

# Children's Omnibus 2023

General Attendance and Participation in the Arts once a year or more

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# Introduction

## Background

Since 2007, Arts Council of Wales has conducted an annual attendance and participation survey among children and young people. Information on attendance to arts events and participation in artistic activities is collected via a series of questions asked on the Beaufort Research Children's Omnibus Survey each year. A copy of the questionnaire used to collect the information is Appendix 3.

This report summarises the findings from the 2023 survey, examining overall levels of attendance at and participation in the arts by children and young people. Demographic and regional variations are explored, a comparison of art-forms is provided, and individual art-form trends are provided in supplementary reports 'Children's Omnibus 2023: Children's Attendance in the Arts once a year or more by Artform' and 'Children's Omnibus 2023: Children's Participation in the Arts once a year or more by Artform'.

## Methodology

### Interviews

The Beaufort Research Children's Omnibus Survey is conducted twice a year in spring and autumn. Each wave of the survey involves interviews with approximately 500 children and young people aged 7 to 18 years. Arts Council of Wales sponsors question modules on both the April and October questionnaires. Each year of data discussed within the report is an amalgamation of the April and October datasets, representing a combined annual sample size of approximately 1,000 interviewees. In order to achieve a representative sample of 7 to 18-year-olds across Wales, quotas are set on the interviews conducted by region, age, gender and Welsh speaking ability, reflective of Census 2011 proportions. The resulting data are also weighted to correct any minor imbalances in the sample, ensuring that it is representative of the Welsh population aged 7 to 18.

Data collection was paused during the Covid-19 pandemic, and as a result this report compares 2023 results to the latest pre-pandemic results in 2019. Before 2023, interviews were conducted face-to-face in the homes of respondents; however, following the Covid-19 pandemic interviews were conducted online and self-completed by participants using the Cint online panel exchange platform. All fieldwork was undertaken in accordance with the MRS Code of Conduct, and, specifically, following the Guidelines for Conducting Research with Children and Young People.

A total of 807 interviews were conducted across two waves of fieldwork, in March - April 2023 and October 2023.

## Data presentation

The data are presented in a series of line and bar charts, which show the percentage of children and young people who have attended or taken part in each of the activities asked about in the survey. The results are split out by key demographic grouping and region. Where frequency of attendance and participation is presented, it refers to a rate of once a year or more often. Definitions of social grades and regions can be found in Appendices 1 and 2 of this report.

### Attendance per Artform

Respondents were asked to indicate how often they attend each of the following nine artforms:

- Plays
- Musicals
- Classical Music
- Opera
- Other Live Music
- Dance Performances
- Art or Craft Galleries or Exhibitions
- Readings, Storytellings and other Literature Events
- Carnivals and Street Arts\*

\*Artform added in 2010

Attendance to Arts Events summarises overall attendance to arts events, measured by attendance to any art form. Demographic and regional variations in overall attendance will be examined to help understand which children and young people are more likely to attend the arts in Wales once a year or more.

When considering the overall attendance figures, it should be noted that Carnivals and Street Arts was added to the list of artforms in 2010. Overall arts attendance will therefore be examined based on attendance at any of the eight artforms over the last ten years, but also based on all nine artforms over the last six years. When examining demographic trends, comparisons will be based on the full nine artforms over the last three years.

## Participation per Artform

Respondents were asked to indicate how often they took part in each of the following activities:

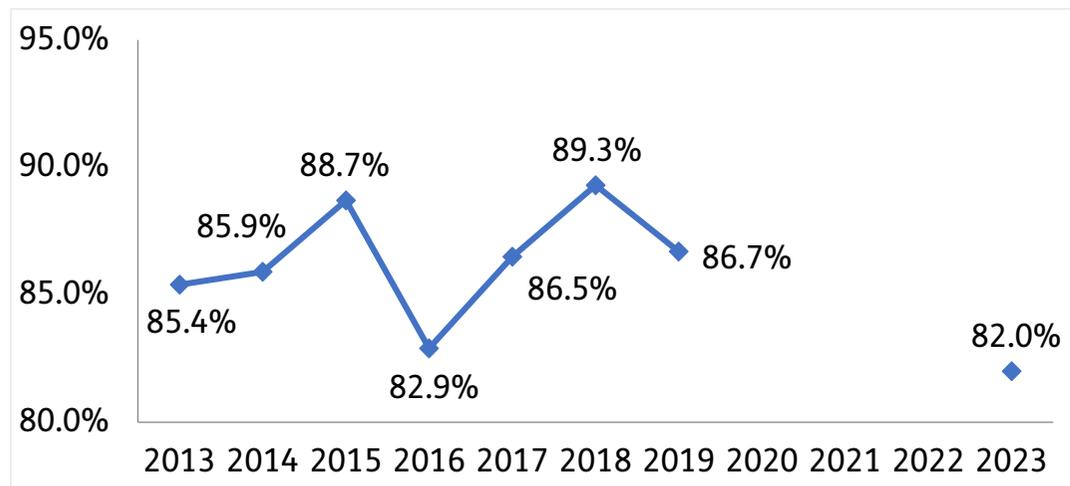
- Musical activities
- Drama or theatrical activity
- Dance activity
- Film and video making or photography
- Visual arts and crafts
- Digital Arts
- Creative Writing

Participation in arts events summarises overall participation once a year or more, measured by, amongst other factors, demographic group, region and Welsh language speaking ability.

It should be noted that up until 2009, the survey asked about 'media arts' as opposed to 'digital arts,' which was introduced in 2010. Whilst broadly examining a similar type of activity, media arts was defined as website design and working with your PC, whereas digital arts are more clearly defined as: creating and making arts using digital technology e.g. uploading, creating or remixing arts-related content (e.g., on YouTube, Flickr).

## Executive Summary

### Attendance



In 2023, 82.0% of children and young people attended any of the 9 artforms at least once a year. This represents a 4.7 percentage points decrease compared to 2019.

Figure 1. Percentage of children and young people attending arts events once a year or more (9 artforms)

Without the inclusion of carnival and street events, attendance in 2023 decreased by 4.2 percentage points compared to 2019, with 76.7% of children and young people attending any of the 8 consistent art forms once a year more.

The results suggest a general decline in attendance among children and young people for the arts in Wales since 2023.

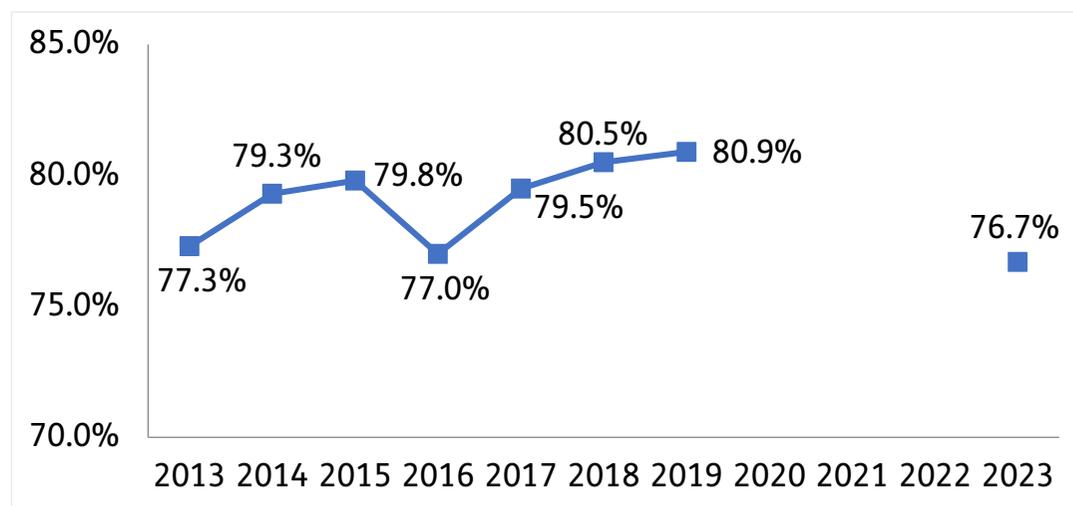


Figure 2. Percentage of children and young people attending arts events once a year or more (8 consistent art forms).

## Overview of Arts Attendance by Artform across the last three years

- After a slight decrease in 2019, attendance to Carnival and Street Arts has increased by 1.4 percentage points to 55.2% in 2023. Overall, it continues to be the most attended artform amongst children and young people since 2018.
- The second most attended artform, plays have seen an increase in attendance with 50.8% of children and young people attending at least once a year.
- Attendance to Art/Craft Galleries or Exhibitions has increased by 1.8 percentage points, with 43.2% of children and young people attending in 2023.
- Attendance to Musicals has increased significantly, with 40.9% of children and young people attending in 2023; this is an increase of 11.5 percentage points from 2019.
- Attendance to Classical Music events continue to increase in 2023: 9.9% of children and young people attended once a year or more often, representing a 2.9 percentage points increase.
- Attendance to Opera has increased considerably to 7.9%, though remains the least attended artform by children and young people.
- All other Live Music events show a substantial increase in attendance, with 47.9% of children and young people attending in 2023 (a 12.1 percentage points decrease). This is the largest increase in attendance in 2023 across all art forms.
- Attendance to Literary Events saw a negligible increase, with 29.5% of children and young people attending in 2023. The 0.1 percentage points increase is the smallest increase in attendance amongst all artforms in 2023.
- Attendance to Dance events has increased, with 26.8% of children and young people attending in 2023.

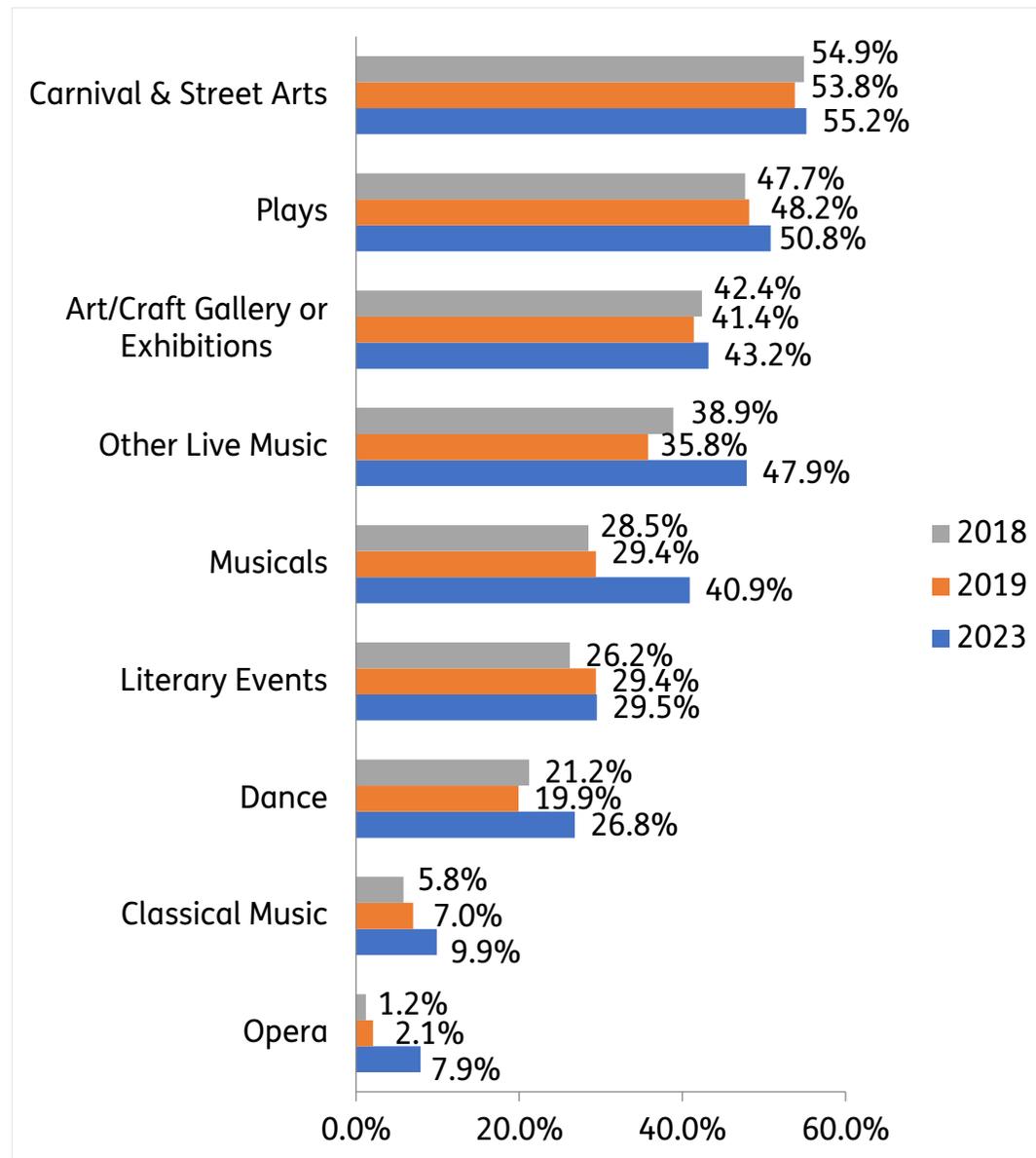


Figure 3. Percentage of children and young people attending arts events once a year or more by artform.

These figures do not add up to 100% as the sample is children and young people who could have attended more than one art-form in more than one way.

### How and When are Activities attended?

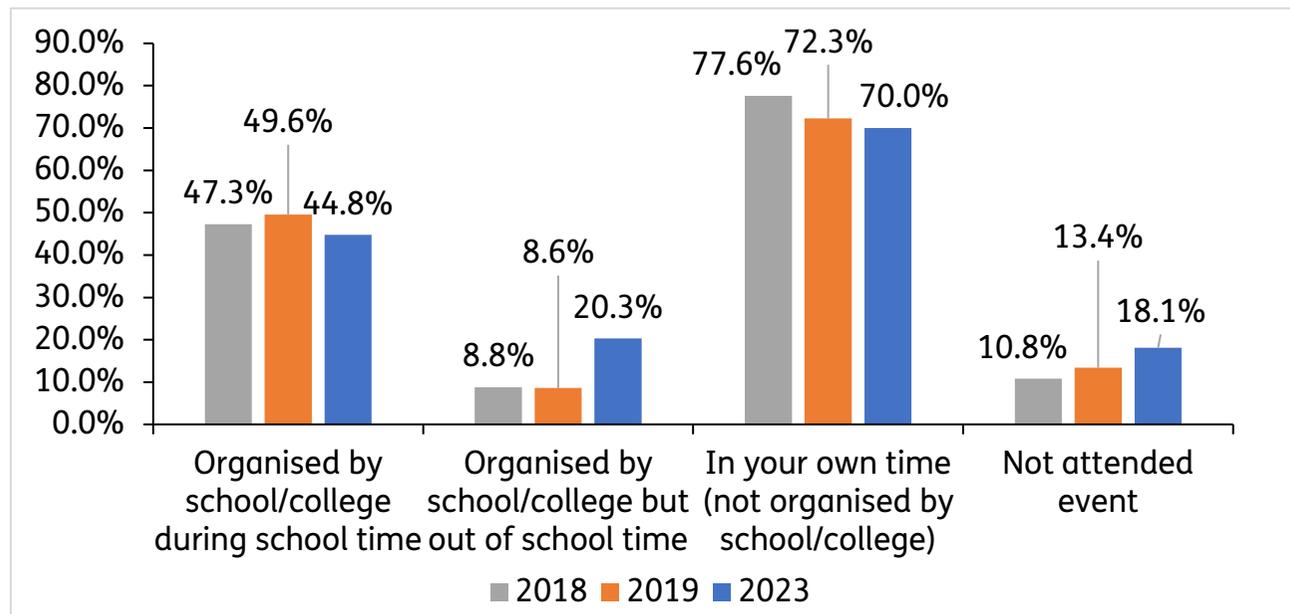


Figure 4. Percentage of children and young people attending art events (% of all children and young people).

The percentage of children and young people not attending any artistic events has increased by 4.7 percentage points, with 18.1% not attending events in 2023.

The numbers of attended events organised by schools/colleges during school time has decreased from 49.6% in 2019 to 44.8% in 2023.

Conversely, the number of attended events organised by schools/colleges outside of school time has increased considerably to 20.3% in 2023.

The majority of artistic events continue to be attended in children and young people’s own time. However, as with previous years this number has decreased further, by 2.3 percentage points in 2023 to 70.0%.

These figures do not add up to 100% as the sample is children and young people who could have attended more than one art-form in more than one way.

## Participation

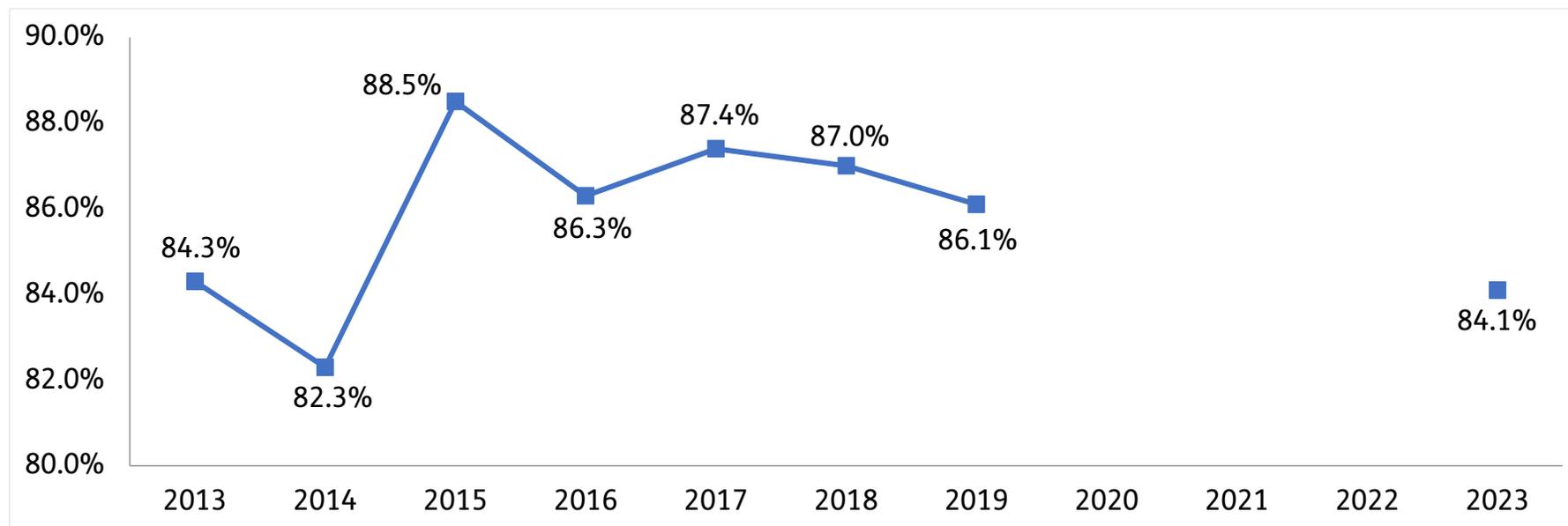


Figure 5. Percentage of children and young people taking part in arts activities once a year or more (7 consistent artforms).

Participation in artistic activities continues to fall, reaching levels similar to 2013: 84.1% of children and young people took part in at least one of the 7 artforms once a year or more in 2023.

## Overview of Arts Participations by Artform across the last three years

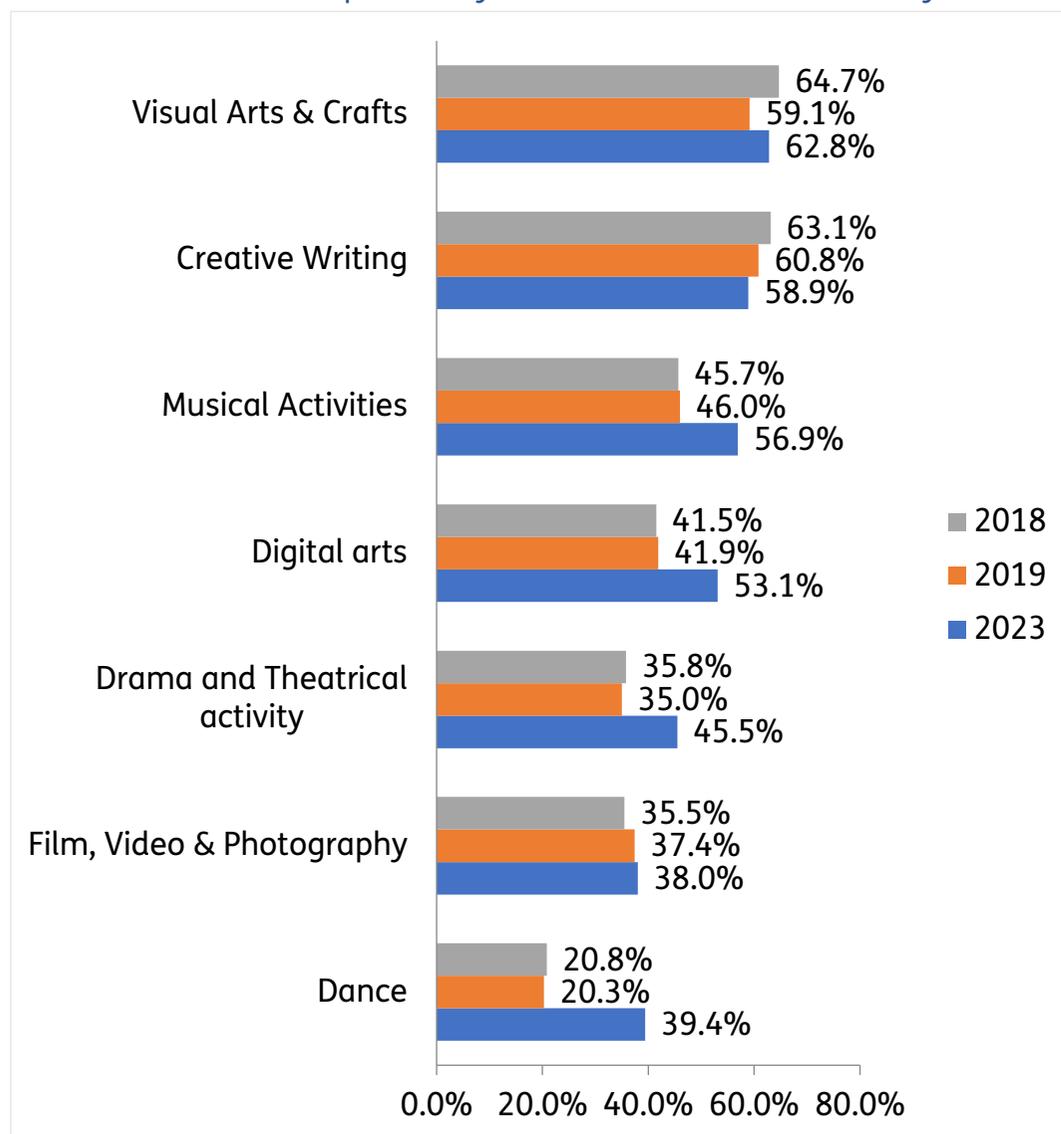


Figure 6. Percentage of children and young people taking part in arts activities once or more a year by artform.

Visual Arts & Crafts participation has varied in the last three years, but in 2023 it is the art form with the highest percentage of participation among children and young people at 62.8% - an increase of 3.7 percentage points from 2019.

Creative Writing participation continues to decrease, by 1.9 percentage points to 58.9% this year. As a result, it is no longer the artform with the highest participation rate.

Participation in Musical Activities, Digital Arts and Dance for 2023 has increased significantly compared to previous years, at 56.9%, 53.1%, and 39.4%, respectively. Dance is no longer the art form with the lowest participation rate.

Participation in Drama and Theatrical activities has increased considerable from 2019, with 45.5% of children and young people taking part in 2023.

Participation in Film, Video & Photography has remained stable, with 38.0% of children and young people taking part at least once a year in 2023. However, it is now the art form with the lowest participation rate.

These figures do not add up to 100% as the sample is children and young people who could have attended more than one art-form in more than one way.

## How and When are Arts Activities participated in?

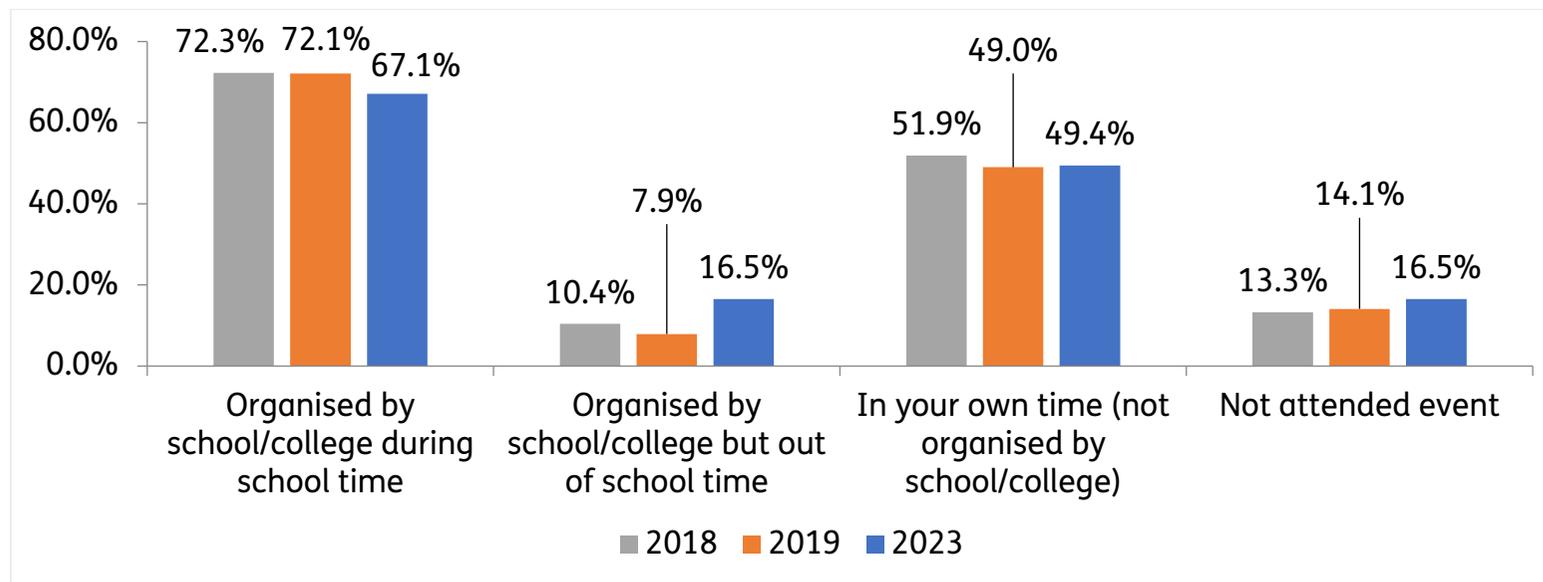


Figure 7. Percentage of children and young people taking part in arts activities by setting.

The percentage of children and young people not partaking in any artistic activities continues to rise, with 16.5% not participating in any artforms in 2023.

In contrast to attendance, participation in artistic activities primarily occurs during school time. However, this has decreased by 5.0 percentage points from 2019, with 67.1% of children and young people taking part during school time in 2023.

Participation in activities organised by schools out of school time has risen considerably to 16.5%, an 8.6 percentage points increase.

Participation in children and young people's own time has increased slightly to 49.4% in 2023.

These figures do not add up to 100% as the sample is children and young people who could have attended more than one art-form in more than one way.

## Social Grade: Attendance

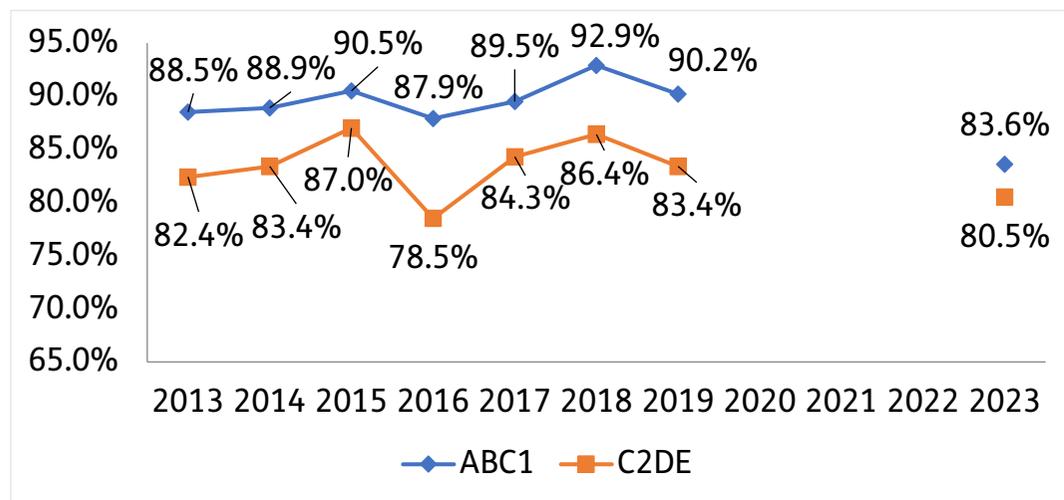


Figure 8. Percentage of children and young people attending any arts events once a year or more often by social grade.

Children and young people from higher social grades continue to attend artistic events more often (83.6% for ABC1s and 80.5% with C2DEs). However, attendance continues to decrease for both groups, with ABC1s attendance down by 6.6 percentage points and C2DEs attendance down by 2.9 percentage points.

The difference in attendance between ABC1 and C2DE households has narrowed to 3.1 percentage points in 2023.

## Social Grade: Participation

Children and young people from ABC1 households continue to be more likely to take part in artistic activities than those from C2DE households (87.5% of ABC1s versus 80.8% of C2DEs).

The overall participation in ABC1 households remains unchanged from 2019; however, participation among C2DE households has decreased in 2023 by 3.9 percentage points.

The difference between the two social grades groups has increased from 2.8 percentage points in 2019 to 6.7 percentage points in 2023.

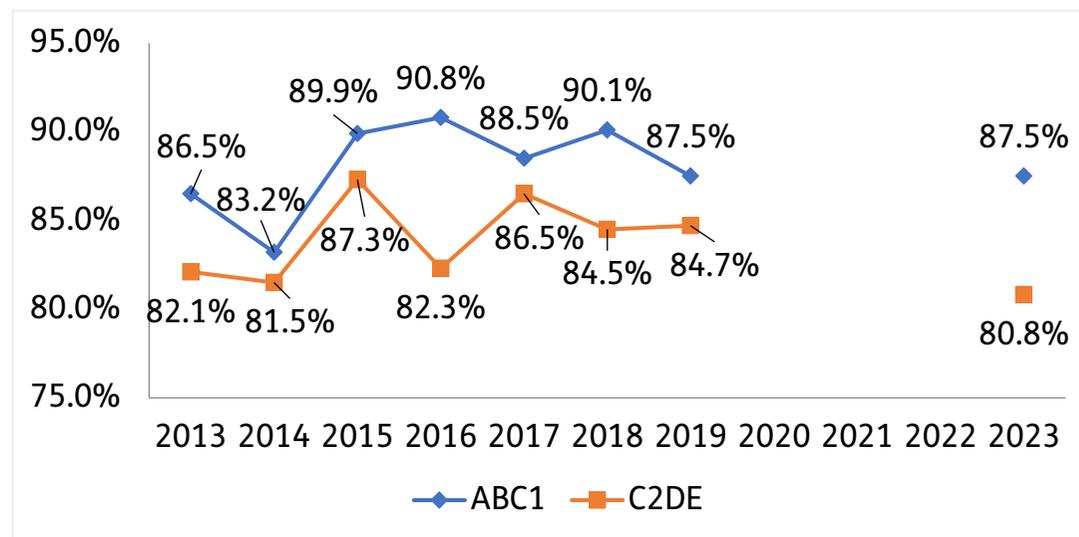


Figure 9. Percentage of children and young people taking part in any artistic activity once a year or more often by social grade.

## Gender: Attendance

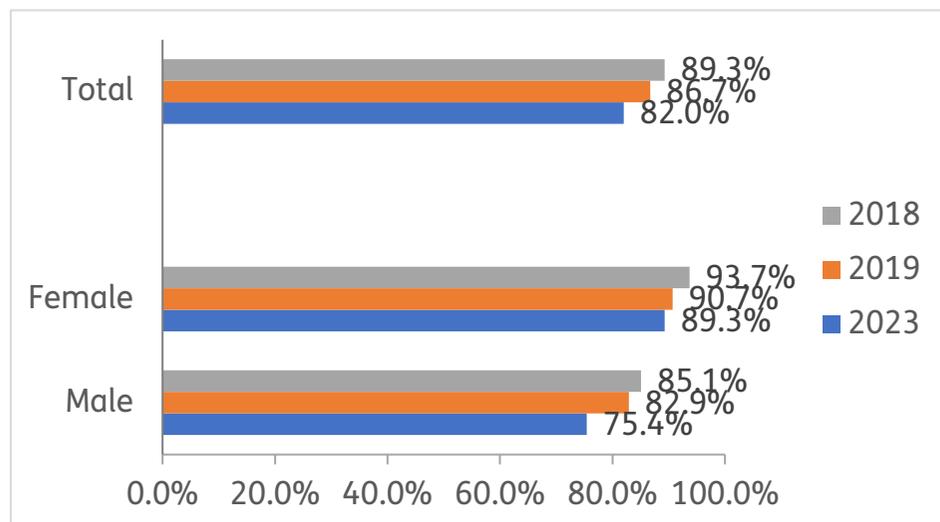


Figure 10. Percentage of children and young people attending any arts events once a year or more by gender.

Attendance to arts events continues to be higher among girls (89.3%) than boys (75.4%) in 2023. Attendance for both groups, however, continues to drop in 2023, by 7.5 percentage points for boys and by 1.4 percentage points for girls.

The difference in attendance between genders has increased considerably, rising from 6.3 percentage points in 2019 to 13.4 percentage points in 2023.

## Gender: Participation

Participation levels also continue to be higher amongst girls (88.9%) than boys (79.7%).

There was an increase in participation among girls by 1.7 percentage points to 88.9%. Participation among boys decreased, however, by 5.4 percentage points to 79.7%.

The difference in participation between girls and boys increased, from 2.1 percentage points in 2019 to 9.2 percentage points in 2023.

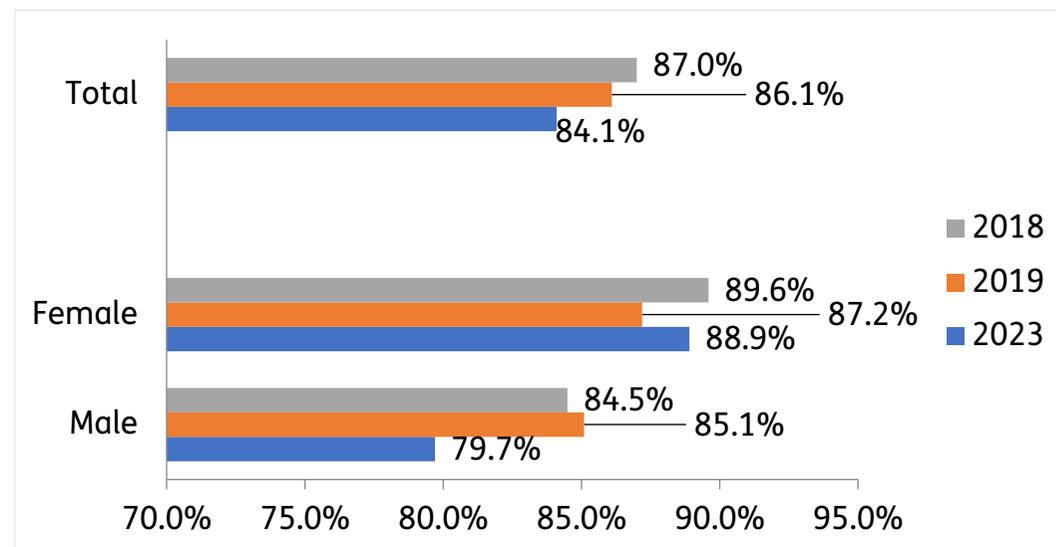


Figure 11. Percentage of children and young people taking part in any arts activities once a year or more by gender.

## Age: Attendance

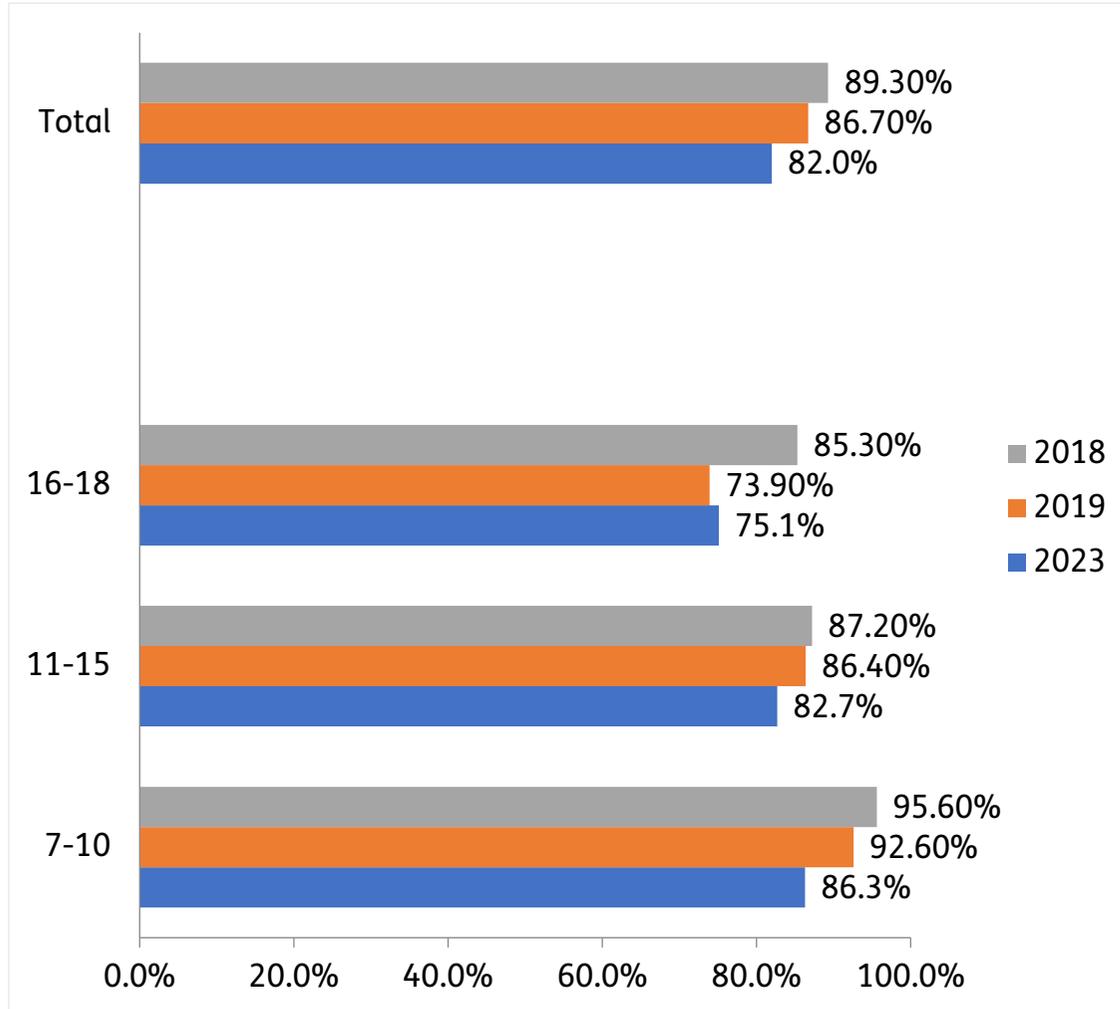


Figure 12. Percentage of children and young people attending arts events by age group.

Attendance in 7-10 year olds has decreased by 6.3 percentage points to 86.3%, continuing the trend observed in previous years. However, this is still the strongest attendance level amongst all age groups.

Attendance in 11-15 year olds also continues to drop, this time by 3.7 percentage points.

The lowest attendance levels are still found in 16-to-18 year olds; however, attendance within this group has increased by 1.2 percentage points, with 75.1% attending artistic events at least once a year.

Average attendance amongst all age groups has decreased in 2023 to 82.0%, a drop of 4.7 percentage points.

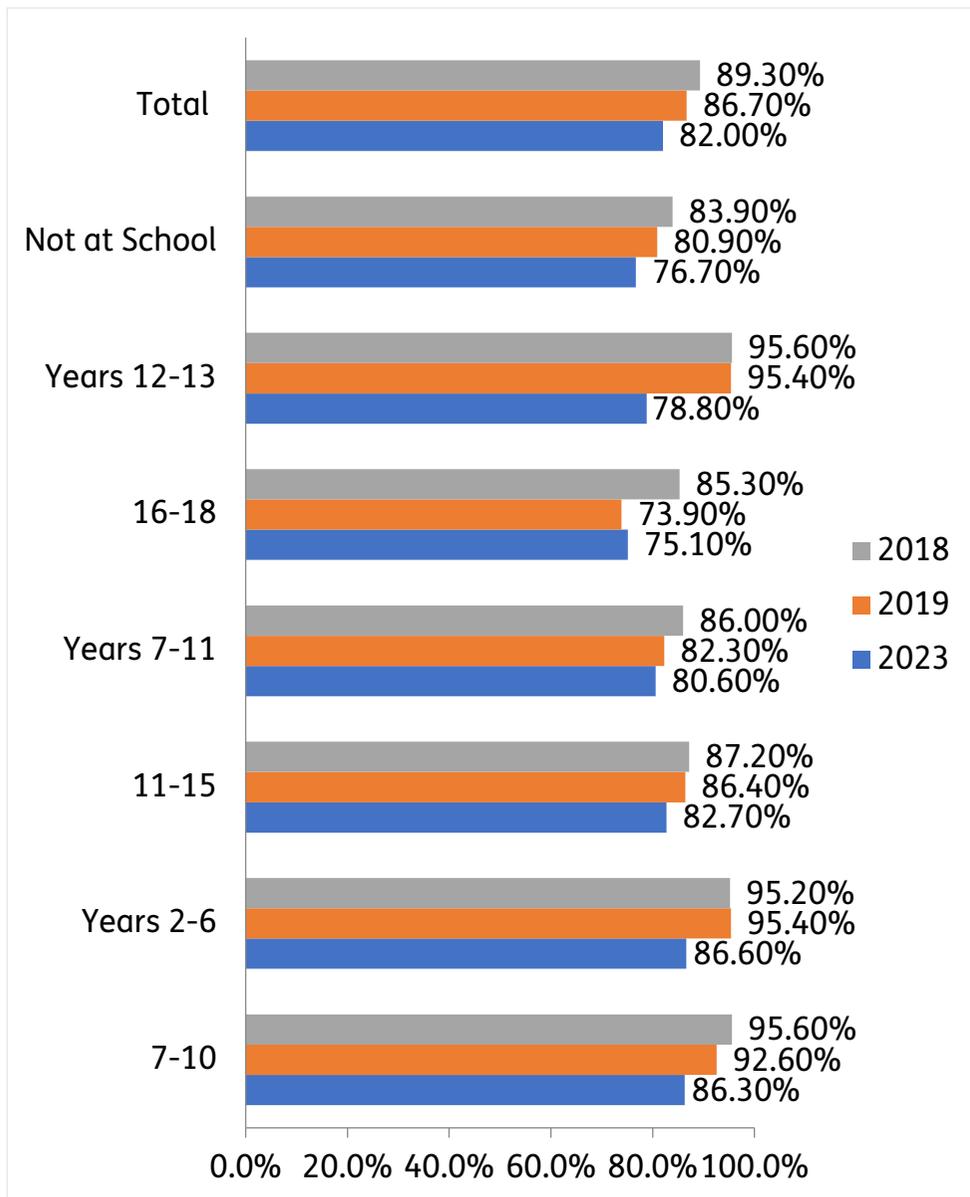


Figure 13. Comparison of arts attendance by age and school year group (percentage of children and young people attending any artform once a year or more).

Attendance levels are near identical between 7-10 year olds and Years 2-6, with 86.3% of the former and 86.6% of the latter attending artistic events at least once a year. There is only a 0.4 percentage points difference between the two groups; in 2019 the difference between 7-10 year olds and Year 2-6 was 2.8 percentage points.

Attendance levels are also fairly close between 11-15 year olds (82.7%) and Years 7-11 (80.6%). The difference between 11-15 year olds and Years 7-11 has narrowed: in 2019 it was 4.1 percentage points, whilst in 2023 it has decreased to 1.2 percentage points.

Years 12-13's attendance has dropped significantly by 16.6 percentage points from 95.4% in 2019 to 78.8% in 2023. Conversely, attendance amongst 16-18 year olds has increased slightly by 1.2 percentage points. The reason for this discrepancy is unknown. Attendance to arts events for those not in school has also decreased (from 80.9% in 2019 to 76.7% in 2023).

Both Years 12-13 and 16-18 year olds have the lowest levels of attendance amongst school year groups and age groups, respectively.

Years 2-6 and 7-10 year olds have the highest attendance levels in their respective groups. Overall attendance has decreased from 86.7% to 82.0%.

## Age: Participation

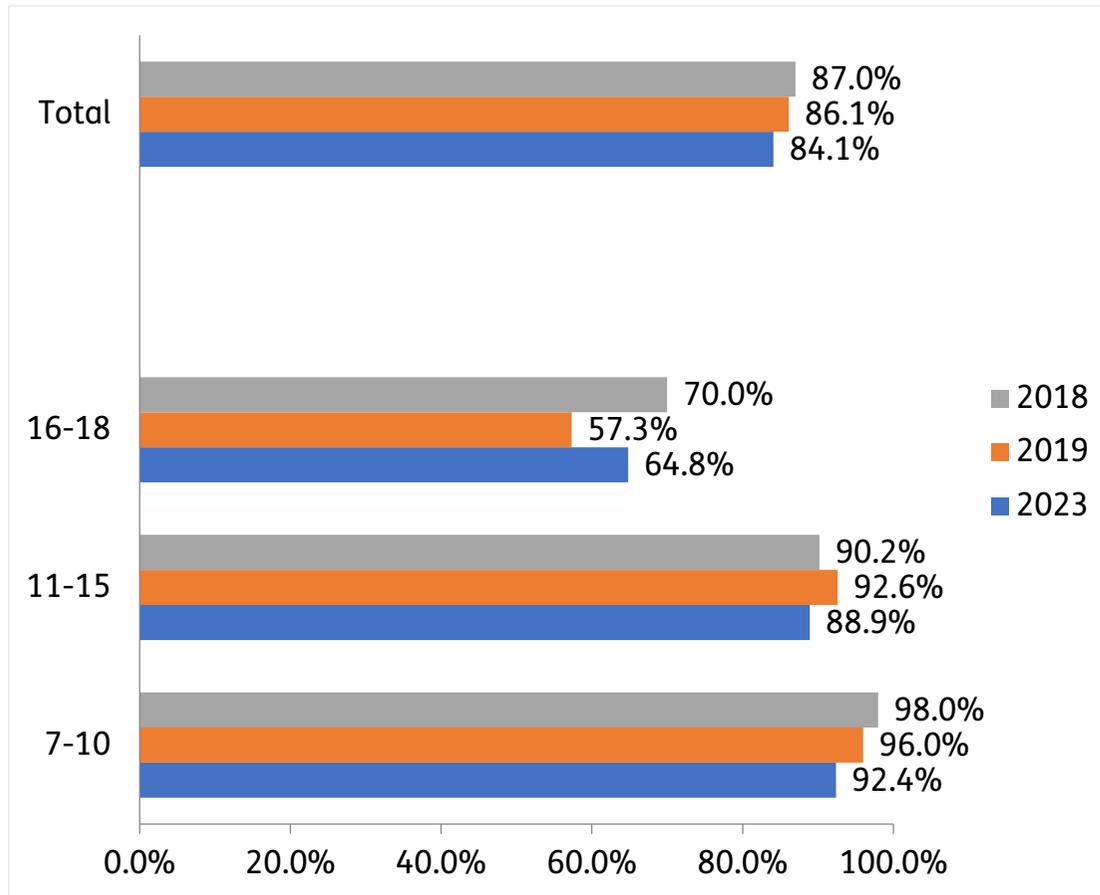
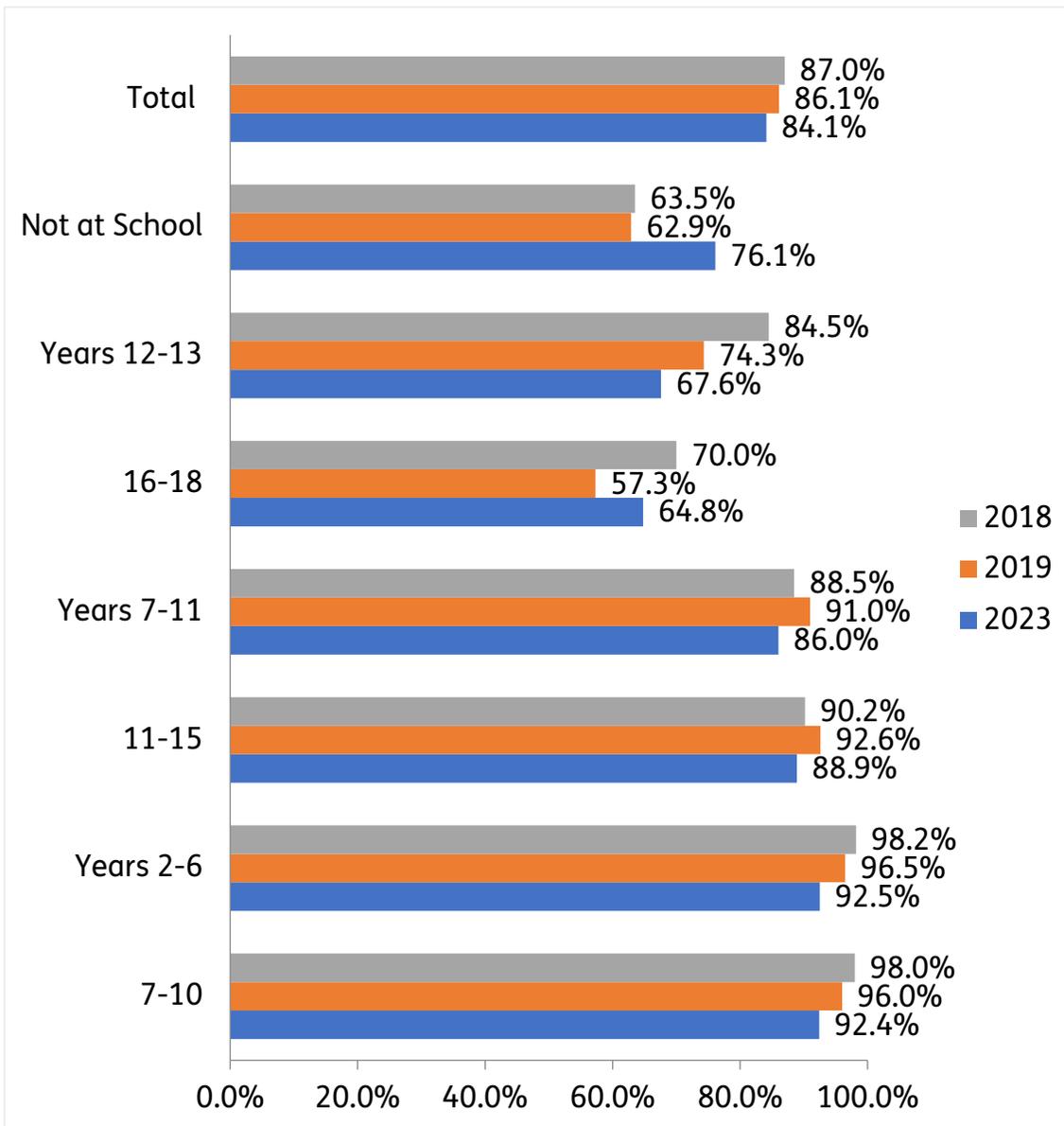


Figure 14. Percentage of children and young people taking part in any arts activities once a year or more by age.

Paralleling attendance, the highest participation levels are found in 7-to-10 year olds, 92.4% of whom take part in artistic activities at least once a year. However, participation in this age group has decreased once again, this time by 3.6 percentage points to 92.4%.

As with attendance, participation amongst 11-15 year olds has decreased, down by 3.7 percentage points to 88.9%.

While their attendance has increased only slightly, participation among 16-to-18 year olds is considerably higher, with a 7.5 percentage points increase to 64.8%. However, they remain the age group least likely to take part in artistic activities at least once a year, 19.3 percentage points below average participation levels.



Participation levels remain virtually identical between 7-to-10 year olds and Years 2-6, 92.4% and 92.5% of whom respectively take part in any artform at least once a year.

11-to-15 year olds and Years 7-11 also participate in artistic activities at very similar levels (88.9% and 86.0%).

Unlike the small rise seen in attendance, participation in 16-to-18 year olds has increased moderately by 7.5 percentage points to 64.8%; in contrast, participation amongst Years 12-13 has decreased by 6.7 percentage points to 67.6%.

Participation levels amongst young people who do not attend school has increased dramatically to 76.1%, and is now higher than participation among 16-to-18 year olds still in school.

Figure 15. Comparison of arts participation by age and school year (percentage of children and young people taking part in any artistic activity once a year or more).

## Attendance by Arts Council of Wales Region

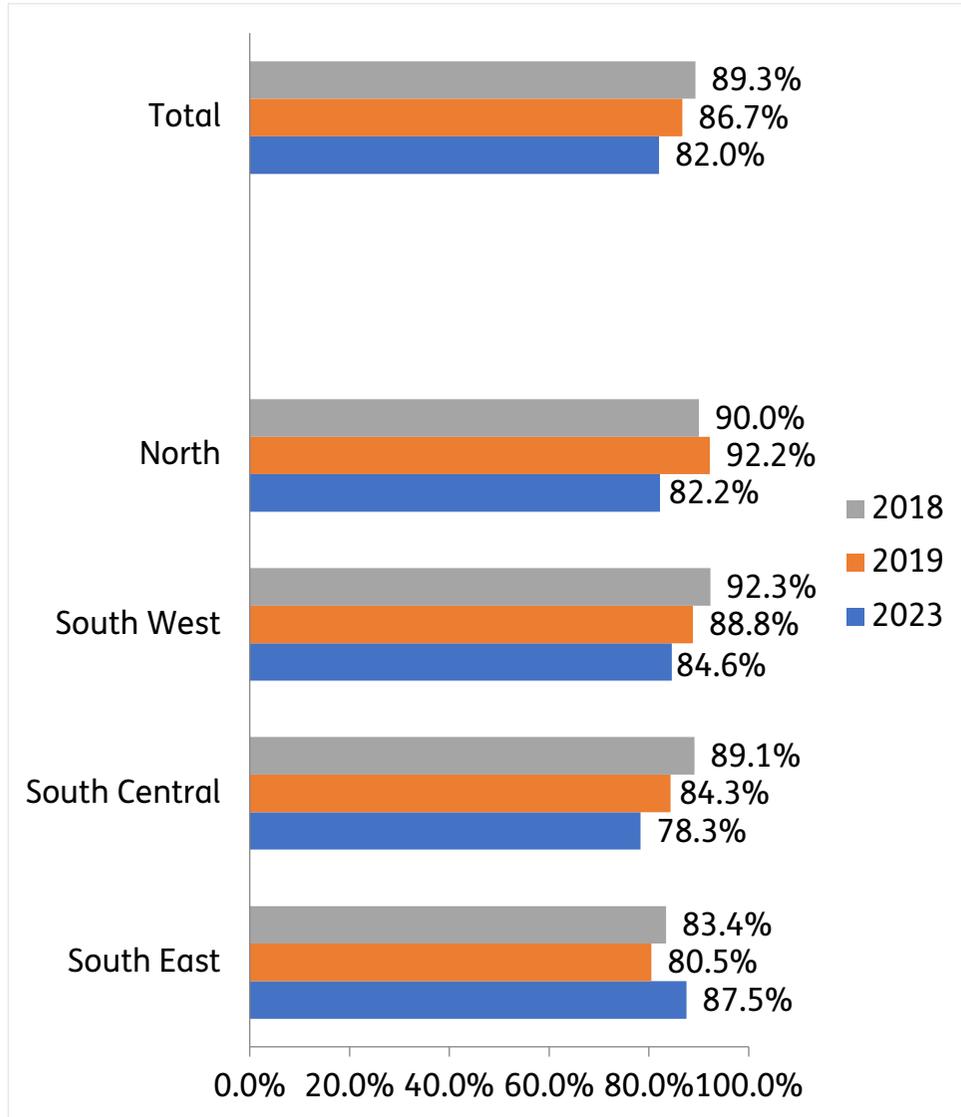


Figure 16. Percentage of children and young people attending any arts events once a year or more by Arts Council of Wales Region.

Attendance in the North has dropped considerably, from 92.2% in 2019 to 82.2% in 2023 – a 10 percentage points decrease. This is the largest drop in attendance across Welsh regions in 2023. The North now has the second-lowest attendance level across all regions.

Attendance in the South West continues to decline, with a 4.2 percentage point decrease to 84.6% attendance amongst children and young people.

Attendance in the South Central region has decreased again, remaining below average attendance in 2023 (82.0%).

Unlike in 2019, attendance in the South East has increased considerably by 7 percentage points to 87.5%. It is now the region with the highest attendance level.

Attendances for 2023 are shown on the map below.

## Participation by Arts Council of Wales Region

Levels of children and young people participating in artistic activities have increased across all but one Welsh region, and levels are similar between the North, South West and South East, at 87.7%, 86.7% and 86.9% respectively.

All three regions experienced increases in participation in 2023, compared to 2019: 1 percentage point for the North, 0.3 percentage points for the South East, and 0.9 percentage points for South Central.

In South Central, participation amongst children and young people in the arts in has decreased by 7.3 percentage points to 78.8%; it is the only region to experience a decline. Furthermore, South Central is the only region below the national average for participation.

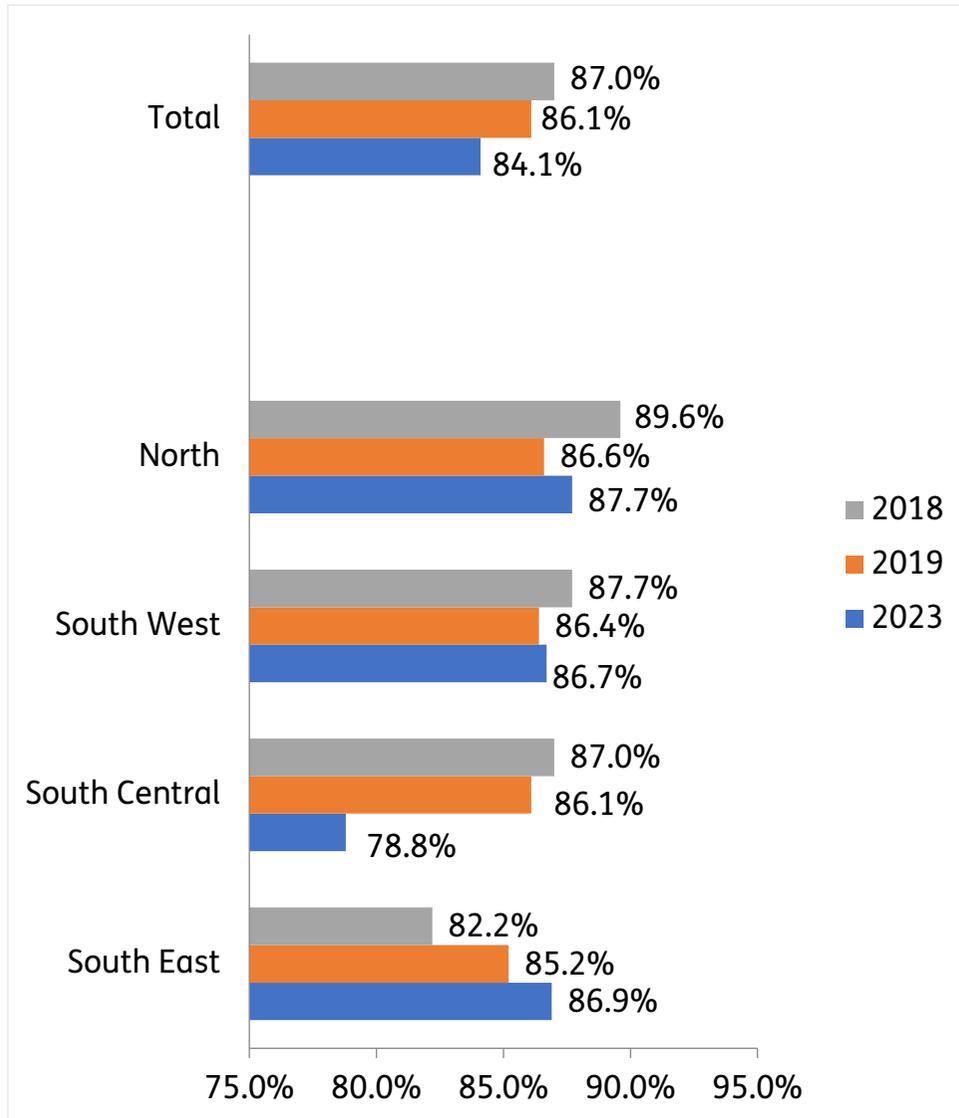


Figure 17. Percentage of children and young people taking part in any artistic activity once a year or more often by Arts Council of Wales Region.

## Attendance by Welsh language ability

Children and young people's attendance continues to be higher among those who speak Welsh (86.3%) than non-Welsh speakers (73.9%).

As in 2019, a decrease in attendance is observed for both groups. For Welsh speakers, there is a moderate decrease of 6.4 percentage points. For non-Welsh speakers, the decrease is more significantly at 9.1 percentage points; the latter now fall below the national average for attendance.

The difference in attendance between both groups has also widened considerably, from 9.7 percentage points in 2019 to 12.4% percentage points in 2023.

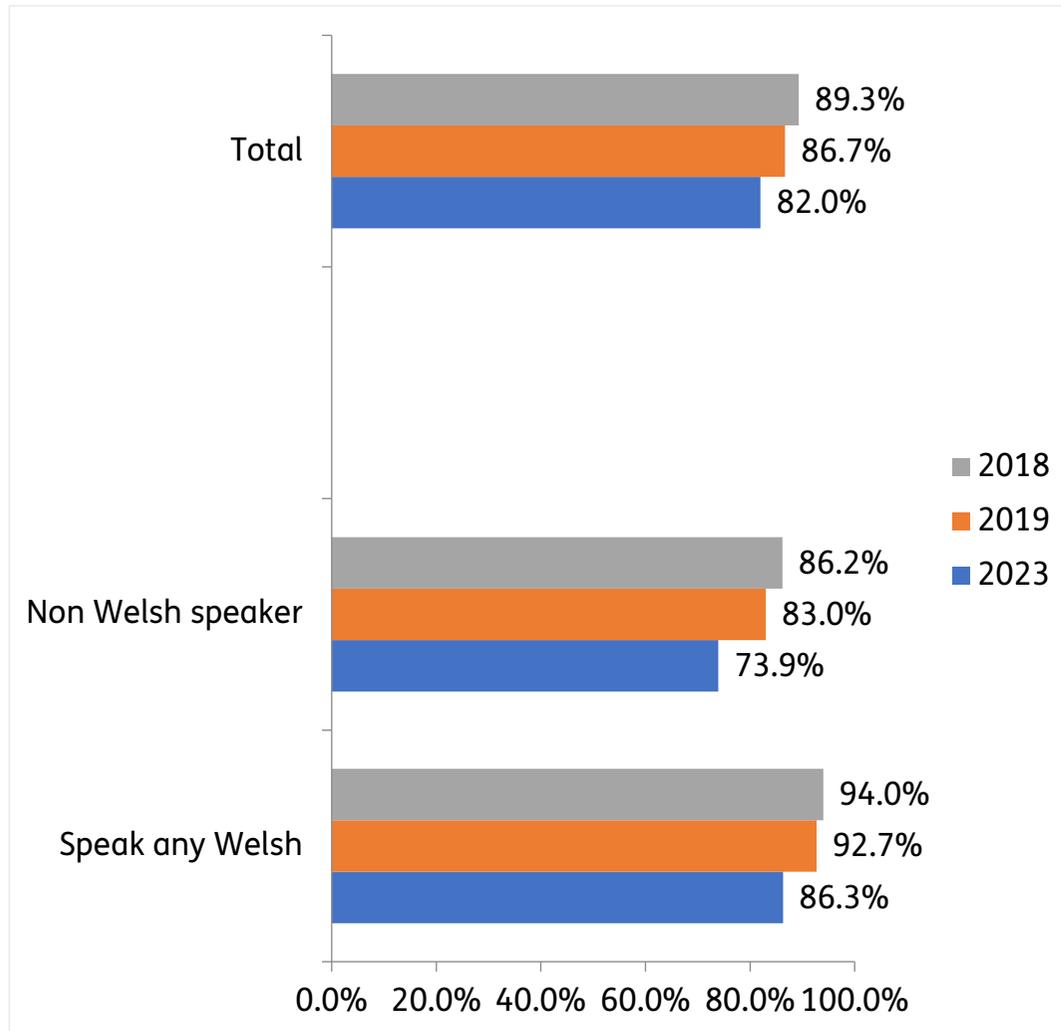
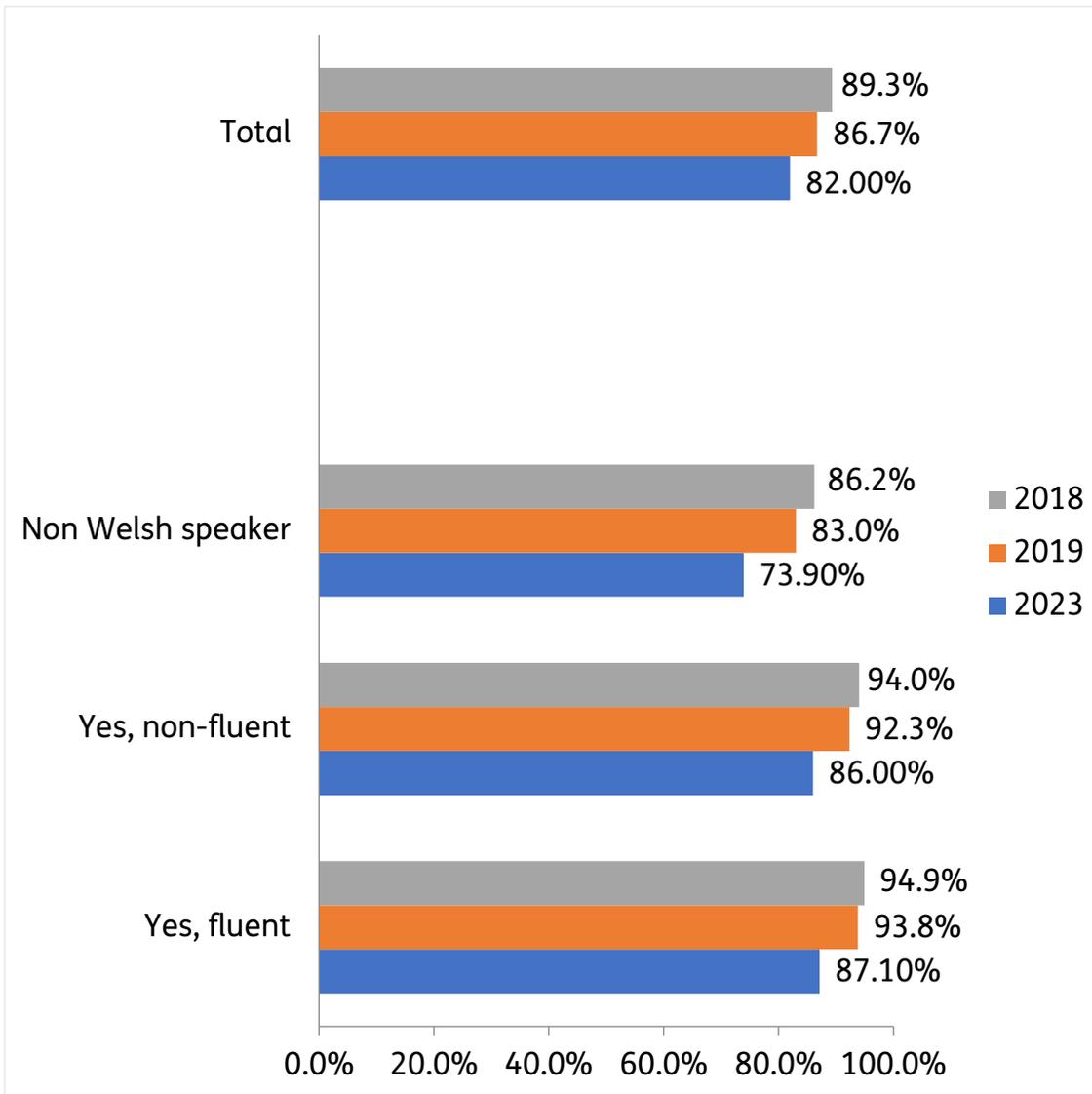


Figure 17. Percentage of children and young people attending any artform once a year or more by Welsh speaking ability.



Analysing Welsh language ability by level of fluency shows consistent attendance levels between fluent and non-fluent Welsh speakers, with attendance levels being slightly higher in the former group. Attendance levels have decreased for both fluent (87.1%) and non-fluent Welsh speakers (86.0%) in 2023, by 6.2 percentage points and 7.7 percentage points respectively.

The difference between fluent and non-fluent speakers' attendance has decreased slightly between 2019 and 2023, from 1.5 percentage points to 1.1 percentage points.

Figure 18. Percentage of children and young people attending any artform once a year or more by level of fluency in Welsh.

## Participation by Welsh speaking ability

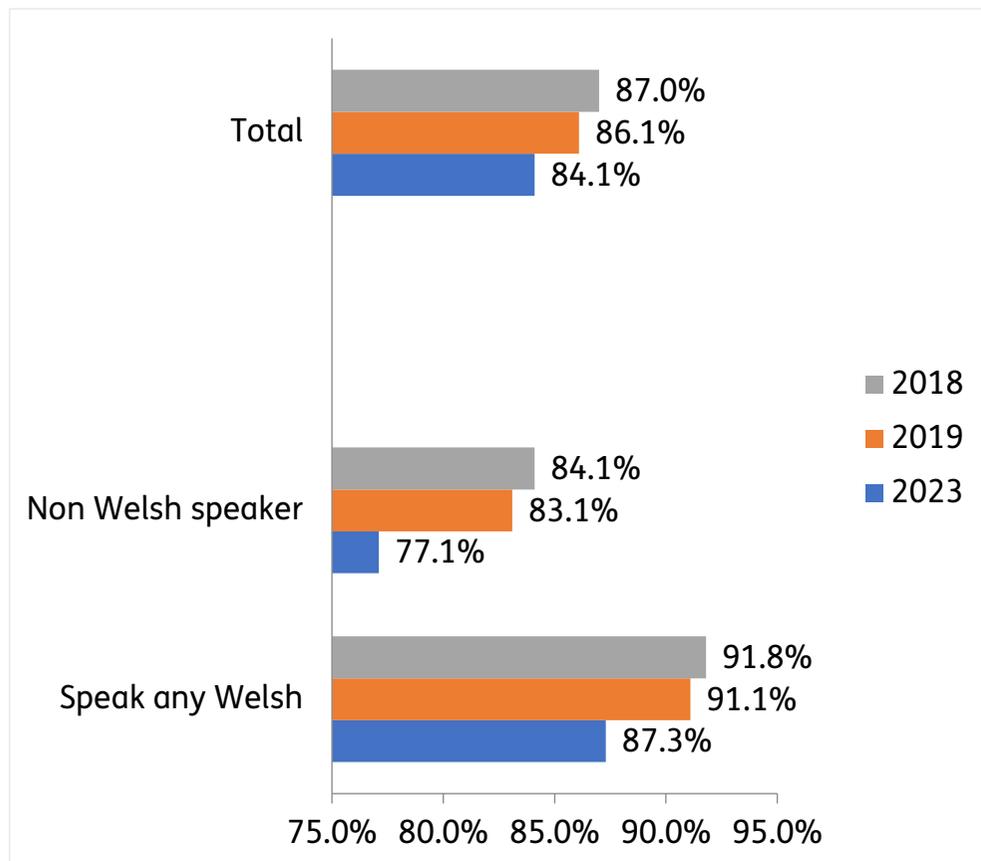
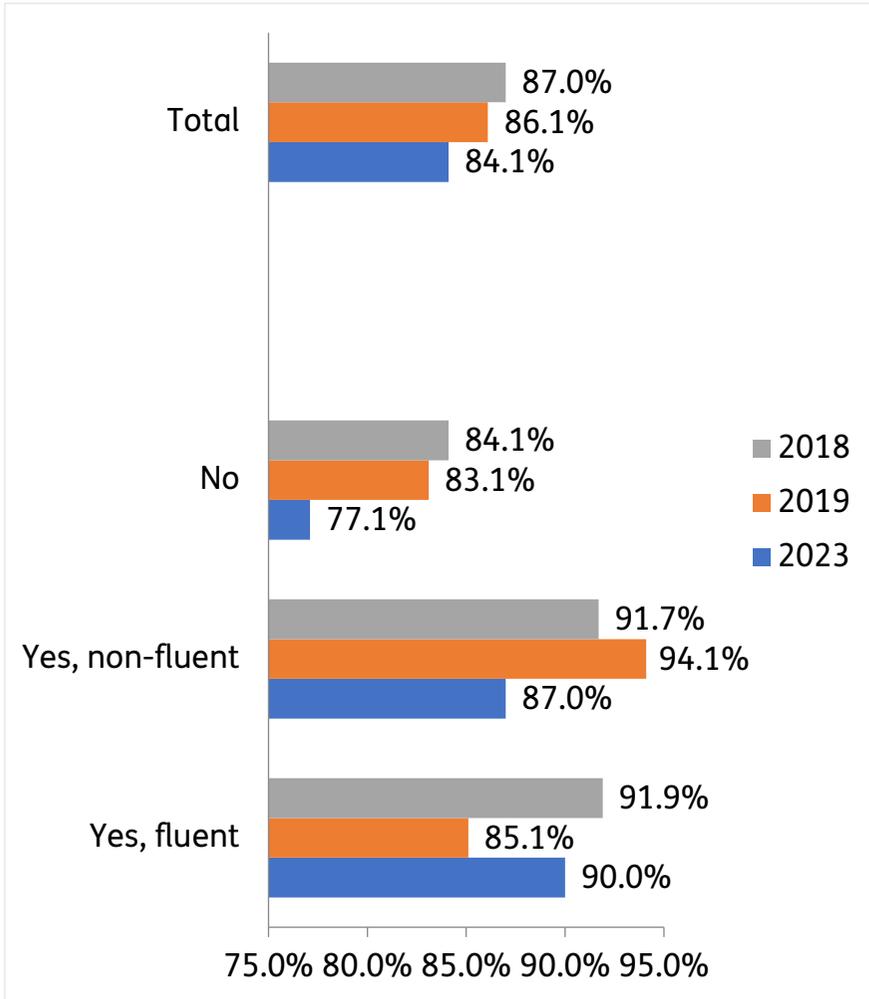


Figure 19. Percentage of children and young people taking part in any artform once a year or more by Welsh speaking ability.

Similarly to attendance, participation is highest amongst children and young people who speak Welsh, with 87.3% taking part in any artform at least once a year; however, this is a 3.8 percentage point decrease from 2019.

Participation levels in non-Welsh speakers remains below average and continues to fall, with 77.1% taking part in artistic activities once a year or more.

The difference in attendance between children and young people who speak Welsh and those who do not has increased further, from 8 percentage points in 2019 to 10.2 percentage points in 2023.



The trend of higher participation in arts activities rates amongst children and young people fluent in Welsh reappears, in contrast to the reverse occurring in 2019. More specifically, participation among fluent Welsh speakers has increased by 4.9 percentage points to 90.0% in 2023; on the other hand, participations among non-fluent Welsh speakers has fallen by 7.1 percentage points to 87.0% in 2023.

However, the difference in participation levels between fluent and non-fluent Welsh speakers has decreased to 3.0 percentage points.

This correlates with the higher attendance levels amongst fluent Welsh speakers compared to non-fluent speakers.

Figure 20. Percentage of children and young people taking part in any artistic activity once a year or more often by level of fluency in Welsh.

## Appendix 1: Social Grades Definitions

The population can be divided into six socio-economic groups or social grades, which are based on the occupation of the Chief Income Earner in the household. Everyone in the household has the same social grade as the Chief Income Earner. To aid analysis, the first three grades and the last three grades are often grouped together into ABC1s and C2DEs which are seen as equating to the ‘Middle Classes’ and the ‘Working Classes’:

- A “Upper Middle Class” - Higher managerial, administrative, professional e.g. Chief Executive, Company Director, Senior Civil Servant, Doctor, Judge, Barrister, Executive Accountant
- B “Middle Class” - Senior and intermediate managerial, administrative, professional e.g. Secondary School Teacher, Librarian, Computer Programmer, Probation Officer, Social Worker
- C1 “Lower Middle Class” - Supervisory, clerical, junior managerial e.g. Clerical/Office Workers, Shop Floor Supervisor, Bank Clerk, Salesperson, Student
  
- C2 “Skilled Working Class” - Skilled manual workers e.g. Electrician, Carpenter, Fire Fighter, Foreman
- D “Working Class” - Semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers e.g. Shop Worker, Assembly Line Worker, Refuse Collector, Messenger, Bar Staff
- E Those wholly reliant on state benefits including the long-term unemployed and pensioners without private pensions. Casual labourers.

**ABC1s** –  
professional, qualified  
and non-manual  
occupations

**C2DEs** –  
skilled, semi-skilled and  
unskilled manual  
workers and non-  
working people

## Appendix 2: Regions

The regional definitions referred to throughout the report are Arts Council of Wales definitions of regions. These can be seen below:

Region Name	Definition
North Wales	Wrexham, Flintshire, Denbighshire, Conwy, Anglesey, Gwynedd
South West Wales	Powys, Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, Swansea, Neath Port Talbot
South Central Wales	Bridgend, Cardiff, Vale of Glamorgan, Rhondda Cynon Taff, Merthyr Tydfil
South East Wales	Torfaen, Monmouthshire, Newport, Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent

## Appendix 3: 2023 Survey Questionnaire

Arts Council of Wales

Final Questions – 2023 Children’s Omnibus

SHOW CARD

Q1 How often do you go to each of the activities that I read out?

So firstly, how often do you:

Go to Plays

.....Several times a week

.....Once a week

.....2 or 3 times a month

.....Once a month

.....Once every 2 to 3 months

.....2 or 3 times a year

.....Once a year

.....Less often

.....Never

REPEAT FOR:

Go to Musicals

Go to Opera

Go to Classical Music concerts

Go to Other Live music

Go to Dance performances

Go to Art or Craft galleries or exhibitions

Go to Readings, Storytellings or other Literature events

Go to Carnivals and Street arts

--

SHOW CARD

**Q2 When you last went to a play (ask for each activity attended at least once a year in Q1) was it:**

organised by school/college during school time  
organised by school/college but out of school time  
in your own time (not organised by school / college)

REPEAT FOR ALL ACTIVITIES ATTENDED ONCE A YEAR OR MORE OFTEN

--

SHOW CARD

**Q3 And how often do you take part in each of the activities that I read out?**

So firstly, how often do you

Take part in musical activities (such as singing or playing an instrument)

.....Several times a week  
.....Once a week  
.....2 or 3 times a month  
.....Once a month  
.....Once every 2 to 3 months  
.....2 or 3 times a year  
.....Once a year  
.....Less often  
.....Never

REPEAT FOR:

Take part in drama or theatrical activity (e.g. acting, directing, technical work)

Take part in dance activity (not disco/clubbing)

Take part in film and video making or photography

Take part in visual arts or crafts (e.g. painting, textiles)

Take part in digital arts (creating and making arts using digital technology e.g. uploading, creating or remixing arts related content on, for example, YouTube, Flickr, etc.)

Take part in creative writing (e.g. poetry or stories)

--

SHOW CARD

**Q4 When you last took part in musical activity** (ask for each activity taken part in at least once a year in Q3) **was it:**

in school/college during school time

in school/college but out of school time

in your own time (not in school / college)

REPEAT FOR ALL ACTIVITIES TAKEN PART IN ONCE A YEAR OR MORE OFTEN