Dublin North-West

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

Contents

Foreword		2
Executive summary		3
1.	Area Context	6
2.	Methodology	10
3.	Study Limitations	13
4.	Respondent profile	15
5.	Research findings	18
6.	Conclusions / Recommendations	38
Appendix 1 – Detailed survey results		40
Appendix 2 – Focus groups registration form		54
Appendix 3 – Focus groups discussion guide		56
Appendix 4 – Maps		57

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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-West 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. This research sought to determine the provision of arts and culture infrastructure in the Dublin North-West area, as well as artists and audiences' perceptions, experiences and thoughts around arts provision in their locality.

2. It allowed has identified 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 18 August 2023 to 13 October 2023, a survey consisting of 26 questions was live and actively promoted.

5. During this period, 227 people fully or partially completed the survey. Based on an overall population for the Local Electoral Area of 72,678 within Dublin North-West / Finglas-Ballymun , this gives our results a confidence level of 85% at a 5% margin for error.

6. A series of 9 in-person and online focus groups took place between 19 September and 18 October 2023, bringing together 41 participants, with representation across age groups from 18 to 74.

7. The survey results are subject to a number of limitations, including:

    - A substantial overrepresentation of women
    - A substantial underrepresentation of people aged 34 and under and those over 75 years old.
    - A significant overrepresentation of those aged 45-54 years old.

8. Within the body of the report, a number of measures have been proposed that could be taken to address these limitations and build upon this research's findings.

9. However, the results nonetheless provide a statistically rigorous basis for the design of future arts and culture provision in Dublin North-West.

Key findings

10. There are a number of key observations that will be important to bear in mind when designing future provision in Dublin North-West. These included:

    - Survey respondents were critical of Dublin North-West's current arts and cultural infrastructure provision, with 50% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that the area currently has a strong arts and culture scene and only 19% agreeing with the statement.
    - Venues and spaces were seen as a key limiting factor for participation in the arts, with 86% agreeing or strongly

agreeing that they would participate in the arts more if venues and spaces were located in Dublin North-West.

- When asked what types of arts and cultural spaces Dublin North-West needed most, the most popular choices were Purpose-Built Workshop / Education Spaces (64% of respondents chose this option) and Artists Workspaces (62%). Among artists and those with a professional interest in the arts, Artists Workspaces were by far the most popular choice, with 81% choosing this option. Collaborative Community Spaces (Makerspaces) were the second most popular choice at 66%.

- Our survey responses showed a strong preference for engaging with the arts in a traditional, in-person manner (60% of respondents said they engaged with arts and cultural activities mostly or completely in-person). However, it should be noted that 53% of respondents said they regularly engaged with the arts by browsing art-related content online.

- 74% of respondents said that a lack of awareness of upcoming events limited their participation in the arts.

- Respondents were strongly supportive of the idea of ensuring that new housing projects and business developments in Dublin North-West should be designed with an arts and culture component included.

11. Focus groups reinforced and complemented those survey findings:

- People in Dublin North-West are avid attenders and engage with arts and culture very regularly, whether outside or at home.

- When they attend events, people in Dublin North-West mostly engage with their friends and with other participants in activities they take part in. This was reflected in people's top motivation for engaging with arts and culture which was to socialise with others. People with children mentioned going to events specifically for them.

- Although most participants across the whole area did sometimes go to Dublin city centre to engage with arts and culture, it seemed to be only occasional. People in Ballymun were more likely to stay local. People in Finglas on the other hand were quite vocal about the barriers they faced. Common barriers for people in the whole area included costs, safety, public transport and accessibility.

- People in the North-West area find out about things to do mostly via word of mouth. Social media and newsletters they are subscribed to were also popular. Many mentioned how they would like to see a centralised website or newsletter where there would be a list of upcoming events in their local area and in the wider city.

- Ultimately, arts and culture are very important to people in Dublin North-West. They are part of who they are and how they live their life.

- When asked what they would change about the offer of events and activities in Dublin North-West, three aspects came to the fore:

  (i) A multidisciplinary venue, similar to Axis, located in Finglas.

  (ii) Better communication around what's on and funding opportunities.

  (iii) Rehearsal and studio spaces for artists.

Recommendations

12. The following interventions are recommended as a result of these findings:

(b) Awareness Raising

It may be worth exploring whether dedicated social media accounts and/or web pages could be used to raise awareness of arts events among the large (and presumably growing) number of people regularly engaging with the arts online. There is also a need for improved communication about funding opportunities for artists and local arts organisations. This may be through dedicated council staff, engaging with the local arts community on a regular basis to inform and support.

(c) Provision of Cultural Space

There is a clear demand for additional venues and locations to both engage with and create art. Consideration should be given to how best to meet this need in the Dublin North-West context, and it may be worth undertaking additional engagement with locals on whether new mechanisms are needed to help identify and provide these creative spaces.

In addition, it may be advantageous to undertake regular ongoing liaison with Dublin City Council's Development Managers to identify any opportunities within the pipeline of proposed developments in Dublin North-West to provide cultural venues either alongside development or as a meanwhile use.

The clear emphasis on both purpose-built workshop / education spaces and artists workspaces has resulted in a recommendation that Dublin City Council urgently prioritises the delivery of more such spaces in this area.

(d) Further Research

It may be worth undertaking further research designed to address the limitations of this study, in particular securing greater input from younger people, the over-75s and men.

This research could utilise a broader range of methods, such as on-street interviews and postal or telephone polling, to secure the engagement of these demographics.

1. Area Context

Dublin North-West

1.1 Dublin North-West is an area corresponding to the Ballymun-Finglas Local Electoral Area.



Figure 1.1: Map of Dublin North-West (within DCC area)

Demographics and Socio-Economic Indicators

1.2 The population of the area at the 2022 census was 56,305.[1] Within this, the age distribution of the population broadly follows the state average.

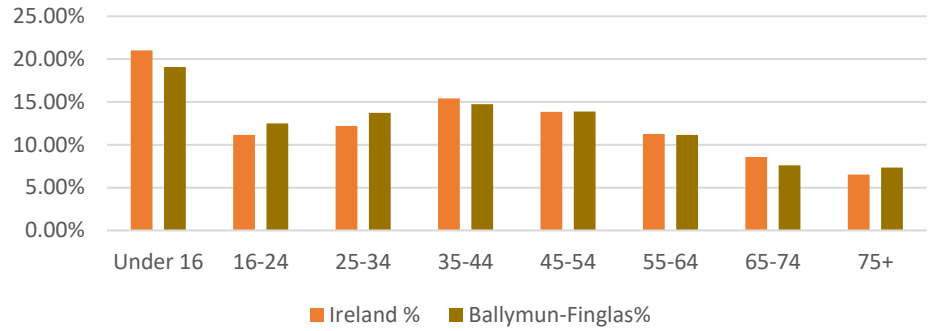


Figure 1.2: Age profile of Dublin North-West (Ballymun – Finglas LEA)

1.3 As of 2022, Dublin North-West has a population of 56,305, of whom 27,134 (48.19%) were male and 29171 (51.94%) were female. The adult population (over 18) was 44,130 (78.37%).

[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/

1.4 The percentage of the population with no formal education is higher (3.98%) for Dublin North-West than for the state as a whole (2.40%), which can indicate higher levels of deprivation.

1.5 The proportion of Dublin North-West's population that was born in Ireland is slightly higher than the state average, at 84.81% compared to 79.99%.

1.6 Within our study area, the Pobal HP Deprivation Index identifies a number of areas of high deprivation. In particular, the Ballymun B and D, and Finglas South C are all defined as 'very disadvantaged' by Pobal.

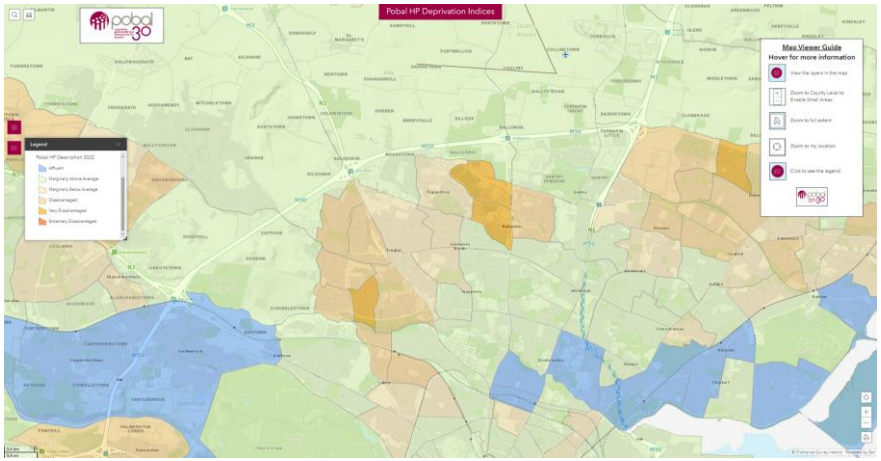


Figure 1.3: Pobal HP Deprivation Index Mapping (areas marked in orange are considered to be more deprived)

Arts Infrastructure

1.7 We have identified a number of arts venues within the wider North-West area. A number of these were mentioned by participants in our focus groups as being places they go to appreciate the arts. These are outlined in the map at Figure 2.4, below.

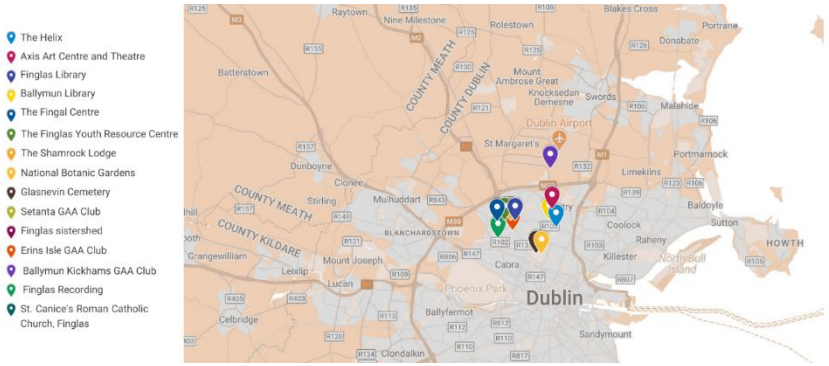


Figure 1.4: Map of Traditional and Non-Traditional Venues within the wider North-West Dublin Area mentioned by focus groups participants

Finglas

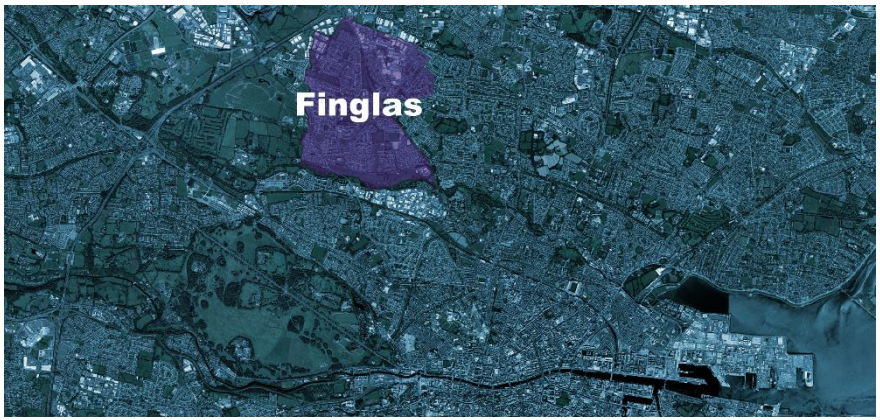


Figure 1.5: Map of Finglas areas

1.8 Finglas's population is very similar to the state in terms of age profile, however, as with many urban areas, the proportion of those indicating their marital status as single at the 2022 census was quite a bit higher than the state, at 62.02% compared to 53.86% for the state as a whole.

1.9 The proportion of Finglas' population born in Ireland is significantly higher than the state as a whole, at 90.75% compared to 79.99%. Only 0.51% of Finglas' population was born in the Rest of the World (ie not Ireland, the UK or the EU), compared to 7.80% in the state as a whole.

1.10 The Finglas South C Electoral Division is described as 'very disadvantaged by the Pobal HP Deprivation Index. Within it, to the

developments leading off the Cardiffs Bridge Road to the East including Valeview Gardens, Kippure Park, Berryfield Drive and Berryfield Gardens all fall into an area described as 'Extremely Disadvantaged by Pobal. Similarly, the area bordering the south and west of Kildonan Park within Finglas North is described as 'Extremely Disadvantaged'.

Ballymun

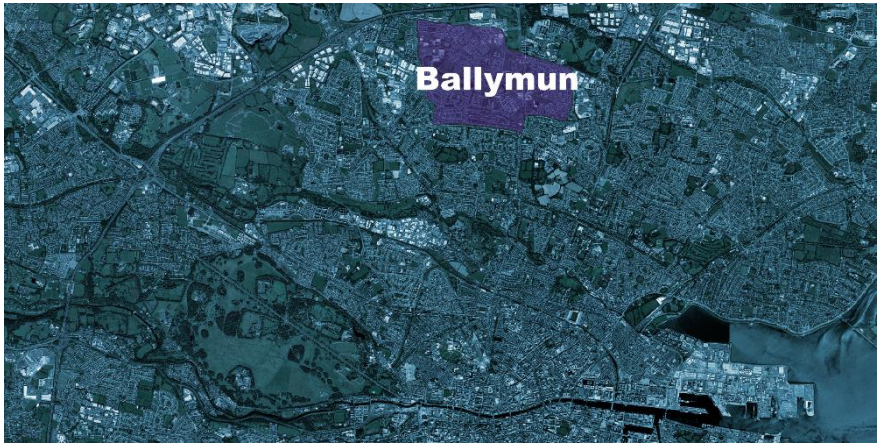


Figure 1.6: Map of Ballymun areas

1.11 Ballymun's population is very similar to the state in terms of age profile, however, as with many urban areas, the proportion of those indicating their marital status as single at the 2022 census was quite a bit higher than the state, at 61.02% compared to 53.86% for the state as a whole.

1.12 The population of Ballymun is similar to the state as a whole in terms of its country of birth, though it has a slightly higher percentage of respondents who said they were born in the EU (8.73%, compared to 6.53% for the state) and the Rest of the World (10.74%, compared to 7.80% for the state).

1.13 Within Ballymun, areas around Marewood Crescent and Siloge Park, Balcurris Close/Balcurris Road and areas of Poppintree are all described as 'Extremely Disadvantaged' by the Pobal HP Deprivation Indices.

2. Methodology

Survey methodology

2.1 A quantitative-led survey was designed by Turley, consisting of 26 questions.

2.2 The survey was hosted primarily online and was in field from Friday 18 August 2023 to Friday 15 September 2023. The survey is available to view here. The survey was then extended to run from 18 September to 13 October 2023. The extension of the survey was to account for summer holidays and the expected impact of vacations on response rates.

2.3 The survey findings supported discussions at focus groups facilitated by research partners, Thrive.

2.4 A digital-led promotional campaign was launched aimed at recruiting survey respondents. This activity included:

- The website (www.dublinnorthwest-arts.ie) hosted approximately 2.3k unique users and received 3.6K page views.
- 157,245 people were reached via a sponsored social media campaign with 3k click throughs to the website.
- The e-bulletin issued from Dublin City Council Arts Office resulted in 3,152 opens and 2,132 click-throughs.
- 41 of the survey respondents registered their interest to take part in the upcoming focus groups.



Figure 2.1: Example of Survey Advert

2.5 The survey design was informed by an in-person consultation session with a number of Dublin North-West arts and community groups on 28 June 2023. The outputs of this gathering were used to inform the survey length and content, channels for respondent recruitment and timings and duration of field work.

Survey results – Confidence level

2.6 In total, 227 individuals engaged with the survey.

2.7 In the last Census of Ireland, carried out in 2022, the population of Dublin North-West was estimated to be 56, with the number of persons aged 18 or over sitting at 44,130.

2.8 Based on 227 people fully or partially completing the survey, this means our results have a confidence level of 85% at a 5% margin for error.

Preliminary Stakeholder Engagement

2.9 On 28 June 2023, Turley and Thrive attended an in-person stakeholder gathering in Finglas with key local community and arts stakeholders in attendance. Dublin City Council facilitated the session and the research team used it as an opportunity to gather early feedback on the initial survey draft and methodology.

Survey Accessibility

2.10 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.

Focus groups methodology

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

2.12 In total, Thrive held 9 focus groups between Tuesday 19 September and Wednesday 18 October 2023, bringing together 41 participants. 7 sessions took place in person, in various venues located in the Dublin North-West area. 2 sessions were held online, via Zoom.

Focus groups recruitment

2.13 Focus groups recruitment was launched alongside the survey on 18 August 2024.

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, 49 agreed to participate and shared their contact details and time slots they would be interested in.

- Contacted each of these 49 respondents for them to confirm their participation.

2.14 Created a separate registration form to recruit more participants in the North-West area who had not necessarily completed the survey. The form was shared on Thrive's social media channels – Facebook, X and LinkedIn, local Facebook groups and via a sponsored post on Facebook targeting adults living in the North West area of Dublin.

2.15 In total, Thrive received 85 registrations through this form, mostly from people living in Dublin 11 and Dublin 9.

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.

3.3 It may be worth undertaking further research, targeting this groups, to provide a greater understanding of how to increase participation in and the popularity of the arts in Dublin North-West.

3.4 Further limitations of the survey and focus groups data include:

- A substantial overrepresentation of women (81.11% of survey respondents compared to 52.06% for Dublin North-West as a whole).
- A substantial underrepresentation of people aged 34 (6.67% of survey respondents compared to 45.14% for Dublin North-West as a whole) and under and those over 75 years old (no respondents within this category in our survey respondents, compared to 8.29% for Dublin North-West as a whole).
- A significant overrepresentation of those aged 45-54 years old (52.22% of survey respondents compared to 13.16% for Dublin North-West as a whole).

3.5 Focus groups participants were all aged over 18.

3.6 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.

3.7 In addition, while the survey sample size of 227 is a very strong sample, the 'gold standard' would be to aim for a confidence level of 95% at a margin of error of 5%, which would require a sample size of 383, based on the Dublin North-West population.

3.8 As outlined in **Chapter 2 – Area Context**, there are several areas within Dublin North-West 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-West. To provide a full picture, it may be worth undertaking research on this topic

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

either solely within Dublin North-West, or as part of a larger study across the Dublin City Council area.

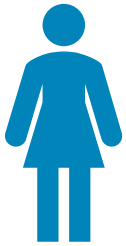
3.9 Many of these limitations can be traced back to the digital-only nature of the survey, which tends to favour certain demographics (although these limitations can often be overcome given sufficient time and resource). In addition, access to the internet is another issue that can be exacerbated by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

3.10 Undertaking a survey approach which utilises a range of techniques can lead to a more balanced output, addressing some of the limitations relating to gender and age. In particular, by 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 random sample of the Dublin North-West population.

4. Respondent profile

Gender Profile



82%



18%

Respondents' connection to Dublin North-West



72%
Residents



34%
Recreation in the area



30%
Work



28%
Socialise



21%
Volunteer in the area



17%
To create art



8%
Students



5%
Other

Respondents' connection to the arts



18%
Artists



18%
Professional interest in the arts



64%
Neither

Survey Respondents' Top Artistic Interests

69%
Music

66%
Theatre

57%
Film

56%
Festivals and Events



31%
Had children living with them



64%
Did not

(**5%** Preferred not to say)

80% Didn't consider themselves to have a disability

11% did

9% preferred not to say



Focus groups respondents

Gender Profile

78%

22%

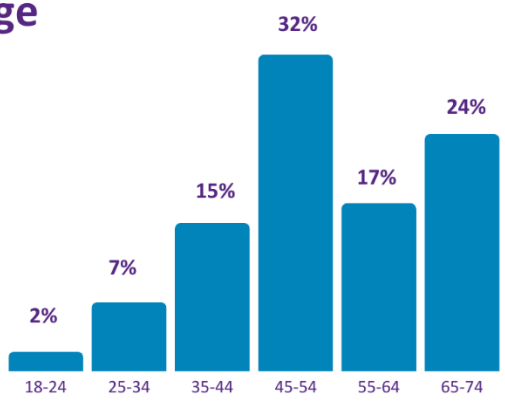
Children in the household

34% Had children living with them

61% Did not

5% Preferred not to say

Age



2% Preferred not to say

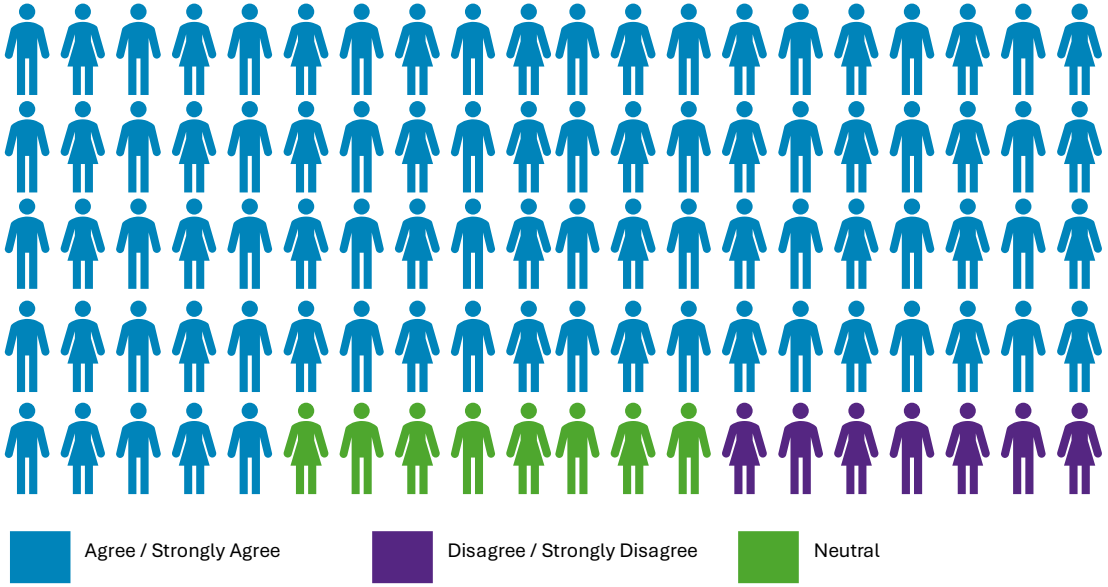
Disability

12% added accessibility requirements for attending the focus groups as part of the registration form.*

*Please note focus groups participants were not asked specifically about their type of disability, so it could not be determined whether their access requirements were due to personal preferences or disability.

5. Research findings

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



85%

Agreed / Strongly Agreed

5.1 There was strong agreement that Dublin North-West doesn't currently offer enough arts and cultural activities, with 85% agreeing or strongly agreeing, 8% neutral and 7% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

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

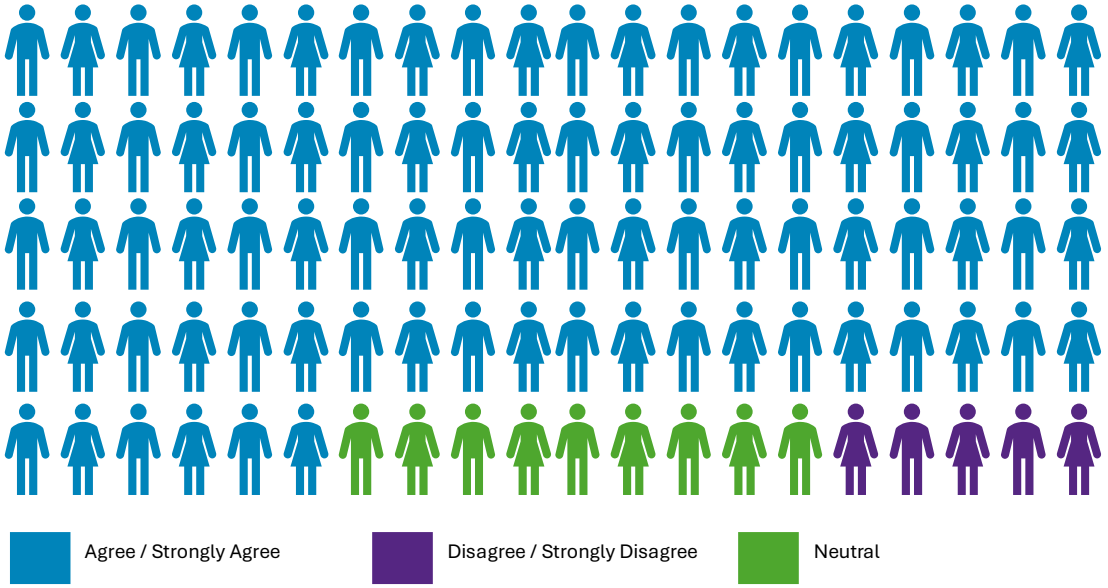


73%

Disagreed / Strongly Disagreed

5.2 Similarly, the vast majority (73%) of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that Dublin North-West offered a wide variety of arts and cultural activities, with 20% neutral and 7% agreeing or strongly agreeing.

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



86%

Agreed / Strongly Agreed

5.3 There was strong agreement that arts facilities located in Dublin City Centre should set up local facilities in Dublin North-West, with 86% agreeing or strongly agreeing, 9% neutral and 5% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

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



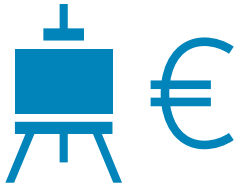
79%
Attending live performances



65%
Visiting art galleries



53%
Browsing art-related content online



46%
Buying artworks from local artists / art shops / markets



41%
Participate in workshops / art classes



41%
Follow and interact with artists and arts collectives on social media

5.4 Attending live performances (79%), visiting art galleries (65%) and browsing art-related content online (53%) were the most popular ways to engage with the arts in Dublin North-West.

5.5 Focus groups findings echoed these results. Whether it was attendance or participation, people in the North-West area do a variety of activities several times a month. They are avid attenders and engage with arts and culture very regularly, whether outside or at home. Some of them are involved in arts and crafts classes such as knitting, sewing, painting, drawing or creative writing. Others attend events from various art forms, the most popular being theatre, film and music. At home, many of them enjoy reading, playing a musical instrument or watching a movie. Sport was mentioned by many participants, including activities such as yoga and swimming. When asked about their favourite type of art form, a majority said **music**.

5.6 When they attend events, people in Dublin North-West mostly engage with their friends and with other participants in activities they take part in. This was reflected in people's top motivation for engaging with arts and culture which was to socialise with others. People with children mentioned going to events specifically for them. Other motivations included **getting out of the house**, **learning something new** and for the benefits engaging with arts and culture bring to their **mental health and wellbeing**.

5.7 Most participants were familiar with the words *arts* and *culture* to describe some of the activities they got involved in during their free time. A couple of participants said they preferred using the word *hobbies*. Participants were also asked what arts and culture meant to them. Their responses comprised of personal definitions of arts and culture, as well as deeper reflections around the impact that arts and culture have on their lives.

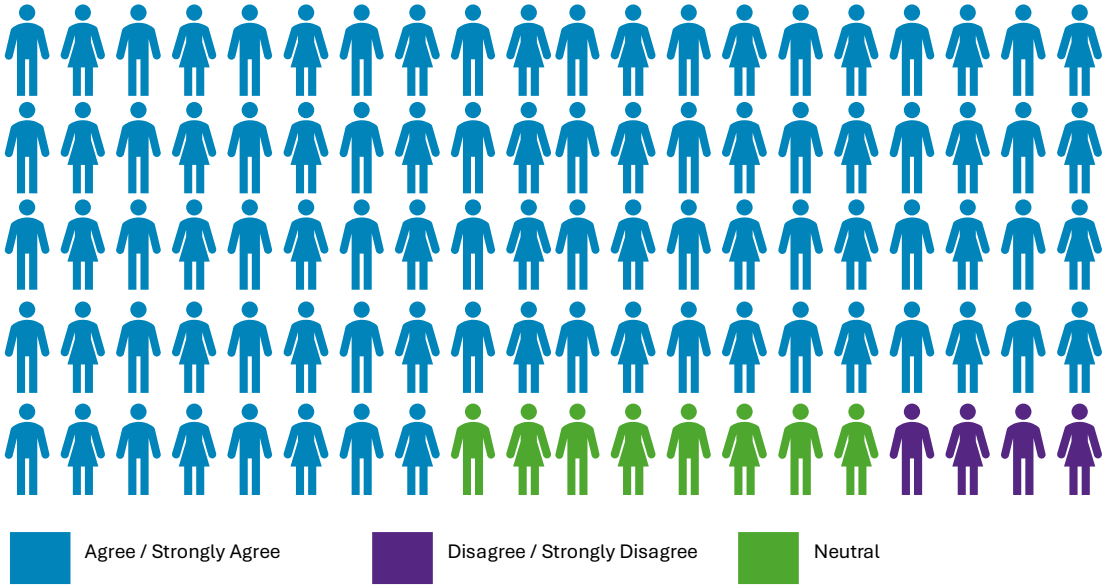
"They could mean anything. Music, drama, it's a very broad term. Anything that's an enjoyable event."

"It's what makes life interesting, makes things meaningful. People don't realise how much arts contribute to everything."

"It's a connection, you're empowering someone when you include them in the arts."

"Great for my mental health and wellbeing. An expression of who and where we are in the world. It unites us and shows us what we have in common. Brings us all together. You see yourself reflected back which is why diversity is important. Arts is a reflection of us."

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

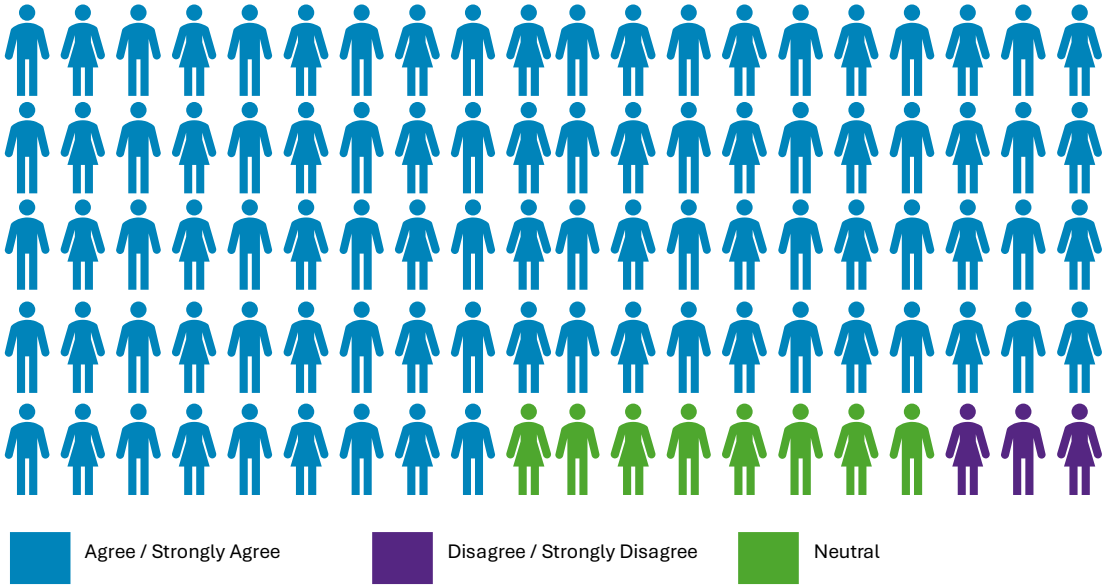


88%

Agreed / Strongly Agreed

5.8 Respondents were strongly in favour of including an arts and culture aspect within new housing projects in Dublin North-West, with 88% agreeing/strongly agreeing, 8% neutral and 4% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

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



89%

Agreed / Strongly Agreed

5.9 Similarly, respondents were strongly in favour of including an arts and culture aspect within new business developments in Dublin North-West, with 89% agreeing/strongly agreeing, 8% neutral and 3% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

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



64%
Purpose-built Workshop and Education Spaces



62%
Artists' Workspaces



61%
Collaborative Community Spaces



59%
Small-scale performance and events spaces



52%
Arts Centres

5.10 Purpose-built workshop and education spaces (64%), artists' workspaces (62%) and collaborative community spaces (61%) 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-West?



70%
Community Outreach Projects



68%
Skills and Training Programmes



61%
Promotion of the Arts



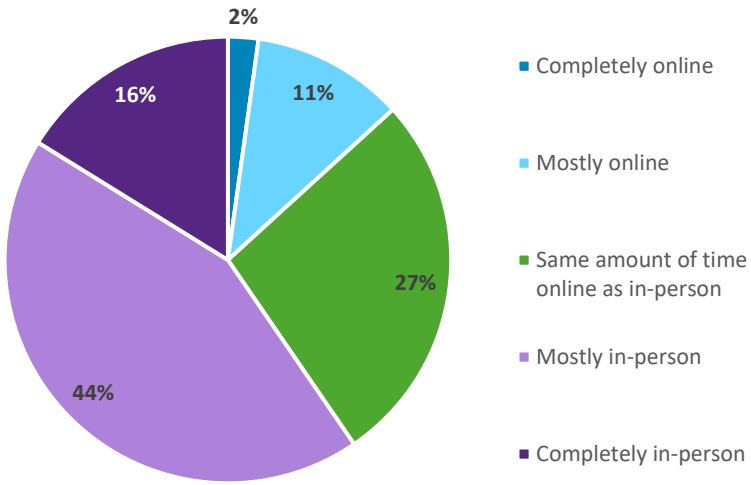
50%
Funding Application Supports



46%
More Funding Opportunities

5.11 Community outreach projects (70%), skills and training programmes (68%) and promotion of the arts (61%) were seen as having the greatest potential positive impact on how people view the arts in Dublin North-West.

To what extent do you engage with the arts online?



5.12 Overall, the majority respondents (60%) said they engaged with the arts mostly or completely in person. However, a substantial percentage (40%) said that a significant proportion of their arts engagement is at least 50% 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-West's arts and culture scenes.

What kind of buildings do you use to engage with the arts in Dublin NW?



43%
Purpose-built Facilities



40%
Theatres



29%
Community Centres



20%
Music Venues

5.13 Purpose-built facilities (43%), theatres (40%) and music venues (20%) were all popular venues in which to engage with the arts.

5.14 During focus groups, participants were also asked about the places where they engage in their local area and in the wider city. Anecdotally, people in Ballymun were more positive and satisfied with the offer in their local area, compared to people in Finglas. Although most participants across the whole area did sometimes go to Dublin city centre to engage with arts and culture, it seemed to be only occasional. People in Ballymun were more likely to stay local. People in Finglas on the other hand were quite vocal about the barriers they faced, which will be explored later in this report. However, there was one quote from one participant that summarises what was regularly heard from Finglas locals during conversations:

"There's not much cultural events in Finglas. If you want to see a play or a certain style of music you generally have to go outside the area."

5.15 Places in the North-West area that were mentioned the most were all located in the nearest vicinity of Ballymun and in Ballymun, and include:

- Axis Ballymun
- Botanical Gardens in Glasnevin
- Age friendly university in DCU
- The Helix

5.16 When residents of Dublin North-West travel outside of their local area to engage with arts and culture, some of the places they go to include:

- The Abbey Theatre
- The Lighthouse Cinema in Smithfield
- Hugh Lane Gallery
- Farmleigh House
- The National Gallery

5.17 Please note there were more city centre venues mentioned by focus groups participants, however, this list only features places that were referred to several times by more than one participant.

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



74%
Lack of Awareness of Events



52%
Better Events elsewhere in the City



29%
Other Commitments Get in the Way



19%
Nothing I Wanted to Do

5.18 Respondents felt that a lack of awareness of upcoming events (74%) was the single most important factor limiting their participation in Dublin North-West. The second most important factor was a perception that there were better events elsewhere in the city (52%). 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.

5.19 There were other barriers not depicted in the survey that prevented people from going to more arts and culture events in Dublin. During focus groups, people's first concerns were **costs** and **safety**. Many mentioned how it is often more than the price of a ticket for a show, it is the cost of the full experience, including food, drinks and transport. Some people talked about planning in advance, such as buying tickets early, to spread costs over time. They know the experience is expensive but they still want to be able to go.

"It's not just the ticket, it's transport, getting a bit of food. If it's not just me going, it gets expensive."

5.20 Many talked about **antisocial behaviour** being a city-wide issue, the city centre being worse than the North-West area. People from Finglas were more likely to raise this compared to people from Ballymun. However, Ballymun locals in particular defended their area by saying it is often misrepresented in the media and its bad rep is not warranted. Feelings of community and people's friendliness were often discussed as reasons for their love of the area and their high likelihood to prefer staying local.

"Ballymun is fabulous. I'm from Finglas but Ballymun would be a 10, whereas Finglas is a 4."

5.21 **Public transport** was also an issue raised by several participants, particularly by Finglas locals.

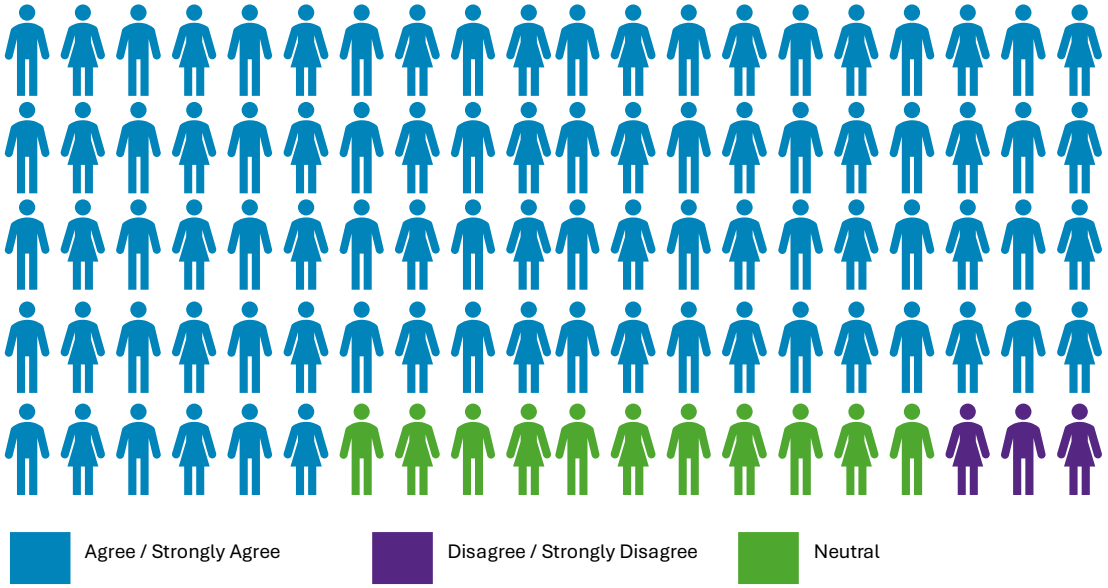
"In Finglas when you try to have a conversation about it, it's like 'ah sure you have the Axis'. That's Ballymun. Not everybody has a car. On days like this, you'd want to get a bus that stops right outside the Centre."

5.22 **Accessibility** for people living with a disability and their family or carers was another barrier brought up during conversations.

"My problem is that I can't go to a lot of spaces, accessibility would be a big barrier to me. For example, I can't go to the Peacock or the Gaiety, or I would need somebody to be with me to help me. That's what you need to see in the area. Before going to places, I always check can I actually go. Standing events, I can't go. I wouldn't go to Croke Park. You want something to be accessible to everybody."

5.23 Other barriers mentioned by focus groups participants included lack of time, lack of awareness, lack of parking and difficulties to find childcare or babysitters.

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



86%

Agreed / Strongly Agreed

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

Dublin North-West has a strong arts and culture scene



50%

Disagreed / Strongly Disagreed

5.25 50% 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 31% saying they were neutral or didn't know and 19% saying they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

5.26 Interestingly, when looking at the results to this question from those who are either artists or have a professional interest in the arts, the percentage of those who disagree or strongly disagree drops to 31%. The percentage of those agreeing or strongly agreeing rises slightly to 22% and neutral rises substantially to 47%.

5.27 The total number of responses from those with a professional interest in the arts is not high enough to grant this result any great deal of statistical rigour. Nonetheless, it suggests that those more 'in the know' about the arts are, if not more positive, at least slightly less pessimistic about the Dublin North-West arts scene.

5.28 Arts and culture are very important to people in Dublin North-West. They are part of who they are and how they live their life. Focus groups participants had lovely things to say about how much they value arts and culture:

"They're very important to me. It's a part of who I am. It keeps me happy. I would be sad without it in my life."

"My mental health, the ability to switch off, mindfulness."

"It has given me friendship and made me feel a part of something."

"That's the spice of life, you've got stuff to look forward to. Like kids looking forward to Christmas."

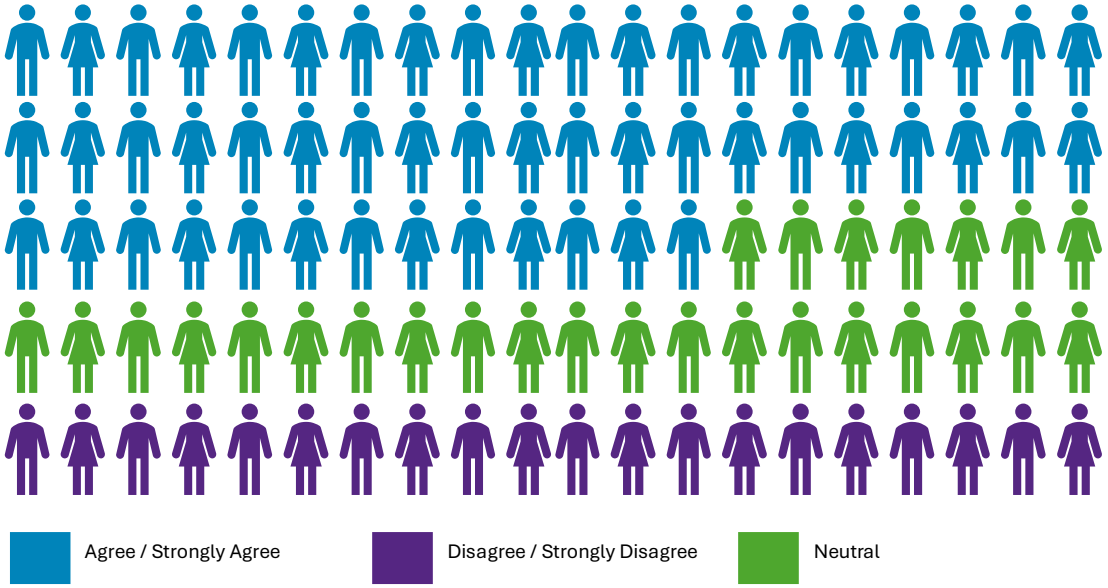
"It's so important. It gets you to do simple things, like having a shower, washing yourself. You can stop doing these things when you're down. It fills your day. It's everything."

"It's getting encouragement from others in the group. I was in a group and trying to make socks. I have issues with my hands and a woman brought in a book, helped me so much. You can inspire others."

"I hugely missed it during covid, being able to go out and randomly mix with people, missing the chat with people over buying a cup of coffee or on the bus, just random greeting. I was in the lighthouse at the weekend for a live screening of an opera. There was an elderly man behind me, he kept kicking the seat. At the interval he leaned over and said 'well what do you think?' That's what I love about getting out and about."

"I'm thinking about the concert I'm going to. It'll be hot and sweaty, but everyone is singing all the words to your favourite songs. You're all there for the shared love for the experience. It's like a home from home."

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



5.29 The majority of respondents (53%) 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-West. Again, however, over a quarter (27%) said they were neutral and a fifth (20%) disagreed or strongly disagreed.

5.30 Interestingly, the same percentage (53%) of respondents from the 'artist or professional interest in the arts' in-group agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. While this carries the caveats mentioned above, it suggests that even those with a professional motivation to engage with the arts locally find it difficult to learn about upcoming events.

5.31 When asked during focus groups how they find out about things to do in their area and beyond, people in the North-West area said it is mostly via **word of mouth**. **Social media** and **newsletters** they are subscribed to were also popular. Other resources included Dublin City Council's website, local libraries, and suggested events on Eventbrite. Several participants mentioned Northside News, Dublin Northwest Partnership and Ballymun

Library as channels they looked at regularly. Many mentioned how they would like to see a centralised website or newsletter where there would be a list of upcoming events in their local area and in the wider city, similar to how the Culture Night website is designed.

Describe the Dublin North-West community in 3 words



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

- Passionate
- Vibrant
- Energetic
- Enthusiastic
- Friendly

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

- Neglected
- Disconnected
- Forgotten
- Underfunded

5.34 Interestingly, the most common word within the answers to this question was 'diverse'. This is surprising as, per chapter 1, census indicators suggest that Dublin North-West is actually slightly less diverse than the state as a whole. It may be worth undertaking further research into participation in the arts from minority groups in the Dublin North-West area.

5.35 During focus groups, participants were able to share their thoughts about Dublin North-West. When asked about the things they liked and disliked in Dublin North-West, a majority talked about antisocial behaviour and safety. Women seemed more fearful than men.

5.36 People from Finglas in particular mentioned how their area feels abandoned; there is often litter and street cleaning does not seem to be performed often. They expressed a desire for Finglas to be taken care of more regularly. Some participants associated this lack of care with lack of funding that would be specifically allocated to the area. Lack of funding was also addressed by participants who identified as artists.

"We come from a culturally strong area and a great history of music and art. The energy and the enthusiasm and the willingness to be an artist in Finglas, it's there. But it's all about containing it and bringing it back into the community. Everyone tends to leave to become artists."

5.37 Many participants mentioned how Dublin North-West should not be administered as one homogeneous area because there are various areas within it which are completely different and disconnected from each other. They specifically referred to Finglas and Ballymun being so far away from each

other, with no public transport connection between them. For this reason, they felt it was difficult to feel a sense of community about the area as a whole and that any sense of community would be more localised.

5.38 However, it was not all negative. This **feeling of community** is very well present within each area of Dublin North-West and was the most observed quality across all participants.

5.39 Residents of Dublin North-West also love their **parks**. Going for walks and being outdoor was important to many participants. Some of the parks mentioned included Johnstown Park, Poppintree Park, Albert College Park and Tolka Park.

6. Conclusions / Recommendations

6.1 The current provision of arts and cultural infrastructure in Dublin North-West came in for some criticism from survey respondents. 50% disagreed or strongly disagreed that Dublin North-West currently has a strong arts and culture scene, with just 19% holding the opposite view. In addition, when asked what art forms have enough support in Dublin North-West, the most popular choice by a significant margin was 'none of the above'.

6.2 Respondents expressed a strong sentiment in favour of locating more arts venues in Dublin North-West. When asked what types of arts and cultural spaces Dublin North-West needed most, the most popular choices were Purpose-built workshop and education spaces (64%) and Artists' Workspaces (62%).

6.3 When exploring the responses of those who said they were artists, or who had a professional interest in the arts, the priority changed somewhat. Artists' Workspaces became the most popular choice at 81%, with Collaborative Community Spaces (Makerspaces) the second most popular choice at 66%.

6.4 Our survey showed a strong preference for engaging with the arts in a traditional, in-person manner. However, it should be noted that 53% of respondents said they regularly engaged with the arts by browsing art-related content online.

6.5 In addition, when asked what limited their participation in the Dublin North-West's arts scene, 74% of our respondents cited a lack of awareness of events.

6.6 Respondents were strongly supportive of the idea of ensuring that new housing projects and business developments in Dublin North-West should be designed with an arts and culture component included.

6.7 Focus groups provided another angle to the story, reinforcing and complementing the survey results. When asked what participants would change about the offer of events and activities in Dublin North-West, three aspects came to the fore:

1. A multidisciplinary venue, similar to Axis, located in Finglas.
2. Better communication around what's on and funding opportunities.
3. Rehearsal and studio spaces for artists. Please note that each time these were mentioned, participants said they did not want new buildings to be built for this purpose and would like to see empty spaces within the area to be regenerated.

Recommendations

6.8 The following interventions are recommended as a result of these findings:

(a) Awareness Raising

Dedicated social media accounts and/or web pages could be used to raise awareness of arts events among the large (and presumably growing) number of people regularly engaging with the arts online.

As well as better communication about arts events for audiences, there is a need for improved communication about funding opportunities for artists and local arts organisations. This may be through dedicated council staff, responsible for the North-West area, engaging with the arts community on a regular basis to inform and support. Ideally, this dedicated resource would be located within the Dublin North-West area, to give those in the area as much access to it as possible.

(b) Provision of Cultural Space

There is a clear demand for additional venues and locations to both engage with and create art. Consideration should be given to how best to meet this need in the Dublin North-West and the specific delivery of cultural workspace requirements, through engagement with artists and arts professionals is warranted.

In addition, it may be advantageous to undertake regular ongoing liaison with Dublin City Council's Development Managers to identify any opportunities within the pipeline of proposed developments in Dublin North-West to provide cultural venues either alongside development or as a meanwhile use.

The clear emphasis on both purpose-built workshop / education spaces and artists workspaces illustrates the immediate need to deliver provision of these spaces as a priority.

(c) Further Research

It may be worth undertaking further research designed to address the limitations of this study, in particular securing greater input from younger people, the over-75s and men.

This research could utilise a broader range of methods, such as on-street interviews and postal or telephone polling, to secure the engagement of these demographics.

In particular, this research should explore whether the low rates of engagement from men is a consequence of our research methodology, or reflects

Appendix 1 – Detailed survey results

About our Respondents / Demographics

38.56% of responses received were from people who identified as artists or as having a professional interest in the arts.

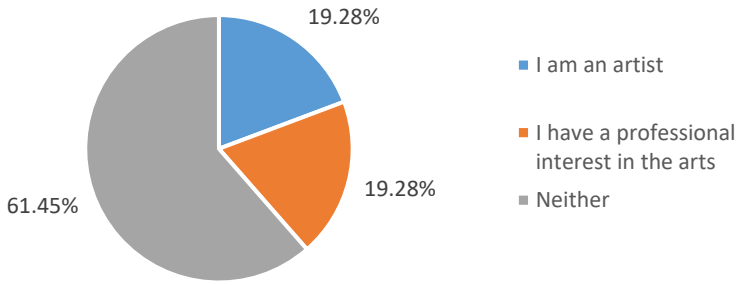


Figure 1.1 'Are you an artist or do you have a professional interest in the arts?' (83 respondents)

Respondents primarily participate in the arts through attendance at live performances (77.04%, 104 respondents), visiting art galleries (62.96%, 85 respondents), and browsing art-related content online (e.g. blogs, podcasts etc) (71 respondents).

The survey sought input from a range of people with a connection to Dublin North-West. The most popular connection to the Dublin North-West area is being a resident (65.52%, 57 respondents). This is followed by respondents who relax / pursue hobbies in Dublin North-West (29.89%,26 respondents) and by those working in Dublin North-West (28.74%, 25 respondents).

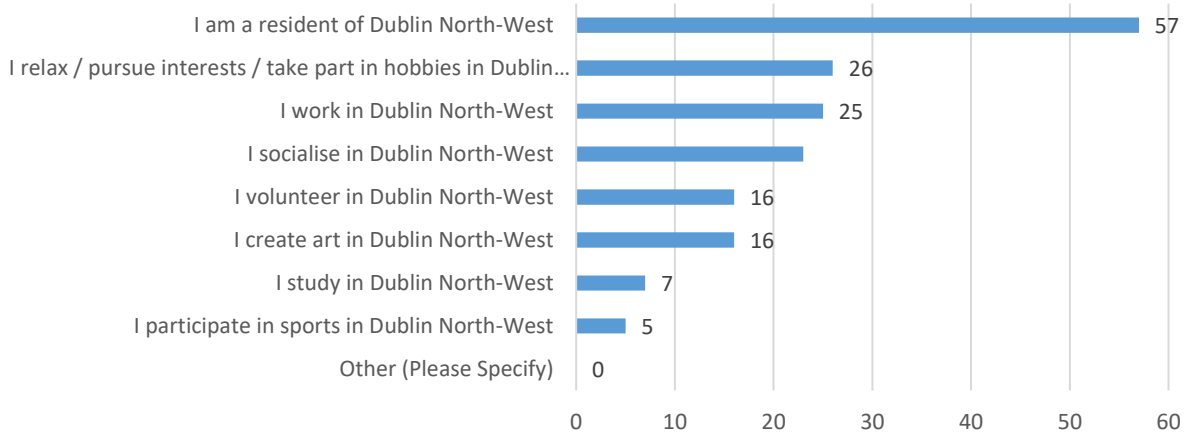


Figure 1.2 'Which of the following best describes your connection to the Dublin North-West area? (87 responses)

The majority of respondents were in the age groups 44 – 54 (38.94%, 44 responses) and 35 – 44 (38.05%, 43 responses).

The majority of respondents identified as female (82.14%), as shown in figure 1.3, below.

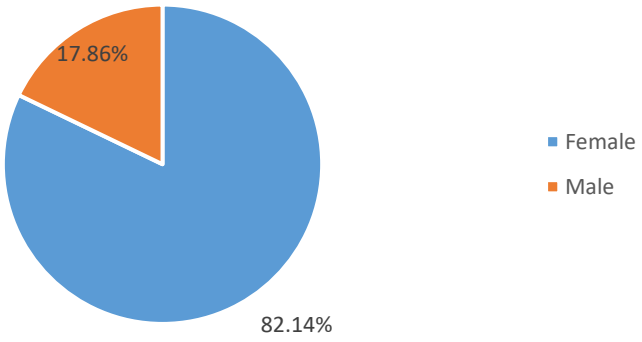


Figure 1.3 What is your gender? (84 responses)

Nearly one third, (31.40%, 27 responses) had children living with them, with 63.95% (55 responses) not and 4.65% (4 responses) preferring not to say.

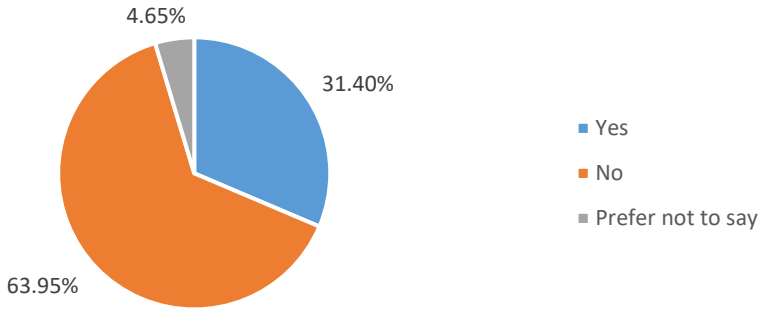


Figure 1.4 Do you have children living with you? (86 responses)

When asked if they identify as a D/deaf or disabled person or have a long-term health condition, 10.34% (9 responses) responded 'yes', 80.46% (70 responses) responded 'no' and 9.20% (8 responses) responded that they would 'prefer not to say'.

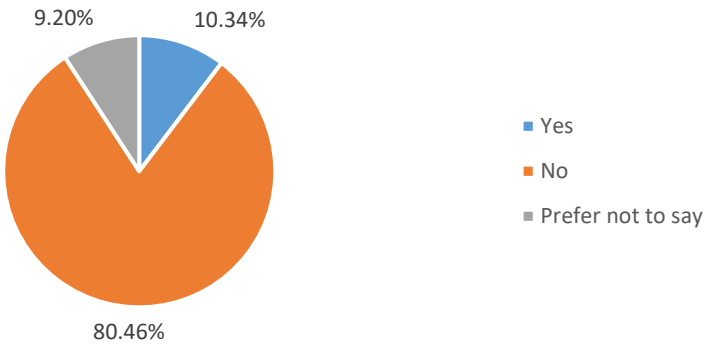


Figure 1.5 Do you identify as a D/deaf or disabled person, or have a long-term health condition?

Current Arts and Community Engagement in Dublin North-West

There is demonstrable engagement by local audiences with the existing arts scene in Dublin North-West.

A high volume of audience respondents engage with the local Dublin North-West community by attending events in the local area (58.65%, 78 respondents). A smaller number volunteer for Dublin North-West community initiatives (17.29%, 23 respondents).

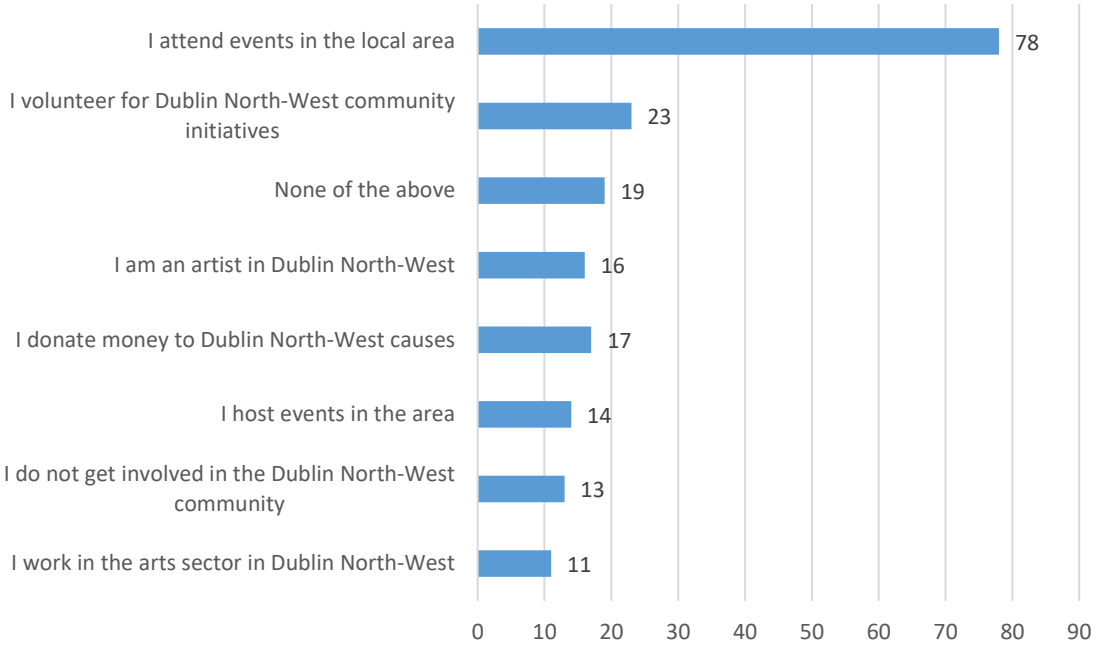


Figure 1.6 What best describes your involvement with the Dublin North-West community? (133 responses)

Respondents primarily participate in the arts through attendance at live performances (77.04%, 104 respondents), visiting art galleries (62.96%, 85 respondents), and browsing art-related content online (e.g. blogs, podcasts etc) (71 respondents).

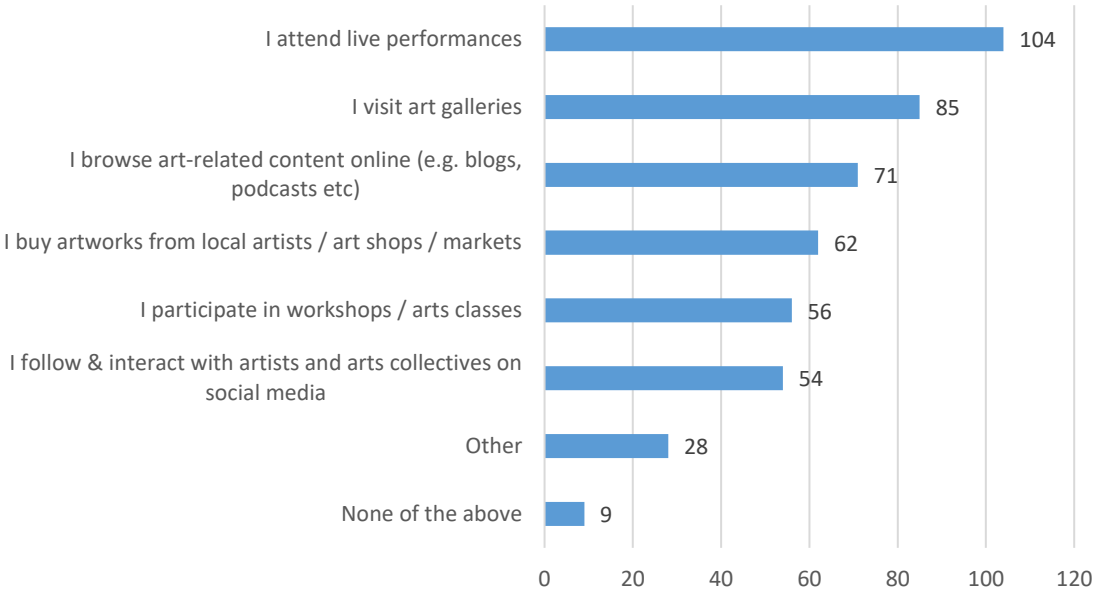


Figure 1.7 What type of arts activities do you take part in? (135 responses)

While audiences in North-West Dublin continue to engage primarily with the arts in-person (62.00%, 81 respondents), a number of respondents highlight that they engage with the arts as much online as they do in-person (26.67%, 36 respondents).

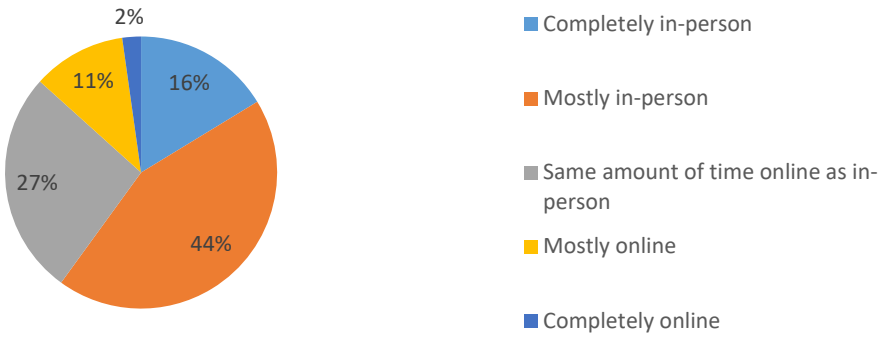


Figure 1.8 To what extent do you engage with arts and cultural activities online or in-person (135 responses)

Overall, the local community does not believe Dublin North-West has a strong arts and culture scene; only 18.66% (25 respondents) believe a strong arts and culture scene exists. In total, 50.00% (of respondents either disagree or strongly disagree that the North-West has a strong arts and cultural scene.

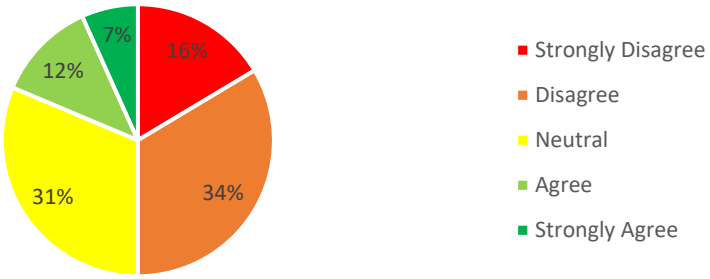


Figure 1.9 Dublin North-West has a strong arts and culture scene (133 responses)

Lack of awareness of arts activities taking place in Dublin North-West was referenced as the top barrier that limits participation in the local arts scene.

The most common barriers for respondents included:

- Lack of awareness of arts activities taking place (78.20%, 104 respondents)
- Better quality arts and cultural spaces and venues in other areas of the city (51.88%, 69 respondents)
- Other commitments that get in the way (e.g. work, family, career etc.) (29.32%, 39 respondents)
- Lack of enticing events (18.80%, 25 respondents)

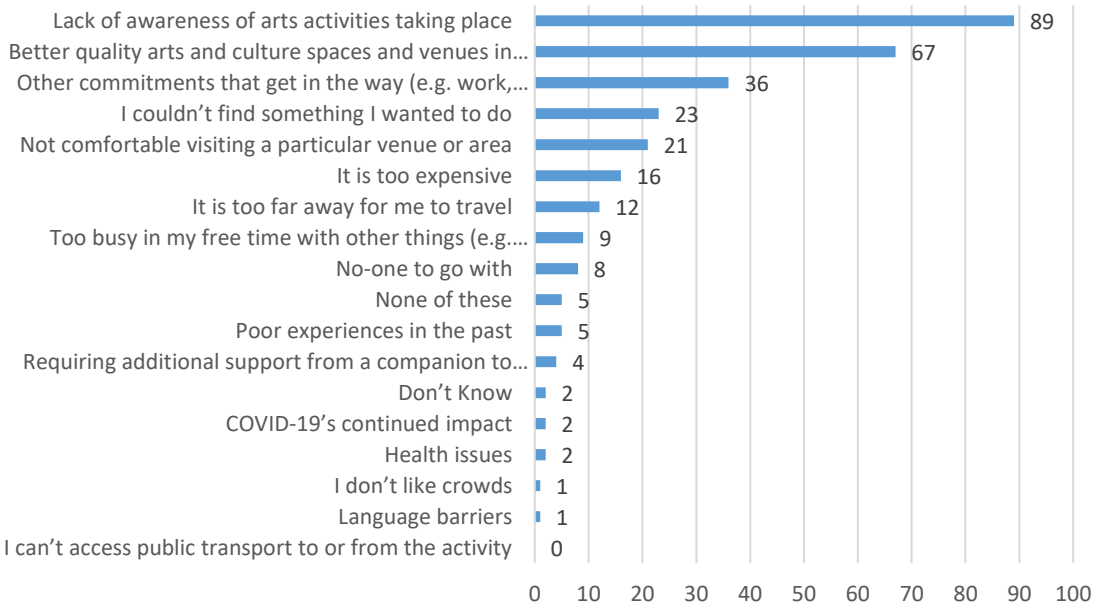


Figure 1.10 What barriers exist for you that limit your participation in the arts in Dublin North-West? (133 Responses)

Current Arts and Cultural Infrastructure Provision in Dublin North-West

The largest group of respondents felt that no art forms have sufficient support in Dublin North-West (52.14%, 73 responses).

The art forms which respondents believe to have the most support include Heritage (16.43%, 23 responses), Music (15.71%, 22 responses), and Film (14.29%, 20 responses).

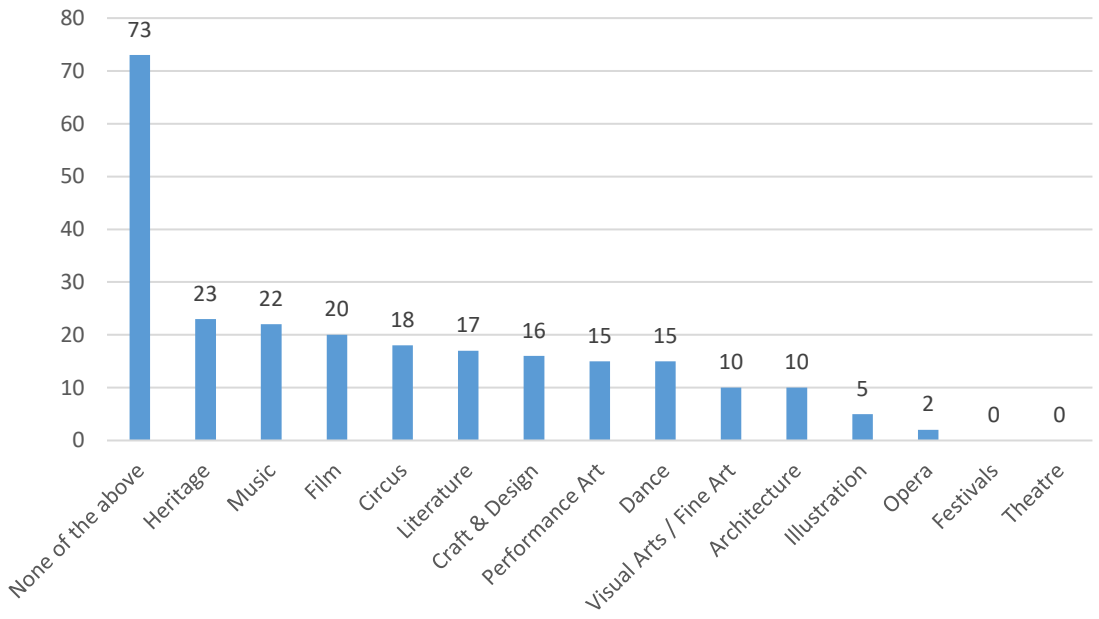


Figure 1.11 Which of the following art forms do you think have enough support in Dublin North-West at the moment? (140 responses)

When asked what art forms they were most interested in, the top 5 most popular choices were:

- Music (68.97%, 100 respondents)
- Theatre (66.21%, 96 respondents)
- Film (57.24%, 83 respondents)
- Festivals & Events (55.86%, 81 respondents)
- Heritage (53.79%, 78 respondents)

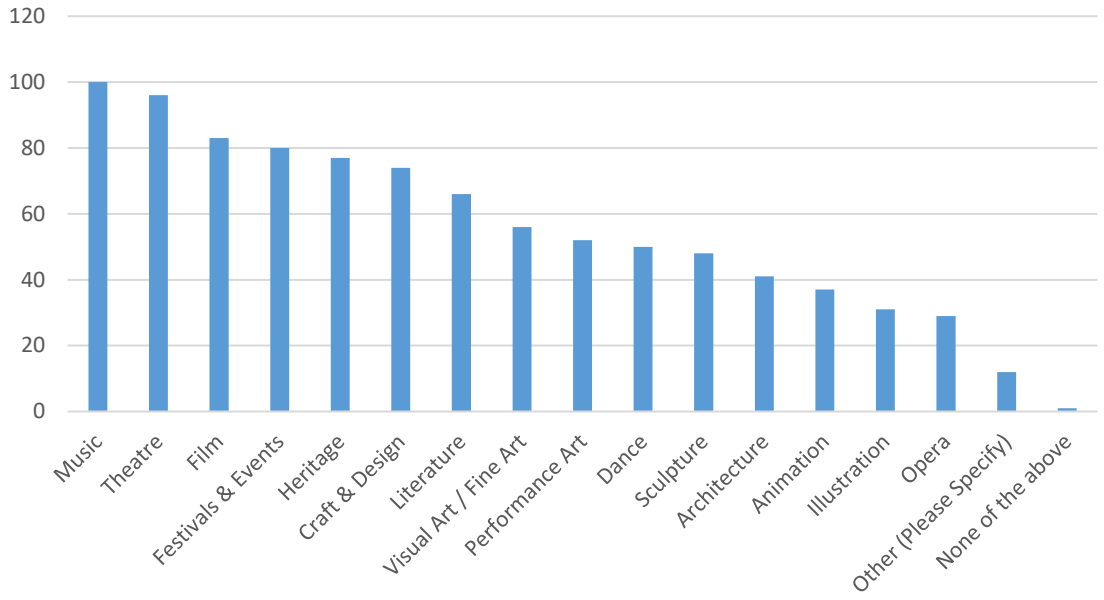


Figure 1.12 Which of the following art forms are you interested in? (145 responses)

The majority of respondents believe there is a shortage of arts and cultural activities (85.91%, 122 respondents agreed or strongly agreed).

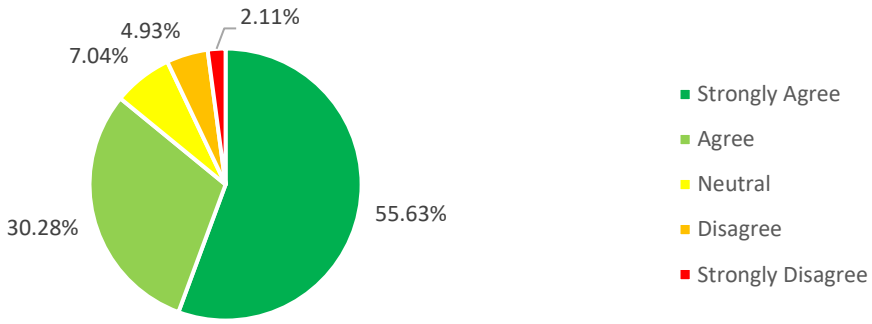


Figure 1.13 Dublin North-West currently does not offer enough arts and cultural activities (143 responses)

Meanwhile most respondents also disagree that Dublin North-West provides a wide variety of arts and cultural activities (73.76%, 104 respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed).

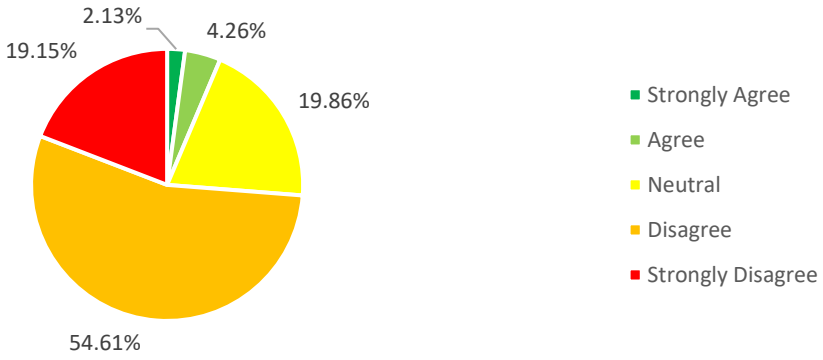


Figure 1.14 Dublin North-West offers a wide variety of arts and cultural activities (141 responses)

Future Arts and Culture Provision

Overall respondents believe that increasing the provision of arts buildings (e.g. workspaces, venues, and galleries) will drive greater arts participation amongst the community (76.69%, 102 responses).

This was followed by increasing funding for arts and culture in the area (64.66%, 86 responses), followed up by reducing participation costs (e.g. tickets, class fees etc.) in Dublin North-West (52.63%, 70 responses).

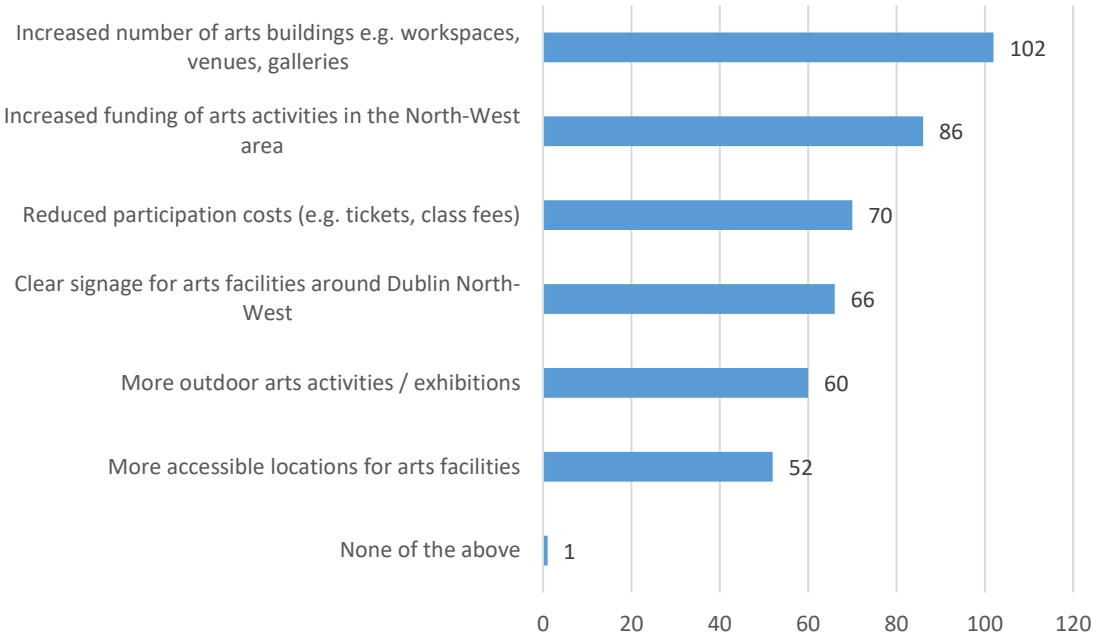


Figure 1.15 What features or activities do you think would encourage more involvement in arts and culture in Dublin North-West (133responses)

Enhanced promotion of the arts poses a significant opportunity to increase audience engagement and participation with the arts in the North-West 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-West (29.85% Strongly Agree and 23.88% Agree).

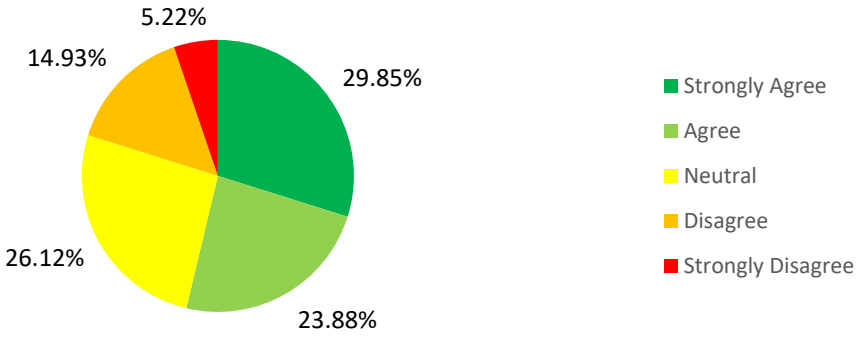


Figure 1.16 I don't know where to find information on arts and culture events taking place in Dublin North-West (134 Reponses)

In terms of future development there is a strong sentiment amongst respondents to the survey is that arts and culture components should be integrated into any prospective business and residential developments being brought forward in the North-West Area.

88.73% (126) of respondents agree or strongly agree that these arts and cultural components be included in the design of new business developments.

Similarly 86.71% support such integration in residential developments.

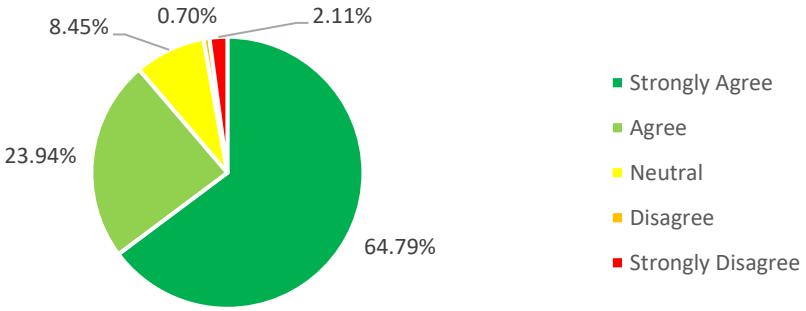


Figure 1.17 New business developments in Dublin North-West should be designed with an arts and culture element included (142 respondents)

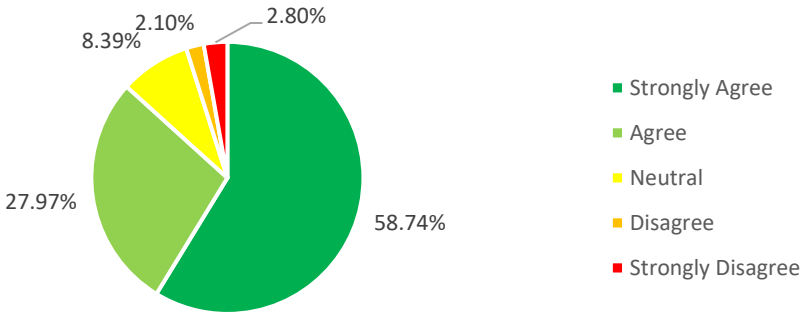


Figure 1.18 New housing projects in Dublin North-West should be designed with an arts and culture aspect included (143 respondents)

In terms of typologies respondents primarily want to see the development of new Purpose-built workshop and education space (62.94%, 90 respondents) in Dublin North-West.

This was followed by artist workspaces (62.24%, 89 respondents), small scale performance and event venues (58.74%, 84 respondents), Collaborative community spaces (58.04%, 83%), arts centres (51.05%, 84 respondents).

When exploring the responses of those who said they were artists, or who had a professional interest in the arts, the priority changed somewhat. Artists' Workspaces became the most popular choice at 81.25% (26 respondents), with Collaborative Community Spaces (Makerspaces) the second most popular choice at 65.63% (21 respondents).

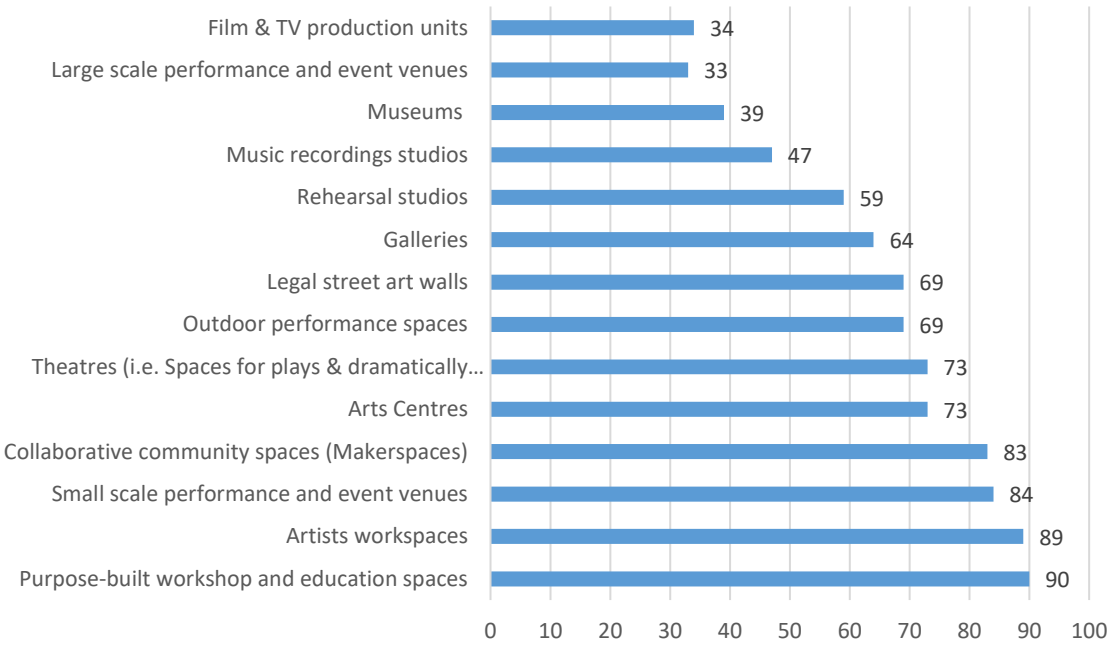


Figure 1.19 Which of the following types of arts and cultural spaces do you think Dublin North-West needs most? (143 responses)

The majority of audience respondents strongly agree / agree they would be more inclined to engage with the arts if more venues and spaces were located in Dublin North-West (85.93%, 116 respondents).

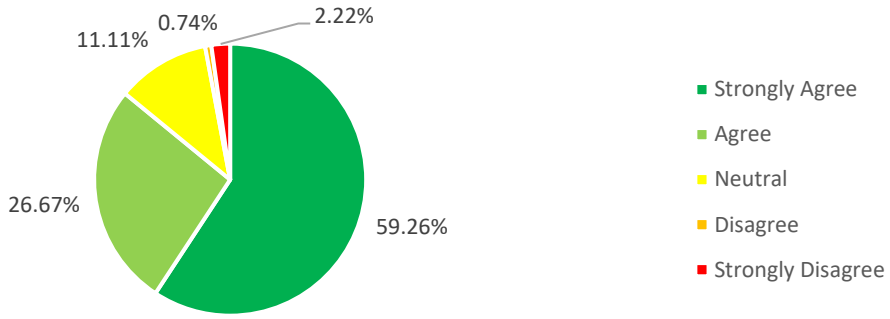


Figure 1.20 I would participate in the arts more if venues and spaces were located in Dublin North-West (135 responses)

Appendix 2 – Focus groups registration form

1. What is your name and email address?
    a. Full name
    b. Email address

2. Which of the following dates and times can you attend? (Please note two of the following dates will take place online via Zoom)

3. Do you consent to anonymised quotes from your participation being used in a report for Dublin City Council Arts Office?
    a. Yes
    b. No

We just have a few more questions, it helps us make sure we're talking to as wide a variety of people as possible.

4. Which of the following best describes your age range?
    a. 16-24
    b. 25-34
    c. 35-44
    d. 45-54
    e. 55-64
    f. 65-74
    g. 75+
    h. Prefer not to say

5. Are you…?
    a. Male
    b. Female
    c. Prefer not to say
    d. Prefer to self-describe: _____

6. Do you have any children living with you in your household?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Prefer not to say

7. What is your Eircode? _____

8. Do you require any of the following?
    a. Accessible facilities (e.g. toilets, seating, etc)
    b. Accessible parking near the venue
    c. Accessible meeting room/event space
    d. None of the above

9. Do you require any of the following?
    a. Larger font size for emails or documents

b. Captions during Zoom meetings
c. High contrast colours in documents
d. No use of green or red colours
e. None of the above

10. Are you affected by any of the following?
    a. Memory loss – either short or long term
    b. Difficulty with speaking, reading or writing
    c. Problems with orientation
    d. Easily distracted or diminished attention periods
    e. None of the above

11. If so, what would help you to join in during any sessions? _____

Appendix 3 – Focus groups discussion guide

General arts engagement patterns

- What type of events or activities do you do in your spare time?
    - Prompt: It could also be activities you do in your own home. This is not only about activities happening in venues.
    - Prompt: Do you use the words ‘art’ and ‘culture’ to talk about the events or activities you go to?
- Where do you usually go to for these events or activities?
    - Prompt: Is there any specific venue or areas of the city you often go to?
    - Prompt: What about online/at home?
- Who do you typically go with?
    - Prompt: Do you go alone or with other people in a group?
- How often do you go?
- How do you find out about events or activities to do in Dublin?
    - Prompt: Do you use the same resources to find out about events or activities in your local area/Dublin North West?
- Why do you like going to these events or activities?
    - Prompt: Specific interest, support artists, get out the house, family activity, professional interest

Perception of the arts and the role it plays in people’s lives

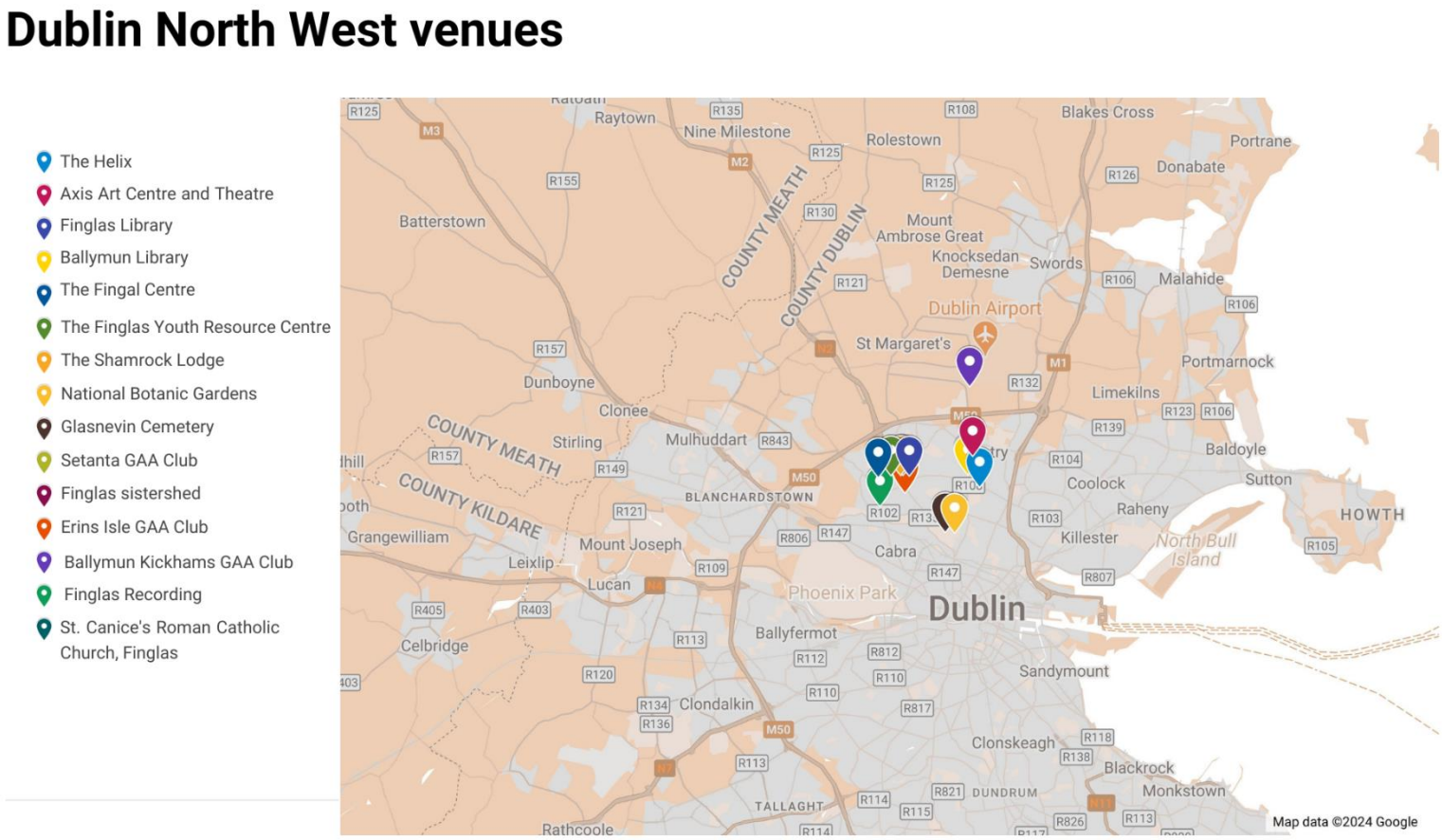
- What do the words ‘art’ and ‘culture’ mean to you?
- How important are arts and culture to you?
    - Prompt: Do you have a favourite type of art form?
- Does going to arts and culture make you feel part of your community?

Barriers to arts engagement

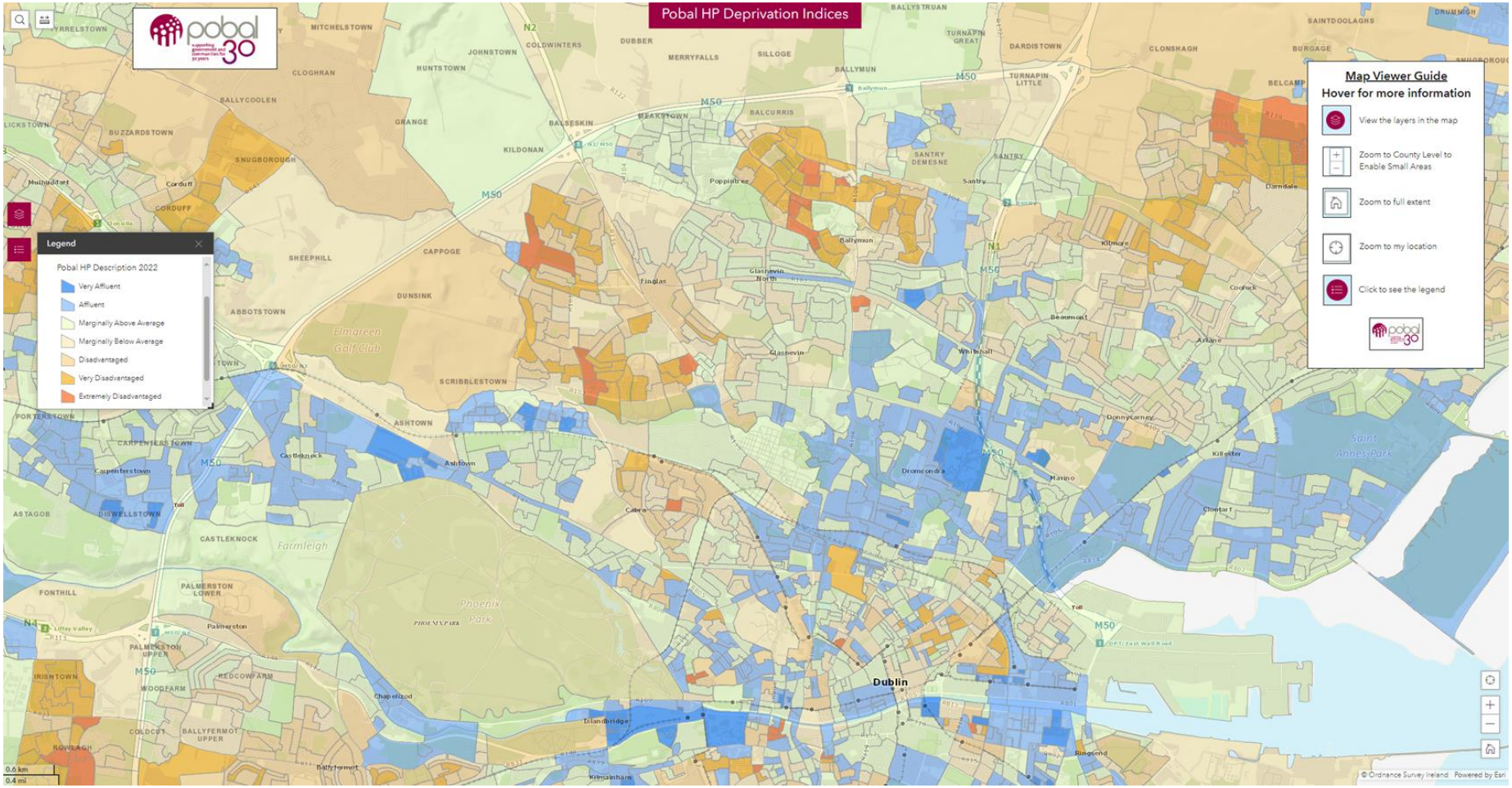
- Is there anything in particular that prevents you from going to events in Dublin?
    - Prompt: Is there anything in particular that stops you from going to events locally?
- What do you like and not like about Dublin North West?
    - Prompt: if they don’t mention arts and culture, ask them about it.
- What would you change about the offer of events and activities in Dublin North West?

Appendix 4 – Maps

1. Map of Traditional and Non-Traditional Venues within the wider North-West Dublin Area mentioned by focus groups participants:



2. Pobal HP Deprivation Index Mapping



Hamilton House
3 Joy Street
Belfast
BT2 8LE

T +44 (0) 28 9072 3900

Crescent Arts Centre
2-4 University Road
Belfast
BT7 1NH

T +44 (0) 28 9043 6480