Taking Part 2016/17:
LITERATURE
This report provides an overview of engagement in literature by adults living in England.

Data is taken from the Taking Part Survey 2016/17 and makes comparisons with earlier years.

All statistically significant differences are noted in the text and on the charts:
- a statistically significant difference is a difference which is probably true and not due to chance
- a non statistically significant difference is probably not a true difference and is likely to be due to chance

* indicates a statistically significant difference between 2016/17 and the earliest survey year shown.

---- indicates the period in which statistical significance has been tested. In this report, significance testing has been applied between 2010/11 and 2016/17.

More information about the Taking Part Survey can be found in Appendix A. A Technical Note on the survey is in Appendix B.
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Key findings

- Overall, over one in ten (12.4 per cent) adults in England had engaged in literature in 2016/17 – a statistically significant increase since 2010/11 (fig 1). Both attendance (fig 10) and participation (fig 11) in literature significantly increased between 2010/11 and 2016/17.

- Between 2010/11 and 2016/17 engagement increased across:
  - Gender – both men and women (fig 3).
  - Age – all age groups (apart from 16-24) (fig 4).
  - Disability status – those with a disability and no disability (fig 5).
  - Ethnicity – white adults only (fig 6).
  - Socio-economic group – upper and lower groups (fig 7).
  - Location – both urban or rural location (fig 8).

- Regionally, engagement increased in the West Midlands, South East and South West between 2010/11 and 2016/17 (fig 9a).

- In 2016/17, adults in the North East and Yorkshire and Humberside were significantly less likely to have engaged in literature, and adults in London were significantly more likely to have engaged in literature (fig 9b).

- In 2016/17, gender, socio-economic group and region were significant factors in an adult’s likelihood to engage in literature.

- Specific changes to literature engagement included an increase in the proportion of adults in England who were a member of a book club between 2010/11 and 2016/17 – 2.0 per cent to 3.9 per cent respectively (fig 14).
Literature

The Taking Part survey asks adults in England about whether they have engaged in a range of literature events and activities in the past 12 months. For the purposes of this profile, engagement in literature is defined as having participated in or attended at least one activity or event listed below in the past year.

**Literature events:**
- Event connected with books or writing

**Literature activities:**
- Written any stories or plays
- Written any poetry
- Been a member of a book club

Taking Part also asks about reading for pleasure (not including newspapers and magazines).
Engagement in literature

Between 2010/11 and 2016/17 there was a statistically significant increase in the proportion of adults who had engaged in literature – 10.0 per cent and 12.4 per cent respectively.

Figure 1 – Engagement in literature in the past 12 months
Figure 2 outlines how adults in England engaged with literature; whether through attendance of literature events, participation in literature activities, both or neither.

There had been a **statistically significant increase** in proportion of adults who had ‘**only participated**’ in literature since 2010/11 and a significant **decrease** in adults who had **no engagement**.

**Figure 2 – Engagement in literature**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2010/11</th>
<th>2016/17</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neither attend or participate</td>
<td>90.0%</td>
<td>87.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend and participate</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only participate</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only attend</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Significant difference
Engagement in literature by gender

Between 2010/11 and 2016/17 there was a **statistically significant increase** in the proportion of both **men** and the proportion of **women** who had engaged in literature.

Likewise 2016/17, **gender was a significant factor** in an adult’s likelihood to engage in literature.

*Figure 3 – Engagement in literature by gender*
Engagement in literature by age group

Between 2010/11 and 2016/17 there was a **statistically significant increase** across **all age groups other than 16-24** who had engaged in literature.

However in 2016/17, age group was not a significant factor in an adult’s likelihood to engage in literature.

*Figure 4 – Engagement in literature by age group*
Engagement in literature by disability

Between 2010/11 and 2016/17 there was a **statistically significant increase** in literature engagement among adults that **had a long standing disability** and those that **did not have a long standing disability**.

However in 2016/17, disability status was not a significant factor in an adult’s likelihood to engage in literature.

*Figure 5 – Engagement in literature by disability*
Engagement in literature by ethnic group

Between 2010/11 and 2016/17 there was a **statistically significant increase** in literature engagement among adults in the white ethnic group. However engagement of adults in other ethnic groups was similar across this period.

However in 2016/17, ethnic group was not a significant factor in an adult’s likelihood to engage in literature.

*Figure 6 – Engagement in literature by ethnic group*
Engagement in literature by socio-economic group

Between 2010/11 and 2016/17 there was a **statistically significant increase** in literature engagement among adults in the both the **upper socio-economic group** and **lower socio-economic group**.

Likewise in 2016/17, **socio-economic group was a significant factor** in an adult’s likelihood to engage in literature.

*Figure 7 – Engagement in literature by socio-economic group*
Engagement in literature by urban/rural

Between 2010/11 and 2016/17 there was a statistically significant increase in literature engagement among adults who lived in both urban and rural locations.

However in 2016/17, urban or rural location was not a significant factor in an adult’s likelihood to engage in literature.

Figure 8 – Engagement in literature by urban or rural location
Engagement in literature by region

Between 2010/11 and 2016/17 there was a **statistically significant increase** in literature engagement among adults who lived in the **West Midlands, South East and South West**.

Likewise in 2016/17, an adult’s **region was a significant factor** in an adult’s likelihood to engage in literature.

*Figure 9 – Engagement in literature by region*
In 2016/17, 12.4 per cent of adults in England had engaged in literature.

Regions where engagement was significantly higher than the national average:

- London – 16.4 per cent

Regions where engagement was significantly lower than the national average:

- North East – 7.2 per cent
- Yorkshire and Humberside – 9.4 per cent

All other regions were statistically similar to the national average.
**Literature attendance**

Between 2010/11 and 2016/17 there was a small but *statistically significant increase* in the proportion of adults who had attended an event related to books or reading – from 3.8 per cent to 4.6 per cent.

*Figure 10 – Attended a literature event at least once in the past 12 months*
Participation in literature

Between 2010/11 and 2016/17 there was a statistically significant increase in proportion of adults had participated in literature – 7.5 per cent and 9.5 per cent respectively.

Figure 11 – Participated in literature at least once in the past 12 months
Written a story or play

In 2010/11 and 2016/17 a similar proportion of adults had written a story or play in the past year – 3.1 per cent and 3.2 per cent respectively.

Figure 12 – Written a story or play in the past year
Written poetry

In 2010/11 and 2016/17 a similar proportion of adults had written poetry in the past year – 3.7 per cent and 3.8 per cent respectively.

Figure 13 – Written poetry in the past year
Been a member of a book club

Between 2010/11 and 2016/17 there was a statistically significant increase in the proportion of adults who had been a member of a book club in the past year – from 2.0 per cent to 3.9 per cent.

Figure 14 – Been a member of a book club the past year
Reading for pleasure

Between 2010/11 and 2016/17 the same proportion of adults who had read for pleasure (not magazines or newspapers) in the past year – from 62.3 per cent.

Figure 15 – Read for pleasures at least once in the past 12 months
Appendix A - About the Taking Part survey

Taking Part is a major, continuous survey of cultural and sport participation in England, commissioned by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport in partnership with Arts Council England, Sport England and Historic England.

Every year it collects detailed information from adults (aged 16 and over) in England about their attendance at a wide variety of arts events, museums, galleries, libraries and heritage sites, and about their participation in creative activities and sport in the last 12 months. The survey has been conducted since July 2005 and since 2008 there has also been a child survey.

Findings from Taking Part, including national trends and some regional analysis, are released twice a year by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. An annual report summarises trends over the financial year. All these reports can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-culture-media-sport/series/taking-part

In March 2016 DCMS published a strategy outlining proposed developments to the Taking Part survey over the next five years: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/taking-part-a-strategy-for-the-next-five-years
**Appendix B - Technical note**

**Arts Engagement**

‘Engagement’ in the arts is calculated by looking at attendance and/or participation in a range of arts events and activities. Adult ‘engagement’ is calculated by the proportion of adults who engage in the arts at least once in the past 12 months, whether it is through attending arts events, participating in arts activities, or through a mixture of both. This includes any of the following activities or events:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dancing – ballet or other literature (not for fitness)</td>
<td>Visual arts exhibition (e.g. paintings, photography or sculpture)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singing – live performance, rehearsal or practice (not karaoke)</td>
<td>Craft exhibition (not crafts market)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing a musical instrument – live performance, rehearsal, practice or playing for own pleasure</td>
<td>Event that includes video or digital art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing music</td>
<td>Event connected with books or writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre – live performance, rehearsal or practice</td>
<td>Street arts (art in everyday surroundings such as parks, streets or shopping centre)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opera or musical theatre - live performance, rehearsal or practice</td>
<td>Public arts display or installation (an artwork such as a sculpture which is outdoors or in a public place)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnival (e.g. as a musician, literaturer or costume maker)</td>
<td>Circus (not animals)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street arts (art in everyday surrounding such as parks, streets, shopping centre)</td>
<td>Carnival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circus skills (not animals) – performance, learning or practice</td>
<td>Culturally specific festival (e.g. Mela, Baisakhi, Navratri)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual arts (e.g. painting, drawing, printmaking or sculpture)</td>
<td>Theatre (e.g. play, drama, pantomime)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photography (as an artistic activity, not family or holiday snaps)</td>
<td>Opera or musical theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film or video – making as an artistic activity (not family or holidays)</td>
<td>Live performances (e.g. classical, jazz or other live musical event but not karaoke)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craft – any craft activity (e.g. textiles, wood, mental work, pottery, calligraphy)</td>
<td>Creative writing – original literature (e.g. stories, poems or plays)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book club – being a member of one</td>
<td>Live literature event (e.g. ballet, African People’s literature, South Asian, Chinese, Contemporary or other live literature event).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Data conventions

The figures in this report are rounded to the nearest decimal place – therefore the totals may not always add up to 100 per cent.

Statistically significant differences on the charts:

* indicates a statistically significant difference between 2016/17 and the earliest survey year shown.

---- indicates the period in which statistical significance has been tested. In this report, significance testing has been applied between 2010/11 and 2016/17.
Statistical significance

Significance testing has been used to identify where differences are statistically significant at the 95 per cent level and not due to chance. Only where the differences are significant are they noted in the text and on the charts. A significant increase or decrease at the 95 per cent level means that there is less than a 5 per cent (1 in 20) chance that the difference observed within the sampled respondents is not representative of the population as a whole.

Weighting

The data are weighted to ensure the representativeness of the Taking Part sample. Weighting is based on mid-2016 population estimates from the Office for National Statistics.