



**DATA
CULTURE
CHANGE**

Film

Theatre

Music

Art & Sculpture exhibitions

Adult Arts Attendance in England State of play, June 2022

Festivals & Carnival

Craft exhibitions

Books & Writing events

Dance

Street Art events

Tracking the pace of return of live audiences after the Pandemic using data from the DCMS Participation survey

October 2022

1) Introduction and Acknowledgement

Official data on arts attendance

For 15 years [Taking Part](#) was the ‘flagship’ survey by the Department for Digital, Culture Media and Sport.

It was a continuous face to face household survey of adults aged 16 and over, and children aged 5 to 15 years old, in England, with an annual sample size of c.8,000. One of its main objectives was to provide a central, reliable evidence source that can be used to analyse cultural, digital, and sporting engagement, providing a clear picture of why people do or do not engage.

Face to face sampling was not possible in 2020/21 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The final annual statistical release (for 2019/20) for Taking Part was published in September 2020.

The [Participation survey](#) replaced Taking Part. It is a continuous push to web survey of adults aged 16 and over in England, with an annual sample size of c.33,000 (over 8,000 a quarter). There are paper surveys available for those not digitally engaged. Fieldwork started in October 2021. It is also designed to provide a central, reliable evidence source that can be used to analyse cultural, digital, and sporting engagement, providing a clear picture of why people do or do not engage.

Understanding pandemic impact and recovery

There is understandable interest within and beyond the sector to have a reliable way to understand changes in patterns of cultural engagement before and after the pandemic. This would have been possible in England if the Taking Part survey had continued with the same methodology. The Participation survey asks many questions in the same or a similar way, but as this [guidance from DCMS](#) explains, direct comparison of results from the two surveys is not statistically sound.

Results from the Taking Part survey remain the best available data on cultural engagement prior to the pandemic. The Participation survey is the new ‘gold standard’ and, with statistical releases every three months, is tracking the rapid changes in levels of cultural engagement of the adult population in England.

This short study provides a snapshot of the comparative comeback of audiences for different artforms and activities in the first nine months of Participation survey fieldwork, from October 2021 to June 2022.

It fully acknowledges the limitations in comparing Taking Part and Participation survey data, and where possible highlights differences in questionnaire content.

2) Snapshot of artform revival, April – June 2022

Table 1: Adult Arts Engagement in England, using most recently available data from Taking Part and Participation surveys

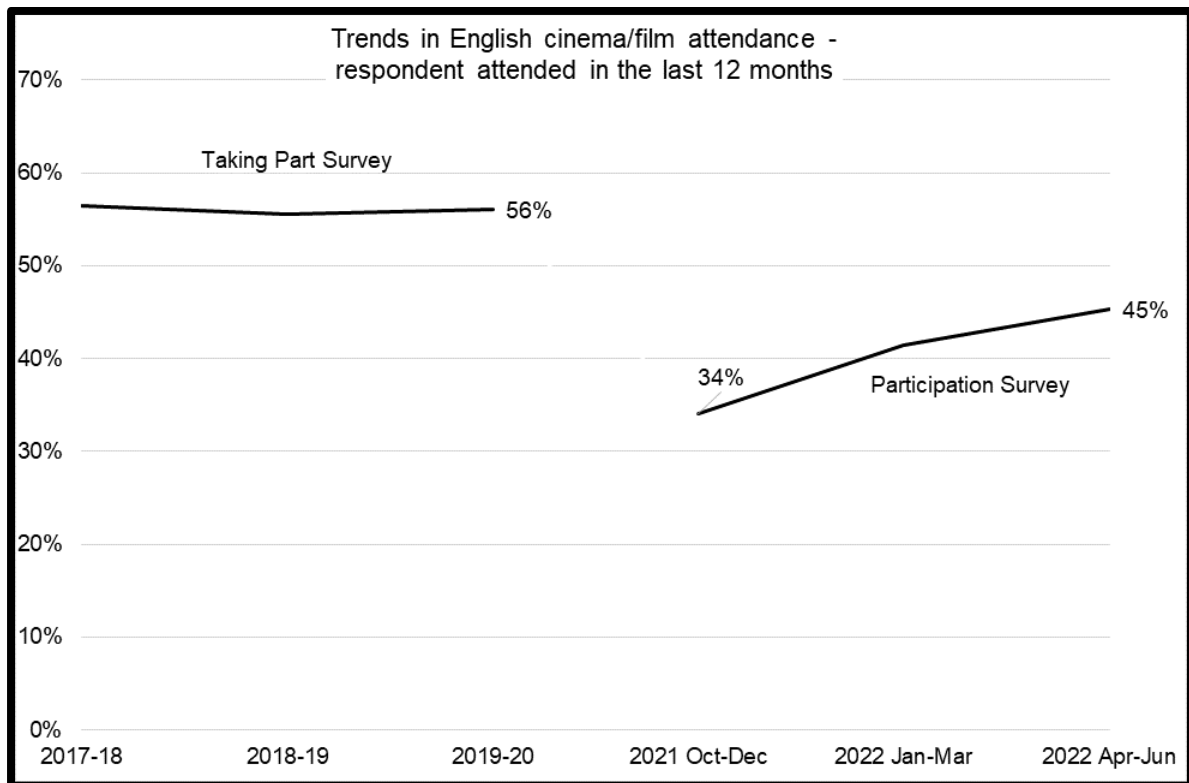
	Taking Part 2019/20	Participation survey Q2 2022	Difference
A cinema screening of a film or movie	56%	45%	-11%
A play, drama, musical, Pantomime, Ballet, Opera	38%	27%	-11%
A live music event	36%	25%	-10%
An exhibition of art, photography or sculptures	21%	18%	-3%
A festival or carnival	15%	15%	+0%
A craft exhibition	11%	6%	-5%
An event connected with books or writing	5%	6%	+1%
A live dance event	8%	4%	-3%
A street art event	9%	3%	-6%

As explained in the Introduction and Acknowledgement, the Participation survey was not designed to allow direct comparison with data from Taking Part. Caution should therefore be taken in attempting to extrapolate trends from the results in Table 1, particularly where the phrasing of questions varied considerably across the two surveys (described in more detail below).

The three most popular artforms (film, theatre and live music) are ranked in the same order across both surveys. There is only one category (an event connected with books or writing) where the Participation survey is registering higher levels of engagement than Taking Part. Affirmative responses were more than 40% lower for both attendance at a craft exhibition and a live dance event and more than 60% lower for attendance at a street art event.

3) Film

Chart 1: Adults stating they have attended film/cinema screenings in the past 12 months



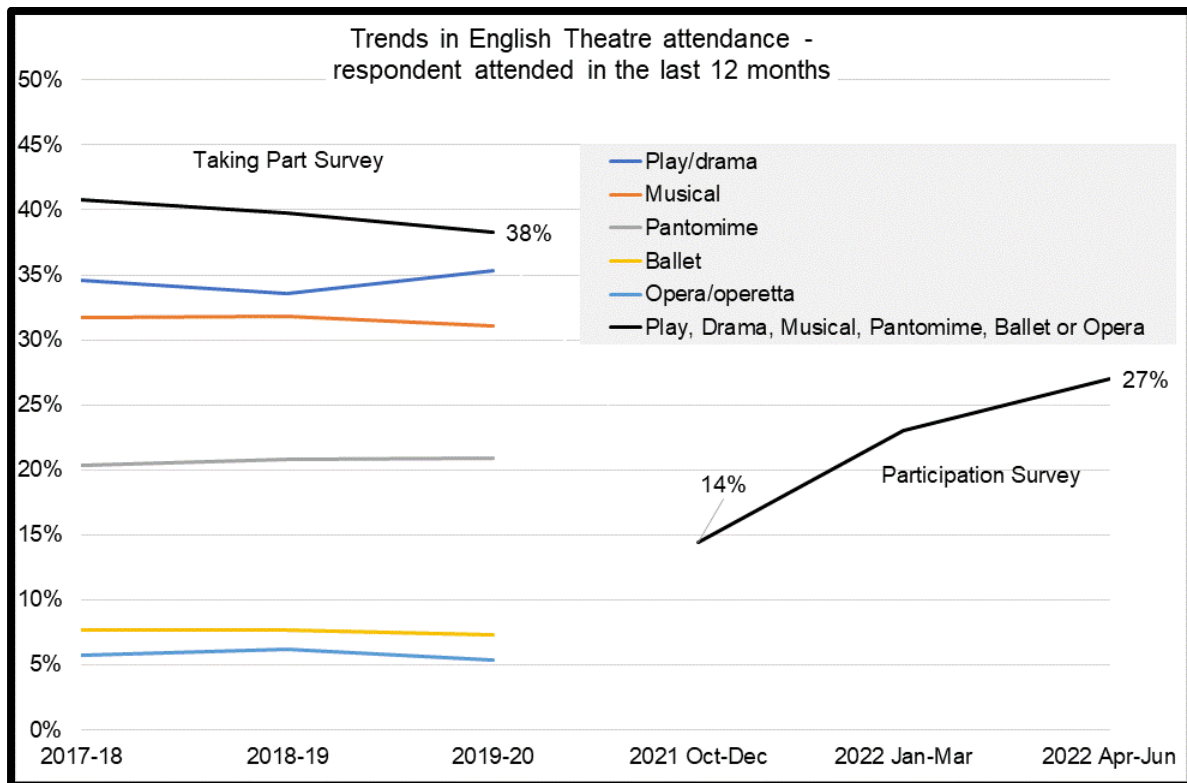
The question in Taking Part was phrased 'Film at a cinema or other venue'. 56% of respondents stated that they had attended in the last 12 months in 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20.

In the Participation survey respondents are asked if in the last 12 months they have attended 'a cinema screening of a film or movie'. It is possible that some respondents who have been to a screening in a venue other than a cinema (e.g. arts centre or theatre) will give a negative answer.

The proportion of respondents responding positively rose from 34% in the last quarter of 2021 to 41% in the first quarter of 2022. There was a further 4% rise in the second quarter.

4) Theatre

Chart 2: Adults stating they have attended theatre performances in the past 12 months



In Taking Part, respondents were asked separately about having attended in the last 12 months:

- a. Play/drama
- b. Pantomime
- c. Musical
- d. Opera/operetta
- e. Ballet

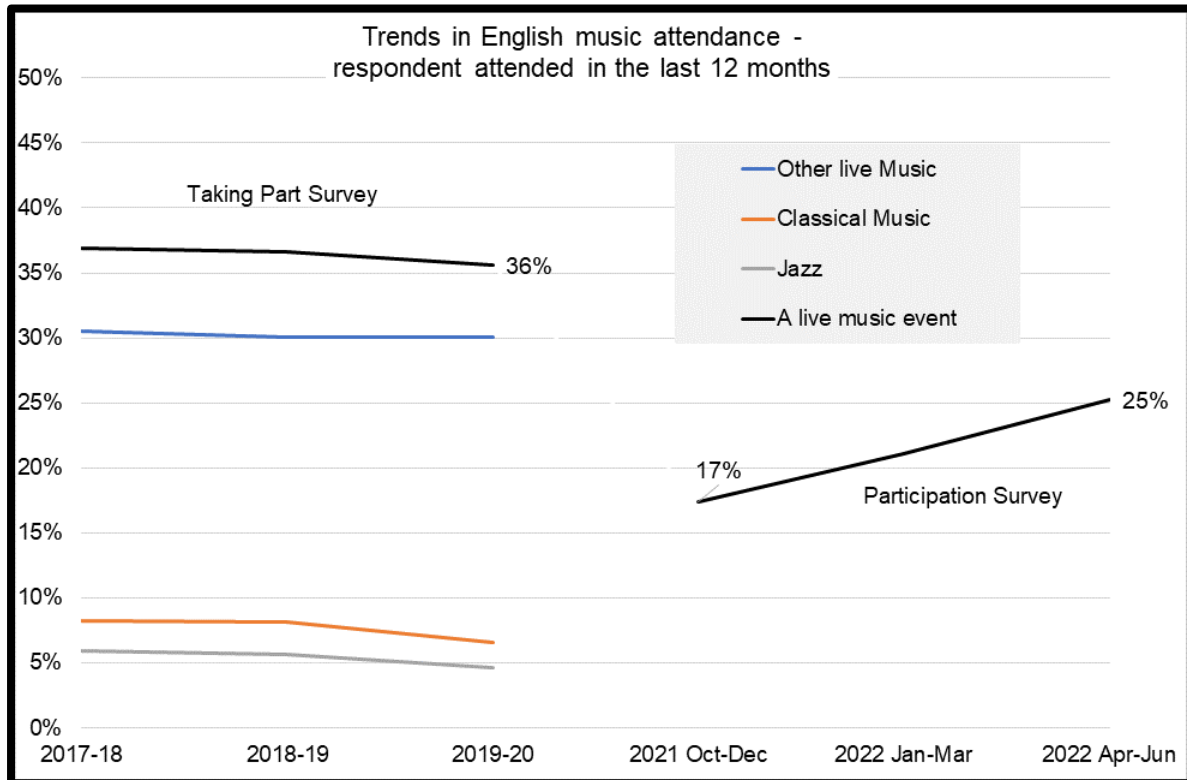
DCMS makes record-level Taking Part datasets accessible via the UK Data Service, University of Essex. We conducted multiple response analysis on records for the final three years of Taking Part to establish the proportion of adults who had responded positively to one or more of the five 'theatre' questions. In 2019-20, 38% of respondents responded affirmatively to at least one of the five questions.

In the Participation survey respondents are asked if in the last 12 months they have attended 'a play, drama, musical, Pantomime, Ballet, Opera'.

The proportion of respondents responding positively rose from 14% in the last quarter of 2021 to 23% in the first quarter of 2022. There was a further 4% rise in the second quarter.

5) Live Music

Chart 3: Adults stating they have attended a live music event in the past 12 months.



In Taking Part, respondents were asked separately about having attended

- a. Classical Music
- b. Jazz
- c. Other live Music

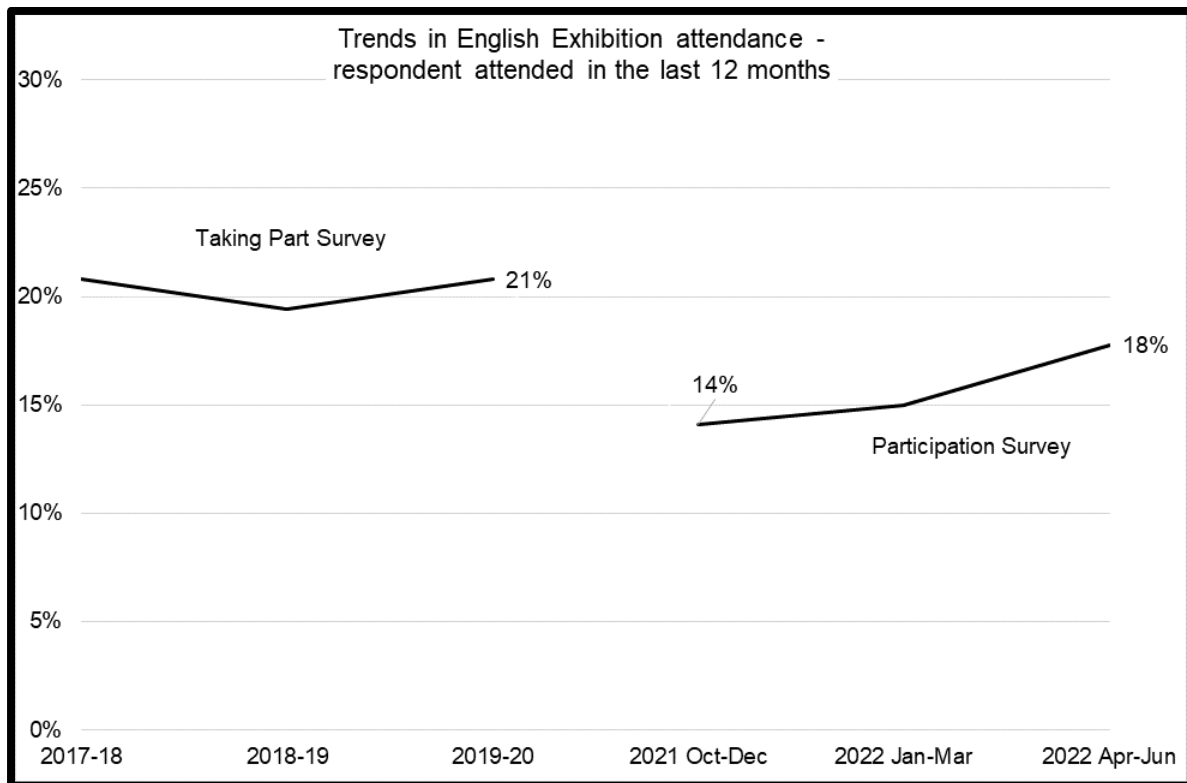
DCMS makes record-level Taking Part datasets accessible via the UK Data Service, University of Essex. We conducted multiple response analysis on records for the final three years of Taking Part to establish the proportion of adults who had responded positively to one or more of the three 'music' questions. In 2019-20, 36% of respondents responded affirmatively to at least one of the three questions.

In the Participation survey respondents are asked if in the last 12 months they have attended 'a live music event'.

The proportion of respondents responding positively rose from 17% in the last quarter of 2021 to 21% in the first quarter of 2022. There was a further 4% rise in the second quarter.

6) Art Exhibition

Chart 4: Adults stating they have attended an art exhibition/collection in the past 12 month.



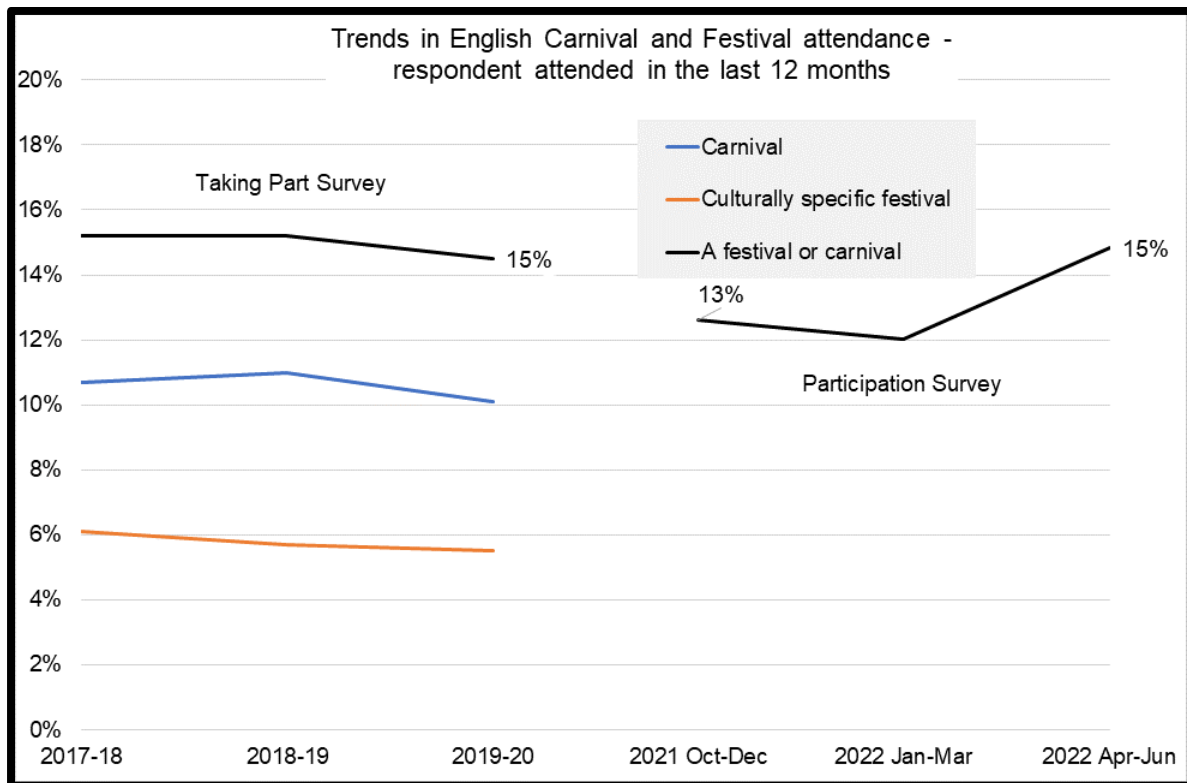
The question in Taking Part was phrased 'Exhibition or collection of art, photography or sculpture'. In 2019/20, 21% of respondents stated they had attended in the last 12 months.

In the Participation survey respondents are asked if in the last 12 months they have attended 'an exhibition of art, photography or sculptures'. It is possible that some respondents who have visited a collection but not a temporary exhibition will give a negative answer.

The proportion of respondents responding positively rose slightly from 14% in the last quarter of 2021 to 15% in the first quarter of 2022. There was a larger 3% rise in the second quarter.

7) Festival or Carnival

Chart 5: Adults stating they have attended a festival and or carnival in the past 12 months



In Taking Part, respondents were asked separately about having attended

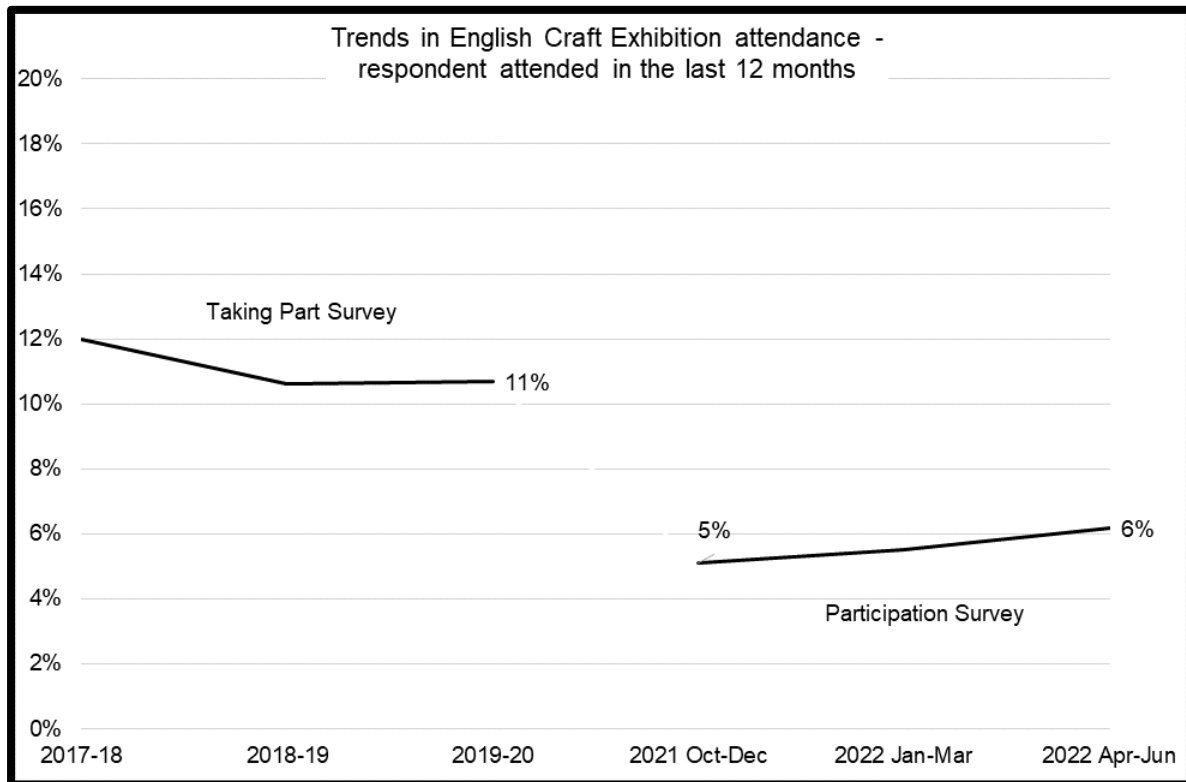
- Culturally specific festival (for example, Mela or Chinese New Year)
- Carnival

DCMS makes record-level Taking Part datasets accessible via the UK Data Service, University of Essex. We conducted multiple response analysis on records for the final three years of Taking Part to establish the proportion of adults who had responded positively to one or both questions. In 2019-20, 15% of respondents responded affirmatively to at least one of the two questions.

In the Participation survey respondents are asked if in the last 12 months they have attended 'a festival or carnival (music, food, culture)'. We view this as a substantially broader definition that would also include (non-culturally specific) music, arts and food festivals. We would therefore expect a higher proportion of respondents to respond affirmatively to the Participation survey.

The proportion of respondents responding positively fell slightly from 13% in the last quarter of 2021 to 12% in the first quarter of 2022. There was then a 3% rise in the second quarter.

Chart 6: Adults stating they have attended a craft exhibition in the past 12 months

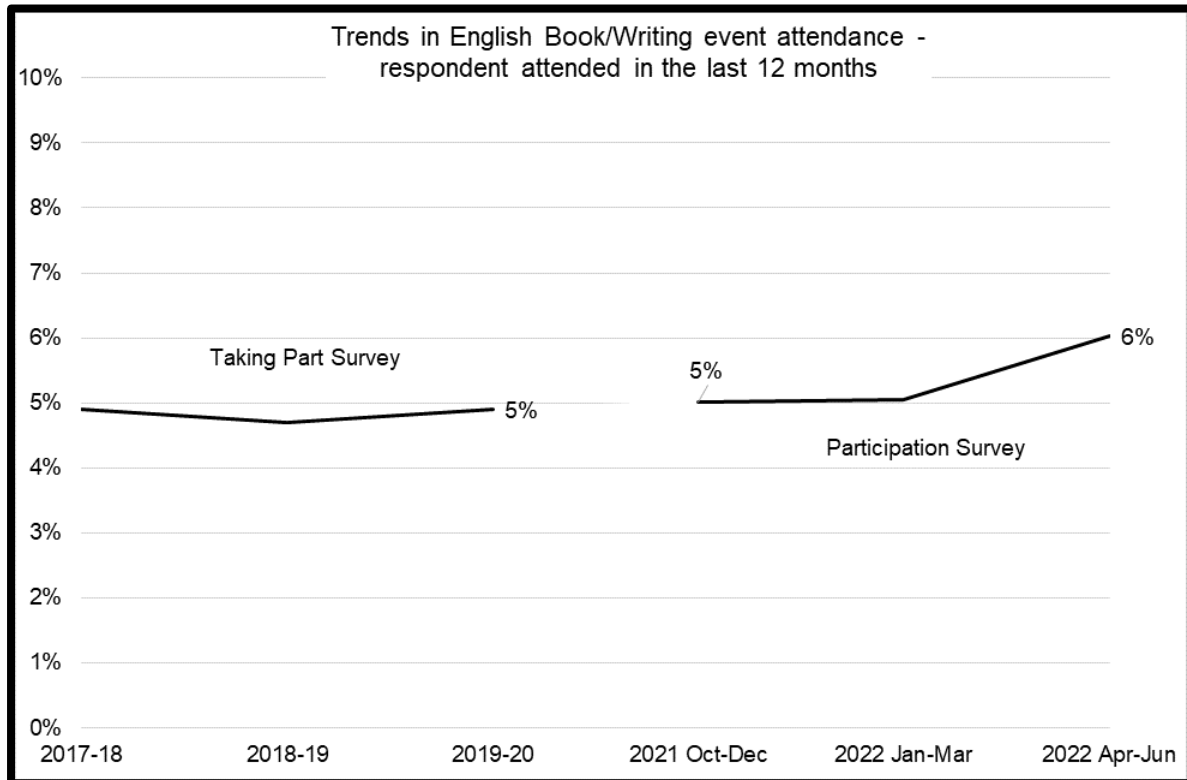


The question in Taking Part was phrased 'a craft exhibition (not a crafts market; crafts include for example textiles, woodworking)'. In 2019/20, 11% of respondents stated they had attended in the last 12 months.

In the Participation survey respondents are asked if in the last 12 months they have attended 'Craft exhibition (not craft market)'. The proportion of respondents responding positively rose slightly from 5.1% in the last quarter of 2021 to 5.5% in the first quarter of 2022. There was a further 0.7% rise in the second quarter.

9) Literary events

Chart 7: Adults stating they have attended a Book/Writing event in the past 12 months

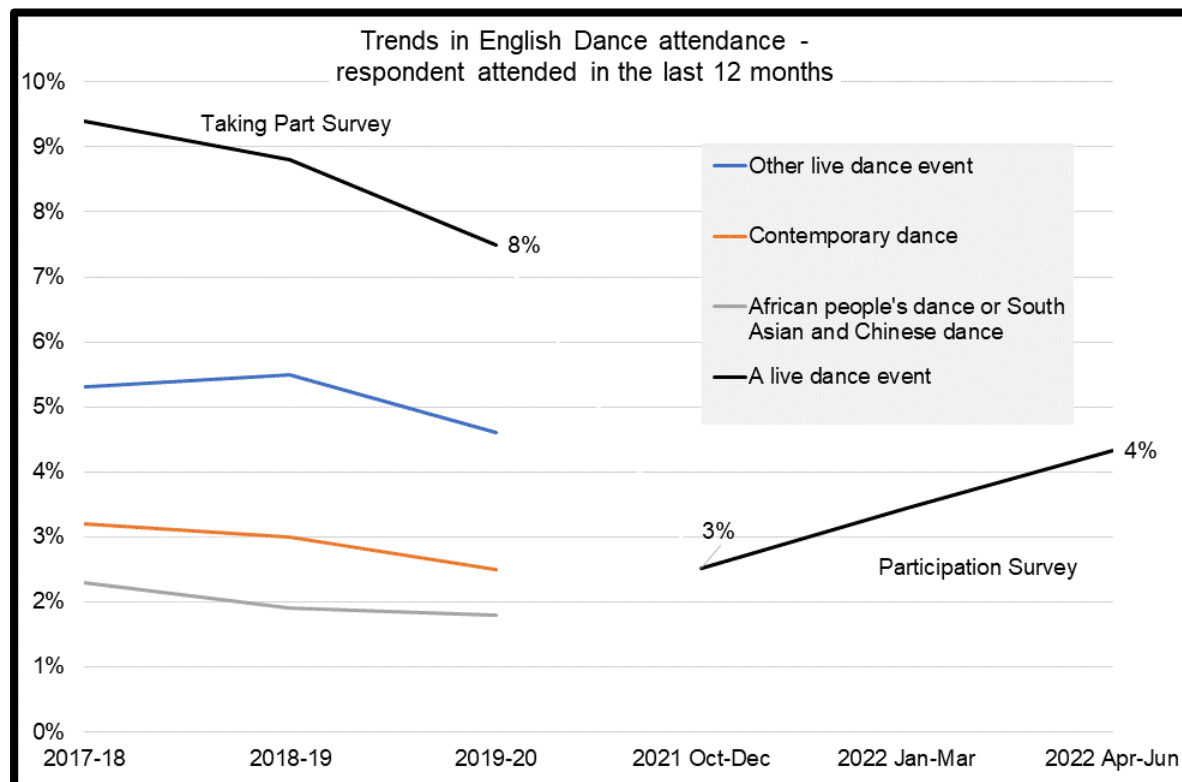


The question in Taking Part was phrased 'Event connected with books or writing'. In 2019/20, 4.9% of respondents stated they had attended in the last 12 months.

In the Participation survey respondents are asked if in the last 12 months they have attended 'an event connected with books, reading, or writing'. The proportion of respondents responding positively was 5.0% in the last quarter of 2021 and the first quarter of 2022. There was a 1.0% rise in the second quarter.

10) Live Dance

Chart 8: Adults stating they have attended a live dance event in the past 12 months.



In Taking Part, respondents were asked separately about having attended

- Contemporary dance
- African people's dance or South Asian and Chinese dance
- Other live dance event

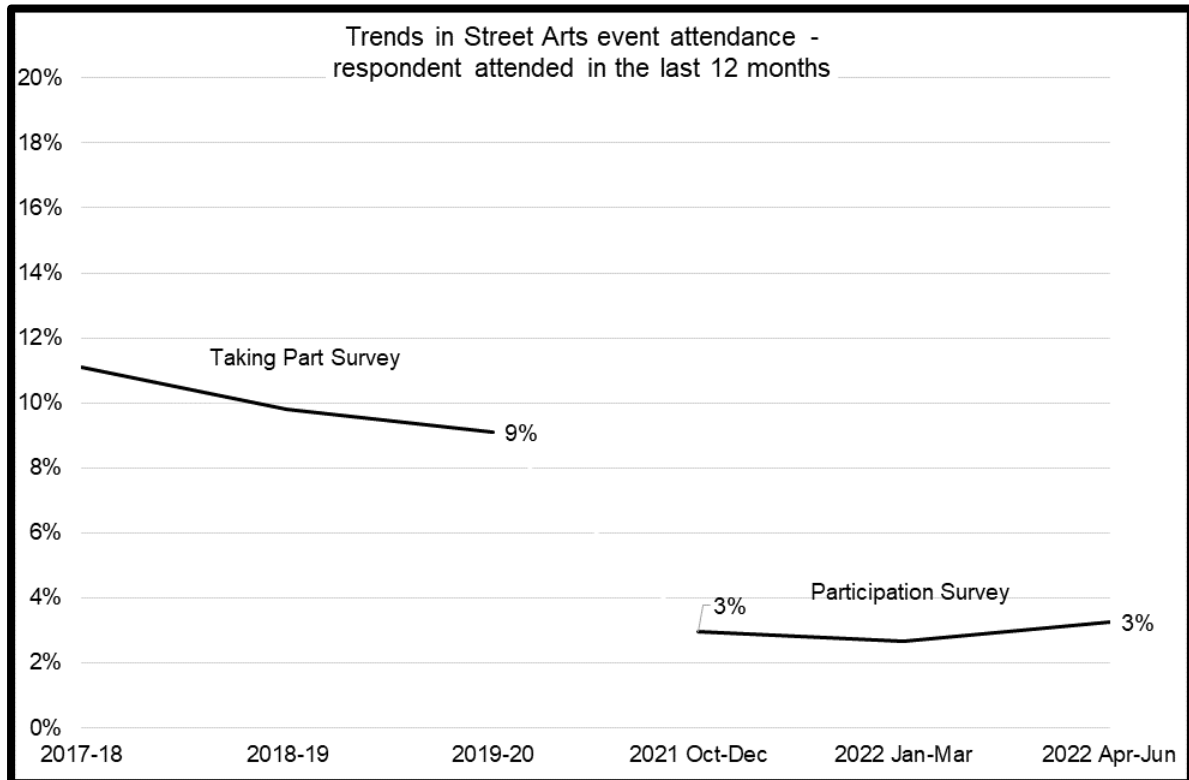
DCMS makes record-level Taking Part datasets accessible via the UK Data Service, University of Essex. We conducted multiple response analysis on records for the final three years of Taking Part to establish the proportion of adults who had responded positively to one or more of the three 'dance' questions. In 2019-20, 7.5% of respondents responded affirmatively to at least one of the three questions.

In the Participation survey respondents are asked if in the last 12 months they have attended 'a live dance event'.

The proportion of respondents responding positively rose from 2.5% in the last quarter of 2021 to 3.4% in the first quarter of 2022. There was a further 0.9% rise in the second quarter.

11) Street Art events

Chart 9: Adults stating they have attended a Street Art event in the past 12 months



The question in Taking Part was phrased 'Street arts (an artistic performance that takes place in everyday surroundings like parks, streets or shopping centres)'. In 2019/20, 9.1% of respondents stated they had attended in the last 12 months.

In the Participation survey respondents are asked if in the last 12 months they have attended 'a street art event'. It is possible that the lack of a detailed description in the Participation survey will lead to a lower proportion of affirmative responses.

The proportion of respondents responding positively was 2.9% in the last quarter of 2021 and 2.7% in the first quarter of 2022. There was a 0.6% rise in the second quarter.

12) Conclusions

i) Positive trajectory in engagement levels

We now have access to three quarters of data published that has been collected in a consistent way through the Participation survey. For all artforms we're seeing a positive trend from Q4 2021 to Q2 2022. For all but three artforms in this study (festival or carnival, literary events, street art events), there was a larger rise in Q2 2022 than there was in Q1. This suggests that the 'revival' of these artforms will continue into Q3 2023.

ii) Engagement with artforms reviving at different paces

In this study we have been very careful to avoid extrapolating trends by looking across data from the two surveys. Where multiple questions are asked in very similar ways across the two surveys, we can look at the relative proportion of responses to each. Across the four largest artforms, there is a greater gap between the numbers of affirmative respondents for theatre and music than film and exhibitions. Of the less popular artforms, craft exhibitions, live dance and Street Arts events index poorly compared to Taking Part.

iii) Possible increase in proportion of adults engaging with literary events

There is only one artform that is registering higher levels of engagement in the Participation survey than it did across the final three years of Taking Part: events connected with books or writing. Of the nine artforms in this study, it was the least popular in the final three years of Taking Part. It is the seventh highest in the ranking of the last nine months, exceeding live dance and Street Arts.

While we cannot say for sure that there is a higher proportion of adult population attending literary events, it could well be that the reported increase in reading during lockdowns has helped a swifter revival in engagement than other artforms.

13) About Data Culture Change

Data Culture Change is a new mission-driven private company committed to the development of a thriving and equitable cultural sector.

We're here to help cultural organisations, practitioners, funders and policy makers get the most out of data. We have decades of experience in the innovative use of data to inform policy and strategy, a fundamental commitment to working in partnership and a desire to keep learning.

www.dataculturechange.com

14) About Campaign for the Arts

Campaign for the Arts is the UK's grassroots alliance for the arts, with over 250,000 supporters nationwide.

It works to champion, defend and expand access to the arts and culture, for and with the public.

www.campaignforthearts.org