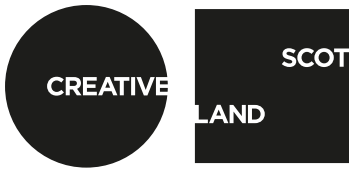


# Understanding Diversity in the Arts Survey Summary Report



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# Contents

<b>Foreword</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Background</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Characteristics of the sector</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Analysis of income and earnings</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Key barriers to career progression</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Conclusions</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>18</b>

## Foreword

Artists, cultural producers and arts organisations are vital for a healthy and dynamic society. They tell the stories of our growing diversity and help to promote freedom of speech and independent thought and ideas. Creative Scotland and the sectors we support can therefore play an important role in tackling widespread and growing inequality.

This survey explores the working conditions and barriers to career progression of those who work in the arts. It draws focus to many issues which have been in constant debate: the economic challenges of pursuing a career in the arts, the role and representation of women within the sector and the specific challenges they face and the experience and concerns of minority ethnic groups and disabled people. People identify across multiple characteristics and this report explores intersectional issues which many face and provides extensive detail about personal experience and perception of those who are at the heart of our creative sector.

Some of the issues raised are specific to our sector while many more reflect broader challenges for society as a whole. However, we should not be complacent in allowing barriers and inequalities to exist, the sector should be at the forefront of addressing inequalities, promoting diversity and challenging institutional barriers.

Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is a connecting theme for Creative Scotland which runs through everything we do. We will use the data from this report together with other data and research in this area to help shape our development role, inform our funding guidance and further develop and implement our equalities outcomes. We will also use it to contribute to the wider debate and ensure that the issues are kept at the forefront.

These findings present a challenge for the whole sector and beyond. This survey provides an opportunity to continue the debate, further explore sector specific issues and look at ways in which the whole sector can work together to address these issues in the short, medium and long term.

I would like to thank the 1,558 people who took the time to respond to this survey. Each response is an important and valuable contribution. Our work does not stop here, our commitment to EDI is an ongoing process and we look forward to continuing and deepening the debate as we move forward.

**Philip Deverell**  
Director, Strategy

# Background

This report provides a summary of the findings of an online survey entitled Understanding Diversity in the Arts. The survey was distributed through Creative Scotland communications channels and generated over 1,500 responses over the month-long period 30 September to 31 October 2016.

A full report on the findings of the survey is available on our website at [www.creativescotland.com/research](http://www.creativescotland.com/research)

# Introduction

Diversity in the arts has been of increasing focus in policy discourse. Many studies have explored issues of gender and the representation of minority ethnic and disabled people within the arts, screen and creative industries. More recently debate has focussed on socio-economic diversity, the 'class ceiling' and the increasing financial challenges of establishing a career in the arts<sup>1</sup>.

Creative Scotland has had a long running commitment to tackling inequalities and promoting diversity and inclusion in the arts, screen and creative industries in Scotland which forms a core connecting theme within the 10 year plan *Unlocking Potential Embracing Ambition* (Creative Scotland 2014).

This survey was developed in the context of *Creative Scotland's Arts Strategy* which has a core aim regarding artists and cultural producers to:

**Explore ways in which the vital contribution that artists and cultural producers make to society is visible and valued – with a view to strengthening opportunities for excellence and diversity across the arts to be encouraged, nurtured and sustained across Scotland. (Creative Scotland Arts Strategy 2016/17)**

The strategy not only tackles issues of equalities in terms of the protected characteristics enshrined by law<sup>2</sup> but also commits to addressing issues of social and economic exclusion. A commitment is stated of 'exploring, with others, ways to improve artists pay, living and working conditions'.

It is in this context that this Diversity in the Arts survey was developed. It aims to provide a snapshot of the creative sector in Scotland and explore the barriers experienced by those working within the arts, not just artists but everyone, across every art form.

The data provide a wealth of information about the working practices and concerns within the sector. It is not a census of the sector, rather it provides useful indicators around key trends and working practices which add to the existing body of evidence.

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1 Academic work in this area includes O'Brien, D., Laurison, D., Friedman, S., Miles, A. (2016) *Are the Creative Industries Meritocratic?*; Eikhof, D.R., and Warhurst, C. (2013) *The promised land? Why social inequalities are systemic in the creative industries*, *Employee Relations*, 35(5), 495-508.

2 The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. It replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act, making the law easier to understand and strengthening protection in some situations [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents)

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## Labour force profile

There are a number of different measures of the size and shape of the creative labour force in Scotland. Scottish Government statistics estimate around 73,000 people work in the creative industries in Scotland of which around 20,000 could be considered to be working within the 'arts' subsectors<sup>3</sup>. However, the sector does not lend itself to being easily quantified, the boundaries and definitions of the sector are indistinct and the large number of freelance and occasional workers are unlikely to be fully accounted for in official measures.

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## Survey profile

This survey, which attracted over 1,500 responses, does not provide a census of the sector. As a diversity survey, conducted through an open, online questionnaire, it is likely to have attracted a positive bias from equalities groups. However, there are a number of key themes coming through from the survey profile which provide strong indications of trends within the larger sector.

There is a higher representation of women in our survey sample, making up 68% of all respondents, when compared to the general population. This is not a conclusive reflection of the sector, although other research and data suggests there is a higher concentration of women in many arts subsectors such as visual arts and crafts<sup>4</sup>.

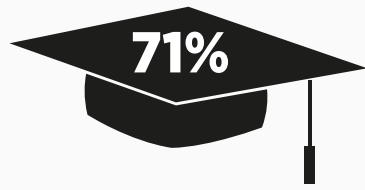
The survey attracted a strong response from people with protected characteristics, with disability, LGBT and minority ethnic response rates all greater than Scotland wide-population indicators. It is not possible to state categorically if this means that these groups have a higher representation within the sector but it does provide valuable data about the experiences and views of these groups.

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3 Scottish Government (2016) Growth Sector Statistics Database, [www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Business/Publications/GrowthSectors](http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Business/Publications/GrowthSectors)

4 Data on gender breakdown within the arts and creative industries can be found at DCMS creative Industries statistics, (DCMS 2016); Craft in an Age of Change (Crafts Council 2012), Visual Arts Sector Review, (Creative Scotland 2016c), Higher Education Statistics Authority subject statistics (HESA 2017)

## Characteristics of the sector



71% of respondents are degree educated

41%

are freelance workers

The survey asked a range of demographic and lifestyle questions and several strong characteristics are apparent.

**Highly educated** – 71% of respondents are degree educated, only 4% stated they did not undertake any further or higher education. Across Scotland only 31% of the population is educated to degree level.

**Portfolio working** – while two in five said their main role is as an artist or performer, the sector is characterised by portfolio working with respondents selecting an average of 2.5 other roles in addition to their main role. There is a strong cross over between artists and additional roles in creative learning, community development and youth work indicating a complex ecology of working practices which support artistic careers.

**Fragility and insecurity** – a significant proportion (41%) of respondents were freelance workers and around a third work part time. In addition, 37% of respondents derive income from work outwith the sector, increasing to 54% among artists. While freelance and contract based working is to an extent a characteristic of the cultural economy, this also highlights the fragility and insecurity of working practices within the sector and the specific challenges that this presents.

It is not possible to fully infer if working arrangements are an indicator of choice or necessity. However, many respondents in the open comments described the necessity of taking on additional work to support their artistic practice and concerns around job insecurity.

**Asset rich and income poor** – incomes within the sector are well below the national average. The median income was just £20,000. Of those who describe themselves as primarily artists/performers 60% earned less than £20,000 per annum.

However, the profile is also arguably asset rich. Respondents are highly educated, have comparatively high levels of home ownership, and a higher than average number of people were privately educated (14% compared with 4% in Scotland as a whole). In addition, nearly half received financial support from family or friends to support their professional career in the arts.

**Urban-centric** – Over half of respondents live in Edinburgh and Glasgow (56%). While this is unlikely to be representative of the whole sector it does suggest creative activity is urban-centric which is also reflected to an extent in Creative Scotland funding and application patterns. and other research<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Geographic data is available in the [Creative Scotland Annual Review of Performance 2015/16](#). Scottish Government Growth Sector statistics, and DCMS Creative Industries Statistics.

## Role and contribution of the artist

The survey gives an insight into the important contribution Scotland's artists make to society and the precarity of their employment conditions.

41% of respondents described their main role as artist/performer/creator etc (henceforth referred to as artists) with many more (30%) citing this as a secondary role.

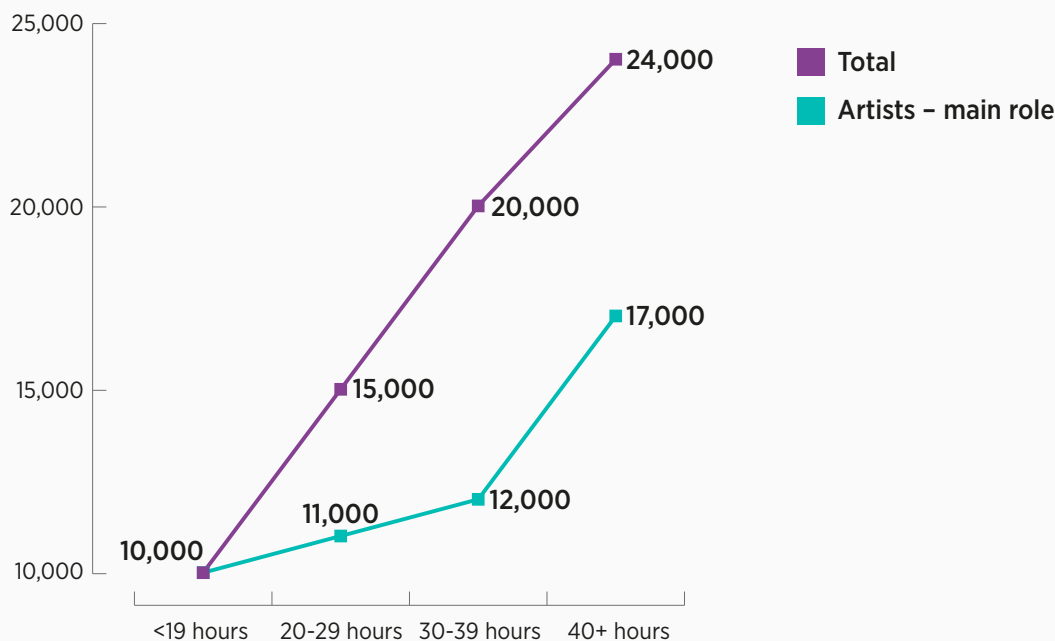
The vast majority of artists are portfolio working within the sector, making important contributions to other sectors such as youth work, creative learning, community development and health, as well as working outside the arts sector to support their careers. In addition, around a quarter of respondents (and 22% of artists) make a contribution to civic life through serving on boards, the majority within arts organisations.

The important contribution to Scotland's international profile is also evident. Nearly half (49%) of artists stated that their work had an international reach.

While income and earnings are low for the whole sector they are particularly low for those who are primarily artists, and incomes remain low throughout careers. It is clear that the earnings of arts practitioners do not reflect their unique and valuable contribution to Scotland's society which goes far beyond that which can be measured in economic terms.

## Analysis of income and earnings

Median income by total number of hours worked:  
all respondents and artists only (£)



The data on income and earnings reveal that incomes for those in the sector are below the national average despite the high levels of education. Median income was £20,000 and full time median income was around £25,000 (lower than the Scottish median full time income of £27,710<sup>6</sup>).

6 Scottish Parliament 2015, Financial Scrutiny Unit Briefing, Earnings in Scotland 2015  
[www.parliament.scot/ResearchBriefingsAndFactsheets/S4/SB\\_15-82\\_Earnings\\_in\\_Scotland\\_2015.pdf](http://www.parliament.scot/ResearchBriefingsAndFactsheets/S4/SB_15-82_Earnings_in_Scotland_2015.pdf)



Those who were primarily artists earned considerably less reporting a median income of only £15,000 per annum – well below the national average and below the Living wage full time equivalent of £16,477 (although not all respondents worked full time so this is not a direct comparison)<sup>7</sup>.

In addition, there is no significant relationship between income and age or years worked in the sector which indicates that income tends not to increase with additional experience gained.

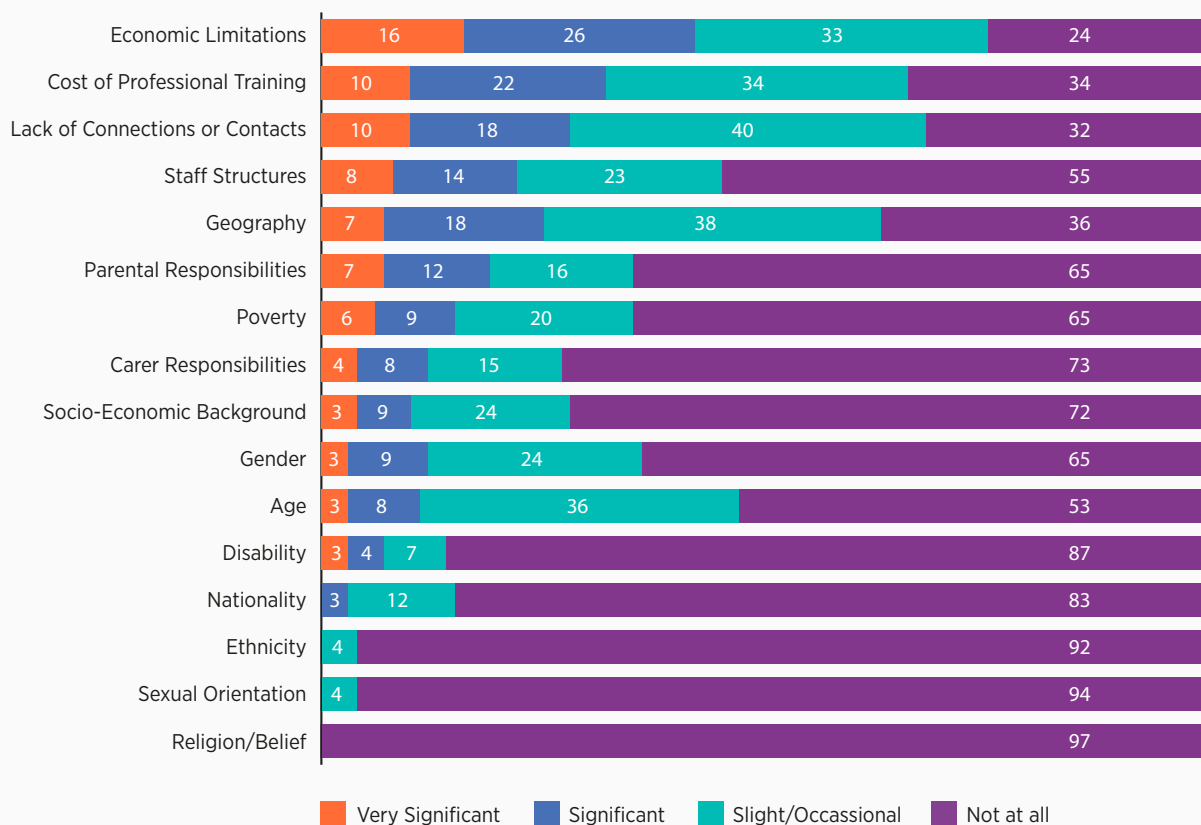
While average income increases as hours worked increases, there is not a direct relationship and the data suggests those working in excess of 40 hours per week are on a far lower hourly rate. This may be symptomatic of the large number of freelance workers in the sector and the project/ piece based payment structures for many creative jobs.

## Key barriers to career progression

### Introduction

The survey asked specific questions about barriers to career progression listing a number of potential barriers – including those which are defined as protected characteristics (gender, age, ethnicity, disability, religion and sexual orientation) and less tangible barriers such as social class, carer responsibilities and geographic limitations. It also allowed space for respondents to give more detail and express concerns about other barriers not listed. The results are detailed in the table below.

**To what extent, if any, have the following factors been a barrier for you in your career progression? (%)**



<sup>7</sup> Living Wage Foundation (2017) *What is the Living Wage as an annual salary?*  
[www.livingwage.org.uk/what-living-wage-annual-salary](http://www.livingwage.org.uk/what-living-wage-annual-salary)

## Economic barriers

**76%** | of all respondents cited economic barriers

Economic limitations was the most commonly cited barrier, selected by 76% of all respondents. The qualitative data reveals the low earnings and precarity of the careers of many who work in the arts. Economic limitations was more commonly cited by women, part time workers and by those who were primarily artists (86%).

Those in receipt of benefits, disabled people or with childcare responsibilities were most likely to cite economic limitations as a very significant barrier.

The 'barriers question' also included the option of 'poverty' which was selected by 35% of respondents. In this context poverty is a subjective and emotive term however the very low incomes reported by many respondents support the assertion that socio-economic factors are an issue for a significant portion of the sector.

A specific limitation of the cost of professional training was cited by two thirds of respondents making it the third most cited barrier. This was significantly higher for artists and younger age groups.

**1/3** | of all reported work-based training initiatives were unpaid

The culture of unpaid internships was cited by many as a socio-economic barrier. The results indicate that 52% had undertaken some kind of apprenticeship, internship or workplace training and while the majority were paid placements, around one third of all reported work-based training initiatives (work placements, internships or apprenticeships/traineeships) were unpaid. 20% of all respondents had undertaken unpaid placements, which were far more prevalent among the younger age groups suggesting they may be a more recent phenomenon.

The most common issues relating to the financial challenges of working in the sector included low pay and an expectation to work for free, including concerns around unpaid internships.

As a new graduate, the only way to get a decent job in the arts is to do an unpaid internship alongside a full time job in order to pay the rent.

The biggest issue I have encountered is at the early career stage, when newly qualified, it can be incredibly difficult to find employment/ gain experience in the creative sector without undertaking unpaid or low-paid internships/ placements. This is a particular problem when you need to gain valuable experience but simply cannot afford to work for little to no pay.

Many described having to rely on other sources of financial support including additional part time work, support from friends and family and welfare benefits.

Difficult, near-impossible to develop projects and look for arts work when having to sustain income through other jobs

Around a third of respondents derive income from outside the arts sector and 40% stated they have received support from family and friends to support their career, however claimants of welfare benefits were relatively low at 13% with less than 1% claiming job seekers allowance.

Other economic challenges included meeting other costs to pursue their career including childcare, training, travel and ticket costs.

## Social structures

**68%** | cite lack of connections as a barrier (81% of all artists)

**Socio-economic background** | more likely to be cited as a barrier by those on lower incomes

Lack of connections was the second most commonly cited barrier (68%) with artists even more likely to cite it as a barrier (81%). This supports other research indicating that the sector is heavily dependent on informal networks, and social and cultural capital.

While networks and connections can have a very positive role for the sector, promoting strong relationships, close working and trust, it is important to be mindful that informal networks and recruitment processes can also have a negative effect on the diversity of a workforce.

28% of respondents cited socio-economic background as a barrier. While there are challenges in establishing the socio-economic background of respondents, it is notable that this barrier was more likely to be cited by those on lower incomes, unemployed or on benefits as well as those who went to state school and those who were the first in their family to attend university.

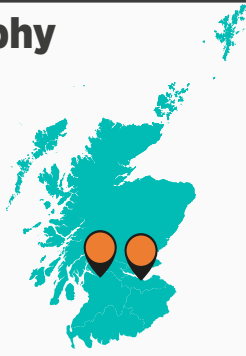
Comments on this theme included statements that connections are more important in Scotland as a small nation; the sector being insular; and frustration with jobs not being advertised openly.

Staff structures within the work place (45% of respondents) included key concerns around a lack of available progression routes as well as perceived gender and socio-economic discrimination in some cases.

There is definitely a feeling that getting a job in the arts is more about who you know than what you know.

Nepotism is rife in the art world; too many paying jobs and opportunities are given on a casual basis without being properly advertised.

## Geography



### Urban Location

**over half of respondents live in either Edinburgh or Glasgow**

Over half of respondents live in either Edinburgh or Glasgow indicating a very urban sector. Geography is also one of the most frequently selected barriers, with nearly two-thirds of respondents indicating it is a barrier.

While those who live outside Edinburgh or Glasgow were more likely to cite geography as a more significant barrier (70%) it was also a barrier for more than half the respondents in the main cities.

This suggests that geographic barriers work on a number of levels. The comments from respondents suggest frustration with the London-centricity of much of the art world and the need to be connected to London and other global centres; while comments from those outside Edinburgh and Glasgow suggested that the urban centricity of the sector within Scotland also posed problems.

In addition, Edinburgh and Glasgow respondents have a younger age profile than those living elsewhere, with 42% under 35 years old (compared with 22% in the other areas). This may be indicative of an expectation to be in the main cities to establish a career and demonstrates the intersectionality of barriers.

[living in a rural area] limited my access to networking opportunities. This has improved dramatically in moving to a large city.

## Age

**Too Young not taken seriously / Too Old for training opportunities**

I am often considered young for my position and, as such, am not always taken seriously or other senior people think I'm at a meeting to take minutes.

The age profile of respondents is largely similar to the Scottish working-age population with the exception of the 16-24 category which is under represented – perhaps explained by the high levels of education leading to later entry to the arts labour market.

In total 47% of respondents cited age as a barrier. However, it was reported by young and old in different ways. Those in the youngest age group are most likely to see age as a barrier with comments such as being seen as too young for management and not being taken seriously. Whereas a frustration that opportunities are targeted only at the young with few opportunities for older people was cited by some older respondents

It is also a young sector so employing older people – even with considerable experience and knowledge – is rarely done

Ageist comments, even 'it's a generation thing' (the age equivalent of I'm not racist but...') go unchallenged.

## Gender

**44%** | of women cite gender as a barrier (compared with 12% of men)

### Males

More likely to:

- work in senior roles
- earn more
- describe the reach of their work as international

### Females

More likely to:

- work part time
- be primary carer of children

From the bottom up, organisations are flooded with women, but once you look at CEO/Director level positions, almost all of these are occupied by men.

Over two-thirds of survey respondents are female (68%), compared to under a third of males (30%). 1% identify as non-binary, a notably high disclosure rate, with a similar proportion stating they would prefer not to say.

Women were far more likely than men to say their gender was a barrier to career progression: 44% compared with 12% of men. While some respondents reported specific experience of sexism or discrimination within the workplace, women's experience in the sector differs beyond simple gender bias.

The data suggests that males in the sector have more career success by a number of different measures. They are more likely to work in senior roles (18% vs 13%), more likely to earn more, and more likely to describe the reach of their work as international (59% vs 46% for artists).

However, men are also more likely to have worked in the creative sector for longer, to be working full time rather than part time and importantly, less likely to be the primary or sole carer of children.

The analysis of earnings data within the report indicates a significant gender pay gap. However, it does not take account of levels of seniority, experience or working hours. This requires further exploration.

There are many societal and structural barriers which prevent women from fulfilling their career potential. A gender pay gap is widely documented across industries within the UK and it is important to view this data within this wider context. Equally, it is important to recognise the significant and distinct barriers which women face when pursuing a career in the arts and ensure that they are addressed.

69 respondents (11%) stated they had experienced sexism when asked to give more details about the barriers they faced. Others highlighted an under representation of women at senior and leadership roles.

Finally, a number of respondents from the screen and performing arts sector voiced concern around the lack of quality roles for women on stage and screen.

...as there are so many female staff working with me, we often feel we are seen as interchangeable in terms of workload delegation although we all have different titles, skills and experience. This doesn't seem to happen with our male colleagues.

I am conscious of working on smaller projects with fewer resources than my male counterparts. I am very conscious of often being the only woman in the room when representing my organisation at high level meetings or events.

## Parenting and carer responsibilities – a particular barrier for women

A third of survey respondents had parental or carer responsibilities with no significant variance by gender. However, there was significant gender variation in how responsibilities are shared, 57% of females described themselves as the primary or sole carer compared with only 9% of males; 44% of respondents felt that carer responsibilities were shared equally (although males were more likely to state this than females).

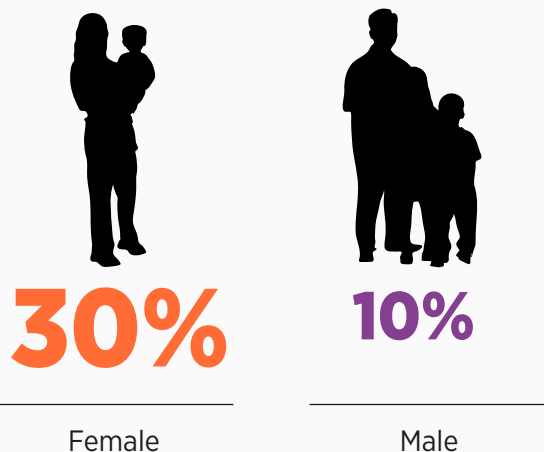
Parental responsibilities are perceived as a far more significant barrier by women. 10% of all females (therefore approximately a third of women with children) cited parental responsibilities as a very significant barrier compared to only 3% of males (or roughly 10% of males with children).

Respondents with children were more likely to cite economic limitations than those without, with 25% stating that economic limitations were a very significant barrier.

The cost of childcare was the most commonly cited issue within the open comments, an issue which goes hand in hand with the low earnings which are characteristic of the sector. Many referenced the challenges of arranging childcare around the unpredictable, long and antisocial hours demanded by many careers within the sector.

A growing issue within society is the care of our older people. Similar levels of males and females had carer responsibilities for older/disabled adults (a total of 6%), however females were more likely to cite this as a barrier to career progression.

### Parental responsibilities are a very significant barrier (those with children)



As a mother of a young child, career progression can be difficult as childcare is very expensive, making flexible working a necessity. Flexible working is an option in my current role but would not necessarily be an option in other senior roles

## Ethnic diversity, nationality and cultural identity

**1/2** of minority ethnic respondents stated ethnicity as a barrier



of respondents were non-UK EU Nationals

Around 5% of all respondents stated they are from a minority ethnic or mixed group, this compares to 3.7% of the Scottish population (Census 2011). Approximately 8% of respondents are from the rest of the European Union.

Half of respondents in the minority ethnic or mixed groups stated their ethnicity was a barrier, with a quarter stating it is a significant or very significant barrier. This compares with 5% of white respondents. Minority ethnic respondents also had a lower median income than average at £15,000. Comments included discrimination and cultural barriers within minority ethnic communities as well as a lack of interest or understanding of the cultural themes of artists work.

Cultural barriers within the arts, but also stigma within ethnic community around pursuing the arts and academia.

Being a creator of content I find that coming from a BAME background I have to work almost five times as hard to get the commissioners on side because the characters or situations are so unknown to them.

87% of respondents identified being British/UK (either Scottish, British or English, Welsh or Northern Irish). However nationality was still identified as a barrier for some.

A total of 17% stated their nationality was a barrier and while non-UK nationals were more likely to cite this as a barrier (44%) it was also cited by UK respondents, particularly English respondents.

27% of English respondents cited this as a barrier compared with only 9% of Scottish and 12% of British respondents with some citing discrimination due to an English accent (12 respondents).

Other comments included discrimination against foreign names and a number of non-EU respondents cited difficulties with securing work visas.

....having lived and worked in Scotland for 20 years. I believe I have occasionally been overlooked by the media and commissioners as they tend to be more supportive of Scottish artists.

## Disability

**43%** of disabled respondents stated disability as a barrier

30% of respondents stated they had a disability/long term health condition<sup>8</sup>. This is well above the national average of around 20%. However, 22% of the respondents stated their disability reduced their ability to carry out day-to-day activities 'a little' or 'a lot', which is closer in line with national level statistics.

The most common condition, selected by 14% of all respondents is a mental health condition.

43% of disabled respondents stated that their disability was a barrier. This increased in line with the severity of their disability.

Respondents who reported having a disability/long term health conditions were more likely to earn less than the average for the sector. However, this does not take into account part time working.

Stories about people with disabilities are often considered 'uncommercial' and not suitable for funding.

Tellingly, I never tell people how old I am, and keep my disability to myself wherever possible.

## Sexuality and sexual identity

15% of respondents identified as being Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgendered (LGBT). This is considerably higher than the Scotland-wide estimate of 1.6% (Scottish Government SSCQ, 2016). It is thought that this may indicate both a high representation of the LGBT community in the arts and an unusually high disclosure rate.

While a high disclosure rate may indicate a high level of acceptance within the sector it is important to note that a quarter of respondents identifying as LGBT stated their sexual orientation was a barrier. However only 3% stated it was a significant barrier and none stated it was a very significant barrier.

<sup>8</sup> Conditions which have lasted, or are expected to last at least 12 months from drop down list, including mental health condition, other long-term/chronic condition; learning disabilities; hearing impairment/Deaf; Physical disabilities; visual impairment; Developmental disorder; Other and prefer not to say. (listed in order of most commonly selected.)



## Conclusions

The findings of this report indicate that career progression in the arts is far from a level playing field. Some groups face real and significant barriers to career progression in the sector.

The most prominent theme is economic challenges which are particularly pertinent for those who are primarily artists and those who are freelance. The data reveals income levels which are well below national averages despite high levels of education. The responses provided an illustration of low pay, an expectation to work for free and unpaid internships. Portfolio careers are very common within the sector with many highlighting the challenge of maintaining artistic practice while having to work outwith the sector for financial support. In addition, the low levels of pay reported by respondents at all stages of their career indicate that there is little pay progression within the sector as experience is gained, exacerbating the pay gap between the sector and other industries.

Economic challenges were more acutely felt by women, people with parental responsibilities and disabled people, indicating a complex intersectionality of experience.

Lack of connections, social structures and networks also feature highly as a barrier with many mentioning the importance of informal networks in securing work or getting noticed. This has implications for geographic barriers, recruitment practices and ensuring diversity.

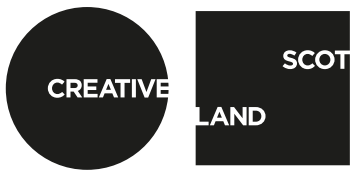
The data also indicates specific barriers experienced by minority groups and while many of these are symptomatic of trends in wider society there are some very specific issues related to working in the arts or in specific subsectors.

This survey provides an important snapshot of the working conditions and views of those who work in the arts today. It gives insight around the characteristics of the sector and the barriers faced by many within it and also provides indicators around the barriers to career entry.

Many of the key points in this report echo other research from the sector, adding to the body of evidence around the barriers to inclusion and diversity in the sector. It highlights issues which are society-wide as well as some which are specific to the arts sector. It provides challenges for funders, employers and commissioners within the sector. The sector as a whole must work together to develop and implement solutions.

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