also ranked as the top artforms of interest for North-Central audiences.

This aligns with the artists responses illustrated in Figure 1.3 above, suggesting that with the exception of Music, the community's 'artforms-of-interest' are currently being catered for by the existing provision in Dublin North-Central.

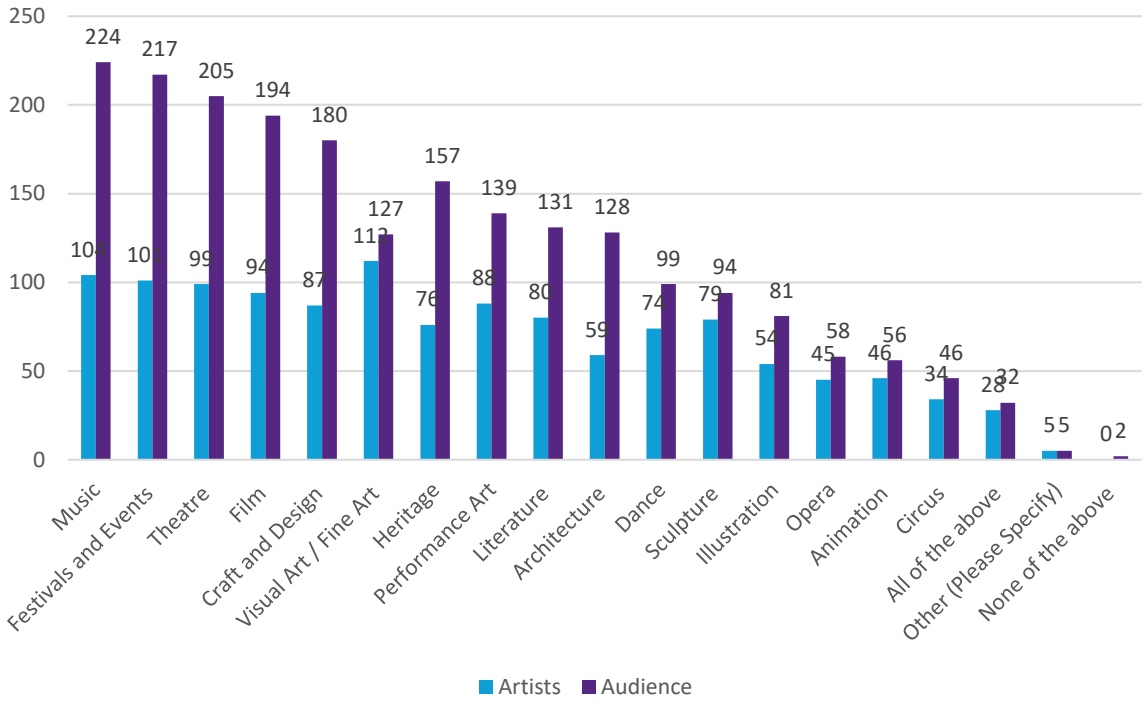


Figure 1.4 Which of the following art forms are you interested in? (Total respondents: 341)

Overall, however, the majority of artist respondents believe there aren't enough arts and cultural activities in the NORTH-CENTRAL AREA (24% Strongly Agree and 41% Agree). Meanwhile, many of these artists also disagree that Dublin North-Central provides a wide variety of arts and cultural activities.

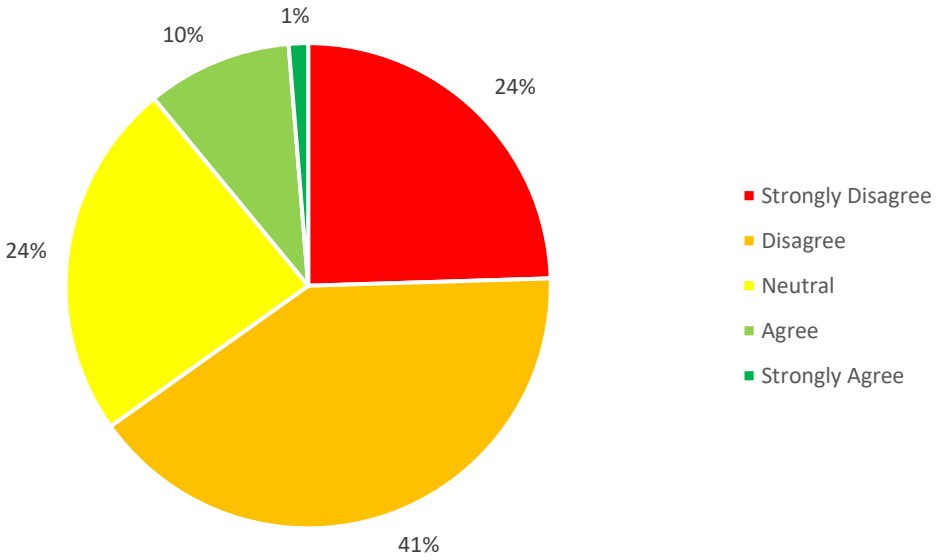


Figure 1.5 Responses to 'Dublin North-Central offers a wide variety of arts and cultural activities' (Artists Respondents: 155)

What did the focus groups say?

This was echoed during focus groups. When asked what type of arts or culture activities participants engaged with, most art forms were mentioned. The most mentioned were Theatre, Music and Visual Arts.

Respondents often separated attendance and participation – activities they went to and enjoyed in a passive way, and others they were actively involved in. Art classes and workshops were often mentioned and covered music, dance, painting, drawing and craft such as knitting, sewing or pottery.

Other art forms included:

- Cinema
- Literature (book clubs, creative writing classes, public readings)
- Opera
- Dance (attendance and participation)
- Comedy
- Circus
- Museums

There is demonstrable engagement by local audiences with the arts scene in Dublin North-Central in the survey. A high volume of audience respondents engages with the arts by attending events in the local area (168 audience respondents). This is seconded by a small number who volunteer for Dublin North-Central community initiatives (45 audience respondents).

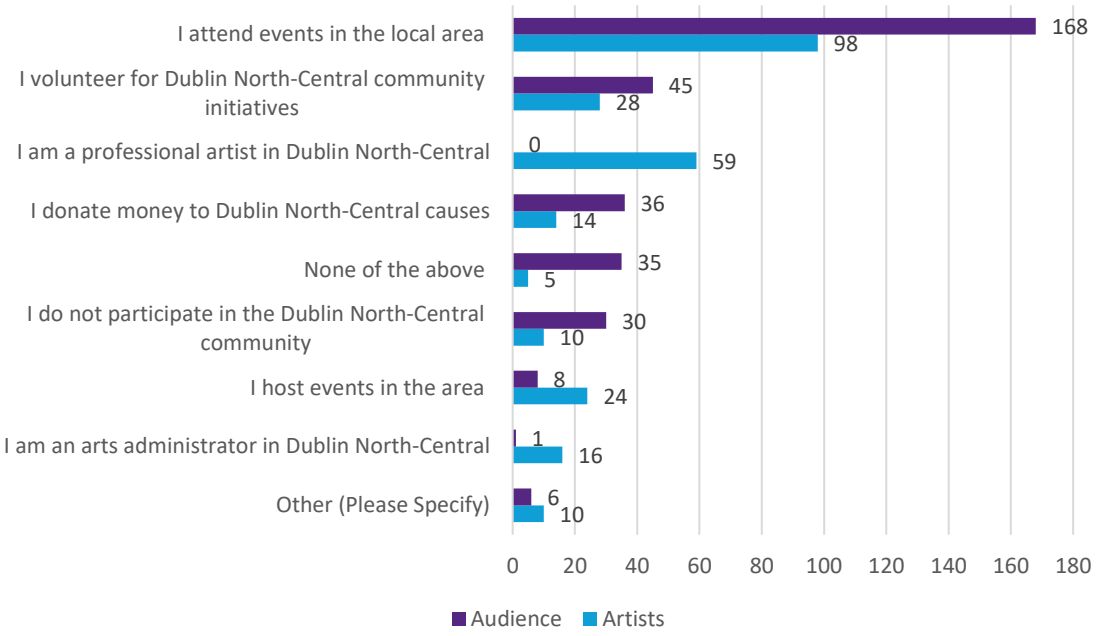


Figure 1.6 Graph outlining the split between artists & audiences in how they participate in the Dublin North-Central Community (Audience: 226, Artist: 104)

The majority of respondents strongly agree / agree they would be more inclined to engage with the arts if more venues and spaces were located in Dublin North-Central (84%, 387 respondents).

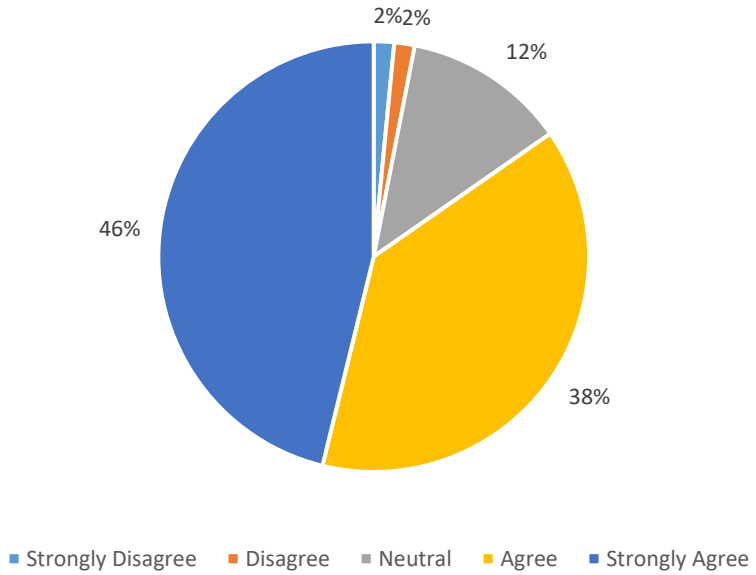


Figure 1.7 Responses to 'I would participate in the arts more if venues and spaces were located in Dublin North-Central?' (No. of respondents: 387)



What did the focus groups say?

When asked where people engaged during focus groups, responses varied. The majority said they tended to engage in venues in the city centre and that there was very little on offer in their local area. However, when analysing the list of venues they attended, it was noticeable that many are situated in Dublin North Central:

- The Red Stables
- The Helix
- The Viking
- Sean O'Casey Community Centre Theatre
- The Shed, Clontarf
- Axis Ballymun
- Casino, Marino
- Artane School of Music
- Local parks (St Anne's, Fairview and Rockfield were mentioned several times)
- Local community centres (Sphere 17 Darndale was mentioned)
- Local churches
- Local schools
- Local libraries
- Local GAA clubs

Other aspects of people's arts engagement patterns came to light during focus groups:

- People had different understanding of arts and culture. As such, many activities mentioned would be considered culture rather than arts, such as gardening, food and drink, green events, family activities or chess.
- Who participants engaged with when attending or participating in arts and culture depended on the type of event they went to. Most said they went with their partner, friends, or family. A large number of respondents also said they often went to some events by themselves.

- People interviewed were frequent attenders. Most said they engaged daily, weekly or monthly. They either engaged in person in venues located outside of the NORTH-CENTRAL AREA; locally, in some of the venues mentioned above; or at home. At-home activities often involved arts and craft, like knitting, drawing or painting, and were carried out alone or as part of an online class.

Future developments demand

Considering future developments, the majority of artists who responded to the survey believe that arts and culture should be integrated into any future commercial and residential developments being brought forward in the NORTH-CENTRAL AREA. 92.3% of artists are in agreement that these components be included in the design of new commercial spaces, with 94.8% agreeing for such integration in residential properties.

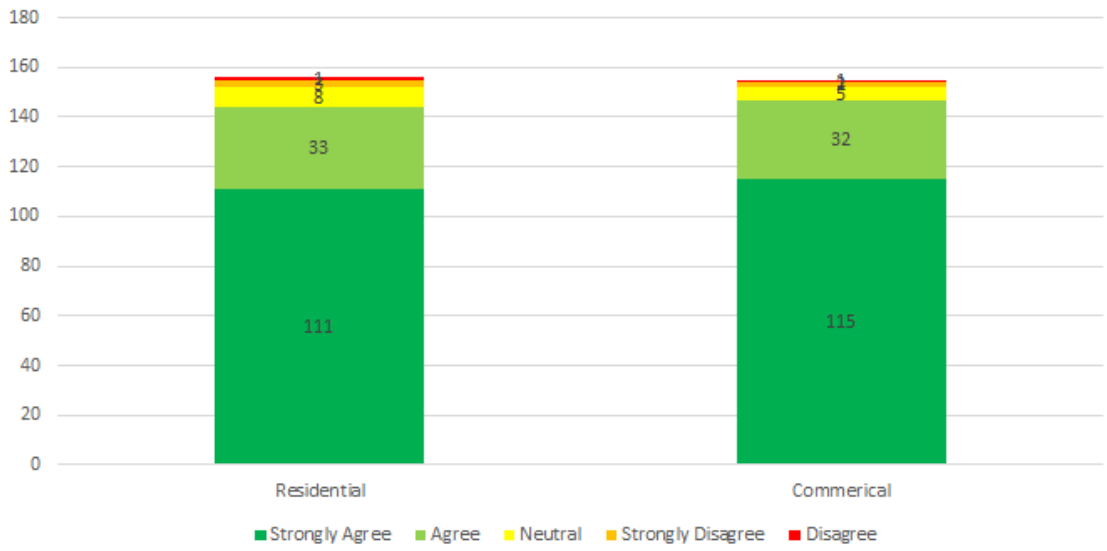


Figure 1.8 A comparative graph showing attitudes towards new commercial & residential developments including an arts & cultural component. (No. of artist respondents: 156 (commercial) & 155 (residential)).

In terms of the type of arts or cultural space people would like to see in the future, artists primarily want to see the development of new artist workspaces (11.4%, 139 respondents), this was followed by Purpose-built workshop and educational spaces (10%, 121 respondents), and small-scale performance and events venues (9.9%, 120 respondents).

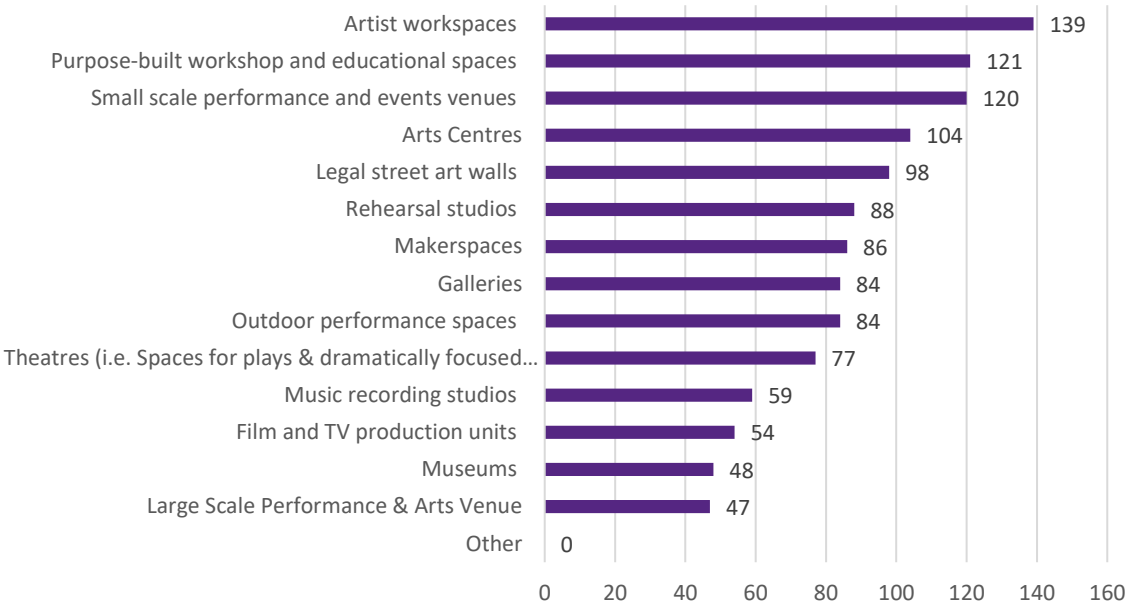


Figure 1.9 Response to 'Which of the following types of arts and cultural spaces do you think Dublin North-Central needs most?' (Artists-only questions) No. of Respondents: 224

Considering audiences' behaviours in terms of arts engagement (Figure 1.6), it would suggest that the type of spaces in demand by members of the public may be more likely to be performances spaces, galleries and retail outlets, rather than the workspaces and education spaces prioritised by the artist sample.

Arts perceptions and barriers

Arts perceptions

Overall, the local community does not believe Dublin North-Central has a strong arts and culture scene (Figure 12). Only 18% of survey respondents believe a strong arts and culture scene exists.

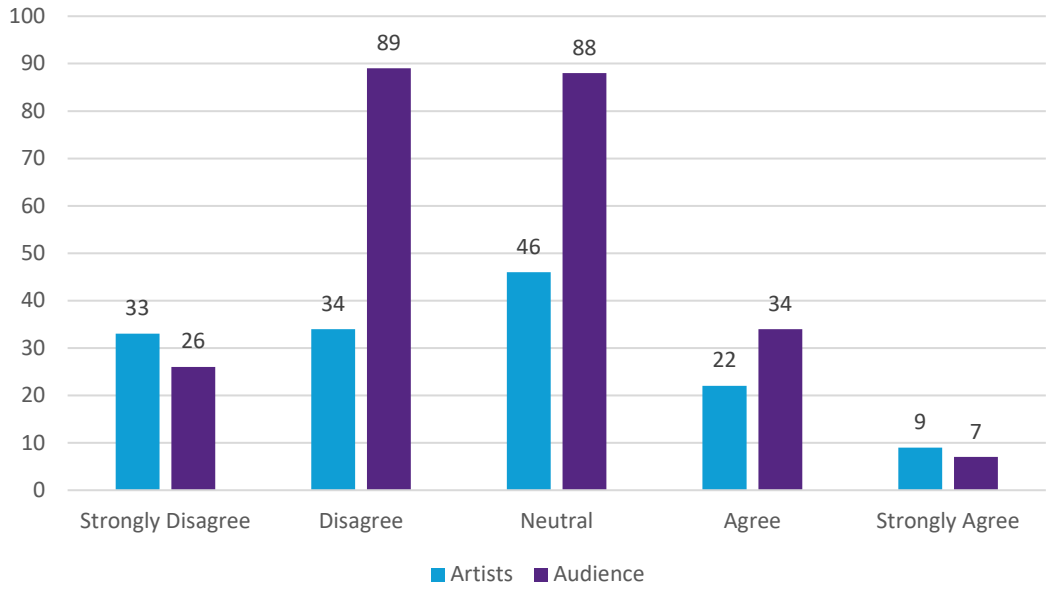


Figure 1.10 Dublin North-Central has a strong arts & culture scene. Split between artist & audience responses. No. Respondents: 388, Artists Respondents: 144, Audience Respondents: 244)

In the survey, there was an overall positive perception of the Dublin North-Central Area, with many describing the community as *friendly* (46 occurrences – 6.7%), *diverse* (28 occurrences – 4%) and *vibrant* (21 occurrences – 3%). Other words that resonated with the respondents when asked to describe Dublin North-Central included community, potential, fun, creative, honest, interesting and underfunded.

What did the focus groups say?

During focus groups, participants were able to share their thoughts about Dublin North-Central. When asked about the things they liked and disliked in Dublin North-Central, participants said they liked people in the area, the outdoor opportunities and natural beauty (parks, sea front in Clontarf, the coastline), as well as its diversity. Things they disliked included how the area is disconnected within itself and from the rest of the city, the litter, antisocial behaviour, lack of restaurants and things to do, and finally, its bad reputation.

Participants were also asked whether going to arts or culture events make them feel part of the community. All agreed that arts and culture in general make them feel part of the community. However, they didn't think this was the case in Dublin North Central because of the lack of offer in the area.

Going back to the survey findings, funding was perceived by artists as a key enabler for increasing engagement in the arts in Dublin North-Central. After funding, artist respondents believe the following would have the greatest impact on the perception of the arts and culture in Dublin North Central: Community outreach programmes (19%, 116 respondents), Promotion of the arts (19%, 116 respondents), and more funding opportunities (18.8%, 112 respondents).

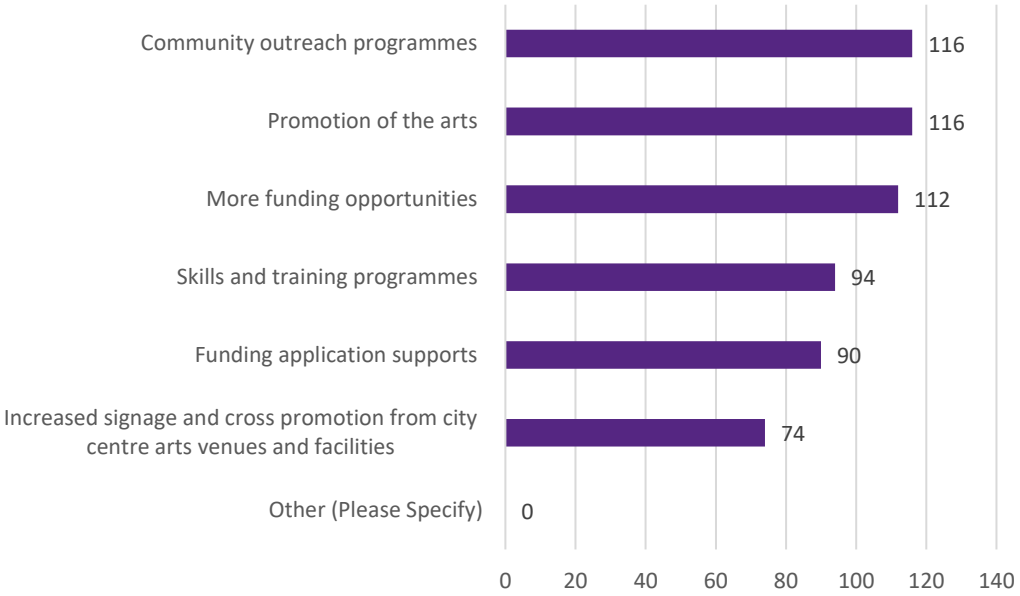


Figure 1.11 Responses to 'Which of the following would have the greatest impact on the perception of the arts & cultural activities in Dublin North-Central?'. (Artists Respondents: 142)

Barriers to arts engagement

In the survey, a high proportion of audiences cite one of the main barriers to engagement in the arts is that there are better quality arts spaces and venues located in other areas of the city (107 audience respondents).

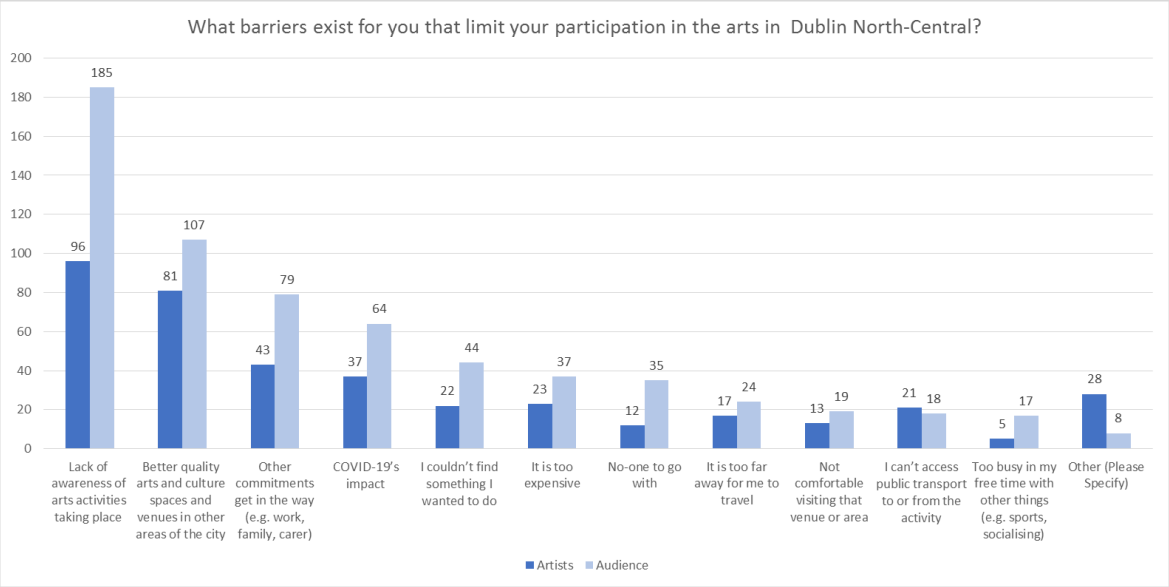


Figure 1.12 Responses to 'What barriers exist for you that limit your participation in the arts in Dublin North-Central?' (No. audience respondents: 281 and 132 artist respondents)

A selection of audience members cite that it is a challenge to 'find something I want to do' as a barrier to arts engagement. This may be attributed to the volume and variety of available arts programming in the North-Central Area (44 audience respondents, 18%).

There may therefore be a case for established venues and spaces elsewhere in the city to locate satellite spaces in Dublin North-Central. This concept was well supported by artists responding to the survey, with 51% Strongly Agreeing and 33% Agreeing with the statement 'Arts facilities located in Dublin city centre should establish local facilities in Dublin North-Central'.

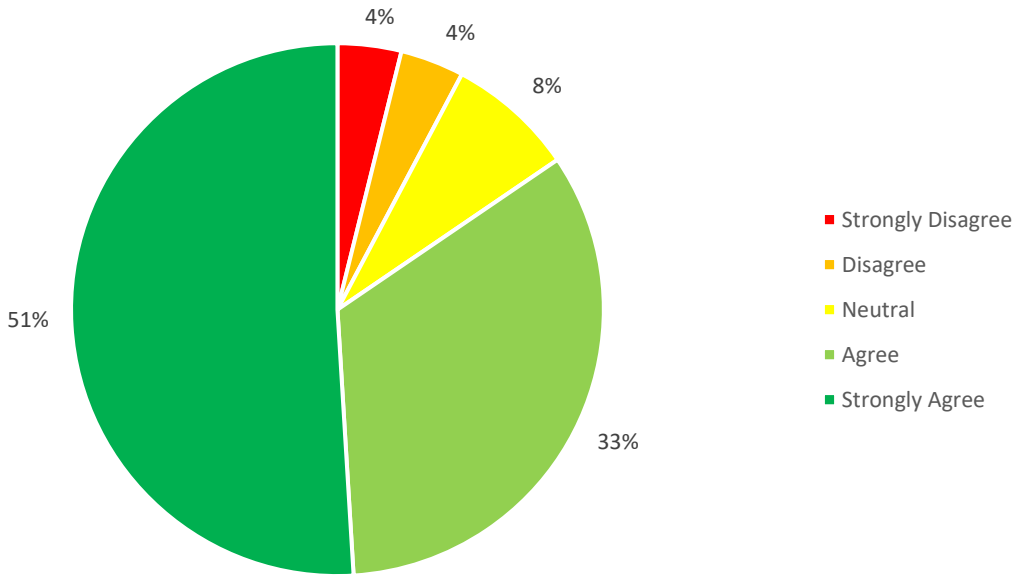


Figure 1.13 Arts facilities located in Dublin city centre should establish local facilities in Dublin North-Central. (Total Artist Responses: 155)

However, it's important to note that focus groups showed there was a preference for any future offer to be driven by the local community. Indeed, participants indicated that for them, the main role of arts and culture is to strengthen connections between people in the community while giving opportunities for them to meet and come together in a positive way. If satellite spaces were to be explored with Dublin city centre locations, it would have to be initiated with a public consultation with residents in the NORTH-CENTRAL AREA.

The perception that there are fewer arts spaces located in Dublin North-Central compared to other parts of the city has been documented in previous studies and assessments, including the Artist Workspaces Report 2020, 'Where is the Art' research by O'BFA, and 'Culture Near You' data from Dublin City Council. Figure 16 below illustrates the geographic placement of these arts and cultural infrastructure data sets.

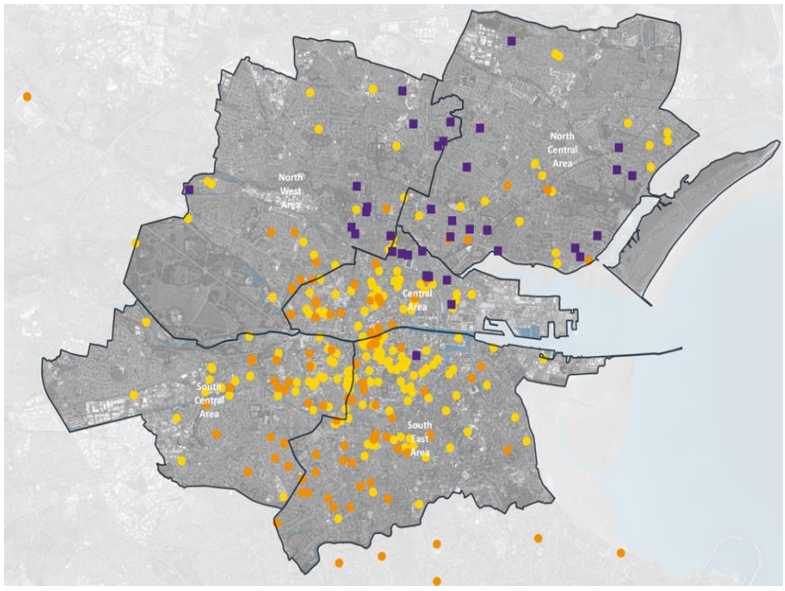


Figure 1.14 Combined GIS Data of Arts and Cultural Infrastructure across Dublin

What did the focus groups say?

There are similar and other barriers to arts engagement in Dublin North Central. The list below details these barriers, mentioned during conversations at the focus groups:

- The lack of offer, events and venues in the area was the most mentioned
- Lack of awareness came second
- Public transport

- Pricing
- Accessibility
- Confidence in attending or participating in activities that do take place in the area

For artists and people working in arts and culture organisations, there were additional barriers directly linked to their practice:

- Lack of studio space
- Bureaucracy around funding applications that the majority finds too complicated, not streamlined, in a language they don't necessarily understand. Many also said they're often unaware of funding opportunities.
- The design of funding that already exists. Some mentioned the desire to see multi-annual funding rather than project-based in order to maintain and nurture relationships between different areas of the city.

Lack of awareness of arts and culture events or activities taking place in the NORTH-CENTRAL AREA also appeared in the survey findings. Indeed, a high proportion of audience respondents agree they do not know where to find information on arts and culture events or initiatives taking place in Dublin North-Central (19% Strongly Agree and 44% Agree).

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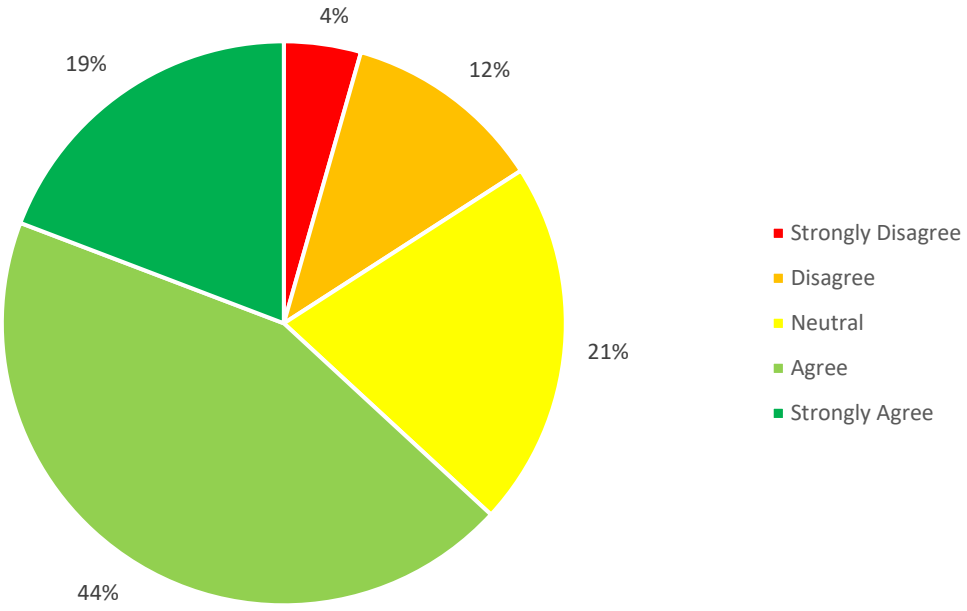


Figure 1.15 Responses to 'I don't know where to find information on arts and culture events or initiatives taking place in Dublin North-Central.' (244 Audience Respondents.)

During focus groups, participants were asked how they usually find out about activities to do or to attend, and responses were diverse. The majority find out through word of mouth or social media. Facebook was the number one platform they used for this purpose, especially local community or residents' association groups. Other resources included:

- Newspapers (the Irish Times, Sunday Times were mentioned often)
- Radio (Arena on RTE 1)
- Online (Google, Journal of Music, Meetup, LovinDublin)
- Newsletters from specific venues
- Notice boards, flyers or posters in local shops or venues
- Outdoor advertising
- Whatsapp groups
- Going physically to local community centres to ask what's on
- Two people mentioned the Culture Club by Dublin City Council Culture Company.

Some participants said they were subscribed to the Dublin City Council's newsletter, but the majority was not aware it was available.

In the survey, lack of awareness of arts activities taking place in Dublin North-Central was also referenced as the top barrier that limits audience engagement in the local arts scene. Other common barriers for audiences include work, familial and care-giving commitments, COVID-19's impact, and a perceived lack of activities of interest.

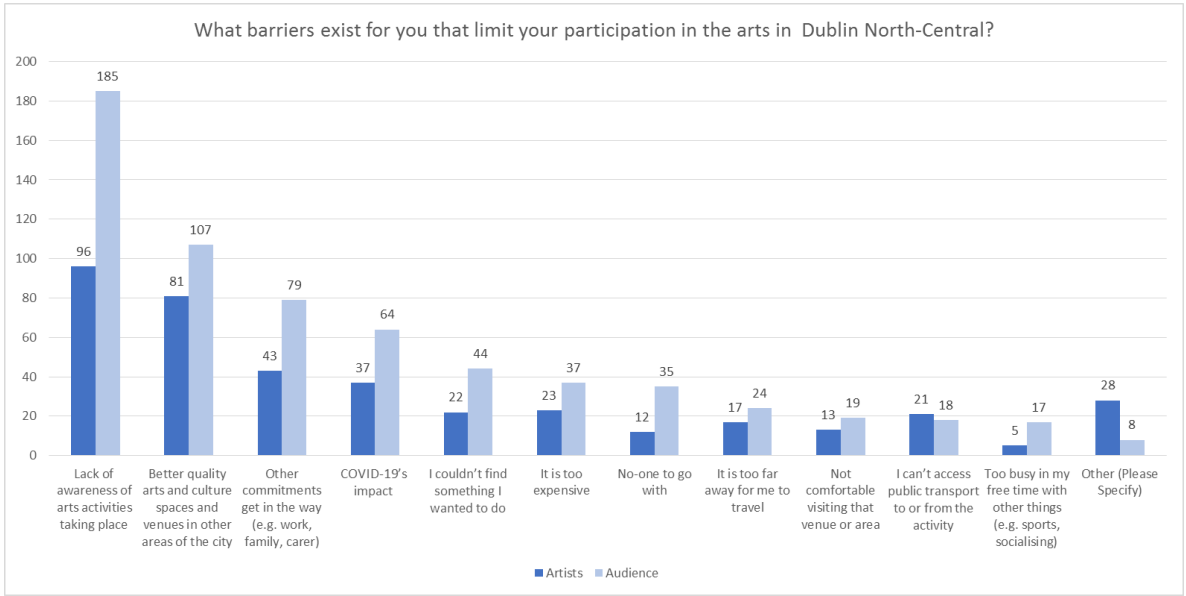


Figure 1.16 Responses to 'What barriers exist for you that limit your participation in the arts in Dublin North Central?' (Audience Respondents: 210, Artist Respondents: 143)

Exploring some of these barriers in greater detail, it is apparent the pandemic has and may continue to have some impact to how people interact with the arts. While audiences in North-Central continue to engage primarily with the arts in-person (45%, 131 respondents), a number of respondents highlight that they engage with the arts as much online as they do in-person.

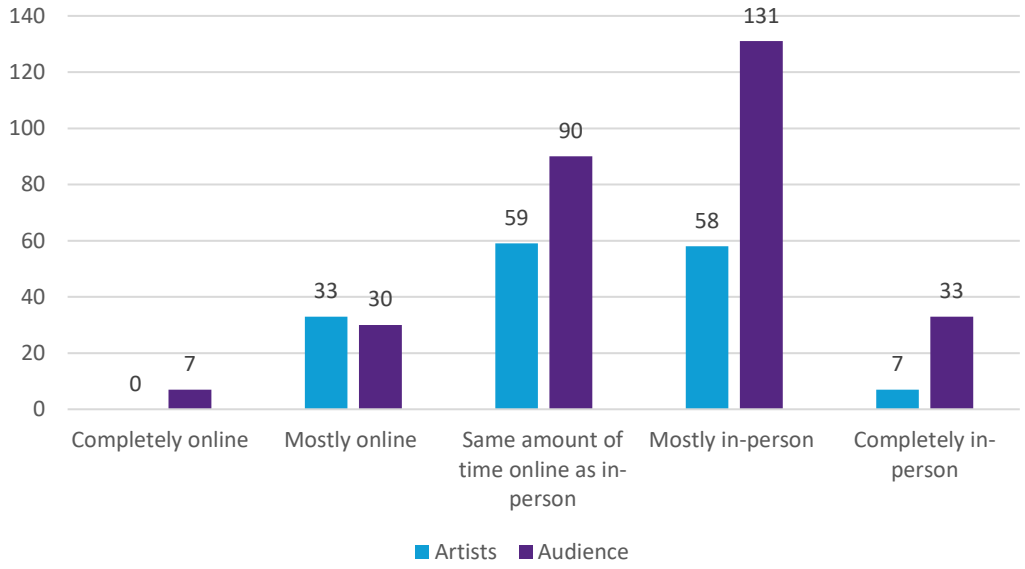


Figure 1.17 Responses to 'To what extent do you engage with the arts online or in-person' (Audience Responses: 291, Artists Respondents: 157)

Although barriers were extensively looked at, it was beneficial to investigate people's motivations for engaging with arts and culture in the first place and what this engagement brings to their lives. Focus groups participants engage with arts and culture on a regular basis for various reasons. Most focused on the impact arts and culture has on them and the benefits it brings them:

- An opportunity to connect with others. Those were interested in the social aspect and the shared experience with other like-minded individuals.
- Learning and experiencing something new
- Curiosity
- Feeding the soul
- Wellbeing
- Happiness and enjoyment
- Relaxation

When asked about what arts and culture meant to them, all participants said it had an incredibly important place in their lives. These are some of the things they said:

"They enable to enter into people's minds. It's about engaging, enjoying the experience. It inspires me to do things differently. It entertains me. It makes life more enjoyable."

"It's a real appreciation of someone else's skills. You don't get that often in your daily life."

"The arts has the power to change people and change lives."

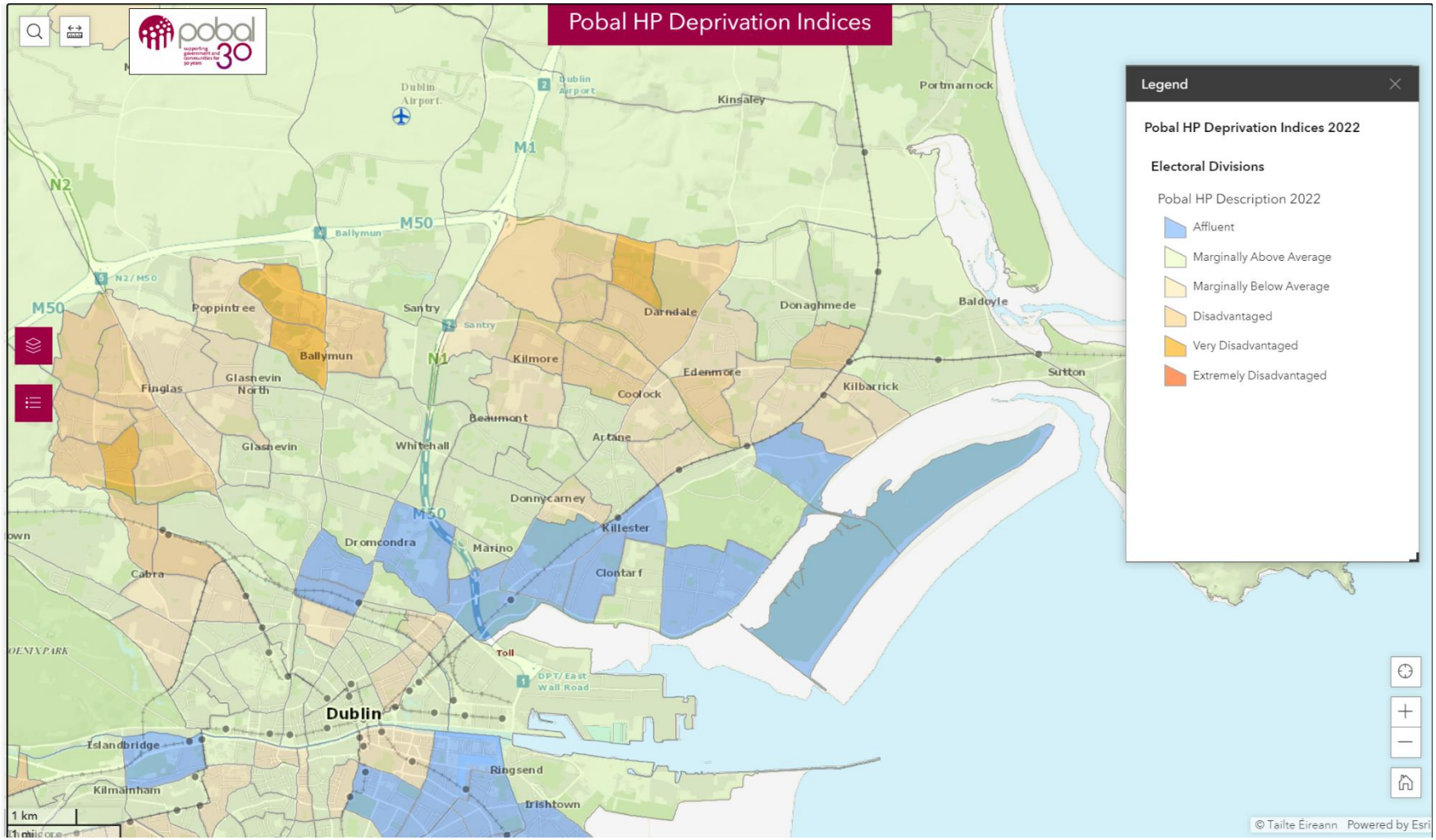
"The joy of seeing people who think they have nothing to offer and seeing them changed by the experience of going out in front of an audience."

"People think it's a hobby, but it's more than that. It's everything to me. It's an extension of my personality."

"It's about trying to connect. With cinema, I enjoy going alone but with live music you're connecting with the crowd and the atmosphere that is there. Connection is a big thing for me."

Appendix 2: Pobal HP Deprivation Index Map

1. Pobal HP Deprivation Index Mapping



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