Taking Part 2016/17: THEATRE
This report provides an overview of engagement in theatre 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, around four in ten (37.9 per cent) adults in England had **engaged in theatre** in 2016/17 – a statistically similar proportion as 2010/11 (fig 1).

- In 2016/17, nearly four in ten (37.4 per cent) adults in England had **attended theatre** – a similar proportion to 2010/11 (fig 10).

- A similar proportion of adults had **participated in theatre** between 2010/11 and 2016/17 – 2.2 per cent and 1.9 per cent respectively (fig 14).

- In 2016/17, significant factors affecting theatre engagement included **gender, age, disability status, ethnic group, socio-economic group** and **region** (fig 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 9 respectively).

- Looking at engagement by region over this period, there was a statistically significant **decrease** in theatre engagement in **Yorkshire and Humberside** (fig 9a).

- In 2016/17, adults in the **South East** were significantly **more likely** to have engaged in theatre than the national average. Adults in **Yorkshire, the North East and North West** were significantly **less likely** to have engaged in theatre (fig 9b).

- Specific changes to theatre engagement include:
  
  - **Attendance of musical theatre** – a **decrease** between 2010/11 and 2016/17 (fig 13).
  - **Participation in musical theatre, opera or an operetta** – a **decrease** between 2010/11 (1.0 per cent) and 2016/17 (0.8 per cent) (fig 16).
Theatre

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

**Theatre events:**
- Play or drama
- Pantomime
- Musical theatre

**Theatre activities:**
- Rehearsed or performed in a play or drama
- Rehearsed or performed in an opera, operetta or musical theatre
Engagement in theatre

A statistically similar proportion of adults in England engaged in theatre in 2010/11 and 2016/17 – 39.6 per cent and 37.9 per cent respectively.

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

Between 2010/11 and 2016/17 there were no statistically significant changes in the way that adults engaged with theatre.

*Figure 2 – Engagement in theatre*
Engagement in theatre by gender

Between 2010/11 and 2016/17 there was a statistically **significant decrease** in the proportion **men** who had engaged in theatre. There was no change in the proportion of women’s engagement over this period.

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

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

Between both 2010/11 and 2016/17 there was no significant changes in proportion of adults who engaged in theatre by age group.

However in 2016/17, age was a significant factor in an adult’s likelihood to engage in theatre.

Figure 4 – Engagement in theatre by age group
Engagement in theatre by disability

Between 2010/11 and 2016/17 a similar proportion of adults engaged in theatre, regardless of disability status.

However in 2016/17, disability status was a significant factor in an adult’s likelihood to engage in theatre.

Figure 5 – Engagement in theatre by disability
Engagement in theatre by ethnic group

Between 2010/11 and 2016/17 a similar proportion of adults engaged in theatre, regardless of ethnic group.

However in 2016/17, **ethnic group was a significant factor** in an adult’s likelihood to engage in theatre.

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

In 2010/11 and 2016/17 a similar proportion of adults engaged in theatre, both in the upper and lower socio-economic groups.

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

**Figure 7 – Engagement in theatre by socio-economic group**

![Bar chart showing engagement in theatre by socio-economic group for 2010/11 and 2016/17.](chart)

- **Upper NS-SEC**:
  - 2010/11: 49.1%
  - 2016/17: 47.1%

- **Lower NS-SEC**:
  - 2010/11: 26.1%
  - 2016/17: 24.9%
Engagement in theatre by urban/rural

In 2010/11 and 2016/17 a similar proportion of adults engaged in theatre, both in the urban and rural areas.

In 2016/17, living in an urban or rural area was not a significant factor in an adult’s likelihood to engage in theatre.

Figure 8 – Engagement in theatre by urban or rural location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010/11</td>
<td>38.6%</td>
<td>43.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016/17</td>
<td>37.2%</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Engagement in theatre by region

Figure 9a provides an overview of engagement in theatre by region. Between 2010/11 and 2016/17 there was a statistically significant decrease of adults in Yorkshire and Humberside engaged in theatre there was no significant changes by region.

However in 2016/17, region was a significant factor in an adult’s likelihood to engage in theatre.

Figure 9a – Engagement in theatre by region
In 2016/17, 37.9 per cent of adults in England had engaged in theatre.

Regions where engagement was **significantly higher** than the national average:

- South East – 45.6 per cent

Regions where engagement was **significantly lower** than the national average:

- Yorkshire and Humberside – 31.1 per cent
- North East – 32.7 per cent
- North West – 33.0 per cent

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

A similar proportion of adults in England had attended the theatre in 2010/11 and 2016/17 – 39.2 per cent and 37.4 per cent respectively.

*Figure 10 – Attended a theatre event at least once in the past 12 months*
Attended a play or drama

In 2010/11 and 2016/17 a similar proportion of adults had attended a play or drama in the past year – 22.0 per cent and 21.4 per cent respectively.

Figure 11 – Attended a play or drama in the past 12 months
Attended a pantomime

In 2010/11 and 2016/17 a similar proportion of adults had attended a pantomime in the past year – 12.6 per cent and 13.3 per cent respectively.

Figure 12 – Attended a pantomime at least once in the past 12 months
Attended musical theatre

Between 2010/11 and 2016/17 there was a statistically significant decrease in the proportion of adults in England who had attended musical theatre – from 22.4 per cent to 19.9 per cent.

Figure 13 – Attended musical theatre at least once in the past 12 months
Participation in theatre

In 2010/11 and 2016/17 a similar proportion of adults had participated in theatre in the past year – 2.2 per cent and 1.9 per cent respectively.

Figure 14 – Participated in theatre at least once in the past 12 months
Rehearsed or performed in a play or drama

In 2010/11 and 2016/17 a similar proportion of adults had rehearsed or performed in a play/drama in the past year – 1.6 per cent and 1.5 per cent respectively.

Figure 15 – Rehearsed or performed in a play or drama in the past year
Rehearsed or performed in musical theatre, opera or an operetta

In 2010/11 and 2016/17 a small yet statistically significant decrease in the proportion of adults had rehearsed or performed in musical theatre, opera or an operetta – 1.0 per cent and 0.8 per cent respectively.

Figure 16 – Rehearsed or performed in musical theatre, opera or an operetta in the past year
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 theatre (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, theatre 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>Digital art – producing original digital artwork or animation with a computer</td>
<td>Live theatre event (e.g. ballet, African People’s theatre, South Asian, Chinese, Contemporary or other live theatre event).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craft – any craft activity (e.g. textiles, wood, mental work, pottery, calligraphy)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Creative writing – original theatre (e.g. stories, poems or plays)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book club – being a member of one</td>
<td></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.