

More Than Moments:

The Impact of Culture in
Hull and East Yorkshire



**Impact of
Culture Report**
March 2026

Commissioned by



HEY CREATIVE
Advancing our cultural landscape

Report created by

KADA 

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1 Introduction

In 2025, HEY Creative commissioned Kada Research to quantify the economic and social impact of culture in Hull and East Yorkshire and assess how this has changed over the last decade.

Robust, cohered and region-wide evidence of the impact of arts, culture and heritage in Hull & East Yorkshire (HEY) was lacking. The data that did exist was often varied in geographic coverage and difficult to unpick. With the opportunities of devolution, a greater focus on joined up working across HEY, and an increasingly challenging funding landscape, HEY Creative sought to fill this gap with the development of a comprehensive and well-evidenced data set. This report, and its accompanying data, will support the development of the sector through improved advocacy, fundraising and celebration of the diverse work of HEY's cultural sector.

Kada was commissioned to synthesise existing relevant datasets and undertake additional research to fill gaps where they exist. National benchmarks have been extrapolated against local insights and additional data points to give credible estimates in areas of persistent evidence deficits.

For the purpose of this report, 'culture' is often used as a shorthand for arts, culture and heritage, and is defined as **music, theatre, dance, film, radio, visual arts and photography, arts/crafts, heritage and museums, literature, festivals and combined, interdisciplinary and live arts**. This definition was created in reference to UK Government policy and guidance, although there is currently no consistency between terminology employed at a national reporting level. The technical annex contains further information as to the specific trades included.

In order to show trends over time, where possible, data has been analysed from 2015-2025. This has the benefit of reflecting, acknowledging and where relevant, mitigating the impact of both the events of UK City of Culture 2017 and COVID-19. The analysis also benchmarks HEY's performance against national figures, and those of Tees Valley by way of a neighbour comparison. Tees Valley was selected as an area with some similarities (geographically, industrially and socio-economically) but also in contrast, as a region with a mature Combined Authority, now reaping the benefits of significant investment in culture.

This report starts by quantifying the economic impact of culture in HEY, before then assessing the social impact culture has on the region. The social impact draws on well-established benchmarks, calculated using methods aligned with HM Treasury's Green Book. The Green Book is currently being reviewed to ensure a better representation of social benefits, including culture, meaning that both these values themselves and the understanding of them may increase in the future.

About HEY Creative

[HEY Creative](#) is the Arts Council England [Cultural Compact](#) for Hull and East Yorkshire (HEY). Cultural Compacts develop and advocate for an area's arts, culture and heritage through partnership-working with other sectors, such as local government, private business, education, healthcare and more. HEY Creative is funded by Arts Council England, East Riding of Yorkshire Council, Hull City Council, City Health Care Partnership, Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, University of Hull, Wykeland Group, Beal Homes, Horncastle Group, HullBID, For Entrepreneurs Only, Future Humber and the NHS Humber and North Yorkshire Integrated Care Board.

2 The Economic Impact of Culture in Hull & East Yorkshire



£101.2m

Total annual economic impact of culture in HEY



£63.3m

of which is directly generated by the sector



£37.9m

of which is indirectly generated by the sector



365

cultural enterprises in HEY



£41,262

generated for every cultural job in HEY (average)



2,100+

people working in culture in HEY



£41.4m

invested by Arts Council England since 2018



£26m

invested by National Heritage Lottery Fund since 2015



37%

increase in total annual economic impact of culture in HEY (2015-2025)

2.1 Summary

The cultural sector contributes **£101.2m** a year to the regional economy in HEY. **£63.3m** of this is directly generated by the sector, and **£37.9m** is generated by the impact of its activity, e.g. through its supply chain, or additional spend at shops and restaurants.

365 cultural enterprises were operating in HEY in 2024. This is up **14%** on 2015 but is growing at a lower rate than both comparator Tees Valley (15%) and the national average (19%). Over half of HEY's cultural enterprises fall into one of three industrial categories, **design**, **artistic creation**, and **performing arts**, which reflects a greater sector-specific concentration than the national average.

Over **2,100** people work in HEY's cultural sector. This includes **c.1,600 within employed roles** (up 12% since 2015), and **over 500 freelancers**, who are estimated to make up 32% of the workforce¹. HEY's cultural workforce are concentrated across fewer sub-sectors (performing arts, libraries and museums) than generally seen nationally.

Investment from Arts Council England (ACE) has **increased by 7%** since 2018. This is a lesser rate than experienced nationally (22%), and does not keep pace with inflation, reflecting a real term cut in funding. ACE investment in HEY was **£10.03 per head** in **24/25**, compared to a national average of £13.48, and the Tees Valley comparison of £14.83.

Over the decade, HEY has also been more successful at attracting **National Lottery Heritage funding** than the national average, receiving **£55 per head** versus £42 per head. A caveat is that this figure is significantly increased by their transformational £13.6m investment into the Hull Maritime project.

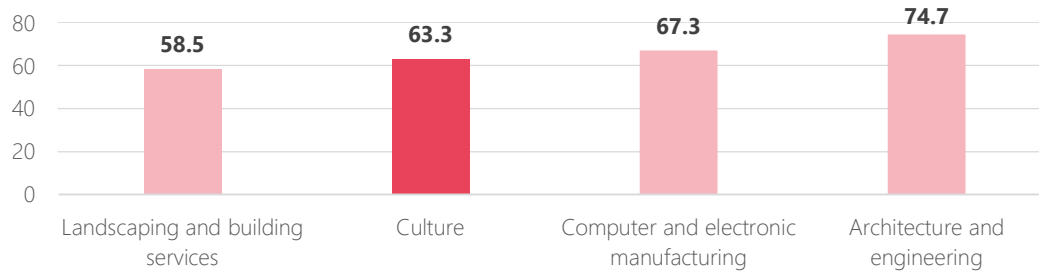
2.2 Economic Contribution

Culture in HEY contributes £101.2m per year (in 2025 prices) to the regional economy, known as its 'Total GVA'. £63.3m of this is directly generated ('Direct GVA') from culture businesses' own production of goods and services. £37.9m is generated as additional economic value created by the supply chains of cultural businesses ('Indirect GVA'), for example technical services.

Culture as a sector has a comparable economic impact in Hull & East Yorkshire as the manufacture of computers and electronics. Figure 2.2a benchmarks the economic impact of culture against other industries within HEY.

¹ Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre, [Freelancers in the creative industries](#), 2021

Figure 3.2a: Direct GVA comparison (2025, £m)²

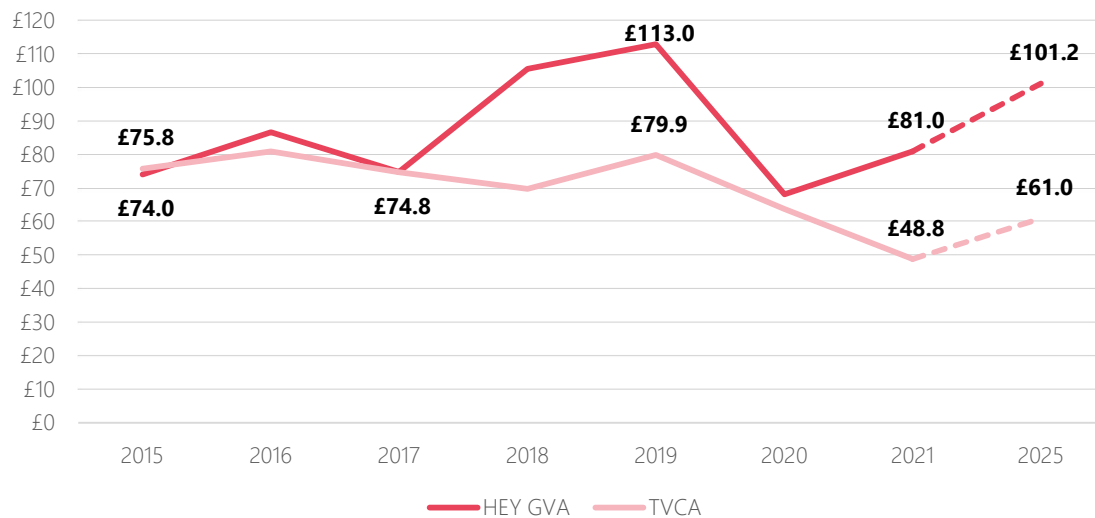


Source: ONS (2021) 'Regional GVA (balanced by Industry, Bank of England Inflation Calculator)^{3 4}

For every job created in culture in HEY, on average £41,262 is added to the regional economy. This is an increase of nearly £7,000 in the last five years, demonstrating the growth in both the economic output, and impact of culture, in HEY.

Between 2015 and 2025, the GVA contribution of the sector has increased by approximately 37%, increasing from £74.0m to £101.2m. Contrastingly, Tees Valley has seen an overall GVA contribution decrease of approximately 20%.

Figure 2.2b: Total GVA change (2015-2021, £m) inc. projections to 2025



Source: ONS (2021) 'Regional GVA (balanced by Industry, Bank of England Inflation Calculator)⁵

² Comparison against similar industries for context.

³ ONS Regional GVA by industry data and BRES data has been utilised to calculate GVA per employee as a measure of productivity.

⁴ As GVA is provided at 2-digit SIC, whilst employment is at 4-digit SIC, in order to align with the sector definition, a proportionate sector moderation has been applied. The proportion of 4-digit SIC employment that comprised 2-digit SIC employment (%) was used to moderate 2-digit SIC GVA data to align with 4-digit SIC employment more accurately.

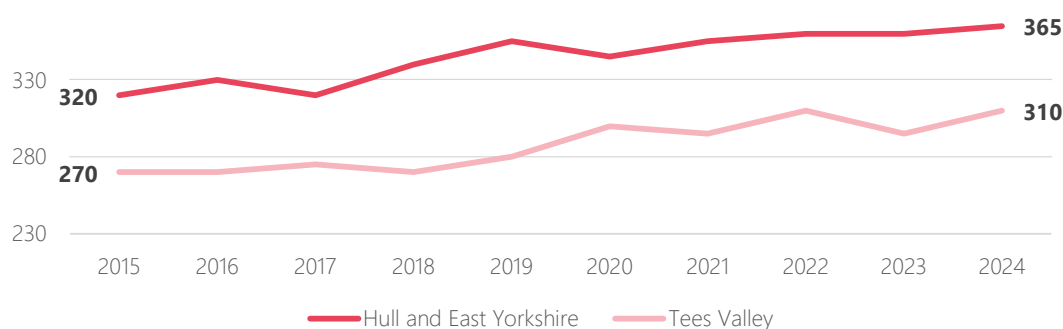
⁵ National GVA data is published with a lag. As such, the 2025 figures are projections, with reasonable assumptions based on the rate of inflation are made using available data.

2.3 Business Base

In 2024 there were 365 cultural enterprises in HEY. Whilst this represents a 14% increase (+45) over the last decade, this trails behind both national average (19%) and Tees Valley (15%) figures. Inversely, despite having a smaller population than the Tees Valley, HEY boasts a higher number of cultural enterprises overall (365 vs. 310).

The aforementioned growth of cultural enterprises in HEY was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The overall number of cultural enterprises in HEY however recovered and stabilised quickly, suggesting good resilience, particularly in comparison to their Tees Valley counterparts. Growth in cultural enterprises in HEY since 2020, however, has not continued at the previous rate - nor matched the average national growth rate.

Figure 3.3a: Cultural Enterprises



Source: ONS (2024) UK Business Counts - enterprises by industry

Over half of HEY's cultural enterprises fall into one of three categories: design (27%), artistic creation such as painting (12%), and performing arts (11%). Video production is the largest growing subsector in HEY of the last decade, increasing by 200% (+20).

2.4 Employment

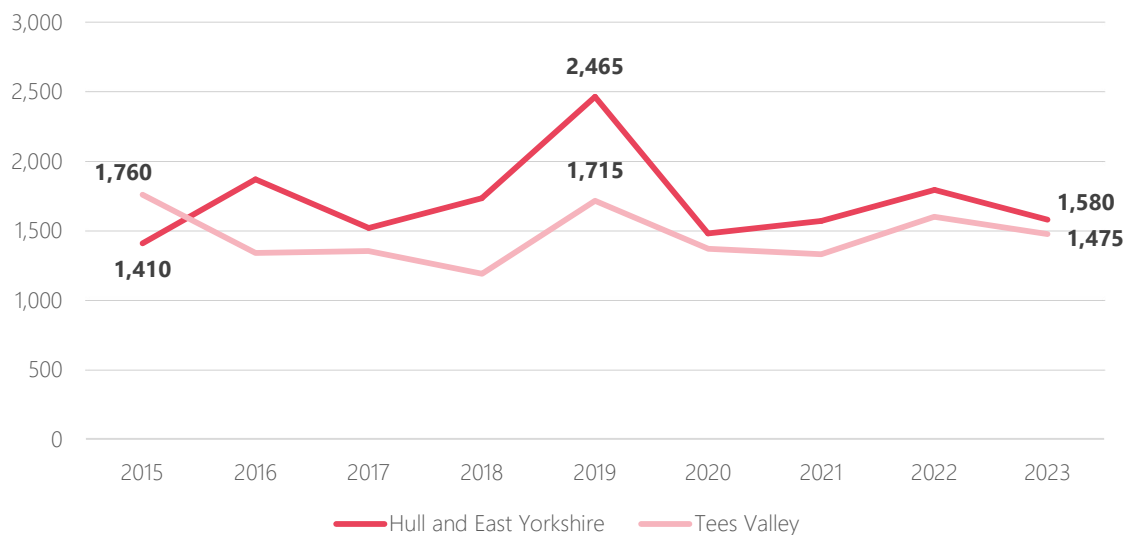
We calculate that at least 2,100 people are currently working in culture in HEY. This uses the most recent cultural employment data (1,580) and makes additions to incorporate those working in cultural roles but not directly employed by cultural organisations (e.g. at Local Authorities), and those working freelance. DCMS/CPEC findings have been extrapolated to estimate 506 freelance culture workers in HEY⁶, although a more in-depth study could uncover greater numbers.

Since 2015 the number of people directly employed by cultural organisations in HEY (1,580) has increased 12%. The national increase is 20%. Figure 2.4a shows that HEY experienced an increase in its cultural employment base following City of Culture (up to a high of 2,465 in 2019), before a contraction following the pandemic. This post-pandemic trend is reflected both nationally and within comparator Tees Valley. The contraction of cultural *employment* post-pandemic compared with the recovery and

⁶Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (2021), 'DCMS Sector Economic Estimates: Employment Oct 2019 - Sep 2020'. [Available here.](#)

slight increase in the number of cultural *enterprises* themselves suggests that HEY's cultural enterprises are employing fewer people than they did pre-pandemic.

Figure 3.4a: Cultural Employment



Source: ONS (2023) 'Business Register and Employment Survey'⁷

In the same way that HEY's cultural enterprises are clustered around only a small number of sub-sectors, so are its cultural employees. Three subsectors employ almost 50% of all workers: performing arts (19%), library activities (16%) and museum activities (11%). This contrasts significantly to national trends, where there tends to be a more diverse spread of cultural employment. Nationally, only one sub-sector constitutes more than 10% of the culture's employment (specialised design activity), whereas HEY has the above three sub-sectors, plus two further at 9.5% each (radio broadcasting and specialised design). It can be said, therefore, that HEY's cultural employment base is more specialised than the national average.

Cultural employment in HEY is concentrated within the urban areas of Hull, Beverley and Bridlington. Since 2015, figures suggest there has been a 7% increase in urban cultural employment and a 29% decrease in rural cultural employment. It is not possible to estimate the location of the freelance workforce, although anecdotal evidence suggests that there may be a more equal spread between urban and rural locations, due to the proliferation of grassroots and community activities and home-based practice. Similarly, it is not possible to estimate the location of remote working within the employed cohort, a good proportion of which is understood to be rural based.

2.5 Investment

Arts Council England

Funding data for Arts Council England (ACE) is available from 2018/19 onwards. Since 2018/19 almost £41.5m has been invested across HEY. Investment per year has increased 7% since, from £5.9m to £6.3m in 2024/25. It is important to note that whilst absolute values have increased, accounting for

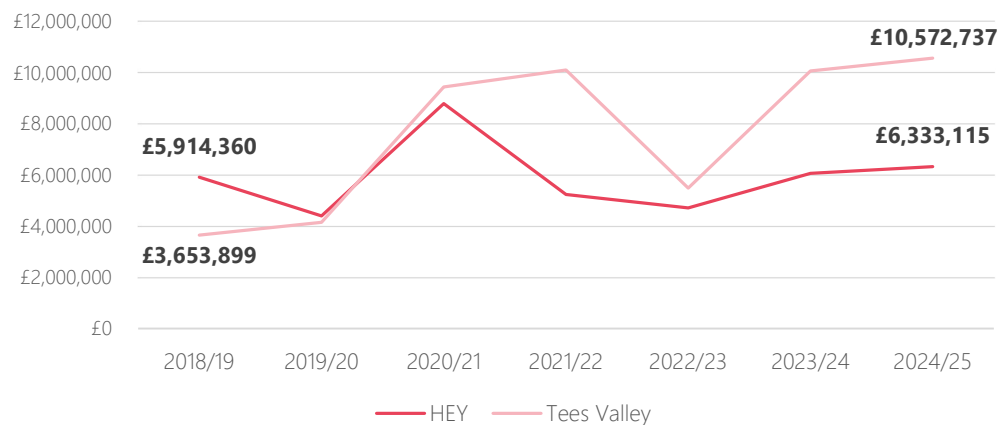
⁷ ONS (2023) 'Business Register and Employment Survey': available [here](#)

inflation (3.61% since 2018/19), this equates to a real-terms reduction of 19%, as the £5.9m of 2018/19 is equivalent to £7.8m in 2024/25.

In comparison, the national average increase over the same time period is 22%, which also fails to keep pace with inflation. This suggests that on average HEY has suffered more significantly from lack of investment than other areas across England, a challenge which has been compounded by inflation. Tees Valley Combined Authority area has seen a much greater increase in investment (189%) across this period, although it is worth noting that TVCA was historically underfunded, and has benefitted from designation as an Arts Council England Priority Place.

In 2024/25, HEY received ACE investment equivalent to £10.30 per head. This is a quarter less than the national average (£13.48), and a third less than in Tees Valley (£14.83). In 2018/19, ACE's investment in HEY was £9.77. Had this kept pace with inflation, it would be approximately £13 in 2025, in line with ACE's national average.

Figure 3.5a: Arts Council England Funding by Year (2018-2025)



Source: Arts Council England (2025)⁸

Each year, the most significant proportion of ACE investment into HEY supports National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs): in 24/25 NPOs received £3.48m (55%), £1.72m (27%) was invested via the Music Education Hubs programme, and £1.04m (16%) was allocated via National Lottery Project Grants. The remaining £85.7k (2%) were other and strategic investment funds, including Developing Your Creative Practice grants to freelancers.

In 2024/25⁹, 46% of HEY's ACE funding was allocated to local authorities, 37% to arts organisations, and the remaining 17% to museums or libraries (1%), schools or colleges (7%), youth groups (2%) and other organisations (6%)¹⁰. This funding split is somewhat of a contrast to the national picture: across England government public bodies received on average just 10% of ACE funding, with 68% allocated to arts organisations.

⁸ Arts Council England (2025) Culture and Place Data Explorer. Available [here](#)

⁹ ACE Funding allocation by type of organisation is only available for the year 2024/25.

¹⁰ Arts organisations were awarded £2.3m in 2024/25 via Arts Council England.

The annual funding between 2018-2022 for NPOs was £2.39m, which increased nominally in the 22/23 extension year. There has been a 46% increase in the amount of funding for the 2023-26 period¹¹, with an increase from 7 NPO organisations to 11. This includes the addition of some organisations, the withdrawal of others, and the transition of some from one core ACE funding stream to another (e.g. Creative People and Places to NPO). Top-level analysis of the change in funding is provided below.

Figure 3.5b: NPO investment by artform

Artform	2018 - 22		2023 - 26		Difference	
	£	%	£	%	£	%
Combined Arts	453,841	19	1,169,944	34	+ 716,103	+ 158%
Dance	0	0	0	0	0	0
Libraries	0	0	240,000	7	+ 240,000	N/A
Literature	0	0	0	0	0	-
Museums	996,409	42	1,112,243	32	115,834	+ 12%
Music	0	0	0	0	0	-
Theatre	940,680	39	957,989	28	17,309	+ 2%
Visual Arts	0	0	0	0	0	
Total	2,390,930	100	£3,480,176	100	£1,089,246	+ 46%

Source: Arts Council England, 2026¹²

Although there are no NPOs classified as delivering dance, literature, music or visual arts, many NPOs - specifically those classified as 'Combined Arts' - deliver these activities within these artforms. However, these artforms may present themselves as areas of focus for future development, for example Hull's ambition to become a UNESCO City of Music, and reflections elsewhere in this report on the potential for literature activities within the region.

In addition to this, the region received a one-off ACE capital investment into musical instruments. The wider region (included North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire) received over £1.5m, with Hull acting as the fundholder. For HEY specifically, the following investment into music is noted in the table below.

¹¹ Arts Council England (2025) NPOs and IPSOs 2023-2026

¹² Arts Council England, 2023-26 Investment Programme: Data, 2026

Figure 2.5c: ACE investment into Music Education Hub Funding

	24/25 Revenue	24/25 Capital	24/25 Total
HEY	£818,556	£268,683	£1,087,239

Source: Humber Music Service (2025)1314

Similarly, with the expansion of the Humber Museums Partnership to include North and North East Lincolnshire in 2023, the amount of funding entering into the region has increased, though not all will be retained in HEY. Of the £1.13m that has been allocated to the region, approximately £852,000 will be retained in HEY, once again with Hull being the fundholder for all four authorities¹⁵.

Figure 2.5d: NPO Investment in the Humberside Museum Partnership (23-26)

Area	Funding
Regional	£72,303.20 ¹⁶
HEY	£852,088.80

Source: Humber Museums Partnership Funding Allocation (2026)

In the last full financial year (24/25), HEY received £1.04m from ACE National Lottery Project Grants (NLPG) funding stream. The most successful specific artform in the period was theatre (with the 'Not Discipline Specific' award, delivering across multiple artforms). Libraries, Literature and Museums received no direct investment, although NLPG funding for the year may have contributed towards the delivery of activities in these locations and artforms during the year. Since 22/23, 11% of project grant investment has been into NPOs - across just 4 (6%) successful applications

Further analysis of NLPG data from 22/23 onwards demonstrates that over recent years, theatre has been the most successful single (52% of successful applications, 45% of investment), with museum the least successful (2% of applications, 1% of investment). Other least successful artforms were dance, literature and music, each receiving 6% or less of investment. Mid-scale, non-NPO organisations are currently most successful (35% of funded projects, 41% / £1.21m of investment), and investment into freelancers and small organisations seems to be decreasing – from 63% of applications and 43% of investment in 22/23, to 33% / 10% in 24/25.

¹³ These figures differ to ACE Place and Data Tool figures due to regional allocation and distribution of funding and a change of funding timescales, from standard financial years to academic years.

¹⁴ As Hull is the fundholder, not all funding allocated to Hull will be spent in Hull, with much of it being distributed to the other local authorities.

¹⁵ As Hull is the fund holder for the funding allocation, investment into the area is overinflated in summary datasets as not all funding is retained in Hull

¹⁶ This figure assumes an equal split of funding across local authorities.

Figure 3.5ce NLPG's investment by artform

Artform	2024 - 25	
	£	%
Combined Arts	139,050	13
Dance	28,700	3
Libraries	0	0
Literature	0	0
Museums	0	0
Music	28,890	3
Not discipline specific	442,828	42
Theatre	277,166	27
Visual Arts	127,654	12
Total	2,390,930	100

Source: Arts Council England, 2026¹⁷

From 2020-2025, £419,457 was awarded in HEY via a total of 42 Developing Your Creative Practice (DYCP) Grants, awarded to freelancers¹⁸. DYCP investment in the region has varied over the 22 rounds of funding, with Round 19 seeing the highest level of investment (£67,872). Investment into HEY has been achieved in over three quarters of the rounds (77%, 17 of 22), with success in every round since July 2021¹⁹.

National Lottery Heritage Fund

Over the 2013-2023 period, HEY received a proportionally larger share of public funding through the National Lottery Heritage Fund than the national average: £55 per head versus £42 per head. From 2015 to 2025, HEY received £27.5m in National Lottery Heritage Funding.

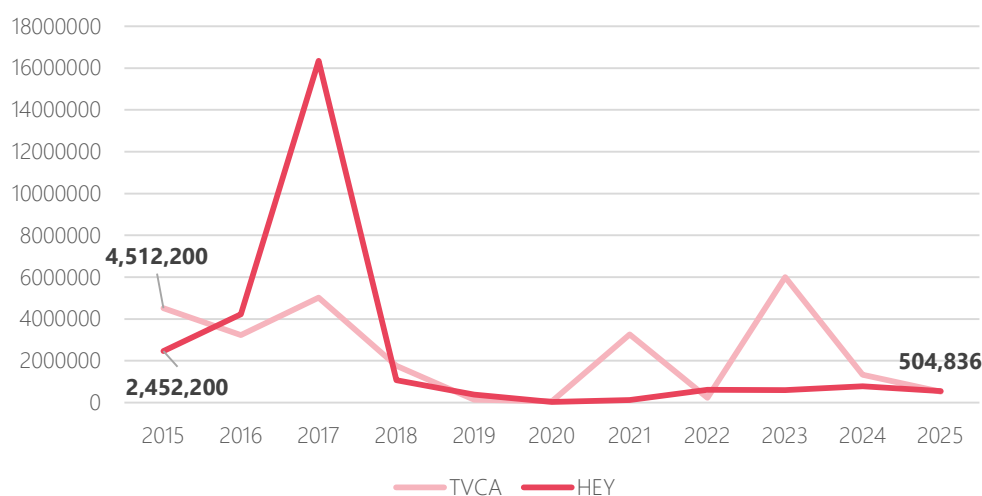
However, as seen in figure 2.5b, the vast majority of this funding was received prior to 2018, in relation to UK City of Culture and Hull Maritime. When looking at 2019 onwards, investment via National Lottery Heritage funding is modest, not keeping pace with either national or Tees Valley comparators.

¹⁷ Arts Council England, [National Investment Dashboard](#), 2026

¹⁸ [Arts Council England \(2025\) Funded Applications](#)

¹⁹ [Arts Council England \(2025\) Funded Applications](#)

Figure 2.5f: National Lottery Heritage Funding for HEY and TVCA between 2015-2025



Source: National Lottery Fund open data

National Lottery Community Fund

The National Lottery Community Fund (TNLCF) does not strictly fund the arts - although it funds community projects that may use the arts as a form of engagement. Since 2014, £4.47m from TNLCF has supported cultural projects, with more recent notable examples including²⁰:

- Goodwin Development Trust (hosting Back To Ours) - Bransholme Chat (2019): £295,000 towards a welcoming community space that offers cultural activities such as dance classes, crafting and a community choir
- Matthew's Hub - Autistic Peer Support (2021): £419,000 to provide arts, crafts, music and animation classes to young people with autism to support the development of their employability skills
- Artlink - Creative Connections (2024): £150,376 to support disabled adults in HEY to access the Artlink Gallery, including accessible weekly cultural activity sessions

In 2025, HEY received a total of £6.1m from TNLCF, a 182% increase of since 2015²¹. It has not been possible to extrapolate whether a similar proportional increase directly to cultural projects has been experienced.

Trusts & Foundations

Analysis of major grant funding for all causes (not exclusive to culture²²) suggests that HEY is underfunded in comparison to both the national average wider average²³ and its Tees Valley comparator²⁴. From 1991-2025, HEY received approximately 78 grants per 10,000 from major grant

²⁰ [360Giving \(2025\) Grant Nav](#)

²¹ Department for Culture, Media & Sport (2025). 'National Lottery grants: data'. [Available here](#).

²² 360Giving collects all funding information since 1991, collating over one million grants. Not all grants are for cultural projects

²³ [360 Just Giving \(2025\) Total amount awarded from major grant funders per head](#)

²⁴ [360 Giving \(2025\) Total count of grants from major grant funders](#)

fundes, in comparison to 115 in Tees Valley and 93 in England²⁵. Per head of population, this amounts to £2,159 in HEY, £3,092 in Tees Valley and £3,508 in England.

²⁵ Calculated by the total combined count of grants awarded per 10,000 of population from the largest national grant giving organisations as published in the 360Giving Datastore. It shows all of the grants awarded since 1991 up until July 2025.

2.6 Case Study – Economic Impact: Bridlington Spa

Owned by East Riding of Yorkshire Local Authority since 1919, Bridlington Spa is a historic culture and business venue featuring a number of multi-purpose spaces. The site has undergone extensive redevelopment since the turn of the millennium, with a complete refurbishment in 2009 and further renovations to the theatre in 2016. Supported by a team of 35 core staff, casual staff of all ages, and passionate, local volunteers, Bridlington Spa aims to **“create meaningful connections between the community, audiences, business and cultures by offering a continuous programme of experiences 364 days a year”**.

“There’s always something going on in the building, so we’re a big driver in the local economy, both culturally and from a corporate perspective”

With an event space capacity of 3,800, the venue is able to host **300 cultural events** and 500 private events a year. These events attract up to **225,000 people annually**, of whom a quarter choose to stay overnight, and many will go on to spend time in the town, supporting the local economy.

Through its diverse event portfolio, Bridlington Spa is able to mitigate the impact of seasonality on the local economy, a challenge indicative of the creative and cultural sector and of coastal towns more widely.

“We are here to generate revenues and big part of our remit is to support the local economy in Bridlington be that the night-time economy or the economy specifically outside of the seasons”

Accessibility is a core value of Bridlington Spa, with the venue hosting BSL signed performances, half price school tickets for children and schools and free film screenings for older people. This ensures that the cultural offer can be accessed by everyone in the region and reflects a commitment to inclusive economic growth.

“I took the decision to half the price of a school pantomime ticket. Quite often, kids who come to the pantomime - it’s probably their first cultural experience. It has a lasting impression on them”

In addition to this, as part of its commitment to supporting the community, Bridlington Spa closes its doors after each show to encourage people to continue their evening in the town, rather than in the venue itself. This ensures that the nighttime economy and hospitality businesses are able to benefit from the increased footfall occurring as a result of the hosting of a popular show or concert.

“We make a conscious decision that once the show’s finished, we close because we want to send everybody into the town and let the nighttime economy reap some of that reward”

The venue is also closely connected to other local cultural organisations such as Sparklers, a theatre group for young people and ARCADE, a community producing company working with underrepresented groups.

“We have values about commitment to customers being innovative, creative, constantly improving, honesty, integrity, passion and fun, and one of my big things is not being afraid to fail.”

3 The Social Impact of Culture in Hull & East Yorkshire



£1.14bn
total annual social value
of culture in HEY



25:1
the return on
investment for every
pound spent on culture



12,954
Volunteers
supporting culture
in HEY each year



£19.2m
of wage-
equivalent
benefits
contributed
to culture by
volunteers in HEY
each year



250+
venues a
year hosting
cultural activity
across HEY



**Heritage
sites**
are the most
common cultural
attendance in HEY,
with **66%** visiting
each year



£15.1m
of wellbeing
benefits received
by volunteers
supporting
culture in HEY
each year

3.1 Summary

Culture has a significant social value in HEY, worth over **£1.14bn** to the region. The vast majority of this (**£1.12bn**) is made up of wellbeing benefits experienced by individuals (including the wellbeing value of engaging with the arts, visiting libraries and volunteering). Wider economic benefits to the value of at least **£22.1m** are realised from willingness to pay for museum visits and wage-equivalent benefits from volunteers. Considering these benefits against costs, a social return on investment of 25:1 is estimated - approximately £25 of social benefit for every £1 invested.

Overall, HEY sees generally **lower levels of cultural engagement** than the national average. **Visiting heritage sites** is the most common form of cultural attendance in HEY (66%), whilst the most common form of cultural participation is **reading** (64%). The lowest level of participation is in dance and choreography, which currently engages just 1% of residents. HEY has 12,954 volunteers in the culture sector annually, contributing £19.2m of wage-equivalent benefits and receiving £15.1m in wellbeing benefits.

HEY, has a unique set of demographic circumstances. A higher proportion of its population than the national average is White, over the age of 65, with the region experiencing a rise in disability of over 50% in the last ten years. More than half of households in HEY experience at least one level of deprivation, which is slightly higher than the national average.

3.2 Demographics of Hull & East Yorkshire

HEY, has a population of 609,228. Overall, population density is low, reflecting that 91% of East Yorkshire is considered rural - significantly higher than the England average of 17%^{26,27}.

HEY's population is characterised by a small female majority (51.3%), marginally higher than the average nationally²⁸. Ethnically, HEY's population is predominantly White British (94.9%), much higher than the national average (81.0%). HEY sees a higher proportional increase in the number of residents reporting a disability (50.5%) compared to the England (44.4%) and Tees Valley (43.2%) average²⁹ with over one in five people reporting a disability. Proportionately, fewer people in HEY report being in 'very good health' (44% in comparison to the national 49%)³⁰. HEY is home to an above average proportion of people aged 65+ (21.5% in HEY compared 19.8% in Tees Valley and 13.4% in England). The region also has over 20% of its population under the age of 20, a smaller proportion than England (23.1%) and Tees Valley (23.5%).

Over half of households in HEY (53%) experience some form of deprivation, with almost one in five (19%) experiencing multiple forms of deprivation. Deprivation varies across the region, with pockets of deprivation in urban, coastal and rural areas. Some urban areas of Hull, and coastal areas of Bridlington, are more deprived than 99% of neighbourhoods nationally³¹. In addition, the collapse of traditional coastal industries like shipbuilding have resulted in high levels of coastal deprivation and a shortage of stable work in these communities³². While rural areas have a lower proportion of relative

²⁶ [DEFRA \(2025\) Rural England](#)

²⁷ [Hull and East Yorkshire Combined Authority: Our Devolution Journey](#)

²⁸ Annual Population Survey (2025) Sex by Local Authority Area

²⁹ Annual Population Survey (2023) T02a:22 EA Core Disabled (current disability) All people

³⁰ [Census \(2021\) General Health](#)

³¹ IMD (2025) Deprivation maps

³² [Key Cities \(2025\) On the waterfront](#)

deprivation, poor connectivity to both physical and digital infrastructure and distributed levels of concentration mean that the challenges faced by rural communities are not always reflected in official statistics³³.

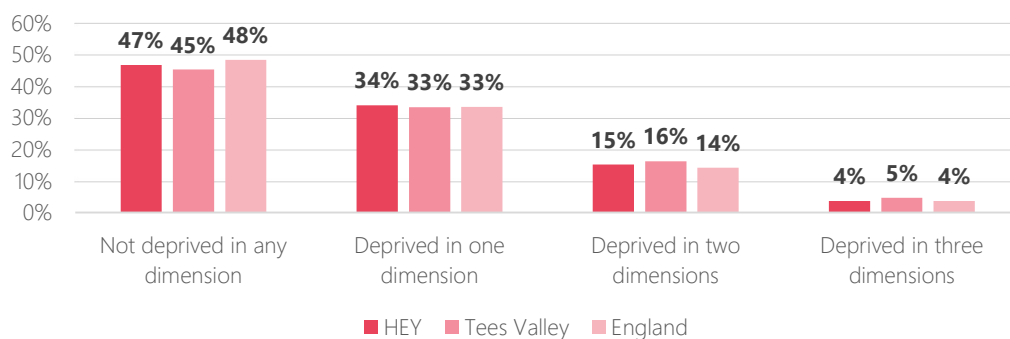
Figure 3.2a: Resident demography

Characteristic	HEY	TVCA	England
Male	48.5%	48.8%	49.1%
Female	51.3%	51.2%	50.9%
White	94.9%	92.1%	81.0%
Non-white or other	5.1%	7.9%	19.0%
Under 20-years-old	21.8%	23.6%	23.0%
Over 65-years-old	21.5%	19.8%	13.4%
Current disability	21.2%	13.7%	27.1%
Deprived in at least one dimension	59.4%	60.8%	57.5%

Census (2021); Annual Population Survey (2023)

The proportion of HEY households experiencing deprivation is comparable with the national average, and slightly higher than comparator Tees Valley. At present, across the nation, those living in deprivation are less likely to participate in culture than their more affluent counterparts³⁴. Inaccessibility (travel and costs), a perception that culture *'isn't for them'* and a lack of access to creative education create barriers³⁵³⁶. Thus, cultural activity that connects to local or personal heritage, or that can be enjoyed by the whole family, is more likely to engage this demographic³⁷.

Figure 3.2b: % of household deprivation (2021)



Source: Census (2021)

³³ [Rural Services Network \(2025\) New IMD acknowledges challenges of measuring rural need](#)

³⁴ CPEC (2025). 'State of the Nation Report'

³⁵ Hull City Council: Arts and Culture Profiles

³⁶ [The Sutton Trust \(2024\) Research reveals stark class inequalities in access to the creative industries](#)

³⁷ [Hull City Council: Arts and Culture Profiles](#)

The importance of local cultural activity is highlighted by the transport barriers faced in the region. Almost a quarter of households (24.1%) in HEY do not have access to a car. While this is in line with national averages, it is compounded by limited or cost prohibitive public transport, particularly in rural areas, which can increase barriers to urban-focused cultural activity.

3.3 Cultural attendance and participation

In line with DCMS definitions, and for the purpose of this section, cultural *attendance* refers solely to visiting a heritage site, museum, gallery, public or mobile library. All other cultural activity, regardless of location or level of active engagement, is defined by DCMS as cultural *participation*, even when common parlance might use attendance-based language e.g. 'attending the theatre'.

Cultural attendance

Visiting a heritage site is the most common form of cultural attendance in HEY³⁸, with 66% having visited a heritage site between 2023 and 2024. This is in line with the English average (66%) and higher than the Tees Valley average (61%), suggesting that the region's heritage assets, many of which are free, successfully attract residents. As HEY is home to an above average proportion of people aged 60-75- who are statistically the most likely to engage with heritage activities - it is perhaps unsurprising that this is the most popular cultural attendance in the region³⁹. Conversely, despite being free, the least common form of cultural attendance in HEY is visiting a library. 22% of residents did so between 2023 and 2024, two percentage points lower than the English average - though three percentage points higher than the Tees Valley average (19%).

Figure 3.3a: Cultural attendance

Activity	National	HEY
Visited a heritage site	66%	66% (-)
Visited a museum or gallery	42%	43% (+1pp)
Visited a public or mobile library	24%	22% (-2pp)

Source: DCMS (2024). 'Participation Survey'.

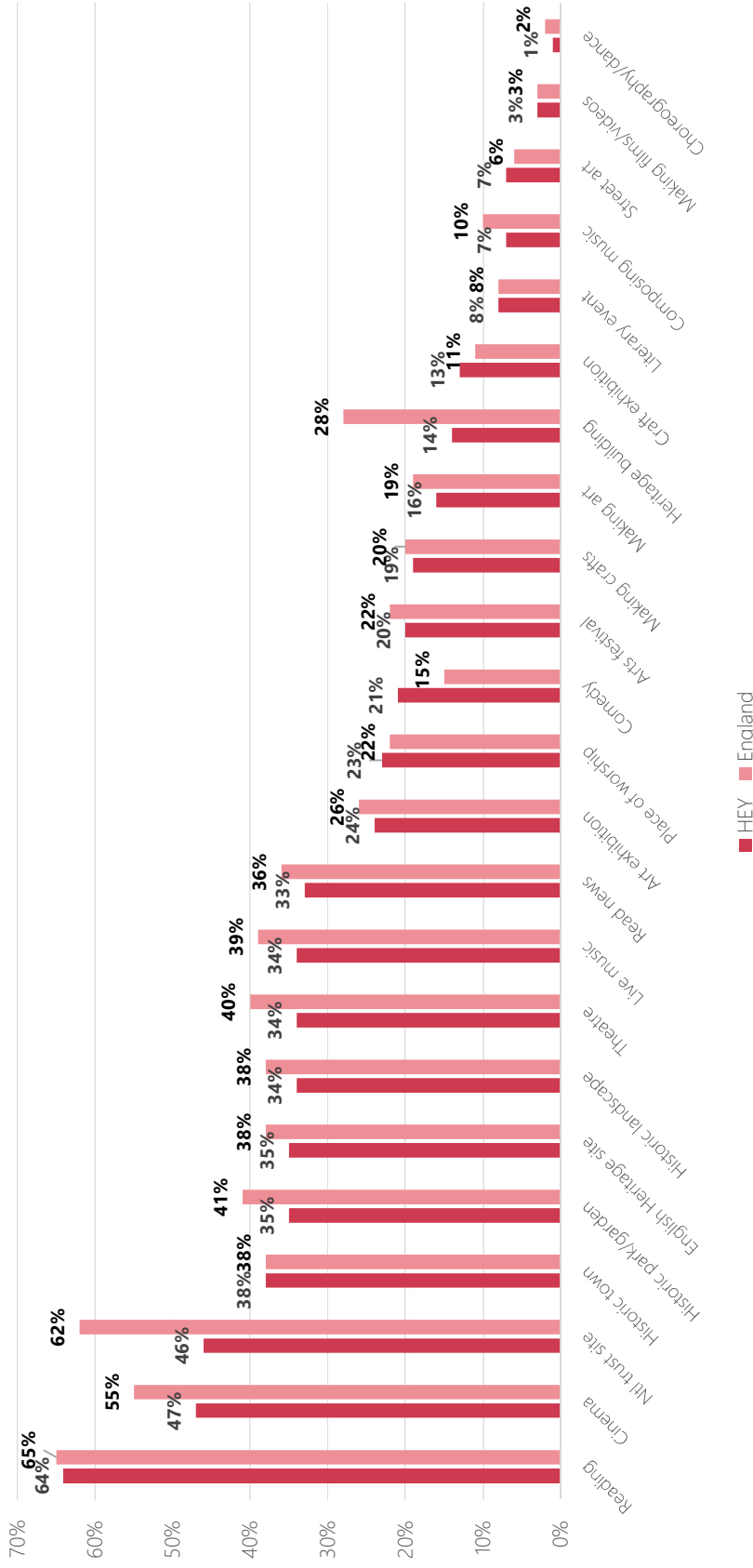
Cultural participation

Cultural participation in HEY is around 3% lower than the national average: 88.4% of people in HEY engaged with the arts in person in the last 12 months, compared to 91% of people nationally. Figure 3.3c shows the rates of cultural participation (as defined by DCMS metrics) in HEY, compared with national averages.

³⁸ [DCMS \(2025\) Participation Survey 2023/24](#)

³⁹ [DCMS \(2025\) Participation Survey 2023/24](#)

Figure 3.3b: Participation against national averages



Source: Creative PEC (2025) [Participation by type](#).⁴⁰

⁴⁰ This dataset presents subcategories of heritage, i.e. National Trust, a Historic Landscape rather than a singular figure for heritage site attendance as presented on the ACE Culture and Place Data Explorer.

Reading is the most common form of cultural participation in HEY (64%). This is followed by cinema attendance (47%), and visits to National Trust sites (46%) and historic towns (38%). All HEY cultural participation levels are below the English average, except attending comedy (+6%), craft exhibitions (+2%), visiting places of worship (+1%) and street art (+1%). Rates of visiting historic towns, attending literary events and making films/videos are all in line with the national average. The largest disparity with the English average was for visiting a National Trust site (-12%). Participation in volunteering in the culture sector is just under 13,000 annually, bringing in £15.1m in wellbeing benefits for volunteers.

Cultural participation varies by demographic. Whilst it has not been possible to analyse this at a HEY level, nationally women are noticeably more likely than men to engage in almost all cultural activities, with the exception of videogaming, composing music and making films. The most significant differences in participation by gender are reading (71% women, 57% men) and theatre (38% women, 22% men).

According to CPEC, nationally the highest rates of cultural participation England comes from the 65 to 69 age group (18.6%) and then 70 to 74 and 25 to 29 age groups (both 18.3%)⁴¹. With a larger than average over 65 population, it could be argued that in HEY the region stands in good stead to address its current under-engagement in culture. Furthermore, with over 20% of HEY's population under the age of 20, and with this cohort more likely than others to engage digitally, a strong digital offer could be important to maximise cultural engagement.⁴²

In respect to ethnicity, cultural participation nationally is currently strongest within those from White British backgrounds (91%), and those from Black and Asian backgrounds have the lowest participation rates (80%). Artform specific discrepancies are particularly stark: 42% of White people engaged with live music in 2023, in comparison to 23% of Black people⁴³; 70% of White people visited a heritage site in 2023 in comparison to 49% of Black people⁴⁴. These national insights could inform further research or engagement with HEY's global majority populations to understand levels of cultural participation.

Non-disabled adults have higher physical cultural participation and attendance rates than disabled adults (92% compared to 86%)⁴⁵. Given that 1 in 5 people in HEY live with disability, improved access and strategic engagement focused on this cohort could have significant impacts on cultural participation rates. Disabled people are more likely to report engaging with activities relating to literature than any other cultural activities⁴⁶. With rates of disability in HEY increasing at a more rapid rate than the national average, literature activities may be particularly popular in HEY⁴⁷.

3.4 Measuring the social value of culture

Engaging in arts and culture has been proven, through regional, national and international studies, to have a number of health and wellbeing benefits for individuals, thereby contributing value to society. Participation in the arts can help to build social cohesion through engagement in community spaces and developing social relationships⁴⁸. Further, studies have found that:

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² CPEC (2025) State of the Nation Report

⁴³ CPEC (2025) Increasing inequality in arts and culture revealed by new research

⁴⁴ DCMS (2024) Participation in the arts, culture and heritage

⁴⁵ Digital participation rates for non-disabled and disabled adults are at the same level

⁴⁶ CPEC (2025) State of the Nation Report

⁴⁷ Annual Population Survey (2025) Disability and/or health condition

⁴⁸ [Frontiers in Public Health \(2025\) Relationships between arts participation, social cohesion and well-being](#)

- Those who engage in arts and culture activities at least once every few months are 32% less likely to develop depression⁴⁹
- Active engagement in the arts reduces cognitive decline and improves quality of life in older populations⁵⁰
- Participating in movement-based arts, such as dance or outdoor photography, can reduce frailty, improve physical mobility, and reduce chronic pain⁵¹
- Engagement with grassroots arts projects can support children and young people to develop resilience to extremist and polarising thinking, resulting in greater pro-social relationships and social cohesion⁵²

The table below presents the nationally recognised individual wellbeing value of engaging in culture, with some artform specific detail where available⁵³. The value of engagement was quantified by Fujiwara in 2014 – for the purpose of this research, the values used to assess value have been inflated in line with the Bank of England, in order to provide 2025 prices. The same recognised measures for sport are provided as a comparison.

Figure 3.4a: Value of engagement (per person) in culture and sports

Model & variables	Value (annual)	Value (monthly)	Value (monthly, 2025) ⁵⁴
Culture			
All arts (participation)	£1,084	£90	£124
All audience (audience)	£935	£78	£107
Audience			
Music	£742	£62	£85
Plays	£999	£83	£114
Participation			
Dance	£1,761	£139	£192
Craft	£1,020	£85	£117
Sports			
All sports	£1,127	£94	£130
Team sports	£1,127	£94	£130
Individual sports	£828	£69	£95
Swimming	£1,630	£136	£187

Source: Fujiwara et al, Quantifying and Valuing the Wellbeing Impacts of Culture and Sport, 2014

⁴⁹ University College London (2023) how the arts can support mental health and wellbeing in adulthood.

⁵⁰ Frontiers in Psychology (2023) The role of arts engagement in reducing cognitive decline and improving quality of life in healthy older people.

⁵¹ DCMS (2024) Culture and Heritage Capital: Monetising the Impact of Culture and Heritage on Health and Wellbeing

⁵² Creative Australia (2025) Next Generation Now Benefits of the arts for children and young people.

⁵³ These art-form specific values were not directly used in our approach to quantifying the impact of cultural activity, but they provide useful impact values for cultural activity that could be used by regional creative organisations.

⁵⁴ Inflated to 2025 prices via Bank of England Inflation Calculator (April 2025 prices). Available [here](#)

The table below shows the value of engagement in culture and sports per activity. Notably the value per engagement in an arts activity is higher than sports albeit due to the lower annual frequency.

Figure 3.4b: Value of engagement in culture and sports per activity

Model	Average frequency (annual)	Value (annual)	Value per activity
Sports	104	£1,127	£10.84
Culture	15-20	£935	£46.75-£62.33 ⁵⁵

Source: Fujiwara et al, Quantifying and Valuing the Wellbeing Impacts of Culture and Sport, 2014

3.5 Social value of culture in Hull & East Yorkshire

The social value of culture in HEY has been calculated as **£1.14bn** per year in total. When analysed against public investment into culture in HEY⁵⁶, the benefits generate a social return on investment of approximately 25:1 - i.e. **a £25 social benefit for every £1 invested in culture in HEY**. This calculation is an estimate and should be treated with caution, but demonstrates the significant impact that arts and cultural activity are having in HEY.

These figures have been derived from a number of streams of inquiry. It is important to note that the figures presented are **based on the data available**. It has only been possible to make estimations where a) there are existing, nationally recognised monetary values available to quantify the social value of the engagement, and b) there is sufficient data to provide an estimate for the number of people engaging in the activity in HEY.

In line with the metrics available, **the social value of museum and library engagement have had to be calculated separately to wider cultural engagement**. In doing so, the figures presented appear modest, particularly in relation to the significance of these sectors across HEY, as they do not benefit from agglomeration effects. **They are likely to be significant under-estimates**. As such, it is not suggested that the value of arts 'versus' museums or libraries are compared, particularly given that a significant amount of non-museum and non-library specific cultural participation takes place in these settings, e.g. performances in libraries, visual art exhibitions in museums.

Furthermore, it cannot be assumed that the value calculated accounts for the impact of arts and culture on specific subgroups, especially those where the impact could be much larger and more profound, e.g. those experiencing mental or physical health issues. For example, those who attend galleries or museums at least every few months have a 49% lower risk of developing dementia⁵⁷. With 12,482 people in HEY expected to be diagnosed by 2030, and £522m expected to be spent in the region on dementia care, it is arguable that increasing sustained engagement in culture amongst this specific target group could result in savings of up to £255m⁵⁸.

⁵⁵ For our impact modelling, we have used the midpoint of this range (£54.54).

⁵⁶ This assumes 24/25 levels of investment (or previous levels of investment, inflated to 24/25 prices) from ACE, NHLF, NLCF and local authorities

⁵⁷ British Journal of Psychiatry (2018) Cultural engagement and cognitive reserve: museum attendance and dementia incidence over 10-years

⁵⁸ Alzheimer's Society (2025) Local dementia statistics

Social value of engaging with the arts⁵⁹ in HEY

Our calculations estimate that engagement with the arts, exclusive of library and heritage visits, has a social value worth **£1,077.1m** per year in HEY. This has been estimated by applying a nationally recognised social value of engagement in arts and cultural activity⁶⁰ to the proportion of HEY's population that have engaged in arts and culture in the past year^{61,62}. As Fujiwara's value is per engagement, national proportions from the Participation Survey (2023/24) regarding the frequency of engagements have been applied to the proportion of the HEY population engaging with arts⁶³.

Figure 3.5a: Social value of culture in HEY

Measure	Value (£m)
Value to individuals engaging with the arts	£1,077.1

Source: Kada Research Modelling (2025)

Social value of library visits and museum visits in HEY

The benefits of engaging with libraries and museums are quantified separately. Data from the Annual Population Survey (2023/24) and the Participation Survey (2023/24) was used to estimate the HEY cohort visiting a library over the past year. The number of frequent library visits was estimated using data from the DCMS Participant Survey, which states that 10% nationally reported using a library once a month, and 5% reported visiting twice a month or more. It was therefore assumed that 15% of those who visited a library in the past year were frequent users (once a month or more). A monthly wellbeing value⁶⁴ was then applied to this group to capture the annual benefit associated with frequent library use in HEY. Library engagement in HEY is thus estimated to have a social value of **£30.4m** per year. HEY's library engagement is significantly below the national average. Should library engagement in HEY increase to be in line with the national average, this £30.4m would increase by £4m (13%) to £34.4m.

Available data has also been used to quantify the social value impact of museum visits in HEY. It should be noted that the value of attending a museum is calculated differently to the engagement in the arts and library visits. Rather than a wellbeing value, the national benchmark value available is a 'willingness to pay' measure, which gives a lower benefit per visit. This was applied to the number of individuals in HEY that have visited a museum over the past year. To accommodate for some visitors having visited more than once, proportions of attendance from a National Museum Directors' Council survey were applied. The social value of museum visits in HEY was thus calculated to be **£2.9m** per annum.

⁵⁹ Engagement in the arts includes attending an exhibition, play, drama, music performance, dance event and watching a film. The benefit value of engagement with the arts is based on aggregate impact figures from different types of arts activities so cannot be broken down.

⁶⁰ [Quantifying and valuing the wellbeing impacts of sport and culture, Fujiwara, Kudrna, Dolan](#), Table 7, Value of engagement in culture and sports per activity, All audience arts value (in 2025 prices).

⁶¹ Annual Population Survey, Population aged 16 and over

⁶² Participation Survey (2023/24), DCMS and ACE, Data tables accessed [here](#), HEY proportions accessed via ACE tool accessed [here](#).

⁶³ Participation Survey (2023/24), DCMS and ACE, Data tables accessed [here](#).

⁶⁴ [Quantifying and valuing the wellbeing impacts of sport and culture, Fujiwara, Kudrna, Dolan](#), Table 6, Value of engagement (per person) in culture and sports, Visit libraries frequently value (in 2025 prices).

Figure 3.5b: Social value of museum and library visits in HEY

Measure	Impact value (£m)
Value of frequent library visits	£30.4
Value of visiting a museum	£2.9

Source: Kada Research Modelling (2025)

It is also possible to hypothesise potential health and wellbeing benefits of engagement with heritage assets in HEY. For example, by applying nationally recognised figures on the impact of heritage engagement on individual wellbeing, and the reduction of mental health and long-term care costs^{65,66} to the percentage of people in the region accessing talking therapies, a 'heritage prescription' for those same individuals could be worth up to £69m to HEY.

3.6 Cultural Venues & Heritage Assets

In 2023 Kada Research conducted an audit of cultural venues in Hull⁶⁷. This audit adopted a mix methods approach incorporating an online survey for facility managers, the use of venue lists, stakeholder insights, a manual online desk review and intelligence from a range of sources (lists of libraries and community venues for example). We identified obvious candidates (theatres, music venues, etc) as well as spaces where the hosting of events was not the primary purpose, for example, restaurants, hotels, stadiums, etc. The analysis identified over 160 spaces or assets offering activities permanently, temporarily or occasionally. The variety is immense, from Grade 1 listed buildings to cutting edge, purpose-built facilities, from meanwhile and temporary facilities to portacabins. There are cultural hotspots, with a high concentration of specialised assets in the city centre, with greater dispersal of community centres and libraries. An audit of cultural venues in East Riding of Yorkshire has not yet been undertaken; however, local knowledge supports that there are over 100 venues in which culture takes place each year.

In conjunction with the number of cultural venues found in Hull and East Yorkshire, the heritage offering is strong. The sub-region has a total of 183 heritage buildings, including faith buildings, manors, bridges and other structures of architectural or historical importance⁶⁸. This is equivalent to 4.38 heritage buildings per 1,000 residents. This is greater proportion than Tees Valley (2.81), but lower than the national average of 6.64. As engagement in heritage in HEY is high, with approximately 66% of all residents visiting a site in the last 12 months, this suggests that the heritage offer is both accessible and well-used. Historic buildings and heritage are important sources of pride of place. The Taking Part Survey found that history was cited by over a third of respondents as a key driver in being proud to be British⁶⁹. This was further supported by the 'What England Thinks' report, which found historic buildings induce greater pride of place in the UK than other institutions such as sports teams and pubs⁷⁰.

⁶⁵Historic England (2017) Therapeutic effect of art and heritage

⁶⁶Royal college of Psychiatry (2025), Access to NHS Talking Therapy

⁶⁷ Kada Research Analysis 2023, Report available [here](#)

⁶⁸ Historic England: National Heritage List: England

⁶⁹ DCMS (2019) Things that make adults proud of Britain

⁷⁰ [The Policy Institute: Levelling Up: What England Thinks](#)

3.7 Case Study - Humber Street Sesh

Humber Street Sesh is an annual music festival held in the city of Hull, born out of a weekly live music night 'The Session' and evolving into Hull's biggest music festival. The event has been running since 2012 and organisers describe it as "giving a platform to emerging musicians, artists, graffiti artists and photographers".

Collaboration is key to the festival's success, with around 1,500 people (including artists and crew) working on the day - and just four full-time staff members. The event features live acts across multiple stages and a free fringe area that takes place at the dry dock, cultivating performance and art across the city.

The festival has a significant positive impact on the community, generating a social value of £1,061,118 in 2023⁷¹. This encompassed all social, environmental and economic impacts of the event, with the environmental impact generating the most value of over £500,000. In 2022, the festival signed up to the Oh Yes! Net Zero Campaign. Through this, the festival works with local companies to reduce its carbon footprint while supporting Hull's economy. All stages are provided by local suppliers, generators run on hydro-treated vegetable oil, free water refill stations help reduce plastic use, and bamboo wristbands limit wastage.

"Again, working with local contractors and predominantly local bands... that all helps our environmental impact."

Welcoming approximately 40,000 visitors in 2025, Humber Street Festival is an inclusive cultural celebration focused on building community. Residents and local businesses are offered complimentary tickets, recognising the festival's impact on the area. The audience spans all ages, with children under 12 attending free.

"On the day you see so many people of all different ages. There's kids with their grandads and grandmas and being together and having a really good community day out and dancing, the actual day itself is a joy, especially when the sun shines."

The festival partners with various colleges across Hull and East Riding to provide opportunity for local students to showcase their work as well as engaging with outreach work to give students a better understanding of being involved in the music industry. To further community inclusion, the event offers volunteering opportunities for young people and local volunteers to work on the stages and set up of the festival.

"We try and provide as much opportunity within the festival for local colleges and for the bands to play their student work on stage... We work with East Riding College as well; their bands play on the rock stage as well as working on the stage in the form of stagecraft."

The festival's reach extends beyond Hull through its partnership with Hull Trains, offering free train travel for attendees and encouraging greener transport options. Visitors travel from Doncaster, Grimsby, Bridlington and York. The festival aims to provide artists with the opportunity to showcase their talent whilst promoting Hull and the wider region through its music.

"It's just going back to that, putting the region on the map musically."

⁷¹ [Humber Street Sesh, Social Value](#)

4 Conclusion

This report reflects the unique impact of culture in Hull and East Yorkshire, highlighting its economic and social value, alongside showcasing levels of participation across different demographics, and key opportunities and challenges.

The economic strength of HEY's cultural sector is clear, **contributing over £101m** to the region each year and supporting **over 2,100 jobs** and **365 businesses**. The number of cultural businesses has increased in the last decade, with the sector proving relatively resilient to the pandemic, although the sector is currently growing more slowly than the national average. The workforce is largely concentrated in performing arts, library services and museum activities, highlighting the strong regional offer in this area.

The sector is supported by significant funding, most notably **Arts Council England**, whose funding in the region has increased 7% since 2018. **This rate keeps pace with neither inflation, nor the average increase experienced nationally.** Currently, the region receives around **£10.03 per head** – around a quarter less than average.

Culture has a plethora of positive social impacts beyond its impact on the economy. Equitable access to culture is linked to stronger social cohesion, increased pride of place and more positive mental and physical health outcomes. The overall **social value of culture in HEY is calculated at £1.1bn**. This relates to a **social return on investment of 25:1** - £25 of social benefit for every £1 invested.

Overall, HEY sees generally **lower levels of cultural engagement than the national average** (88.4% vs 91%). Visiting heritage sites is the most common form of cultural attendance in HEY (66%), whilst the most common form of cultural participation is reading (64%). The region sees strong rates of cultural volunteering, with over 12,000 residents contributing to culture in their community.

Though the strengths and benefits of culture are made clear throughout this report, there are participation gaps across HEY. Harnessing further opportunities to advance culture in the region requires sustained funding, the expansion of community-based support and access to cultural opportunities regardless of age and household income. Targeted action to expand and encourage participation and grow the sector will further enhance the evident social and economic value of culture in HEY. This is particularly clear when considering HEY's unique set of demographic circumstances, which sees a higher proportion of its population than the national average being over the age of 65, a rate of disability increasing faster than the national average, and some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the UK.

5 Annex – sector definition

The following SIC codes have been agreed upon and used where possible to generate the data for this report:

- 32120: Manufacture of jewellery and related articles
- 32130: Manufacture of imitation jewellery and related articles
- 47781: Retail sale in commercial art galleries
- 58110: Book publishing
- 59111: Motion picture production activities
- 59112: Video production activities
- 59113: Television programme production activities
- 59120: Motion picture, video and television programme post-production activities
- 59131: Motion picture distribution activities
- 59132: Video distribution activities
- 59133: Television programme distribution activities
- 59140: Motion picture projection activities
- 59200: Sound recording and music publishing activities
- 60100: Radio broadcasting
- 60200: Television programming and broadcasting activities
- 74100: Specialised design activities
- 74201: Portrait photographic activities
- 74202: Other specialist photography (not including portrait photography)
- 74203: Film processing
- 74209: Other photographic activities
- 82301: Activities of exhibition and fair organizers
- 85520: Cultural education
- 90010: Performing arts
- 90020: Support activities to performing arts
- 90030: Artistic creation
- 90040: Operation of arts facilities
- 91011: Library activities
- 91012: Archive activities
- 91020: Museum activities
- 91030: Operation of historical sites and buildings and similar visitor attractions

As referenced throughout the report, sector data varies both in quality and level of specificity, and as such data is not always available at the most granular level (five-digit SIC) for economic performance indicators. In these instances, the best available data has been used.

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