



Arts Council England Stakeholder Research 2014-15

Quantitative research with the arts and cultural sector

Analytical report

Prepared by ICM for Arts Council England

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Final

Confidential: For research purposes only
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Executive summary

This report presents the findings from the Arts Council's 2015 stakeholder survey. A total of 1,051 interviews were conducted online with stakeholders and opinion formers across the arts and cultural sector, replicating the approach used in previous years.

The research was carried out between 2 March and 30 March 2015.

Key findings

Overall, the findings present a largely positive picture of the Arts Council as a well-regarded organisation that is thought to be heading in the right direction. Stakeholders are becoming increasingly familiar with the Arts Council, and this is linked to stronger favourability and advocacy scores. A large majority of stakeholders feel it performs its role well and stakeholders understand and support its objectives. Relations between the Arts Council and stakeholders from the museums and Children and Young People sectors appear to be particularly strong. Maintaining and developing these will be essential.

However, there remain some clear areas for improvement. Stakeholders are clear that they would like to see the Arts Council become more creative and collaborative. There is a clear appetite for closer ties and more frequent contact between the Arts Council and its stakeholders, particularly among those from the local authority sector. Indeed, a common theme throughout these findings is the fact that the Arts Council has a more distant relationship with its stakeholders in the local authority sector, and improving relations with local authorities therefore appears to be something which the Arts Council would benefit from focusing on over the coming year.

Stakeholders also feel that the Arts Council could do more to demonstrate the value of its investments and a significant minority think that the decision making process needs to be clearer and more transparent. Related to this, in the year of the general election stakeholders would like to see the Arts Council increase its role as an advocate, making a persuasive case for future investment and ensuring that the money it is allocated is distributed fairly.

Overall perceptions

- The Arts Council is **well known among its stakeholders across the arts and cultural sectors**, with nine in ten (90%) reporting that they are familiar with the organisation. Further, stakeholders report an increasing depth of familiarity, with 36% reporting they know the Arts Council *very well* compared to 29% in 2013.
- The **majority of the Arts Council's stakeholders are favourable towards the organisation**. Eight in ten (78%) are favourable, which is a slight, but statistically insignificant, increase on 2013 (76%).
- Similarly, **advocacy is high and rising**. Advocacy quantifies how stakeholders would speak of the organisation to other people, and there has been a statistically significant increase on this measure: 64% say they would speak highly of the Arts Council compared to 59% in 2013.
- However, **stakeholders feel that the Arts Council needs to be bolder, more creative and more collaborative** than it currently is. Around two in five cite 'creative' (42%) and 'collaborative' (40%) as characteristics which the Arts Council should be aspiring to, but fewer feel it currently exhibits those traits.

Performance and impact

- A majority of stakeholders are **positive about the Arts Council's overall performance** as an organisation with 75% saying it performs well.

- Further, the Arts Council's objectives have clearly been well-communicated to stakeholders, with nearly nine in ten (88%) saying they **understand its goals and priorities well**. Stakeholders also believe the Arts Council has a **strong sense of mission** (75%) and have a good understanding of the **plan or strategy behind this mission** (66%).
- However, **there is less clarity around relevance of these goals**. Although three in five (59%) feel that the Arts Council's goals and priorities are relevant to and meet the needs of the wider public, nearly one in five (17%) disagree. Similarly, less than half (45%) believe that the Arts Council sets its goals and priorities based on the needs of artists and arts and cultural organisations.
- On balance, a majority of stakeholders believe that the Arts Council is **has maintained its level of effectiveness, or become more effective in its work to achieve its mission** over the past year. Compared to 2013, significantly more stakeholders say that the Arts Council's effectiveness has got better over the previous year (22%). Many **cite its advocacy work** as a reason for this view – 67% believe that the Arts Council has made a good case for continued public investment over the past year. Two in five (41%) say its effectiveness has stayed the same.
- On the whole, stakeholders are **very positive about the Arts Council's impact in a number of key areas of activity**, including supporting and promoting excellence in arts and culture (90%), enabling more people to experience and be inspired by arts and culture (84%) and enabling artistic talent to thrive (83%). Moreover, there is a clear sense that the Arts Council is making progress, being perceived to have a significantly greater impact in all areas than in 2011.
- Stakeholders believe that the Arts Council's work has most impact at a national level. Nine in ten (91%) agree that **the Arts Council makes a positive difference in England**. To a lesser extent, stakeholders are also positive about the Arts Council's work in their region (80%) and in their local area (61%).
- A majority of stakeholders trust the Arts Council to perform in its core role, including **making the case for public funding of arts and culture** (84%), and **investing to support England's arts and culture ecology in an intelligent way** (78%).

Investment and funding processes

- In terms of investment and funding, the Arts Council is believed to have a good overview of the arts and culture sector (70% say it is **aware of future challenges and opportunities** for the arts and culture in England), and it is thought to be **holding funded organisations properly to account** (66%).
- However, nearly a third of stakeholders (32%) believe that **the Arts Council finds it difficult to demonstrate the value of its investments**, although a further 31% do not believe this to be the case.
- Stakeholders clearly feel that the **Arts Council could do more to provide clear evidence in support of investment decisions**. While most agree that decisions are linked to the Arts Council's vision and goals (62%), more than one in five (22%) believe they are **poorly explained**. Only two in five (38%) agree that the Arts Council's decisions are **informed by sound evidence**, while a sizeable minority (14%) disagree.
- Stakeholders have a **good sense of what the Arts Council funds**. Three in four understand what funding is available for different activities (74%), but there is a **sense for some that its approach to funding can be insufficiently flexible**: 28% think it is not flexible or responsive in its approach to funding, and 33% believe the process of applying for funding is bureaucratic and prohibitive.
- National Portfolio Organisations, Major Partner Museums and Grants for the Arts applicants tend to be very positive about the application process for their specific stream of funding. There is a **clear sense that the application process is well-run**: more than four in five

agree that the eligibility criteria are clearly explained and easy to understand (84%) and that their application was dealt with in an efficient, fair and timely manner (83%).

- Applicants also **generally feel well supported**: 79% believe there was sufficient advice and information to help them complete the process, while 77% feel that the advice or information they received was timely, informative and helpful.
- While most (69%) believe the application form was clear and easy to complete, around one in six (17%) disagree, which suggests that **some experience difficulties with the form itself**. Those who have been in contact with the Arts Council for less than one year (33%) and Grants for the Arts applicants (20%) are most likely to find the form difficult to complete.
- Stakeholders are somewhat **less positive about the decision-making process for funding awards**. Just over half of applicants (54%) believe that the decision-making process is fair and transparent, but 23% disagree. National Portfolio Organisations (58%) are significantly more likely to perceive the decision-making process as fair and transparent than Grants for the Arts applicants (48%).

Working relationships

- Stakeholders tend to have **well established, long-lasting relationships with the Arts Council**. Half of Arts Council stakeholders have been in contact with the organisation for more than 10 years (48%), and the average length of relationship is 7.3 years.
- Stakeholders **most commonly engage with the Arts Council through a specific relationship manager** (43%). However, 17% do not have a regular point of contact, and this is linked to less frequent contact and a worse relationship with the Arts Council.
- The vast majority of stakeholders either have the **right amount of contact with the Arts Council** (56%) or **would like more** (33%). Just six per cent would like less frequent contact.
- Arts individuals (60%), local authority stakeholders (54%) and library stakeholders (49%) are all significantly more likely to say that they want more frequent contact with the Arts Council, suggesting more could be done to build closer ties with stakeholders in these sectors.
- Overall, **a majority of stakeholders have a good working relationship with the Arts Council** (79%).
- Stakeholders from the museums and Children and Young People sectors are the most positive about their working relationships with the Arts Council (88% and 86% respectively), while stakeholders from local authorities are least positive (65%).
- There is a **sense that working relationships are improving**, with three in ten stakeholders (31%) saying that their relationship with the Arts Council has got better over the past 12 months, while just one in ten think it has got worse (10%).
- Most feel that the Arts Council is **not afraid to challenge them** (65%), and that it **seeks feedback from stakeholders and partners** (64%).
- However, 22% **do not feel that the Arts Council listens to and understands their views**, and 13% **do not think the Arts Council is open and honest with its stakeholders and partners**.

Communications

- Most stakeholders (77%) feel that **the Arts Council keeps them well informed** about its work, but a sizeable minority (21%) do not feel well informed.
- Those from the Children and Young People and museums sectors are the most likely to say that they receive the right amount of information.
- Over half of stakeholders from local authorities (54%) and four in ten arts individuals (40%) say that they **would like to receive more information**.
- As found in previous years, **contact with relationship managers is considered to be the most useful channel of communication**, with two thirds (66%) describing it as useful. The Arts Council website and other digital channels (58%) and contact with staff at regional offices (53%) are also widely considered useful.

- The Arts Council is **performing fairly well in the clarity, coherence and consistency of the messages and communications it produces**. For instance, a majority feel that the Arts Council's goals and priorities are clear and easy to understand (70%) and half feel the language used is inclusive and easy to understand (52%).
- However, there remain areas for improvement, with 27% saying that **the Arts Council is not always clear about what it stands for**.

Future priorities

- Over the next 12 months, **stakeholders would like to see the Arts Council focusing on investment in the arts and culture** – both advocating for public investment, and ensuring that its investment is distributed in a way which makes the best possible use of the existing resources.
- **Advocacy is highlighted as a key priority** for the next twelve months, with 33% suggesting that making the case for investment in the arts and culture should be the most important priority for the Arts Council.
- Stakeholders also want to see **a fair distribution of this investment**, with one in five (22%) believing that ensuring a fair and more geographically balanced distribution across England is the single most important priority over the next year.
- When it comes to how the Arts Council works with individuals and organisations in the arts and cultural sector, one in five (20%) believe **the Arts Council should focus on becoming better at partnership and collaboration** in the next twelve months; stakeholders with a long-standing relationship with the Arts Council are particularly interested in this aspect.
- Moreover, one in five (19%) want to have **more personal contact with the Arts Council**, and this applies particularly to those who have less frequency of contact with the Arts Council.

Introduction

This report presents the findings from a survey of 1,051 stakeholders from the arts and culture sector, on behalf of Arts Council England. The research was designed to explore how the Arts Council is perceived, how it is performing against its objectives, how it works with stakeholders and what its future priorities should be.

This research was undertaken by the ICM Government & Social Research Unit.

Background and objectives

Arts Council England aims to achieve great art and culture for everyone. However, it realises it cannot achieve this in isolation. Instead, it works with a wide range of stakeholders including not just artists and arts and cultural organisations, but policy makers from central and local government and the general public.

At the same time as delivering this ambitious mission, the Arts Council has recently been through a period of intense change and reorganisation. In 2011 it took on responsibility for supporting and developing museums and libraries on top of its role in developing and investing in artistic experiences. At the same time, in its 2011-15 settlement Arts Council England agreed to reduce its administrative costs, which required a major re-structure and a substantial reduction in staff numbers.

During the 2011-15 period the Arts Council, in common with most other publically funded bodies, has used research as a mechanism to engage with its stakeholders and to assess its performance and reputation among its key audiences. As such, it has conducted stakeholder focused research, including an online quantitative survey, in 2009, 2011, 2012 and 2013.

To continue and develop this evidence base, in early 2014 the Arts Council commissioned ICM to conduct its regular online quantitative survey of its key stakeholders and opinion formers to understand their views, concerns and expectations. This research covers the full spectrum of the Arts Council's stakeholders, including both its newer audiences in the cultural sector – museums and libraries – and its long-standing audiences in the arts sector.

The overarching objective of the survey is to gather statistical data to measure and track arts and cultural stakeholders' perceptions of Arts Council England. This includes exploration of working relationships, communications, overall regard, perceived effectiveness, understanding of the Arts Council's mission and goals, and views on how the Arts Council can improve. In particular, the research aims to:

1. Explore how stakeholders view Arts Council England in order to track the impact of its efforts to achieve its goals;
2. Examine attitudes towards the way in which Arts Council England works, engages and communicates with stakeholders to inform future approaches; and
3. Identify what Arts Council England can do to improve and what its role should look like in the future.

The survey forms one aspect of a wider programme of reputational research commissioned by the Arts Council to provide a rigorous and authoritative assessment of its audiences' understanding and perceptions of the organisation. The other elements of reputational research consist of a series of in-depth interviews with key stakeholders and opinion formers; a survey of Members of Parliament; a survey of Local Councillors and a nationally-representative survey of the general public.

Methodology

ICM conducted a quantitative online survey with stakeholders and opinion formers from the whole arts and cultural spectrum.

The Arts Council compiled a sample frame from its systems and databases of stakeholder contacts from the arts and cultural sectors, as well as other partners. This group includes organisations that receive regular funding from the Arts Council, individual artists that receive Grants for the Arts, organisations and individual artists that have applied for funding, central and local government staff with responsibility for arts and culture, and key representatives from the libraries sector and national and regional agencies.

To match the process adopted in previous years, a limit of two members and two officers per local authority was imposed. In addition, companies and organisations were limited to one contact to ensure that no organisation was over-represented in the sample.

Once duplicate entries and those with incorrect email addresses were removed, the Arts Council then provided ICM with a sample of 2,771 usable contacts.

A warm-up email, signed by Althea Efunshile – the Acting Chief Executive – was sent to all contacts to confirm the authenticity of the research and stress its importance to the Arts Council.

This email was followed up with an invitation email containing an online link to the survey, which was sent to all contacts in the sample. Reminder emails were sent at weekly intervals throughout the fieldwork period to all stakeholders who had not yet completed the survey. No quotas were set during fieldwork.

In total, ICM interviewed 1,051 stakeholders and opinion formers across the arts and cultural sector. The total sample size, and the number of complete responses, is broken down in the table below.

Arts Council England stakeholder sample details			
Stakeholder group	Total sample	Total completes	Unadjusted response rate
Arts Organisation	1351	626	46%
Children and Young People	167	69	41%
Economic Development (e.g. Local Enterprise Partnerships)	29	2	7%
Arts Individual	397	163	41%
Infrastructure (e.g. national associations relating to arts and culture, or regional heritage organisations)	50	15	30%
Libraries	184	45	24%
Local authority	464	82	18%
Museums	129	49	38%
TOTAL	2,771	1,051	38%

In total, 2,771 emails were sent and 1,051 survey responses were received, giving an unadjusted response rate of 38%. However, a total of 67 bouncebacks were received from old or incorrect email addresses. When factoring these in, the adjusted response rate is 39%.

As the exact size and nature of the Arts Council's stakeholder universe is unknown, data are unweighted. This replicates the approach used in previous years and is a standard approach used in stakeholder research.

The research was carried out between 2 March and 30 March 2015.

All responses have been analysed by a range of geographic and attitudinal variables; detailed breakdowns have been provided in the appendices and in a separate volume of computer tables.

Presentation and interpretation of data

It should be remembered at all times that a sample of Arts Council stakeholders – rather than all stakeholders – has been interviewed. In consequence, all results are subject to sampling tolerances, which means that not all differences are statistically significant. Further information about sampling tolerances is appended.

Where base sizes are small, findings should be treated with caution. For instance, the base sizes for Libraries stakeholders (45) and Museums stakeholders (49) fall under 50 respondents, but have been included in the report. However, results for these groups should be viewed as indicative only.

Infrastructure stakeholders (15) and Economic Development stakeholders (2) have not been included in the report as separate categories due to their very small base sizes.

Where percentages do not sum to 100, this may be due to computer rounding, the exclusion of “don’t know” categories, or multiple answers. Throughout the report an asterisk (*) denotes any value of less than half of one per cent but greater than zero.

In the report and accompanying computer tables, reference is made to “net” figures. This represents the balance of opinion on attitudinal questions, and provides a particularly useful means of comparing the results for a number of variables.

We also emphasise that this survey deals with stakeholders’ perceptions at the time the survey was conducted, rather than facts. Stakeholders’ perceptions, therefore, may not accurately represent the work of the Arts Council itself.

Throughout the report differences across stakeholder categories are highlighted when statistically significant.

Acknowledgements

ICM would like to thank the Arts Council’s Policy & Research and Advocacy & Communications teams for their help and support in developing this project. Special thanks go to the 1,051 stakeholders and opinion formers who took part in this research.

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1. Overall perceptions

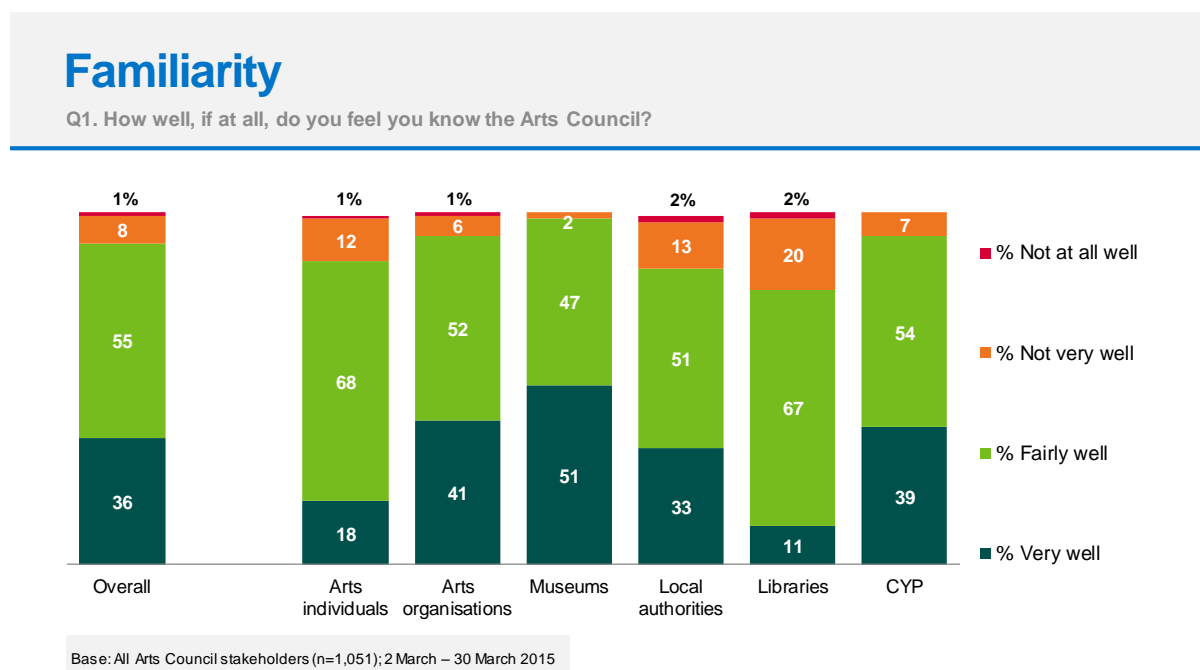
This chapter explores stakeholders' overall views of the Arts Council, including how they perceive the Arts Council and its work, their level of familiarity with the organisation, and key reputational measures such as favourability and advocacy.

1.1 Familiarity

There is a high level of familiarity with the Arts Council and its work among stakeholders across the arts and cultural sector. Nine in ten (90%) report that they feel they know the Arts Council well, although most feel that they know it *fairly well* (55%) rather than *very well* (36%). Just one in ten (10%) feel they do not know the Arts Council well.

As would be expected, the level of familiarity with the Arts Council and its work is strongly correlated with stakeholders' length of contact with the Arts Council and their current frequency of contact with the organisation. Those who have been in contact for more than 10 years (52%) or 7-10 years (40%) are significantly more likely to feel that they know the Arts Council *very well* than those who have been in contact with the Arts Council for 1-3 years (14%) or less than one year (five per cent).

Similarly, those who are in contact with the Arts Council once a month or more often (53%) are significantly more likely to say they know they organisation *very well* than those who have contact every 2-6 months (29%) or less often than every 6 months (12%).



Reflecting this relationship, stakeholder groups who tend to work with the Arts Council more frequently are more likely to feel they know the organisation well. As such, those groups who have the most frequent contact with the Arts Council report the greatest depth of familiarity, with two in five stakeholders from arts organisations (41%) and the Children and Young People sector (39%) feeling they know the Arts Council *very well*. Notably, despite the fact that museums are relatively new to the Arts Council's portfolio, museums stakeholders report the greatest depth of familiarity with the Arts Council and its work, with half (51%) feeling they know the Arts Council *very well*.

Libraries stakeholders (11%) and arts individuals (18%) are least likely to feel that they know the Arts Council very well. Among arts individuals, this lower level of familiarity reflects their lower frequency of

contact with the Arts Council (74% have contact with the Arts Council every four months or less often).

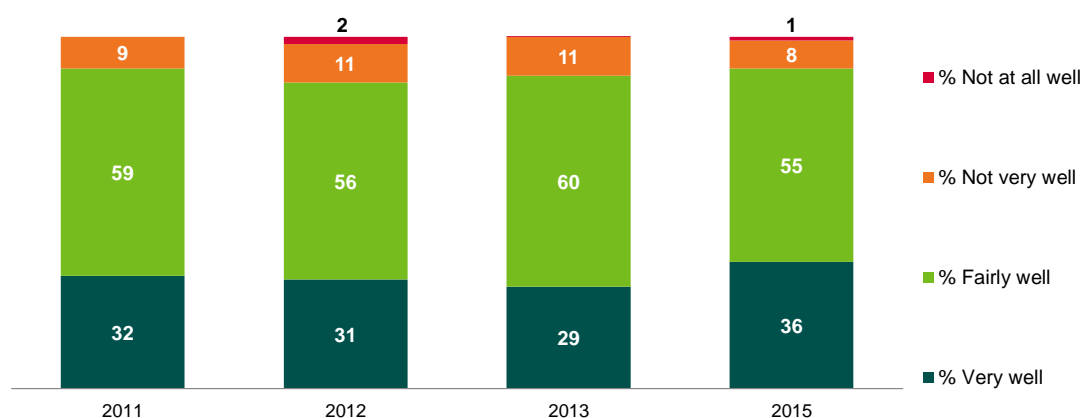
Unsurprisingly, stakeholders with no regular point of contact within the Arts Council are least familiar with the organisation. While their overall level of familiarity remains relatively high (71%), three in ten among this group (29%) feel they do not know the Arts Council well – significantly more than in any other group.

At the overall level, stakeholders' level of familiarity with the Arts Council remains broadly consistent with previous years. While familiarity with the organisation has risen slightly from 88 per cent in 2013 to nine in ten (90%) in 2015, this does not represent a statistically significant difference.

However, as shown in the chart below, stakeholders report a significantly greater depth of familiarity with the organisation in 2015. Over a third (36%) feel that they know the Arts Council very well compared to three in ten (29%) in 2013.

Familiarity trend data

Q1. How well, if at all, do you feel you know the Arts Council?

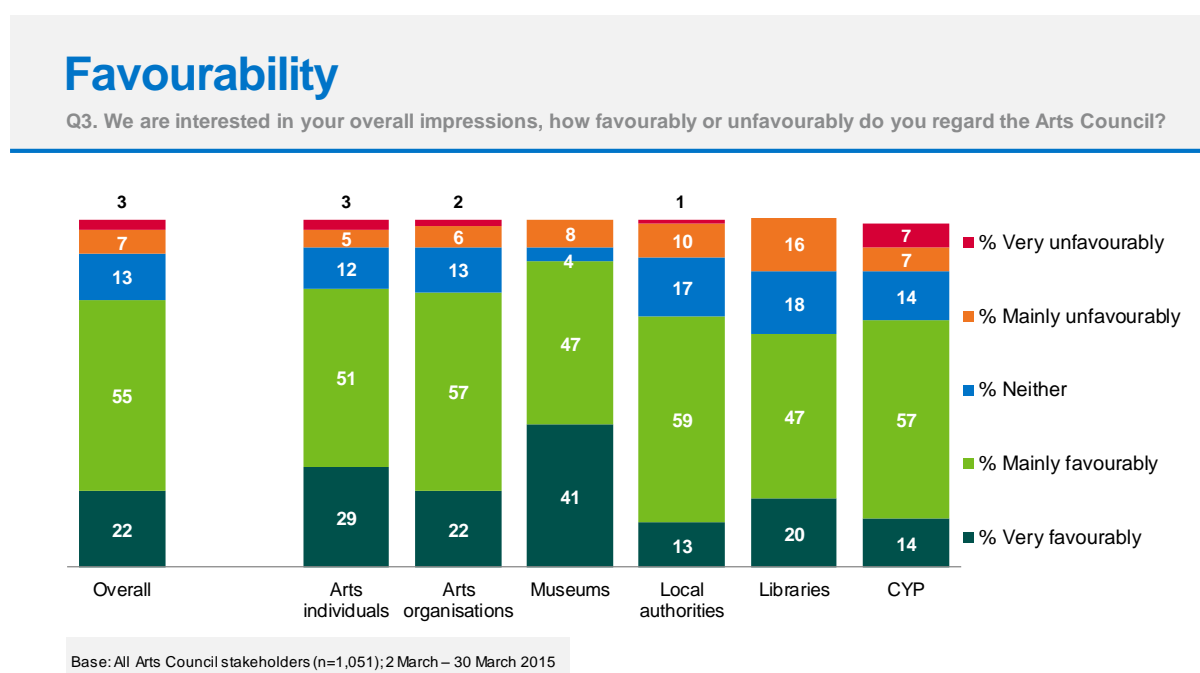


Base: All Arts Council stakeholders : 2015 (n=1,051), 2013 (n=943), 2012 (n=762), 2011 (n=785)

1.2 Favourability

Favourability is a key measure of reputation which indicates the overall level of goodwill towards an organisation. The Arts Council scores strongly on this measure, with a majority of stakeholders in the arts and cultural sector holding a favourable impression of the organisation. Nearly four in five (78%) are favourable overall, with just over one in five (22%) describing themselves as very favourable. One in eleven (nine per cent) are unfavourable towards the Arts Council.

Those closest to the Arts Council are most likely to have a favourable view of the organisation. This may reflect the quality of the Arts Council's working relationships with its stakeholders - (overall, 79% of stakeholders say their working relationship with the organisation is of good quality). As such, stakeholders who feel that they know the Arts Council well (81%) are significantly more favourable than those who do not know it well (47%), while stakeholders who have contact at least once a month (82%) are significantly more favourable compared to those who have contact every 2 months or less (75%).



Favourability also varies by stakeholder category. Museums stakeholders are most positive in their overall impressions of the Arts Council, with two in five (41%) saying they are very favourable towards the organisation. Arts individuals are also positive, with three in ten (29%) saying they are very favourable, while ratings are lowest among local authority stakeholders (13%).

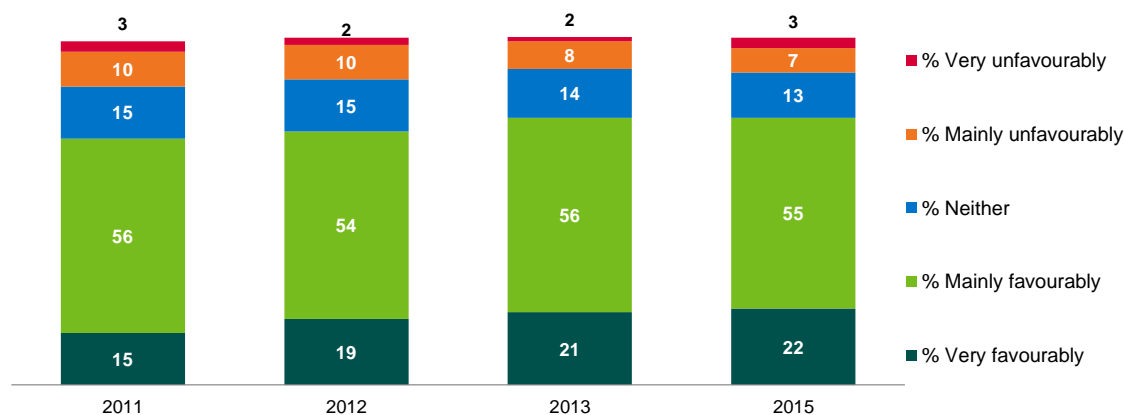
Favourability ratings are closely related to stakeholder perceptions of the Arts Council's performance as an organisation. Among those who rate its overall performance as good, nine in ten (91%) are favourable, while the same applies to only one in eleven (nine per cent) among those who rate its overall performance as not good.

At the overall level, favourability has risen slightly, albeit not statistically significantly, since 2013. Four in five (78%) are now favourable towards the Arts Council compared to three quarters (76%) in 2013.

As displayed in the chart below, favourability ratings have remained broadly consistent year-on-year since 2011. However, examining the longer-term trend shows that there has been a gradual rise over time in the proportion of stakeholders who regard the Arts Council *very favourably*. Conversely, the proportion of stakeholders who are unfavourable has fallen from 13 per cent in 2011 to nine per cent in 2015.

Favourability trend data

Q3. We are interested in your overall impressions, how favourably or unfavourably do you regard the Arts Council?



Base: All Arts Council stakeholders : 2015 (n=1,051), 2013 (n=943), 2012 (n=762), 2011 (n=785)

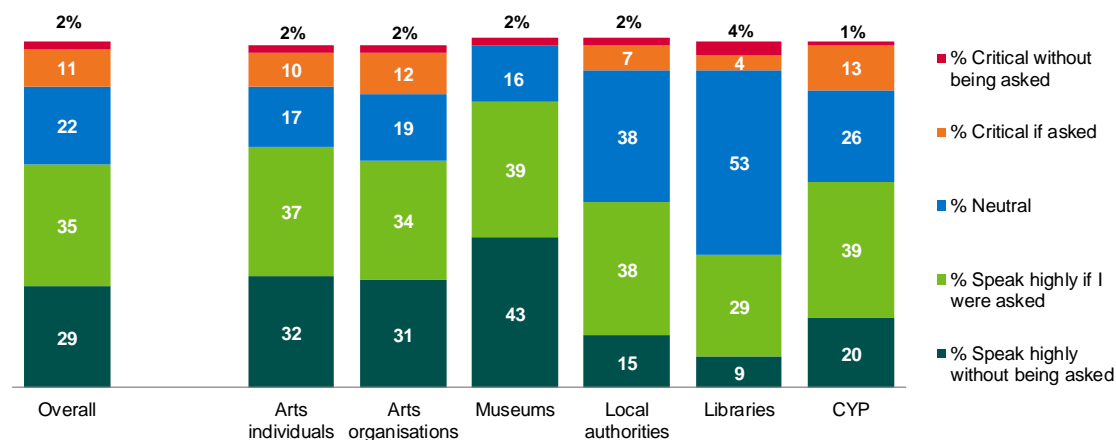
1.3 Advocacy

Advocacy is a more robust measure of reputation than favourability; while favourability quantifies the overall level of goodwill towards an organisation among stakeholders, advocacy indicates how they would speak of it to other people, and thus measures the wider impact of their views on the organisation's reputation. Again, the Arts Council performs well on this measure, with two thirds of Arts Council stakeholders (64%) being advocates of the organisation.

Three in ten (29%) say they would speak highly of the Arts Council without being asked to do so, while a further third (35%) would speak highly of the Arts Council if asked. However, one in five (22%) would be neutral towards the Arts Council, while a minority (13%) would be critical.

Advocacy

Q4. Which of these phrases best describes the way you would speak of the Arts Council to other people?



Base: All Arts Council stakeholders (n=1,051); 2 March – 30 March 2015

As is the case with favourability, ratings are significantly higher among museums stakeholders, with over four in five of this group (82%) saying they would speak highly of the Arts Council. Arts individuals (69%) and arts organisations (65%) also tend to be more positive, with around two thirds of each group saying they would speak highly of the Arts Council.

However, other stakeholder groups are less positive on this measure, being not only less likely to be advocates, but also less inclined to speak highly of the Arts Council without being asked. While half of local authority stakeholders (52%) are advocates at the overall level, they are only half as likely to say they would speak highly of the Arts Council without being asked (15% compared to 29% overall). Similarly, two in five library stakeholders (38%) are advocates, but just one in eleven (nine per cent) would speak highly of the Arts Council without being asked.

Perhaps surprisingly, there is no significant variation in advocacy ratings depending on the length of contact stakeholders have had with the Arts Council. However, those who work most closely with the organisation are more positive: those who have contact with the Arts Council more than once a month (70%) are significantly more likely to be advocates than those who have contact less often than once every six months (52%).

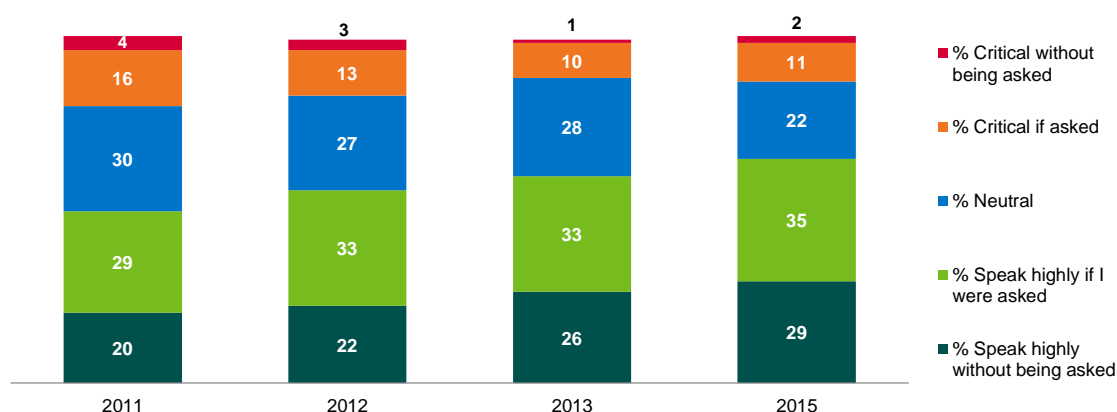
Advocacy is also strongly correlated with perceptions of the Arts Council's performance as an organisation. Four in five (81%) stakeholders who rate the Arts Council's overall performance as good are advocates. Conversely, none of the stakeholders who rate the Arts Council's overall performance as poor would speak highly of the organisation, while four in five of this group (80%) would be critics.

As with favourability, the longer-term trend for advocacy is positive, with ratings rising by 15 percentage points between 2011 and 2015. Indeed, advocacy has increased significantly since the previous stakeholder survey, rising from 59% in 2013 to 64% in 2015.

Most notably, the proportion of stakeholders who say they would speak highly of the Arts Council without being prompted to do so has risen incrementally over the past four years, and has risen significantly since 2013. Three in ten (29%) now say they would speak highly of the Arts Council without being asked, which is an increase of three percentage points on 2013.

Advocacy trend data

Q4. Which of these phrases best describes the way you would speak of the Arts Council to other people?



Base: All Arts Council stakeholders : 2015 (n=1,051), 2013 (n=943), 2012 (n=762), 2011 (n=785)

1.4 Overall perceptions

Stakeholders were presented with a list of words and phrases and asked to select up to six which best reflected their overall ideas or impressions of the Arts Council. They were then asked to select up to six words or phrases which they feel the Arts Council should be seeking to be.

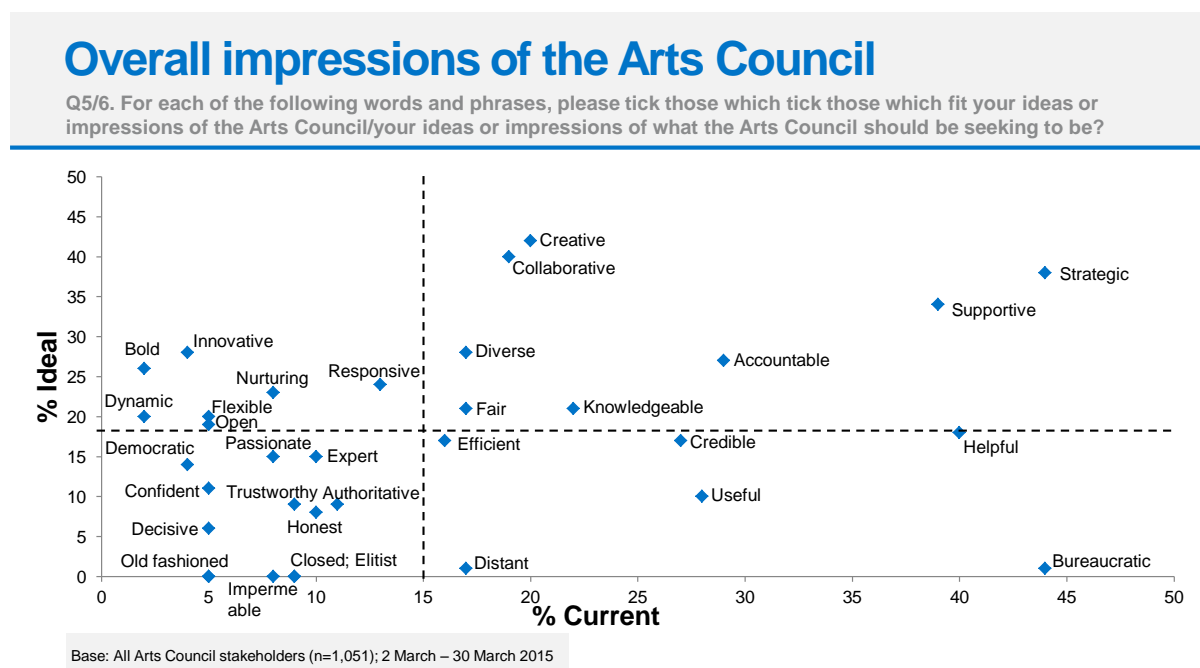
For many stakeholders in the arts and cultural sector, their overall impression of the Arts Council relates to its role as a national organisation. It is most commonly described as bureaucratic (44%) and strategic (44%). However, many stakeholders also view the Arts Council through the prism of their own working relationship with the organisation, with around two in five describing it as helpful (40%) and supportive (39%).

The variety of terms associated with the Arts Council reflect the diverse range of its stakeholders and the relationships they have with the organisation. Notably, local authority stakeholders are significantly more likely than other stakeholder groups to view the Arts Council as distant (33% compared to 17% overall), while Children and Young People stakeholders (36%) and stakeholders in the museums sector (33%) are significantly more likely to perceive the Arts Council as collaborative.

When it comes to characteristics which the Arts Council should be aspiring to, overall stakeholders are most likely to suggest that it should be creative (42%), collaborative (40%), strategic (38%) and supportive (34%).

The chart below shows how well the Arts Council is performing in relation to its stakeholders' expectations; it maps the current perceptions of the Arts Council against what stakeholders feel the Arts Council should be seeking to be. It is clear that the Arts Council is meeting expectations in some respects; in particular, it is widely perceived to be knowledgeable, accountable, supportive and strategic.

However, in other areas there is a considerable discrepancy between what stakeholders would like to see from the Arts Council, and how it is currently perceived. In particular, there is an appetite for the Arts Council to be more bold, innovative, diverse, creative and collaborative in its work.



The list of words and phrases also included the Arts Council's corporate values: passionate, bold, nurturing, knowledgeable, collaborative and accountable. In terms of these five characteristics, stakeholders' views have remained relatively consistent over the past four years. However, in 2015, stakeholders are significantly less likely to either describe the Arts Council as knowledgeable (22% compared to 25% in 2013) or to say that the Arts Council should be seeking to be knowledgeable (21%, compared to 29% in 2013).

Specifically in relation to these five values, the Arts Council is meeting its stakeholders' expectations in some respects. Just over a quarter (27%) believe that the Arts Council should be aspiring to be 'accountable', and three in ten (29%) feel it is currently performing on this value. Further, one in five (21%) believe the Arts Council should be seeking to be 'knowledgeable', and around the same proportion (22%) describe it as 'knowledgeable'.

However, it is performing less well in terms of the characteristics 'passionate' and 'nurturing'. While 15% of stakeholders think the Arts Council should be 'passionate', and nearly a quarter (23%) feel it should be 'nurturing', just 8 per cent currently describe it as such for each value.

The Arts Council is also perceived as less collaborative than it should be (40% believe it should be seeking to be collaborative, while only 19% currently describe it as collaborative). It performs least well for 'bold': while a quarter (26%) believe the Arts Council should be seeking to be 'bold', just 2 per cent feel that this value currently describes the Arts Council.

Stakeholders clearly feel that the Arts Council needs to be bolder and more collaborative than it currently is.

Values	Current characteristics				Ideal characteristics			
	2011	2012	2013	2015	2011	2012	2013	2015
Strategic	40%	41%	45%	44%	39%	44%	46%	38%
Bureaucratic	48%	44%	43%	44%	2%	1%	1%	1%
Helpful	40%	43%	45%	40%	27%	25%	27%	18%
Supportive	41%	39%	42%	39%	40%	38%	42%	34%
Accountable	25%	30%	27%	29%	34%	35%	29%	27 %
Useful	32%	27%	29%	28%	11%	11%	9%	10%
Credible	20%	21%	25%	27%	17%	18%	18%	17%
Knowledgeable	24%	25%	25%	22%	28%	27%	29%	21%
Creative	11%	15%	15%	20%	37%	35%	38%	42%
Collaborative	15%	17%	18%	19%	41%	41%	42%	40%
Diverse	14%	13%	12%	17%	20%	21%	18%	28%
Fair	-	-	-	17%	-	-	-	21%
Distant	22%	18%	19%	17%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Efficient	-	-	-	16%	-	-	-	17%
Responsive	14%	13%	16%	13%	26%	28%	27%	24%
Authoritative	12%	13%	14%	11%	10%	11%	11%	9%
Expert	9%	11%	13%	10%	19%	18%	22%	15%
Honest	10%	11%	16%	10%	20%	17%	18%	8%
Closed	17%	13%	10%	9%	1%	*	1%	*
Elitist	13%	13%	11%	9%	1%	-	1%	*
Trustworthy	6%	8%	8%	9%	14%	13%	11%	9%
Impermeable	13%	9%	8%	8%	1%	*	*	*
Nurturing	6%	9%	9%	8%	22%	24%	22%	23%
Passionate	7%	8%	7%	8%	17%	15%	15%	15%

Values	Current characteristics				Ideal characteristics			
	2011	2012	2013	2015	2011	2012	2013	2015
Old fashioned	8%	7%	7%	5%	1%	*	*	*
Weak	8%	7%	6%	5%	*	*	*	-
Flexible	5%	6%	6%	5%	19%	22%	19%	20%
Open	6%	7%	6%	5%	22%	22%	18%	19%
Confident	7%	7%	7%	5%	10%	14%	13%	11%
Decisive	6%	4%	5%	5%	8%	7%	7%	6%
Innovative	5%	7%	5%	4%	30%	29%	32%	28%
Democratic	3%	5%	5%	4%	11%	11%	10%	14%
Bold	2%	3%	3%	2%	21%	26%	27%	26%
Dynamic	1%	2%	2%	2%	19%	18%	21%	20%

2. Performance and impact

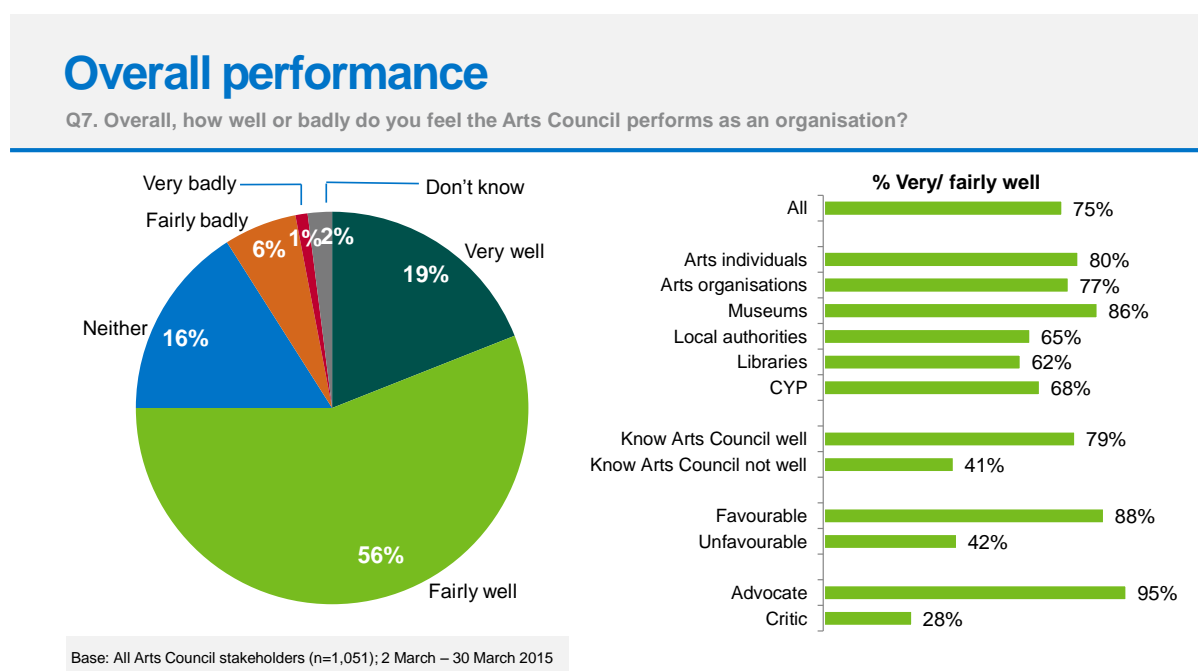
This section explores stakeholders' views on how the Arts Council performs as an organisation, and its mission and goals. It also discusses what impact the Arts Council's work is perceived to have on the wider arts and culture sector.

2.1 Overall performance

As a public body which exists not only to champion and develop arts and culture, but also to invest public money in the arts and culture ecology across England, the Arts Council has naturally felt the impact of the recession and the unfavourable economic climate over the past seven years. More specifically, the Arts Council has faced considerable financial challenges since the 2010 Spending Review, being tasked with making significant cuts to its overall budget, and making substantial reductions to administrative costs.

In this context, stakeholders' perceptions of the Arts Council's organisational performance are a vital measure of how well the Arts Council has succeeded in meeting these challenges.

In the 2015 survey, stakeholders were therefore asked for the first time to give their views on the Arts Council's overall performance as an organisation. On the whole, stakeholders are positive about its performance, with three quarters (75%) believing it performs well, and one in five (19%) saying that it performs *very well*. A further 16 per cent say it is doing neither well nor badly, while only seven per cent believe it performs badly.



However, there are substantial differences in terms of how the Arts Council is perceived to be performing among different stakeholder groups. Museums stakeholders (86%) are most likely to believe it performs well, with a third of this group (35%) saying it performs *very well*. Arts individuals and NPO stakeholders¹ are also positive about the Arts Council's performance, with four in five (80%) saying it performs well among each group.

¹ NPOs – or National Portfolio Organisations – are a sub-group of the 'arts organisations' stakeholder category.

By contrast, local authorities (65%) and libraries (62%) are less positive, which may reflect the fact that public sector organisations are likely to have been most affected by government funding cuts to arts and culture.

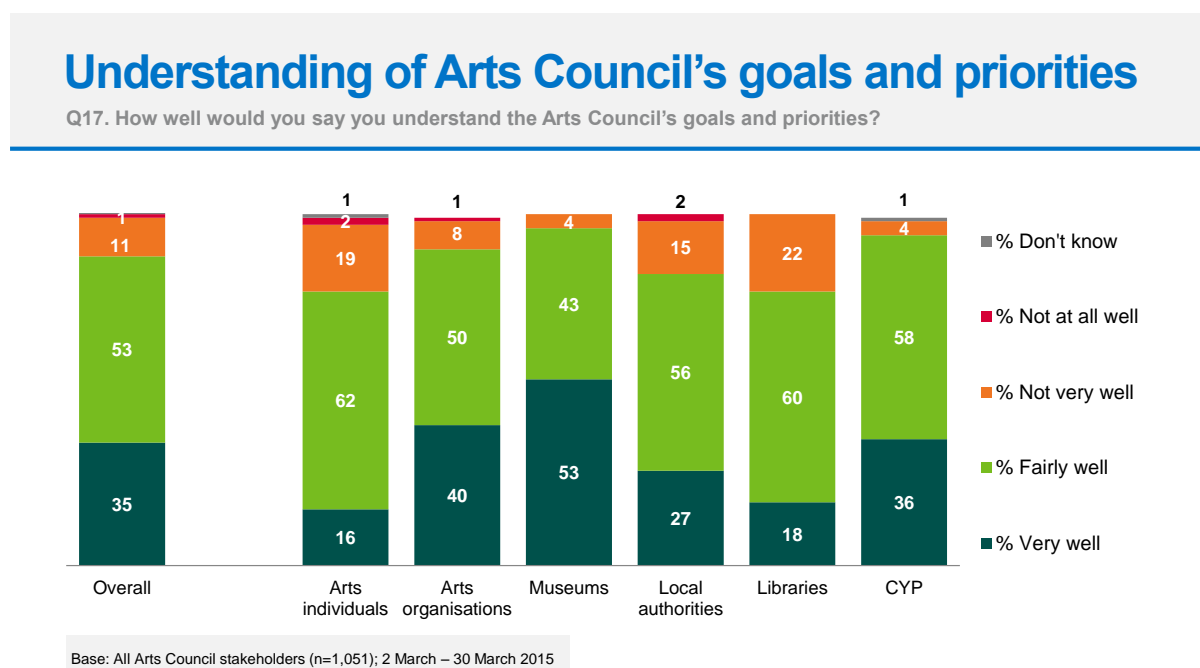
As would be expected, views also differ by the key measures of favourability and advocacy, with unfavourable stakeholders (42%) and critics (28%) being significantly less likely to believe that the Arts Council performs well.

2.2 Mission and goals

2.2.1 Understanding of the Arts Council's goals and priorities

The Arts Council's work is underpinned by the mission to provide 'Great art and culture for everyone'². In order to achieve this mission, the 2010-2020 10-year strategic framework outlines five strategic goals, relating to excellence, reach, resilience and sustainability, diversity and skills, and children and young people. The Arts Council has also outlined a number of priorities which underpin each of the goals.

Arts Council stakeholders largely feel that they have a good understanding of these goals and priorities, which suggests that they have been well communicated to stakeholders across the arts and cultural sector. Almost nine in ten (88%) say they understand the goals and priorities well, which is in line with 2013 (88%). Whereas a third (35%) say they understand them *very well*, around one in nine (12%) say they do not understand them well.



However, levels of understanding vary across different groups of stakeholders. A number of the Arts Council's formal funding application processes require arts and cultural organisations to assess their performance against the goals and priorities. Reflecting this, virtually all NPO stakeholders (98%) feel they have a good understanding of the goals and priorities. They are also most likely to feel they understand the goals and priorities *very well* (55%) compared to other stakeholder groups.

² <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/mission/>

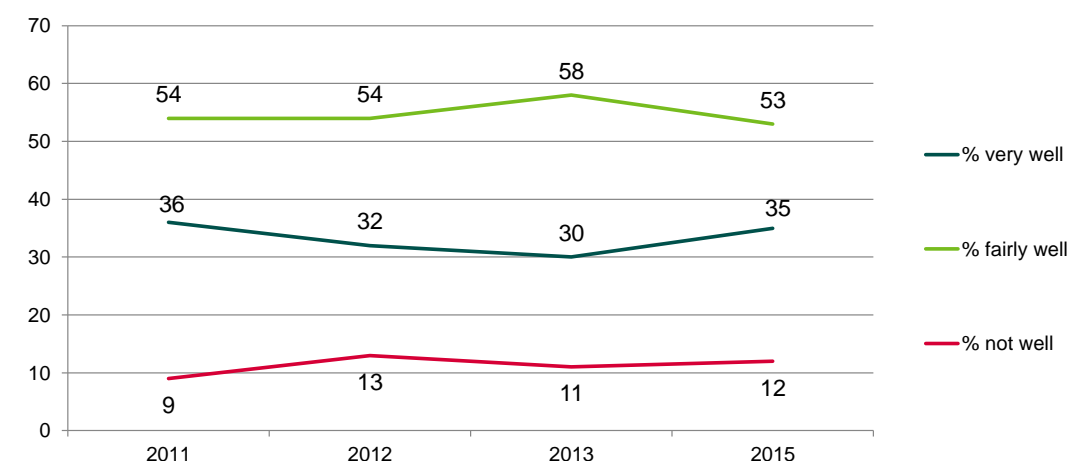
In contrast, libraries stakeholders (22%), arts individuals (21%) and local authorities (17%) are most likely to feel that they do not understand the Arts Council's goals and priorities well.

Understanding of the goals and priorities is also strongly correlated with stakeholders' length of contact with the Arts Council. Around a third of stakeholders who have been working with the Arts Council for less than a year (31%) feel they do not understand the organisation's goals and priorities well compared to just one in twenty (five per cent) among those who have been working with the Arts Council for more than ten years.

While the level of understanding of the Arts Council's goals and priorities is unchanged since 2013 at the overall level, the chart below shows that stakeholders report a greater depth of understanding of the Arts Council's goals and priorities in 2015. Over a third of stakeholders (35%) now feel that they understand the organisation's goals and priorities *very well* – a significant increase since 2013 (30%).

Understanding of Arts Council's goals and priorities

Q17. How well would you say you understand the Arts Council's goals and priorities?



Base: All Arts Council stakeholders : 2015 (n=1,051), 2013 (n=943), 2012 (n=762), 2011 (n=785)

2.2.2 Performance on mission

When it comes to how the Arts Council works to achieve great art, libraries and museums for everyone, stakeholders tend to be positive about the Arts Council's sense of mission and the strategy behind it. However, as found in previous years, for a minority of stakeholders, there remains a lack of clarity around how this relates to its wider stakeholder universe, both in terms of the general public and in terms of stakeholders working in the arts and culture sector.

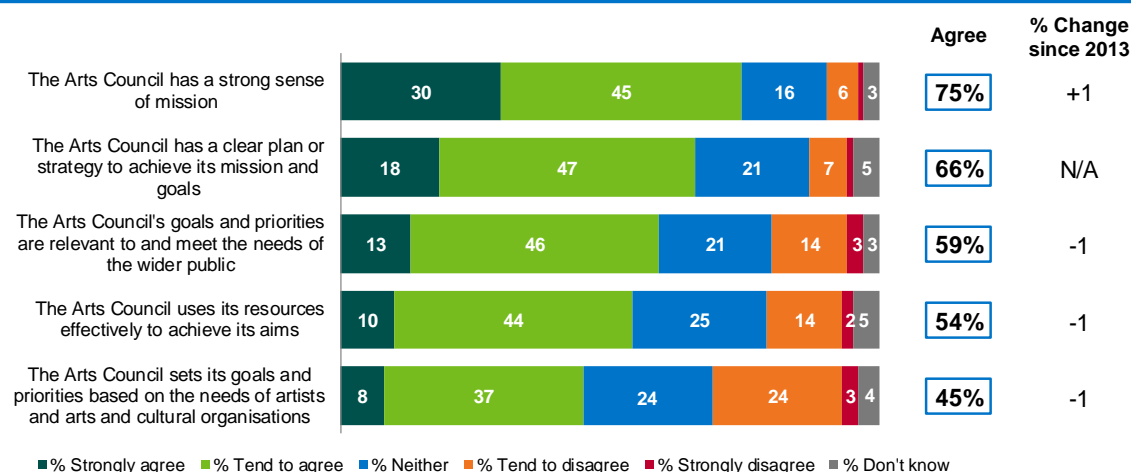
Three quarters (75%) agree that the Arts Council has a strong sense of mission, while two thirds of stakeholders (66%) feel that the Arts Council has a clear plan or strategy in place to achieve its mission and goals. Museums stakeholders in particular have a markedly better sense of the strategy underpinning the Arts Council's mission and goals, with over four in five (84%) believing it has a clear plan to achieve them.

There is less certainty when it comes to how these aims relate to the wider public. Three in five (59%) feel that the Arts Council's goals and priorities are relevant to and meet the needs of the wider public, but nearly one in five (17%) disagree. Library and local authority stakeholders are significantly more likely to have doubts over the public relevance of the Arts Council's goals and priorities: over a third of libraries (36%) and nearly three in ten local authorities (28%) disagree that they are relevant to and meet the needs of the wider public.

Less than half (45%) believe that the Arts Council sets its goals and priorities based on the needs of artists and arts and cultural organisations, while more than a quarter (27%) disagree. There is some variation by region, with stakeholders in northern parts of the country being less confident that the goals and priorities are relevant to the arts and cultural sector. Stakeholders in the North West (34%), North East (33%), West Midlands (33%) and Yorkshire (32%) are most likely to disagree that the Arts Council's goals and priorities are based on the needs of artists and arts and cultural organisations.

Performance on mission

Q18. Thinking about the Arts Council's work to achieve great art, libraries and museums for everyone. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?



Base: All Arts Council stakeholders (n=1,051); 2 March – 30 March 2015

In terms of how resources are used, half (54%) feel that the Arts Council uses its resources effectively to achieve its aims, but a sizeable minority (16%) disagree.

Museums stakeholders are markedly more positive about the Arts Council's use of resources, with over four in five (82%) believing that it uses resources effectively. In contrast, stakeholders who are critics (51%) and those who feel that the Arts Council does not perform well as an organisation (73%) are most likely to disagree.

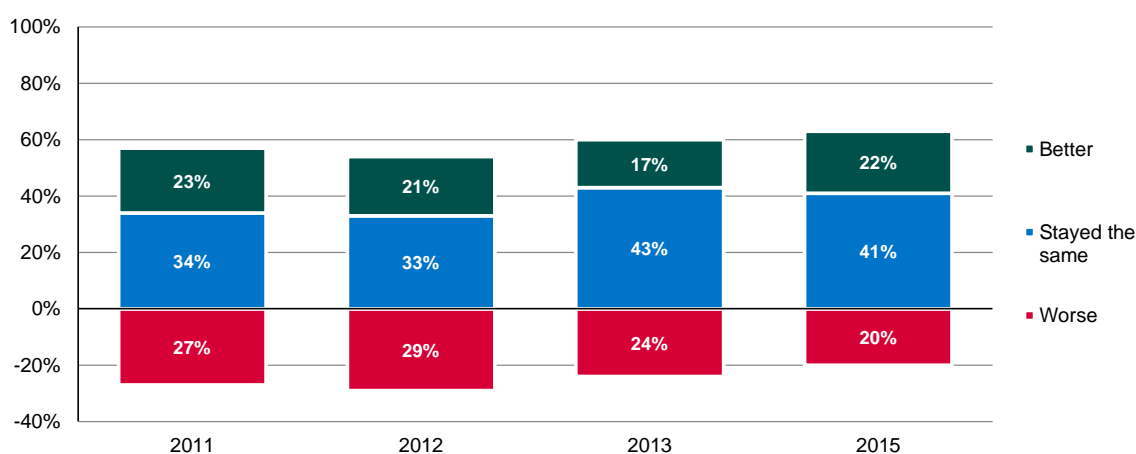
2.2.3 Effectiveness in performing on mission over the past year

On balance, a majority of stakeholders believe that the Arts Council has either maintained its level of effectiveness or become more effective in its work to achieve great art and culture for everyone over the past year. Moreover, stakeholders are markedly more positive about its effectiveness in 2015 compared to previous years.

While a substantial proportion of stakeholders (41%) believe that the Arts Council's effectiveness has not changed in the past year, just over one in five (22%) believe it has got better – a significant increase from 2013 (17%). One in five (20%) believe it has got less effective over the past year, but this represents a significant decrease compared to 2013 (24%).

Effectiveness in achieving mission – trend data

Q8. The Arts Council aims to achieve great art, libraries and museums for everyone. Do you think that the effectiveness of the Arts Council in achieving this has got better, worse or stayed the same over the past year?



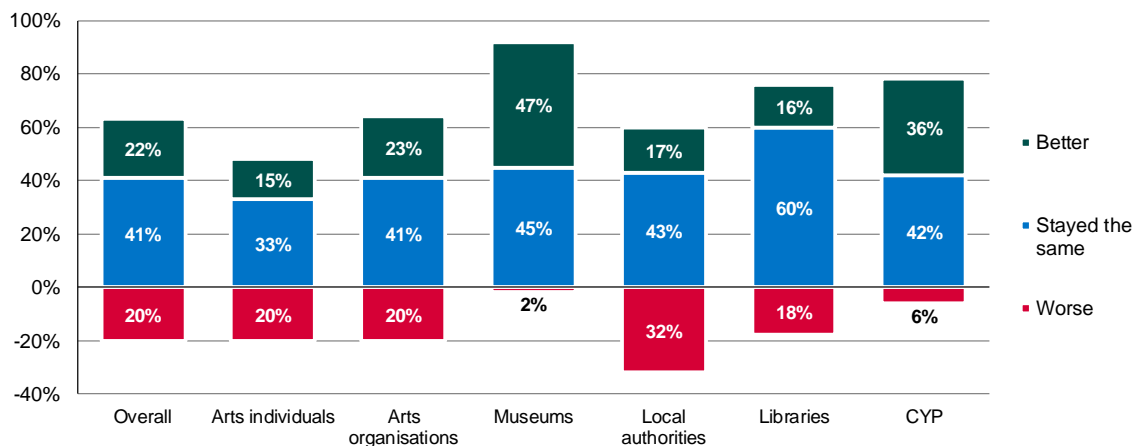
Base: All Arts Council stakeholders : 2015 (n=1,051), 2013 (n=943), 2012 (n=762), 2011 (n=785)

Particular stakeholder groups are considerably more positive about the Arts Council's performance over the past year, which suggests that the Arts Council is making greater improvements in these areas. For instance, nearly half of museums stakeholders (47%) believe that the Arts Council's effectiveness has improved over the past year, and this view is shared by over a third of Children and Young People stakeholders (36%).

In contrast, local authority stakeholders are more negative about the Arts Council's effectiveness, being significantly more likely than any other group to believe that the Arts Council's effectiveness has got worse in the past year (32% compared with 20% overall).

Effectiveness by stakeholder category

Q8. The Arts Council aims to achieve great art, libraries and museums for everyone. Do you think that the effectiveness of the Arts Council in achieving this has got better, worse or stayed the same over the past year?

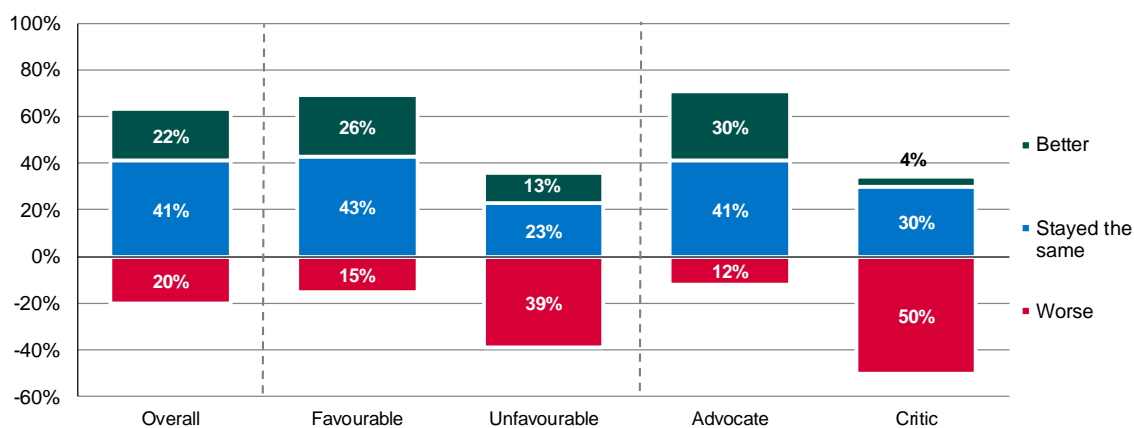


Base: All Arts Council stakeholders (n=1,051); 2 March – 30 March 2015

The perceived effectiveness of the Arts Council's work is strongly correlated with stakeholders' overall views of the organisation. Stakeholders who are unfavourable (39%) and critics (50%) are significantly more likely to believe that the Arts Council's effectiveness has got worse over the past year.

Effectiveness by key metrics

Q8. The Arts Council aims to achieve great art, libraries and museums for everyone. Do you think that the effectiveness of the Arts Council in achieving this has got better, worse or stayed the same over the past year?



Base: All Arts Council stakeholders (n=1,051); 2 March – 30 March 2015

2.2.4 Reasons for saying effectiveness has got better

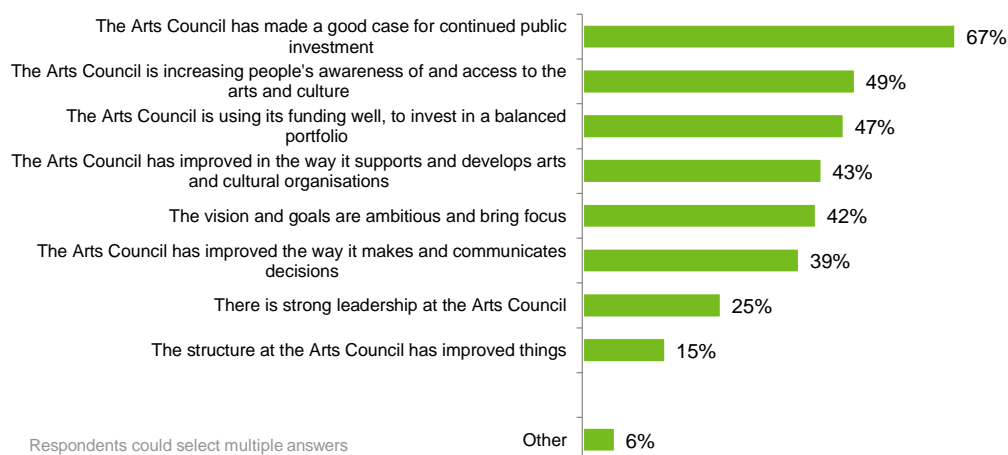
Respondents were presented with a range of different options and asked to select which best reflected the reasons behind their views on how the Arts Council's effectiveness has changed over the past year.

Those who believe that the Arts Council's effectiveness has got better in the past year cite a range of different reasons. However, stakeholders most commonly refer to the Arts Council's advocacy role, with two thirds (67%) believing that the Arts Council has made a good case for continued public investment.

Many also refer to the Arts Council's role in promoting and developing arts and culture, with around half (49%) saying that the Arts Council is increasing public awareness of and access to arts and culture, and a further two in five (43%) suggesting that the Arts Council has improved in the way it supports and develops arts and cultural organisations.

Reasons for saying effectiveness has got better

Q9A. Why do you say it has got better?



Base: All who say effectiveness has got better in the past year (n=236); 2 March – 30 March 2015

There is also a sense that the Arts Council is improving in an organisational capacity, with nearly half mentioning that it is using its funding well to invest in a balanced portfolio (47%). Further, many suggest that it has improved in terms of its communications; around two in five suggest that the vision and goals are ambitious and bring focus (42%) and that it has improved the way it makes and communicates decisions (39%).

2.2.5 Reasons for saying effectiveness has stayed the same

Among those who believe that the Arts Council's effectiveness has been unchanged in the past year, many simply feel that the Arts Council has continued to perform well. Just under half (46%) say the Arts Council has continued to support and develop arts and cultural organisations, while a quarter (27%) believe the Arts Council has generally been effective at achieving great art, libraries and museums for everyone. A further quarter (27%) have noticed no difference in the Arts Council's performance in the last year.

However, there is also a clear sense that lack of funding and resources are a barrier to improving performance. Half (52%) of those who believe the Arts Council's effectiveness has stayed the same say there is too little funding available. On a related note, 17% feel it has been focusing on re-structuring rather than its objectives.

Reasons for saying effectiveness has stayed the same

Q9C. Why do you say it has stayed the same?



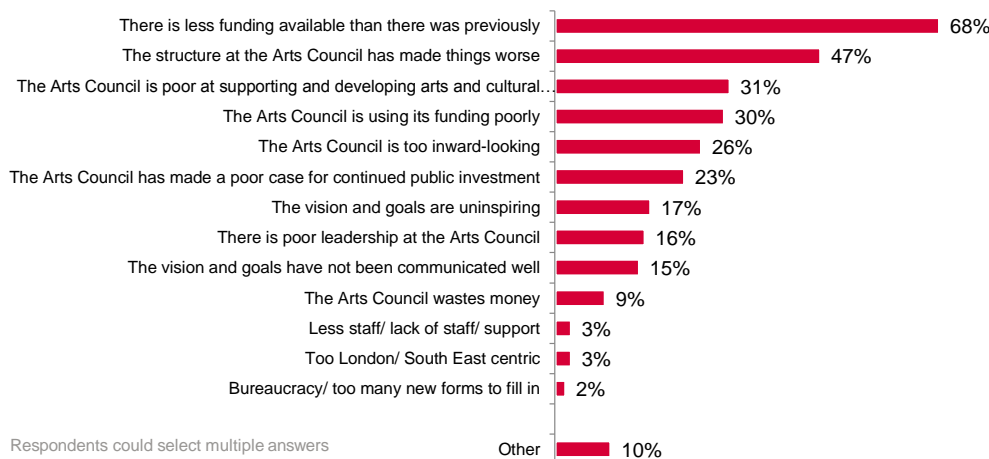
Base: All who say effectiveness has stayed the same in the past year (n=428); 2 March – 30 March 2015

2.2.6 Reasons for saying effectiveness has got worse

Funding is also perceived as the main issue among those who believe the Arts Council has become less effective in the last year. Two thirds (68%) say that there is less funding available than there was previously, while a further three in ten (30%) feel that the Arts Council is using its funding poorly. On a related note, half (47%) feel that the re-structure at the Arts Council has made things worse.

Reasons for saying effectiveness has got worse

Q9B. Why do you say it has got worse?



Base: All who say effectiveness has got worse in the past year (n=207); 2 March – 30 March 2015

However, there are also other areas of concern, with a minority of those who believe it has become less effective suggesting that the Arts Council is poor at supporting and developing arts and cultural organisations (31%), that it is too inward-looking (26%) and that it has made a poor case for continued investment (23%).

2.3 Impact

2.3.1 Impact in areas of key activities

As part of its mission to achieve 'great art and culture for everyone', the Arts Council works towards a number of key aims which reflect its goals and priorities. These key aims are:

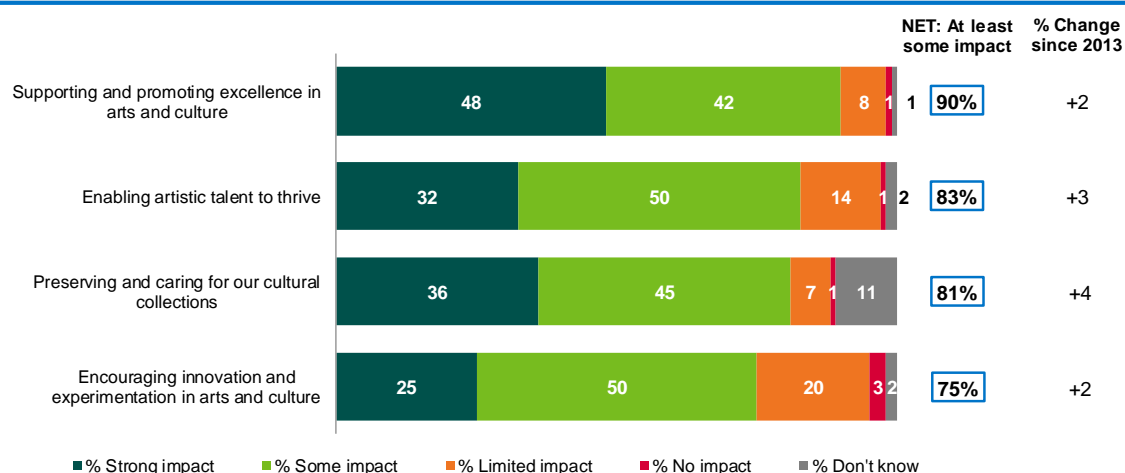
- Supporting and promoting excellence in arts and culture
- Enabling more people to experience and be inspired by arts and culture
- Enabling artistic talent to thrive
- Supporting arts and cultural organisations to become more sustainable and resilient
- Encouraging innovation and experimentation in arts and culture
- Developing the knowledge and skills of arts and cultural leadership and workforce
- Promoting arts and culture that reflect the diversity of contemporary England
- Enabling every child and young person to have the opportunity to experience arts and culture
- Ensuring access to knowledge and learning experiences for all
- Preserving and caring for our cultural collections

On the whole, stakeholders are positive about the Arts Council's performance in these key areas of activity, with a large majority believing that it has at least some impact for each area in question. Moreover, there is a clear sense that the Arts Council is making progress. In virtually all areas, the Arts Council is believed to have a greater impact than in 2013, and its perceived impact has risen significantly since 2011.

Stakeholders are most positive about the Arts Council's impact on the arts and culture ecology in England. Nine in ten (90%) feel the Arts Council has an impact in supporting and promoting excellence in arts and culture, while half (48%) feel it has a *strong impact* in this area. Further, more than four in five feel that it has an impact in enabling artistic talent to thrive (83%) and in preserving and caring for cultural collections (81%, a significant increase from 2013). Three quarters (75%) believe that the Arts Council has an impact in encouraging innovation and experimentation in arts and culture.

Impact – arts and culture ecology

Q22. Thinking about how the Arts Council works to achieve its aims, please tell me whether you think the Arts Council has a strong impact, some impact, limited impact, no impact, or you don't know/have no opinion?



Base: All Arts Council stakeholders (n=1,051); 2 March – 30 March 2015

Among arts individuals, there is less recognition of the Arts Council's role in supporting artistic creativity and innovation than among other groups. This group is significantly more likely to believe that the Arts Council has a limited impact or no impact in enabling artistic talent to thrive (27% compared to 15% overall). They are also more likely to feel that the Arts Council has little impact in encouraging innovation and experimentation in arts and culture (28% compared to 22% overall). By contrast, museums are most likely to feel the Arts Council has an impact in encouraging innovation and experimentation (92% compared with 75% overall).

The Arts Council is also perceived to have a positive impact on the arts and culture sector; a significantly greater proportion of stakeholders believe this to be the case across all measures when compared to 2013. Three quarters (76%) believe that it has an impact in supporting arts and culture organisations to become more sustainable and resilient. A majority of stakeholders believe it has an impact in developing the knowledge and skills of the arts and cultural leadership and workforce (67%) and in developing a more diverse arts and cultural leadership and workforce (57%).

Impact – arts and culture sector

Q22. Thinking about how the Arts Council works to achieve its aims, please tell me whether you think the Arts Council has a strong impact, some impact, limited impact, no impact, or you don't know/have no opinion?



Base: All Arts Council stakeholders (n=1,051); 2 March – 30 March 2015

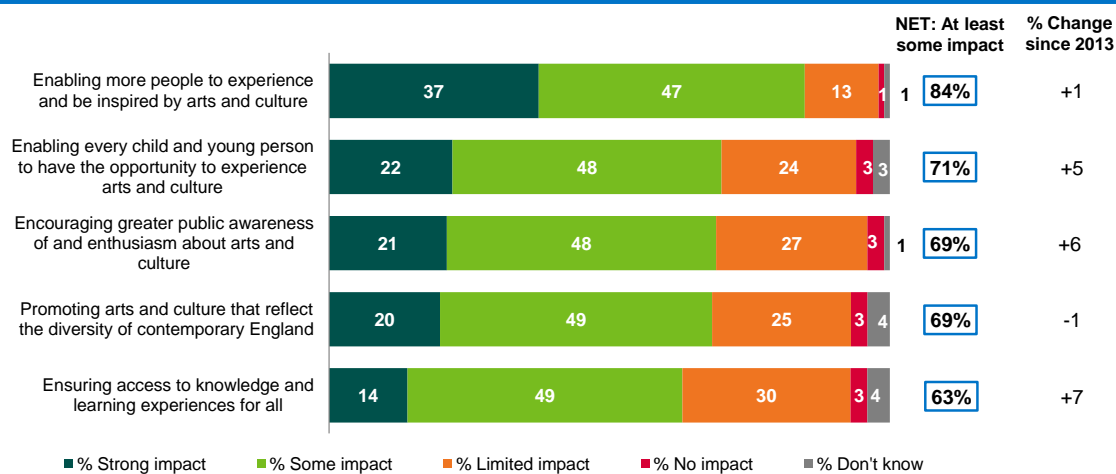
Museums stakeholders are particularly positive about the Arts Council's work in developing the arts and cultural leadership and workforce, with over four in five believing it has an impact in developing knowledge and skills (82% compared with 67% overall).

When it comes to the Arts Council's work in developing a more diverse arts and cultural leadership and workforce, there is some regional variation: stakeholders working for national organisations (73%) or based in the South East (68%) are most likely to feel that it has an impact in this area, while stakeholders in the North West (51%) and in the East Midlands (45%) are least likely to agree.

Stakeholders are also positive about the Arts Council's public-facing work in promoting access to arts and culture. More than four in five (84%) believe the Arts Council has an impact in enabling more people to experience and be inspired by arts and culture, while around seven in ten believe it has an impact in enabling every child and young person to have the opportunity to explore arts and culture (71%), encouraging greater public awareness of and enthusiasm about arts and culture (69%) and promoting arts and culture that reflect the diversity of contemporary England (69%).

Impact – general public

Q22. Thinking about how the Arts Council works to achieve its aims, please tell me whether you think the Arts Council has a strong impact, some impact, limited impact, no impact, or you don't know/have no opinion?



Base: All Arts Council stakeholders (n=1,051); 2 March – 30 March 2015

Museums are notably more positive about the impact of the Arts Council's work with the general public, with a large majority believing that it has an impact in enabling more people to experience and be inspired by arts and culture (94%), ensuring access to knowledge and learning experiences for all (92%), and enabling every child and young person to have the opportunity to experience arts and culture (88%).

Children and Young People stakeholders are also positive about the Arts Council's provision for children and young people, with three quarters (75%) believing it has an impact in enabling every child and young person to have the opportunity to experience arts and culture, and three in ten (29%) believing it has a *strong impact*.

By contrast, libraries and local authorities are significantly more negative about the Arts Council's public-facing work. More than half of both groups (56%) believe that the Arts Council has little impact in ensuring access to knowledge and learning experiences for all, and over two in five of local authorities (46%) and libraries (42%) feel it has little impact in encouraging greater public awareness and enthusiasm.

They also have doubts about its provision for children and young people, with half of library stakeholders (51%) and more than two in five local authority stakeholders (44%) feeling that it has little impact in enabling every child and young person to have the opportunity to experience arts and culture.

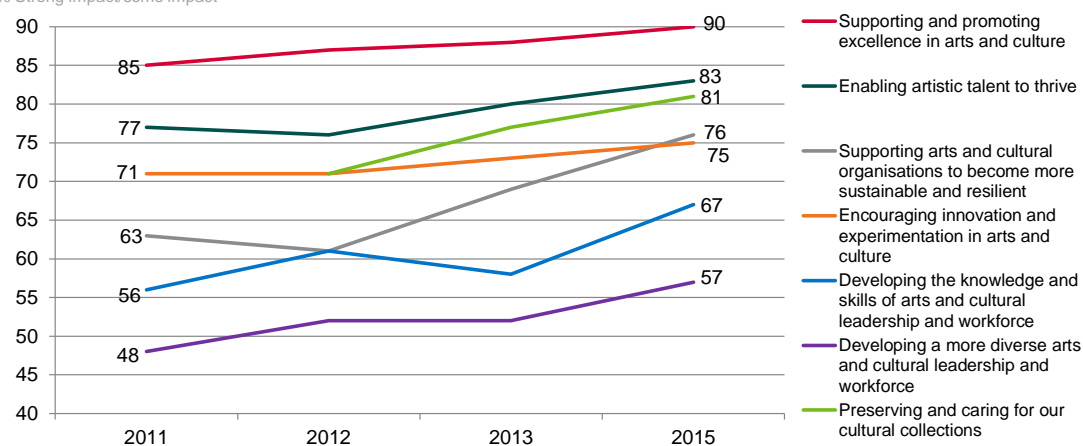
In overall terms, the perceived impact of the Arts Council's work has risen significantly over the past four years across all measures, both in terms of its impact on arts and culture landscape across the country, and more specifically on the arts and cultural sector.

In the past year in particular, there have been significant improvements in the Arts Council's perceived impact within the arts and cultural sector, including developing the knowledge and skills of the arts and cultural leadership and workforce (up 9 percentage points), supporting arts and cultural organisations to become more resilient (up 13 percentage points), and developing a more diverse arts and cultural leadership and workforce (up 5 percentage points).

Impact – arts and culture trend data

Q22. Thinking about how the Arts Council works to achieve its aims, please tell me whether you think the Arts Council has a strong impact, some impact, limited impact, no impact, or you don't know/have no opinion?

% Strong impact/some impact



Base: All Arts Council stakeholders : 2015 (n=1,051), 2013 (n=943), 2012 (n=762), 2011 (n=785)

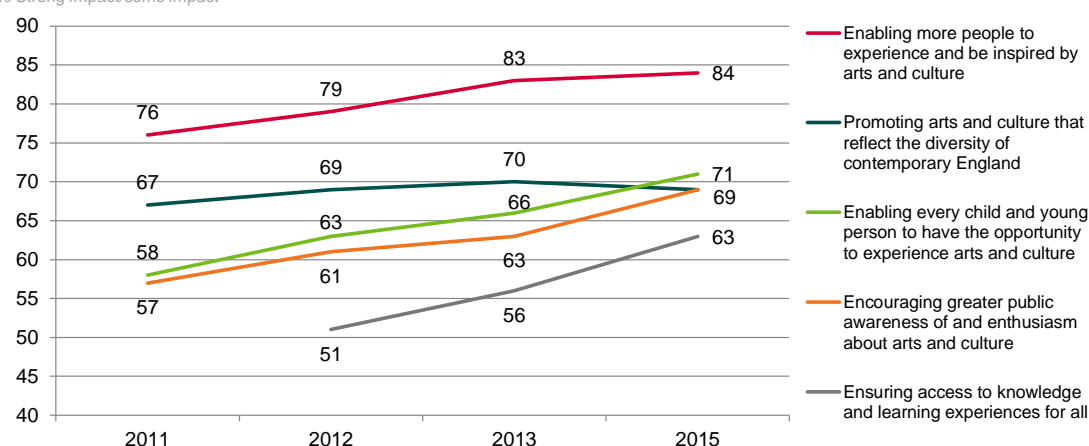
Similarly, the Arts Council's perceived impact in its public-facing work has increased markedly over the past four years, with the greatest improvements in those areas where it was originally believed to have least impact.

Nearly two in three (63%) believe the Arts Council has an impact in ensuring access to knowledge and learning experiences for all compared to around half (51%) in 2012, while seven in ten stakeholders now believe that the Arts Council has an impact in enabling every child and young person to have the opportunity to experience arts and culture (71% compared to 58% in 2011). A similar proportion feel that the Arts Council has an impact in encouraging greater public awareness of and enthusiasm about arts and culture (69% compared to 57% in 2011).

Impact – general public trend data

Q22. Thinking about how the Arts Council works to achieve its aims, please tell me whether you think the Arts Council has a strong impact, some impact, limited impact, no impact, or you don't know/have no opinion?

% Strong impact/some impact



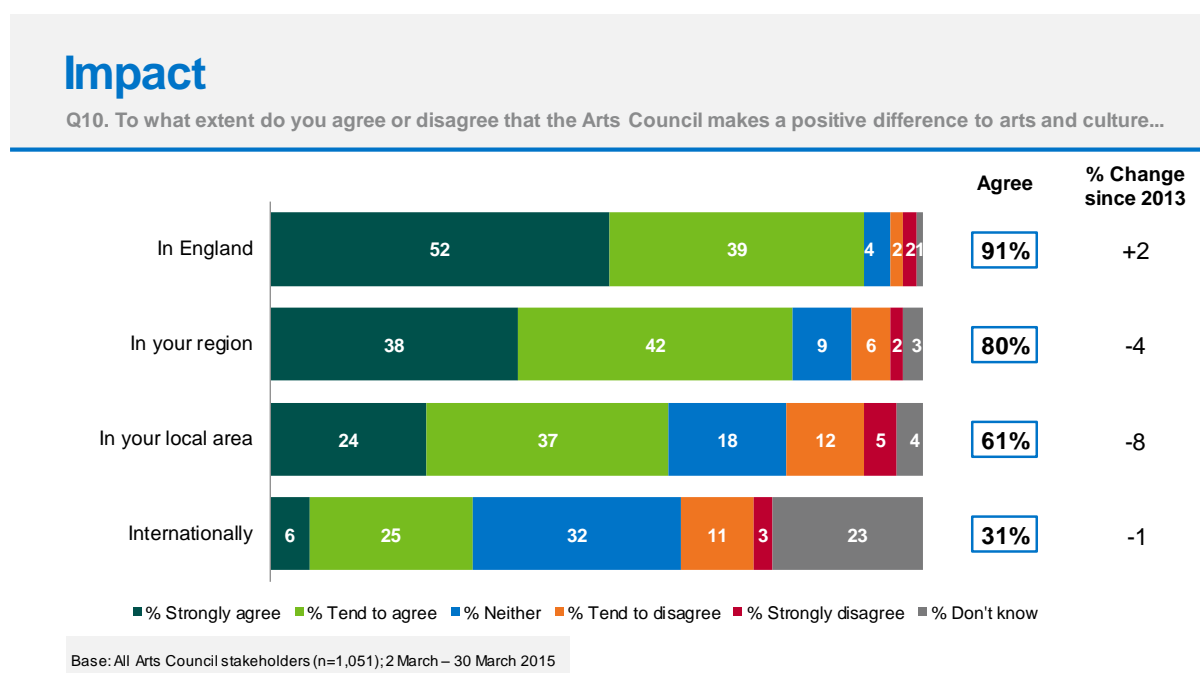
Base: All Arts Council stakeholders : 2015 (n=1,051), 2013 (n=943), 2012 (n=762), 2011 (n=785)

2.3.2 Regional and national impact

The Arts Council works to make a positive difference to arts and culture on a number of different levels, ranging from arts and culture provision at a local level across the country, to England's international reputation as a world centre for artistic excellence.

However, for the Arts Council's stakeholders, it is clear that the organisation has its greatest impact at a national level. Nine in ten (91%) agree that the Arts Council makes a positive difference in England, with half (52%) saying that they *strongly agree*.

To a lesser extent, stakeholders are also positive about the Arts Council's work in their region and in their local area. Four in five (80%) believe the Arts Council makes a positive difference to arts and culture in their region, while three in five (61%) believe this to be the case of their local area.



Stakeholders are least likely to feel that the Arts Council makes a positive difference to arts and culture internationally (31%). However, this perception relates mainly to the fact that many stakeholders are unable to express an opinion in this area, with a third of stakeholders (32%) saying they *neither agree nor disagree*, and a further quarter (23%) saying they do not know or have no opinion.

NPO stakeholders are most likely to feel that the Arts Council has a positive impact on arts and culture across the country, with a large majority (95%) saying the Arts Council makes a positive difference in England. Arts individuals (93%) and arts organisations (93%) are also more likely to believe this to be the case.

Few doubt that the Arts Council has a positive impact on the arts and culture ecology across the country, with fewer than one in twenty disagreeing that the organisation makes a positive difference in England (4%). Even among stakeholders with less positive views of the Arts Council, a majority believe that it makes a positive difference: among unfavourable stakeholders, seven in ten (72%) believe the Arts Council makes a positive difference in England, while just 15 per cent disagree. Similarly, nearly three quarters of critics (74%) believe the Arts Council makes a positive difference to arts and culture in England, while just one in nine (11%) disagree.

Perceptions of the Arts Council's impact on a local level vary markedly across different regions. Stakeholders in London (84%), the South East (83%) and the South West (82%) are most likely to feel the Arts Council makes a positive difference in their region. Indeed, nearly half of stakeholders in London (48%) *strongly agree* that the Arts Council makes a positive difference in their region.

However, stakeholders in the West Midlands (68%) are least likely to feel the Arts Council makes a positive difference in their region, while stakeholders in the North East (77%) and East Midlands (79%) are also less likely to agree. Similarly, stakeholders in the West Midlands (48%) are least likely to agree that the Arts Council makes a positive difference to arts and culture in their local area.

This reflects a key finding from the qualitative research in the Arts Council's 2014-15 stakeholder research programme. This research found that there is a perceived geographical imbalance of Arts Council funding, with many stakeholders feeling that London benefits from a higher level of investment compared to other parts of England.

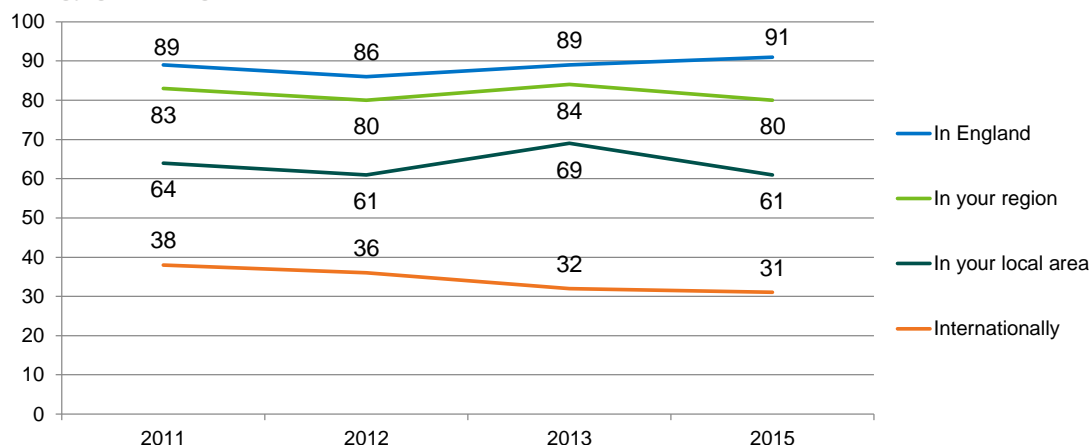
Stakeholder perceptions of the Arts Council's impact on a local level are linked to their level of knowledge about the Arts Council. Those who feel they are kept well informed about the Arts Council and its work are significantly more likely to feel that it makes a positive difference in their region (86% compared to 63% among those who feel not well informed). This disparity is even more pronounced when it comes to the Arts Council's impact in the local area, with stakeholders who are kept well informed being significantly more likely to feel it makes a positive difference in their local area (68% compared to 39%).

While the Arts Council's perceived impact on a local level has fallen markedly since 2013, with stakeholders being significantly less likely to agree that the Arts Council makes a positive difference to their region or their local area, the level of agreement is broadly similar to that seen in 2012.

Impact

Q10. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Arts Council makes a positive difference to arts and culture...

% Strongly agree/tend to agree



Base: All Arts Council stakeholders : 2015 (n=1,051), 2013 (n=943), 2012 (n=762), 2011 (n=785)

Notably, the Arts Council's perceived impact on an international level has gradually declined over the past four years, with three in ten (31%) believing the Arts Council makes a positive difference to arts and culture internationally in 2015 compared to nearly two in five (38%) in 2011.

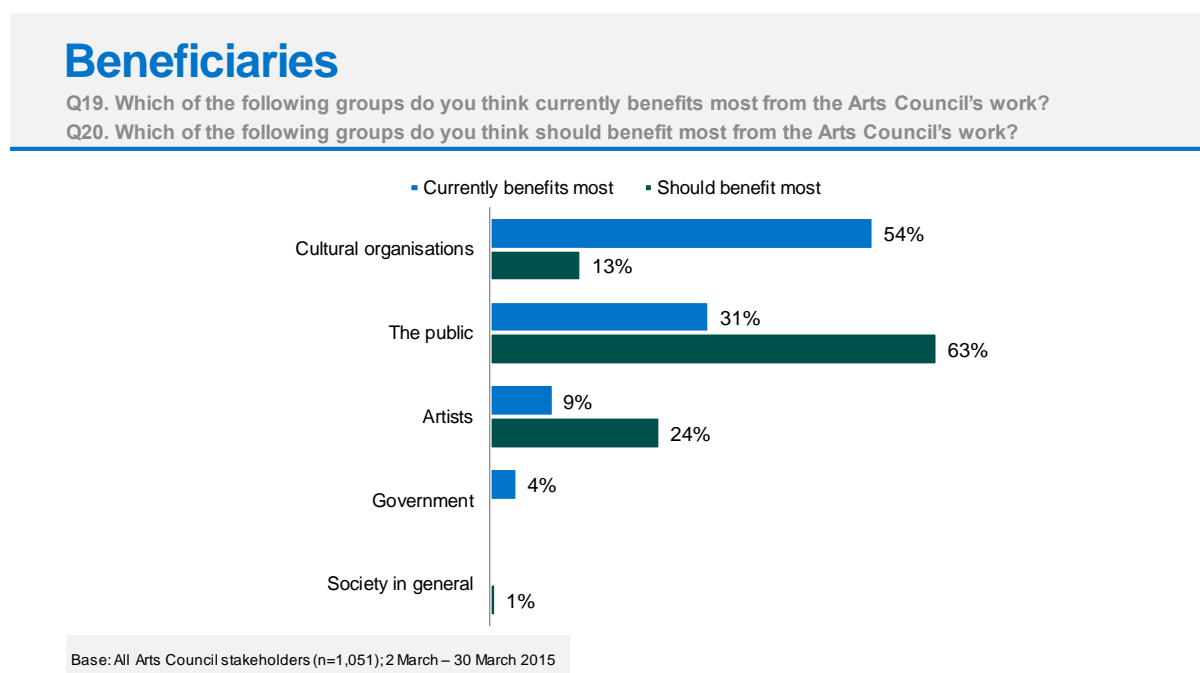
However, the Arts Council's perceived impact at a national level is higher than in previous years, and has risen slightly since 2013.

2.3.3 Beneficiaries

The Arts Council's work affects a wide range of stakeholders, including not only artists and arts and cultural organisations – the groups interviewed in this research – but a wider universe of stakeholders including the general public and government stakeholders.

Reflecting this range of audiences, stakeholders mention a number of groups who are beneficiaries of the Arts Council's work. However, as in previous years, there is a sense for some that those who benefit most in reality are not necessarily those who should ideally benefit most from the Arts Council's work.

When considering which groups currently benefit most from the Arts Council's work, half of stakeholders believe that cultural organisations are the main beneficiaries (54%). However, when asked who should benefit most, it is the public that a majority of stakeholders cite (63%).



The Arts Council's role as a public body is reflected in the fact that the general public is identified by a majority of stakeholders (63%) as the group which should be the primary beneficiary of its work, which is in line with 2013 (61%). However, there are doubts about to what extent the public benefits, with only around a third (31%) believing that the public actually benefit most, although this has risen significantly since 2013 (27%).

Publicly funded organisations are markedly more likely to focus on the Arts Council's role in delivering value to the general public. Libraries (93%), museums (80%) and local authorities stakeholders (76%) are most likely to feel that the general public should benefit most from the Arts Council's work.

When it comes to the actual beneficiaries of the Arts Council's work, museums stakeholders (47%) and NPO stakeholders (39%) are most likely to say that the general public benefits most from the Arts Council's work.

While just 13% of stakeholders feel that cultural organisations should be the primary beneficiaries of the Arts Council's work, over half (54%) feel that these organisations currently benefit most (2013: 53%), which reflects the fact that cultural organisations are often directly funded by the Arts Council and therefore benefit from its work in the most direct way.

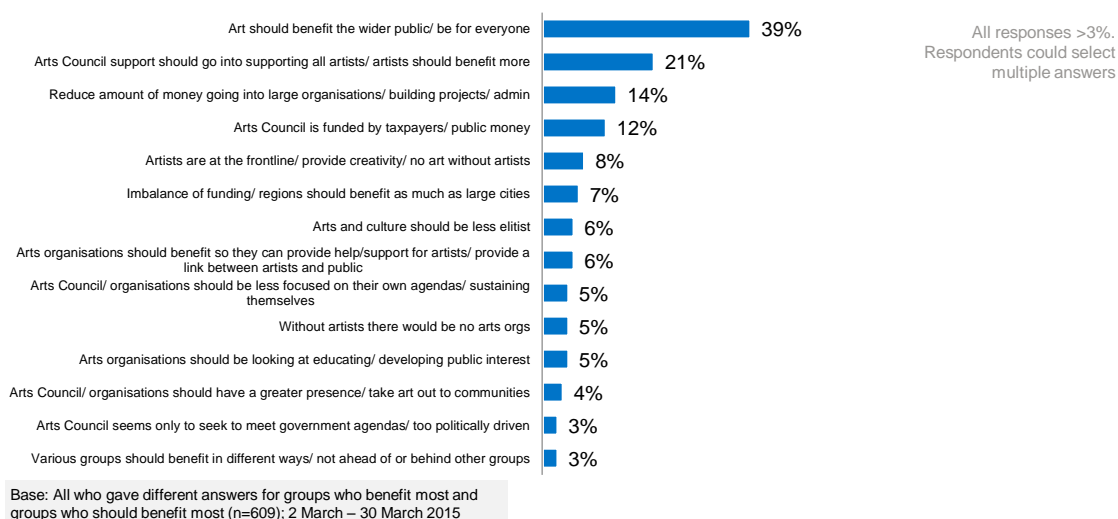
Around a quarter of stakeholders (24%) feel that individual artists should benefit most from the Arts Council's work. Unsurprisingly, arts individuals themselves (55%) are most likely to concur, but arts organisations (23%) are also significantly more likely to mention artists compared to other stakeholder groups. One in eleven (nine per cent) feel that individual artists currently benefit most, the same proportion as in 2013.

Stakeholders who do identify a disparity between the groups that should benefit most and the groups that do benefit most cite a wide range of reasons for this perception.

For many, there is a clear sense that there is a public purpose to arts and culture, with many saying that art should benefit the wider public/ be for everyone (39%). On a related note, stakeholders mention that the Arts Council is funded by public money (12%), and some also refer to concerns around public access to arts and culture, such as a regional imbalance of funding (seven per cent) and a perceived elitism of arts and culture (six per cent).

Beneficiaries

Q21. You said that [...] benefit most from the Arts Council's work, and that [...] should benefit the most. Why?

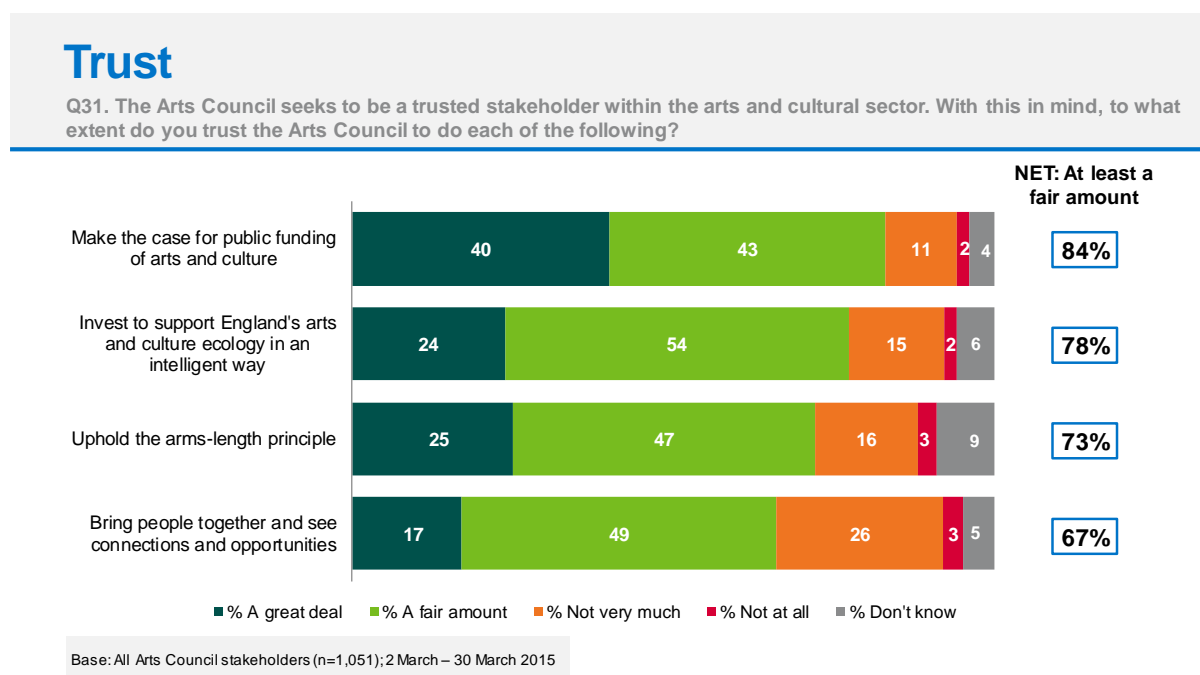


However, some also suggest that art creators should benefit more from the Arts Council's work. One in five (21%) feel that Arts Council support should go into supporting all artists, while a further eight per cent mention that artists are at the frontline and provide creativity (8%). On a related note, many feel that the Arts Council should reduce the amount of money going into large organisations, building projects and admin (14%).

2.4 Trust

The Arts Council seeks to be a trusted stakeholder in the arts and cultural sectors, and on balance it is generally believed to be achieving this, with a majority of stakeholders reporting that they trust the Arts Council at least a fair amount to perform in its core role. Over four in five (84%) say they trust the Arts Council to make the case for public funding of arts and culture, and two in five (40%) say they trust them *a great deal*.

Around four in five (78%) say they trust the Arts Council to invest to support England's arts and culture ecology in an intelligent way, while nearly three in four (73%) say they trust the Arts Council to uphold the arms-length principle, which means making funding decisions which are independent of government. Two thirds (67%) trust the Arts Council to bring people together and see connections and opportunities.



Museums have a greater degree of trust in the Arts Council, being significantly more likely to trust the Arts Council to uphold the arms-length principle (86%), to invest to support England's arts and culture ecology in an intelligent way (86%) and to bring people together and see connections and opportunities (82%).

Children and Young People stakeholders have markedly more trust in the Arts Council specifically in relation to its advocacy role, with a large majority (96%) saying they trust the organisation to make the case for public funding of arts and culture, and more than half (55%) saying they trust it *a great deal*.

Few stakeholders say they do not trust the Arts Council at all to perform in these areas, however, a sizeable proportion say they do not trust the Arts Council very much. In particular, there is some doubt around the Arts Council's work in connecting people, organisations and projects, with a quarter (26%) saying they do not trust the Arts Council very much to bring people together and see connections and opportunities.

3. Investment and funding processes

This chapter explores stakeholders' views specifically in relation to the Arts Council's investment and funding processes. This includes how it invests public money, perceptions of funding and monitoring processes in general, and views on funding processes specifically among NPO, MPM, and GFTA applicants.

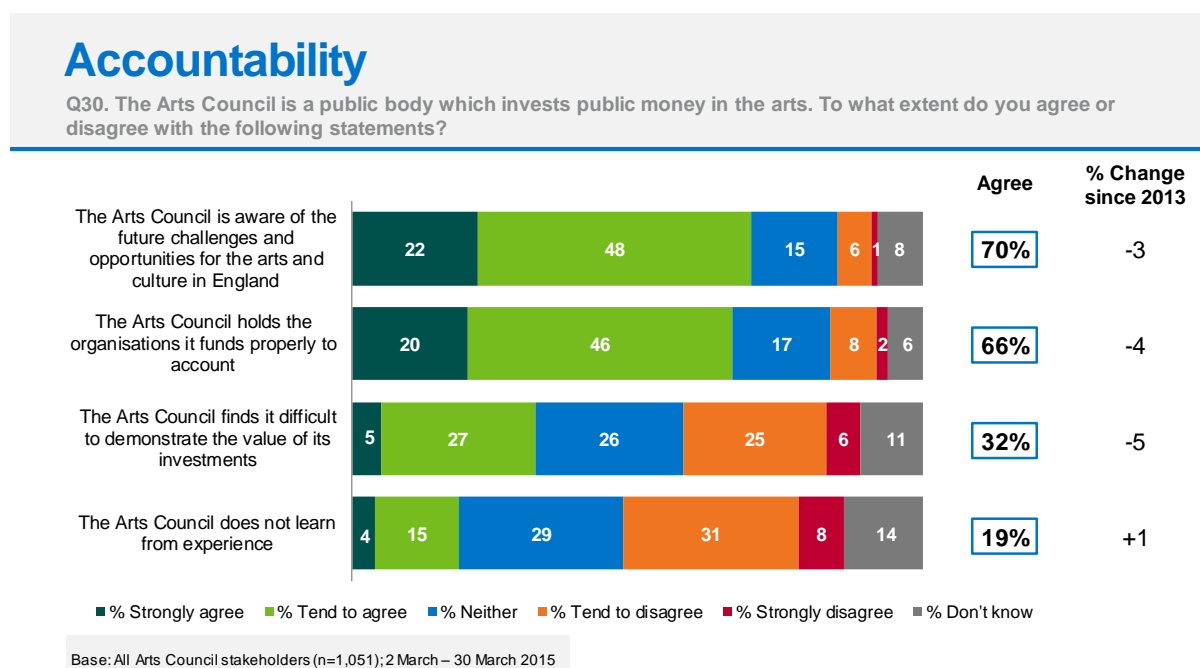
3.1 Accountability and investment of public money

As a public body, the Arts Council needs to demonstrate both transparency and accountability in how it invests public money in arts and culture across England. Between 2015 and 2018, the Arts Council plans to invest £1.1 billion of public money from government and an estimated £700 million from the National Lottery³; making clear, transparent and evidence-based decisions is therefore an invaluable part of its investment.

3.1.1 Overall views on investment processes

When it comes to the wider context of the Arts Council's investment and funding, most stakeholders are positive about the Arts Council's knowledge of the wider arts and culture landscape. Seven in ten (70%) agree that the Arts Council is aware of the future challenges and opportunities for the arts and culture in England.

Stakeholders are also positive about how the Arts Council monitors the use of its funding. Two thirds (66%) believe that funded organisations are properly held to account by the Arts Council, with one in five saying they *strongly agree* that this is the case.



³ <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/who-we-are/>

Nevertheless, there is a sense that the Arts Council could do better in some areas. A third of stakeholders (32%) agree that the Arts Council finds it difficult to demonstrate the value of its investments, although this has dropped significantly since 2013 (37%).

Moreover, a notable minority (19%) feel that the Arts Council does not learn from experience (although 39% feel it does), which suggests that many feel it could be more flexible and responsive in its approach to investing public money.

Specifically in relation to demonstrating the value of investments, perceptions vary somewhat by region. Stakeholders based in the North East (43%) and in Yorkshire (40%) are significantly more likely to believe that the Arts Council finds it difficult to demonstrate the value of its investments compared to stakeholders in the East of England (25%), the North West (27%), or the South East (26%).

In contrast, those closest to the Arts Council are more likely to say that it does not find it difficult to demonstrate value. Stakeholders who feel they know the Arts Council well are twice as likely to disagree (33%) than those who feel they do not know it well (15%). Similarly, across different stakeholder groups, museums stakeholders (41%), Children and Young People stakeholders (36%) and arts organisations (33%) are most inclined to disagree that the Arts Council finds it difficult to demonstrate value.

However, a substantial proportion of stakeholders don't know or are unable to express an opinion on each of these aspects. This applies particularly to arts individuals, who may have less knowledge of the larger-scale investment and funding processes of which they have little personal experience. Unsurprisingly, stakeholders who have been working with the Arts Council for a shorter length of time are also less inclined to offer an opinion on its investment processes.

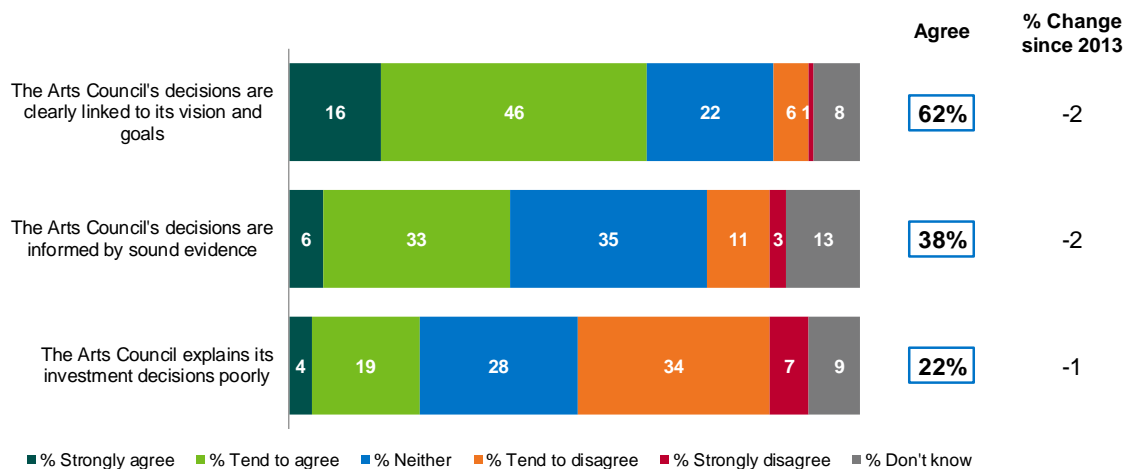
3.1.2 Investment decisions

There are mixed views among stakeholders regarding how the Arts Council performs in terms of transparent and accountable decision-making. On the one hand, individual investment decisions are generally thought to be linked to a wider strategy within the organisation, with the majority (62%) agreeing that investment decisions are clearly linked to the Arts Council's vision and goals.

However, for a minority of stakeholders, there is a sense that the Arts Council's decisions could be explained more clearly and with a greater level of detail. More than one in five (22%) believe that the Arts Council explains its investment decisions poorly. Further, only two in five (38%) agree that the Arts Council's decisions are informed by sound evidence, while a sizeable minority (14%) disagree.

Accountability

Q30. The Arts Council is a public body which invests public money in the arts. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



Base: All Arts Council stakeholders (n=1,051); 2 March – 30 March 2015

Unsurprisingly, perceptions differ considerably depending on how informed stakeholders feel about the organisation as a whole. Those who feel that the Arts Council keeps them well informed are significantly more likely to believe that its decisions are clearly linked to its vision and goals (71%) and informed by sound evidence (44%). They are also more confident that the Arts Council does not explain its decisions poorly: half (49%) do not believe this to be the case compared to one in nine (11%) among those who feel they are not kept well informed about the Arts Council.

Museums stakeholders tend to be more confident about Arts Council investment processes compared to other stakeholder groups. For instance, four in five (80%) agree that the Arts Council's investment decisions are linked to its vision and goals, with 29% saying they *strongly agree*, while nearly three in five (57%) do not believe that the Arts Council explains its investment decisions poorly. Around half of museums stakeholders (51%) believe the Arts Council's decisions are informed by sound evidence compared to 38 per cent overall.

National Portfolio Organisations are also more likely to believe that decisions are clearly linked to the Arts Council's vision and goals (70%) and that the Arts Council does not explain its investment decisions poorly (53 per cent disagree).

Again, a substantial proportion of stakeholders don't know or are unable to express an opinion on each of these aspects, and arts individuals are less likely than other stakeholder groups to offer an opinion on Arts Council investment decisions.

3.2 Arts Council funding and monitoring processes

3.2.1 Funding processes

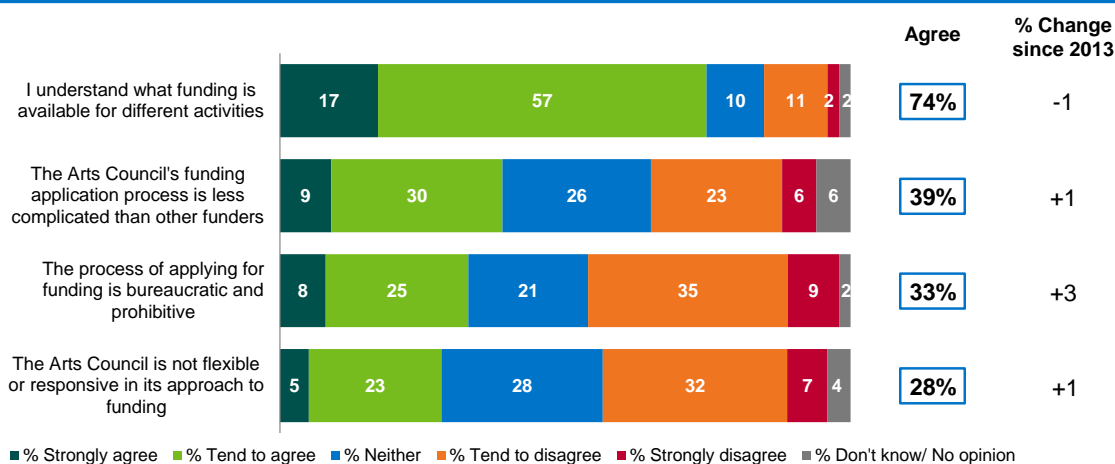
Stakeholders from the arts and cultural sector have a good sense of what funding is available from the Arts Council, but a considerable proportion of stakeholders experience difficulties with the actual process of applying for funding.

In terms of funding availability, most stakeholders feel they have a good understanding of what funding is available for different activities, with three quarters (74%) believing this to be the case.

Museums stakeholders are particularly confident about their knowledge in this area, with four in five (82%) agreeing they understand what funding is available and three in ten (29%) saying they *strongly agree*. NPOs are also positive, with 80% agreeing they understand what funding is available for different activities, and one in five (20%) saying they *strongly agree*.

Overall views on funding processes

Q32. The Arts Council operates a range of funding and monitoring processes. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



Base: All Arts Council stakeholders (n=1,051); 2 March – 30 March 2015

However, there are mixed views on the Arts Council's overall approach to funding processes, with a considerable proportion of stakeholders believing it to be insufficiently flexible. Three in ten (28%) agree that it is not flexible or responsive in its approach to funding, although two in five (40%) disagree. Further, a sizeable minority of stakeholders perceive funding application processes as complicated or difficult. A third (33%) believe the process of applying for funding is bureaucratic and prohibitive, while one in three (29%) disagree that the Arts Council's funding application process is less complicated than other funders.

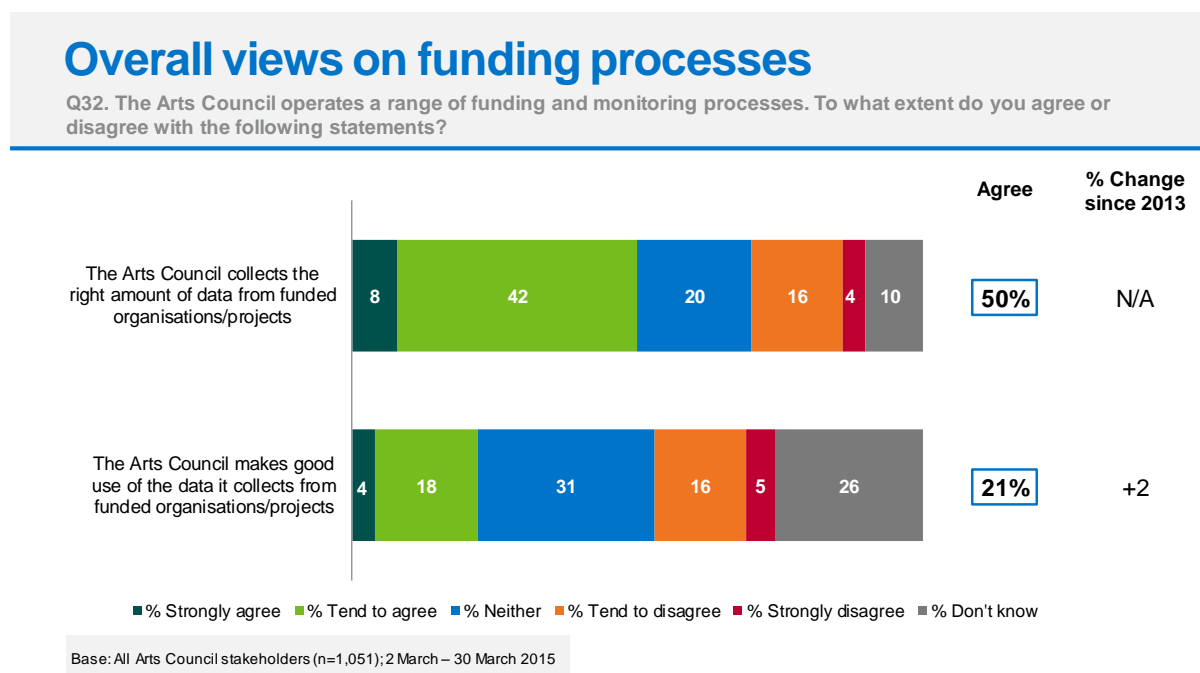
The view that the Arts Council's approach to funding is insufficiently flexible is linked to negative perceptions of the organisation as a whole, being widely held among critics (65%) and among stakeholders who believe it does not perform well as an organisation (80%).

Museums stakeholders (63%) and NPOs (45%) are most likely to disagree that the Arts Council is not flexible or responsive, which suggests that their experience of funding processes tends to be more positive.

3.2.2 Monitoring processes

Many stakeholders have no strong view on how the Arts Council operates its monitoring processes. Half (50%) believe that the Arts Council collects the right amount of data from funded organisations and projects. However, just eight per cent say they *strongly agree*, while one in five (20%) disagree and a further one in five (20%) have no opinion either way.

Stakeholders are divided on how the data collected from funded organisations and projects is used. While one in five (21%) believe the Arts Council makes good use of the data it collects, a further 21% disagree. Many either say they don't know (26%) or are unable to give an opinion (31%).



Perceptions vary markedly by stakeholder category. Children and Young People stakeholders are significantly more likely to say that the Arts Council does not collect the right amount of data from funded organisations and projects (46%), or that it makes good use of this data (41%). To an extent, NPOs are also more negative about monitoring processes, being more likely than average to disagree that the Arts Council collects the right amount of data from funded organisations and projects (29%), or that it makes good use of this data (30%).

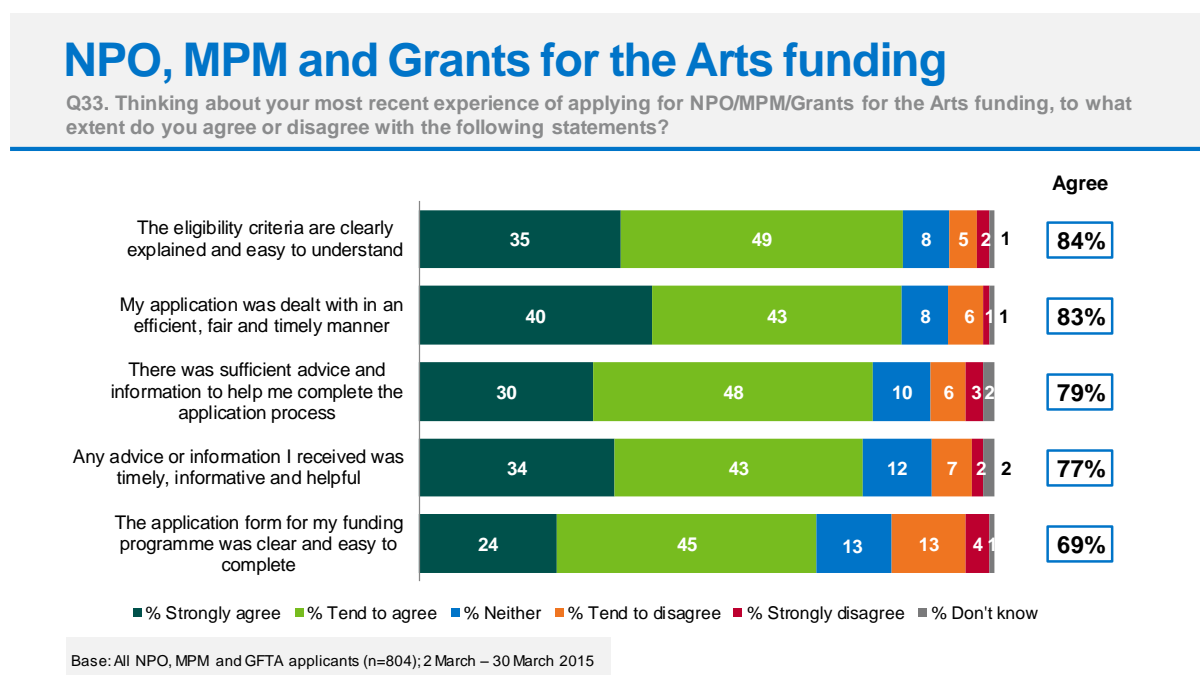
3.3 NPO, MPM and Grants for the Arts funding applications

In the 2015 research, several specific groups of stakeholders were asked about their experience of funding applications in more detail. These included National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs), which are funded via the Arts Council's National Portfolio Funding programme, Major Partner Museums (MPMs), and arts individuals who receive 'Grants for the Arts' (GFTA) funding. Stakeholders were asked about a number of aspects, including the process of applying for Arts Council funding, the decision-making process and the negotiation of funding agreements.

3.3.1 Application process

On the whole, NPO, MPM and GFTA applicants are very positive about the application process for their specific stream of funding. There is a clear sense that the application process is well-run: more than four in five agree that the eligibility criteria are clearly explained and easy to understand (84%) and that their application was dealt with in an efficient, fair and timely manner (83%). Indeed, two in five (40%) *strongly agree* that their application was handled in an efficient, fair and timely manner, while just seven per cent disagree.

Stakeholders also generally feel well supported throughout the application process. Four in five (79%) believe there was sufficient advice and information to help them complete the process, while over three in four (77%) feel that the advice or information they received was timely, informative and helpful.



However, there are some clear differences by applicant type. For instance, while only a small minority of applicants feel they did not have sufficient advice and information available to them, Grants for the Arts applicants are significantly more likely to disagree that they had sufficient advice and information (12%) compared to NPO applicants (6%).

Moreover, funding applicants who feel that they know the Arts Council well generally feel better supported; they are significantly more likely to feel they had sufficient advice and information (81% compared to 54% among those who do not know the Arts Council well) and that the advice or information was timely, informative and helpful (79% compared to 51%).

The proportion of stakeholders who believe that their application was dealt with in an efficient, fair and timely manner is largely consistent across sub-groups, although stakeholders who are unfavourable (62%) and critics (50%) are less likely to agree.

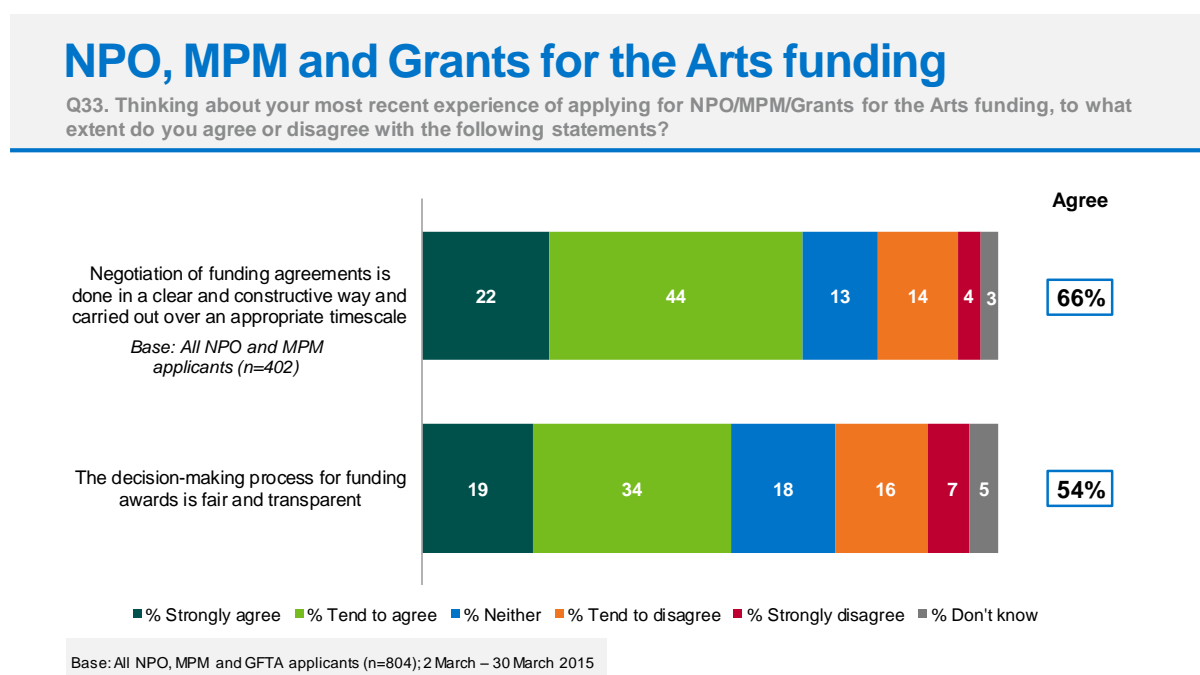
Funding applicants are slightly less positive about the application form itself. While most (69%) believe the application form for their funding programme was clear and easy to complete, a sizeable minority (17%) disagree, which suggests that some applicants may experience difficulties with the form.

Applicants who have less experience of working with the Arts Council appear to have more difficulty with the funding application form. Those who have been in contact with the Arts Council for less than one year (33%) or for between one and three years (22%) are significantly more likely to disagree that the form was easy to complete compared to those who have been in contact with the Arts Council for more than ten years (14%). Similarly, a third (34%) of those who say they do not know the Arts Council well disagree that the form is clear and easy to complete compared to 15% among those who feel they know the organisation well.

There is also some disparity by funding stream. While the two funding application processes have different application forms, GFTA applicants are significantly more likely to disagree that their application form was clear and easy to understand (20% compared to 14% of NPOs who disagree that their application form was clear and easy to understand).

3.3.2 Decision-making process and funding agreements

Despite positive views on the process of applying for funding, stakeholders are somewhat less positive about the decision-making process for funding awards. While over half of applicants (54%) believe that the decision-making process is fair and transparent, a quarter (23%) disagree.



While the decision-making process differs by funding stream, NPO applicants (58%) are significantly more likely to perceive the decision-making process for their funding stream as fair and transparent compared to Grants for the Arts applicants (48%).

Further, perceptions of the decision-making process are influenced by the frequency of contact with the Arts Council. Two thirds (66%) of funding applicants who are in contact more often than two times

a month believe the process to be fair and transparent compared to two in five (41%) among those who are in contact less often than every six months.

In contrast, funding applicants who have more negative perceptions of the Arts Council as a whole show less confidence in its decision-making process. Those who are unfavourable towards the Arts Council (35%) and those who are critics (16%) are significantly less likely to believe that the decision-making process for funding awards is fair and transparent.

Among NPO and MPM applicants in particular, most tend to be satisfied regarding how funding agreements are negotiated. Two in three (66%) agree that negotiation is done in a clear and constructive way and carried out over an appropriate timescale. However, nearly one in five (18%) disagree.

4. Working relationships

This section focuses on working relationships with the Arts Council, including stakeholders' level and frequency of contact with the organisation, and the overall quality of their working relationship. It also explores stakeholders' views on how the Arts Council works in partnership.

4.1 Length of relationship

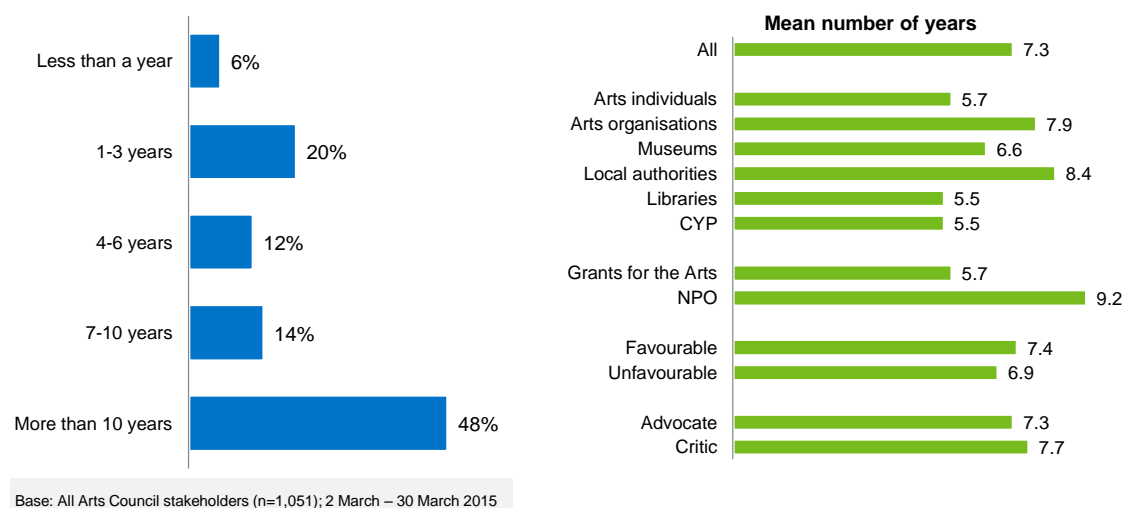
As found in previous years, stakeholders tend to have well established, long-lasting relationships with the Arts Council. Around half of Arts Council stakeholders have been in contact with the organisation for more than 10 years (48%), while a further 14% have had a relationship lasting 7-10 years.

Overall, the average length of a relationship with the Arts Council is 7.3 years. Stakeholders from arts organisations (7.9 years) and local authorities (8.4) tend to have the longest relationships, while stakeholders from the museums (6.6), libraries (5.5) and Children and Young People (5.5) sectors tend to have been in contact with Arts Council for slightly less time. This is unsurprising given that those sectors have been under the Arts Council's purview for a shorter period of time.

The longest held relationships are with NPO organisations which, on average, have been working with the Arts Council for 9.2 years. This confirms the findings from the qualitative research that NPO relations tend to be well-established and long-lasting, and that the process can benefit those who already have a relationship with the Arts Council.

Length of relationship

Q2. How long have you been in contact or working with the Arts Council?



The length of relationship between the Arts Council and its stakeholders does not appear to have a significant impact on perceptions of the organisation. Advocates – those who speak highly of the Arts Council – tend to have been in contact with the Arts Council for less time than critics (7.3 years compared to 7.7 years), however, this is not a statistically significant difference.

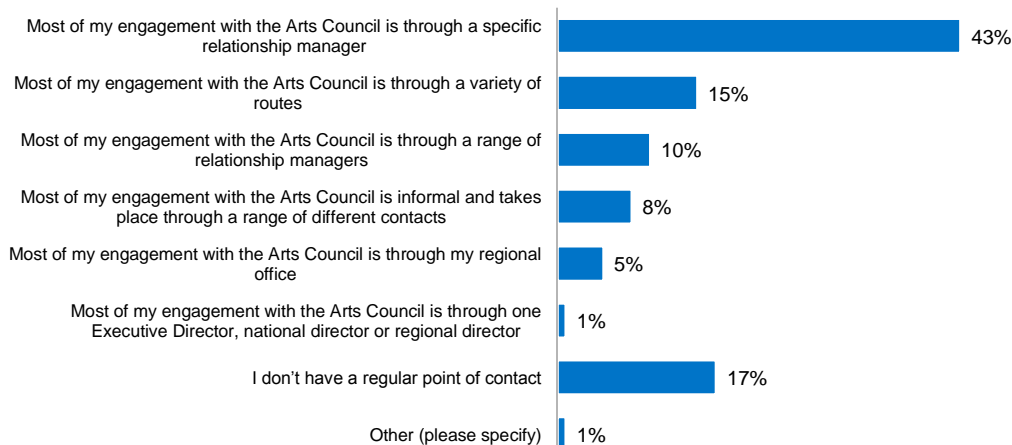
4.2 Level of contact

Stakeholders were asked about their primary type of contact with the Arts Council. Stakeholders most frequently engage with the Arts Council through a specific relationship manager (43%) and a further 10% engage with the Arts Council through a range of relationship managers. Only a small minority primarily engage with the Arts Council through their regional office (five per cent), or through an Executive Director, national or regional director (one per cent).

Fifteen per cent of stakeholders engage with the Arts Council through a variety of routes and 17% do not have a regular point of contact. These figures are very similar to last year, which suggests that relationships have stabilised following the re-structuring.

Level of contact

Q13. Which of these phrases best describes the most regular contact and working relationships that you currently have with the Arts Council?



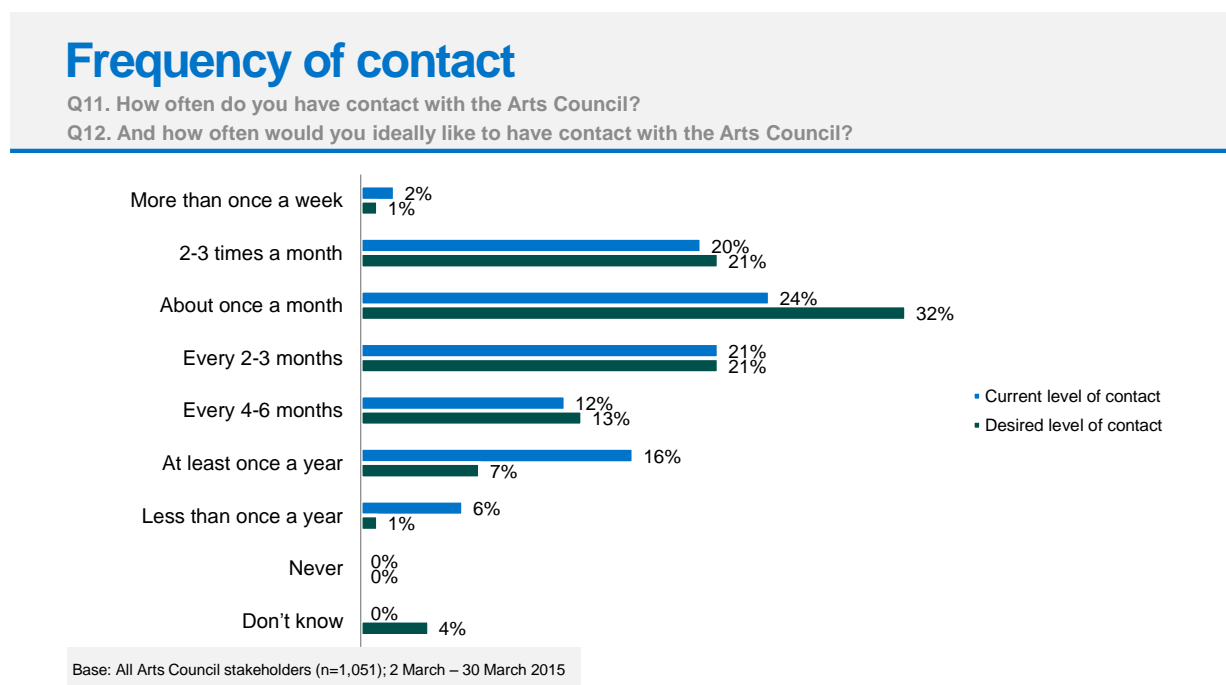
Base: All Arts Council stakeholders (n=1,051); 2 March – 30 March 2015

Arts individuals are significantly less likely to have a regular point of contact than other stakeholders, 43% do not have a regular point of contact. Stakeholders from the Children and Young People sector are more likely to engage through specific relationship manager (62%), while those from the museum sector are more likely to engage with a range of routes (37%).

Level of contact by stakeholder group						
Level of contact	Arts individual (Base: 163)	Arts org (Base: 626)	Children and Young People (Base: 69)	Library (Base: 45)	LA (Base: 82)	Museum (Base: 49)
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Most of my engagement with the Arts Council is through my regional office	7	7	0	0	2	2
Most of my engagement with the Arts Council is through a specific relationship manager	17	50	62	49	28	51
Most of my engagement with the Arts Council is through a range of relationship managers	10	11	7	7	21	0
Most of my engagement with the Arts Council is through one Executive Director, national director or regional director	1	*	0	7	1	2
Most of my engagement with the Arts Council is through a variety of routes, including a relationship manager, a national/regional director and Head Office	4	13	29	13	17	37
Most of my engagement with the Arts Council is informal and takes place through a range of different contacts	14	5	0	11	13	6
I don't have a regular point of contact	43	13	0	9	17	2

4.3 Frequency of contact

While relationships with the Arts Council are long lasting, the regularity of contact does differ. As the chart below demonstrates, the frequency of contact with stakeholders ranges from more than once a week, to less than once a year. Around a quarter of stakeholders are in contact with the Arts Council around once a month (24%), and a further one in five have contact either 2-3 times a month (20%), or every two to three months (21%).

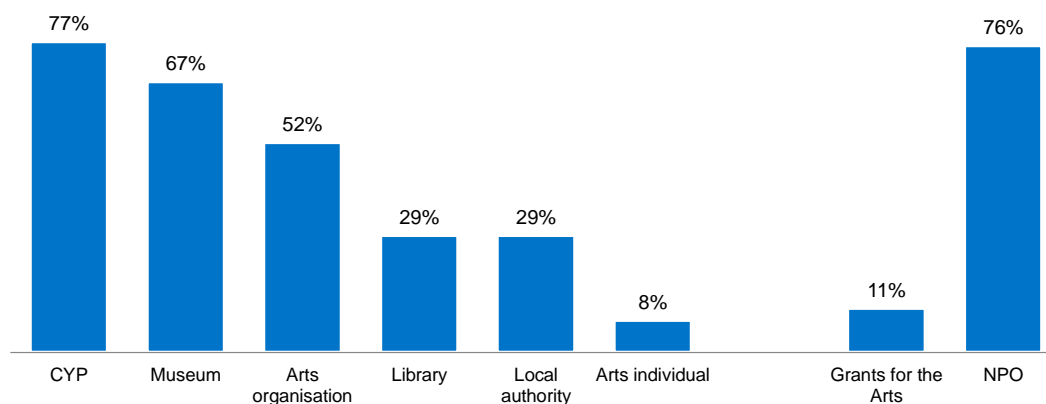


The frequency of contact that stakeholders have with the Arts Council varies greatly across stakeholder groups. As the chart below shows, despite, or perhaps because of their shorter running relationships, stakeholders from the Children and Young People and Museums sectors tend to be in much more frequent contact with the Arts Council (77% and 67% respectively are in contact at least once a month) than arts individuals (eight per cent), local authorities (29%) and libraries (29%). When looking at different types of funding, NPO stakeholders are much more likely to be in contact with the Arts Council at least once a month than Grants for the Arts stakeholders (76% compared to 11%).

Frequency of contact by stakeholder group

Q11. How often do you have contact with the Arts Council?

% At least once a month



Base: All Arts Council stakeholders (n=1,051); 2 March – 30 March 2015

In order to explore whether the Arts Council is providing the right amount of contact for its stakeholders, they were also asked how often they would, ideally, be in contact with the Arts Council. When comparing current and desired levels of contact for each individual, we are able to see whether they would like more frequent contact, less frequent contact, or if the level of contact is current correct.

This shows us that the vast majority of stakeholders either have the right amount of contact or would like more. Just six per cent would like less frequent contact, compared to 33% who would like more, suggesting that there is clear scope to increase contact with stakeholders.

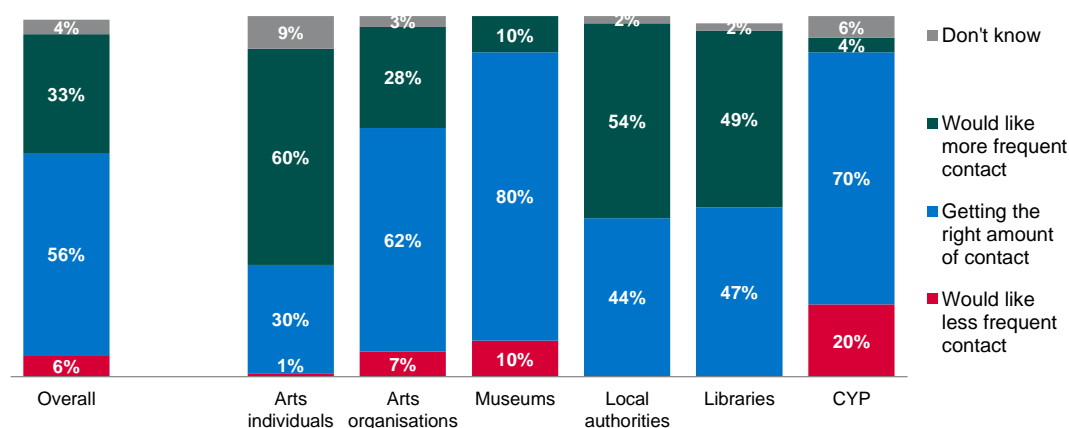
However, the desired levels of contact differ fairly significantly across different stakeholder groups. As the chart below shows, 60% of arts individuals, 54% of local authority stakeholders and 49% of library stakeholders would like more frequent contact. This suggests that these particular groups would benefit most from greater contact if the Arts Council had the resources to provide this. In contrast, there appears to be much less appetite for more contact in the museum and Children and Young People sectors. These groups currently have the most frequent contact with the Arts Council, and this current level of contact seems to be working well. Indeed, among stakeholders from the museum sector, 80% say they are getting the right amount of contact, and 10% would actually like less frequent contact. Similarly, 70% of Children and Young People stakeholders say they have the right amount of contact but one in five would like less. The fact that these groups are getting the contact they require relates closely to their positive views.

A small minority of stakeholders from arts organisations would like less contact (seven per cent), but this is outweighed by the 28% who would like more frequent contact.

Whether stakeholders are getting the right amount of contact

Q11. How often do you have contact with the Arts Council?

Q12. And how often would you ideally like to have contact with the Arts Council?



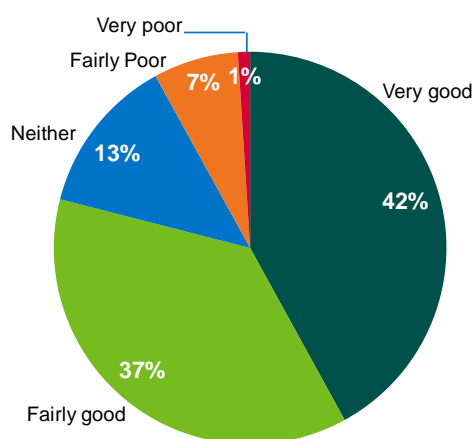
Base: All Arts Council stakeholders (n=1,051); 2 March – 30 March 2015

4.4 Quality of working relationships

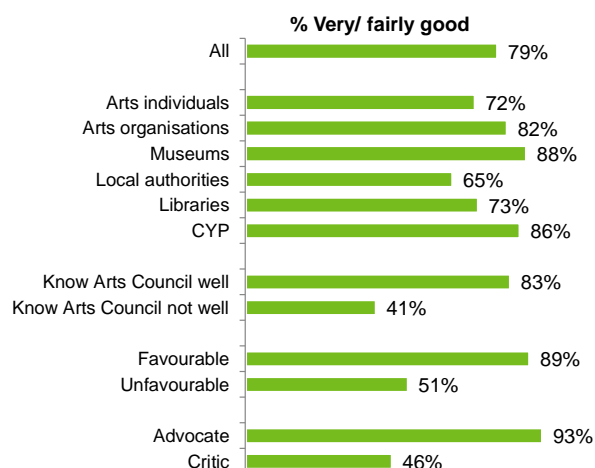
Working relationships between the Arts Council and its stakeholders appear to be strong. Four in five stakeholders would rate the quality of their working relationship as good (79%), compared to seven per cent who rate it as poor. Indeed, 42% rate their working relationship as *very good*.

Quality of working relationship

Q14. How would you rate the quality of your working relationship with the Arts Council overall?



Base: All Arts Council stakeholders (n=1,051); 2 March – 30 March 2015



The quality of working relationships varies across stakeholder groups. Those from the museums and Children and Young People sectors are the most positive (88% and 86% respectively) – reflecting their satisfaction with the amount of contact they have – while a large proportion of arts organisations also rate their relationship as good (82%). Just under three in four arts individuals and stakeholders from the library sector rate their relationship as good (72% and 73% respectively).

At the overall level, those from local authorities are the least positive, with just 65% rating their relationship as good, and 12% rating their relationship as poor. This may be related to the fact that 54% of stakeholders in the local authority sector would like more frequent contact with the Arts Council, and supports the finding that the Arts Council could do more to engage within the sector.

Indeed, there is a clear relationship between frequency of contact and working relationships. For example, 94% of those who have contact with the Arts Council at least two times a month rate their working relationship as good, and this falls to 88% of those in contact once a month, 80% among those in contact every 2-6 months and 52% of those in contact less often than every six months.

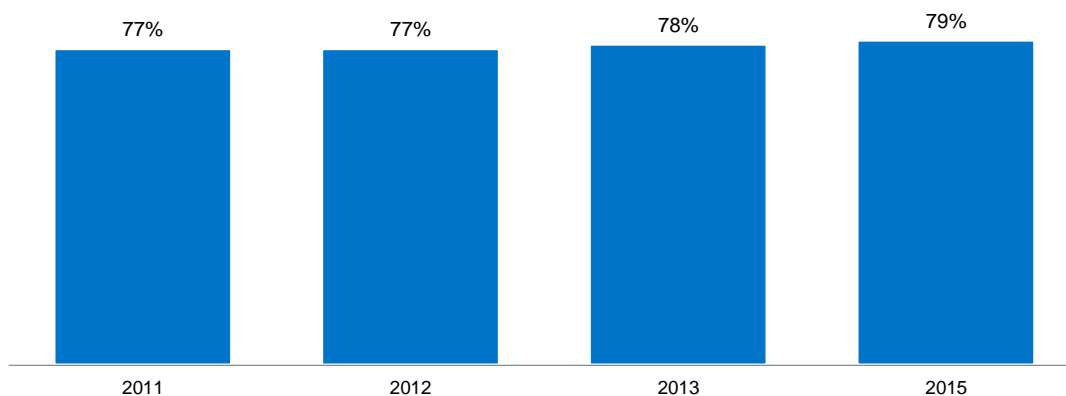
Having a clear point of contact also appears to have a positive influence on working relationships: just 44% of those with no regular point of contact rate their relationship as good, compared to 88% of those with a specific relationship manager.

Working relationships between stakeholders and the Arts Council have remained consistently strong over time. As the chart below shows, the proportion of stakeholders rating their relationship as good has remained similar between 2011 and 2015, with no statistically significant change.

Quality of working relationship

Q14. How would you rate the quality of your working relationship with the Arts Council overall?

% Very/ fairly good



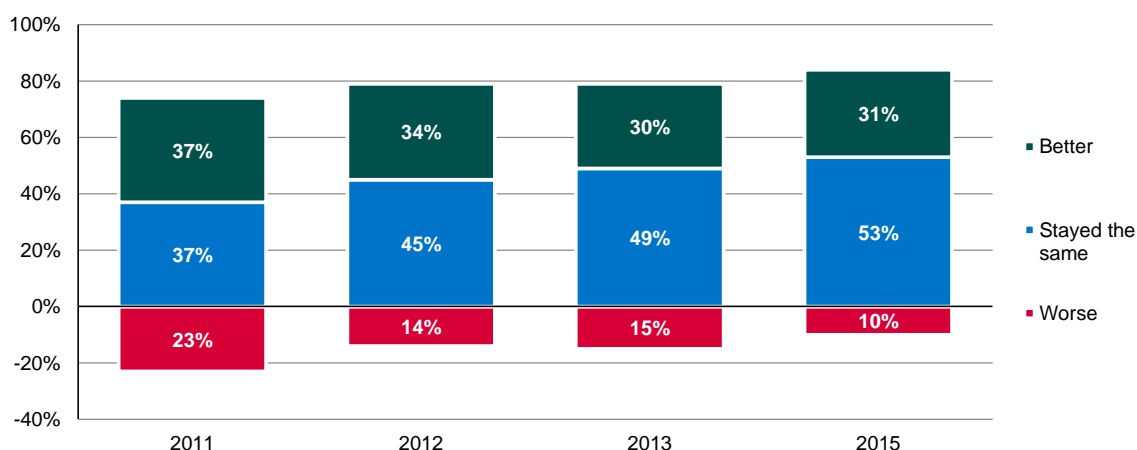
Base: All Arts Council stakeholders : 2015 (n=1,051), 2013 (n=943), 2012 (n=762), 2011 (n=785)

Stakeholders are also positive when asked to consider the direction of travel over the past 12 months. Three in ten stakeholders think that their relationship with the Arts Council has got better over the past 12 months (31%), while just one in ten think it has got worse (10%). Just over half feel their relationship has stayed the same (53%).

These findings are generally consistent with previous years. In particular, the proportion saying that their relationship has stayed the same over the last 12 months has risen from 37% in 2011 to 53% in 2015, suggesting that the Arts Council's relationships with its stakeholders are broadly more consistent.

Working relationships over time

Q15. Do you think your working relationship with the Arts Council overall has got better or worse over the last 12 months?



Base: All Arts Council stakeholders : 2015 (n=1,051), 2013 (n=943), 2012 (n=762), 2011 (n=785)

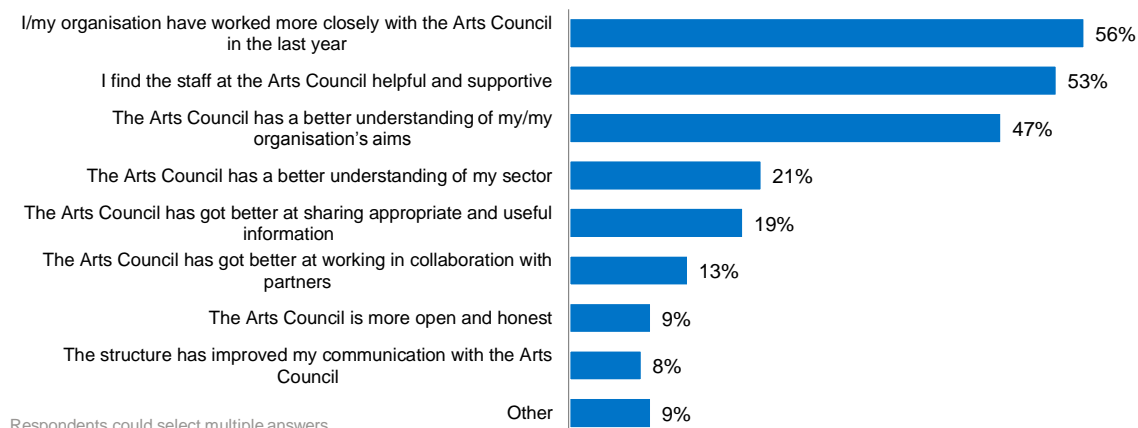
Those whose relationship is primarily managed through a number of relationship managers are significantly more likely to say that their relationship with the Arts Council has got worse over the last 12 months (17%, compared to nine per cent of those with a specific relationship manager), suggesting that the reorganisation and rationalisation of staff has had an effect on a minority of stakeholders.

Among those who say their relationship with the Arts Council has improved in the last year, 56% say that this has been achieved through working more closely together and 53% say it is down to the Arts Council being helpful and supportive. Almost half say that the Arts Council has developed a better understanding of them or their organisation (47%).

A smaller proportion say that the Arts Council has a better understanding of their sector (21%) and that it has got better at sharing appropriate and useful information (19%).

Why relationships have improved

Q16a. Why do you say it has got better?

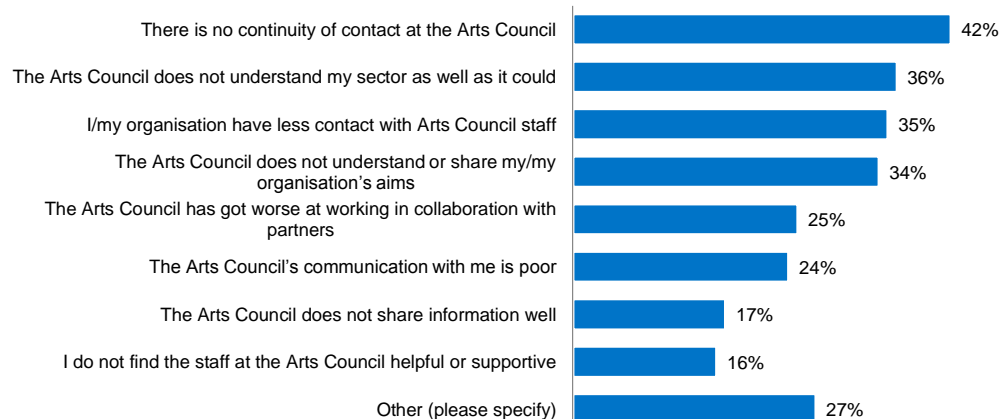


Base: All Arts Council stakeholders who say their relationship has got better in the last 12 months (n=326); 2 March – 30 March 2015

A minority of Arts Council stakeholders – just 10% – feel their relationship has got worse. For 42% of those respondents this is due to a lack of continuity of contact. This was also the single most common reason for a worsening of relations last year (48%). A third ascribe the deterioration to the Arts Council not understanding their sector as well as it could (36%), having less contact with Arts Council staff (35%) or a lack of shared aims (34%).

Why relationships have got worse

Q16b. Why do you say it has got worse?



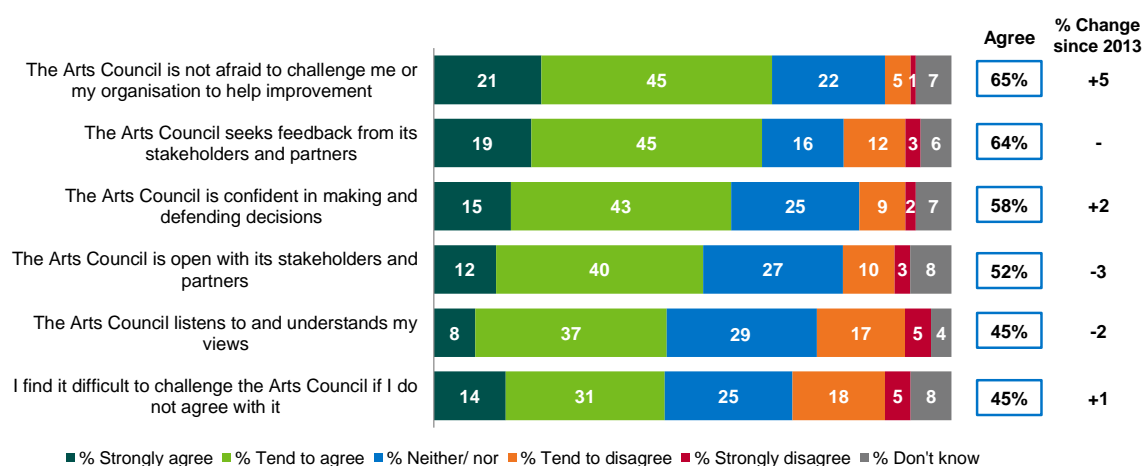
Base: All who say their working relationship with the Arts Council has got worse (n=110); 2 March – 30 March 2015

4.5 Openness of relationship with stakeholders

On balance, a majority of stakeholders find the Arts Council to be open with them. For instance, 65% feel that the Arts Council is not afraid to challenge them, and 64% think that it seeks feedback from stakeholders and partners. However, there remain some clear areas for improvement. For example, while 45% feel that the Arts Council listens to and understands their views, 22% do not think that is the case. Similarly, while 52% think the Arts Council is open and honest with its stakeholders and partners, 13% disagree.

Openness with stakeholders

Q23. Thinking about how the Arts Council works as an organisation, to what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?



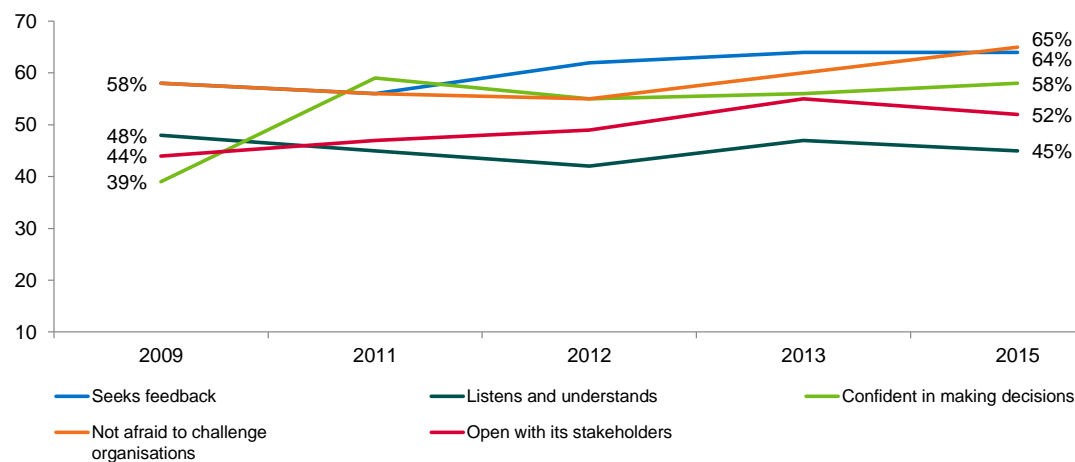
Base: All Arts Council stakeholders (n=1,051); 2 March – 30 March 2015

As the chart below shows, there has been a general, if gradual, improvement against these measures over time. For example, the proportion feeling that the Arts Council seeks feedback has increased from 58% in 2009 to 64% now. Similarly, the proportion who feel that it is confident in making decisions has risen from 39% in 2009 to 58% now. The Arts Council has also seen an increase in the proportion of stakeholders who feel that it is open with its stakeholders, from 44% in 2009 to 52% now.

The one area where the Arts Council has not really improved is in listening to and understanding the views of stakeholders. The proportion of stakeholders who feel the Arts Council listens to and understands them has fluctuated between 42% and 48% each year, with no overall rise or fall. This suggests that the Arts Council needs to continue to do more to show that it is listening to stakeholders.

Openness trends

Q23. Thinking about how the Arts Council works as an organisation, to what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?



Base: All Arts Council stakeholders : 2015 (n=1,051), 2013 (n=943), 2012 (n=762), 2011 (n=785), 2009 (n=946)

Stakeholders from libraries and from local authorities are the most likely to say that the Arts Council does not listen to or understand their views (33% and 27% respectively).

In contrast, stakeholders from the Museum and Children and Young People sectors are the most likely to think that the Arts Council listens to and understands their views (71% and 54% respectively). Indeed, these groups are the most likely to agree with all of the statements, reflecting their generally positive attitude throughout.

4.6 Respect and confidence

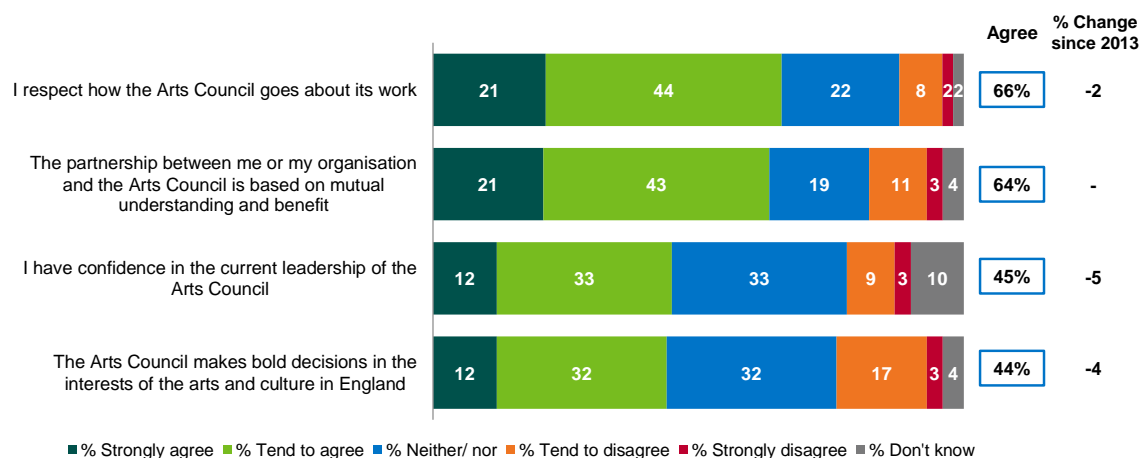
Stakeholders generally respect the Arts Council and feel their relationship is based on trust, but are relatively less confident in its leadership and ability to make bold decisions. To illustrate, 66% respect how the Arts Council goes about its work and 64% feel that their partnership with the Arts Council is built on mutual understanding and benefit.

However, just 45% have confidence in the current leadership of the Arts Council. While most are either neutral (33%), or unable to express a view (10%), one in ten stakeholders do not have confidence in the current leadership.

Stakeholders are more negative about the Arts Council's ability to make bold decisions. While 44% agree that it does, 20% do not think it makes bold decisions.

Respect

Q28. Thinking about your relationship with the Arts Council, to what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?



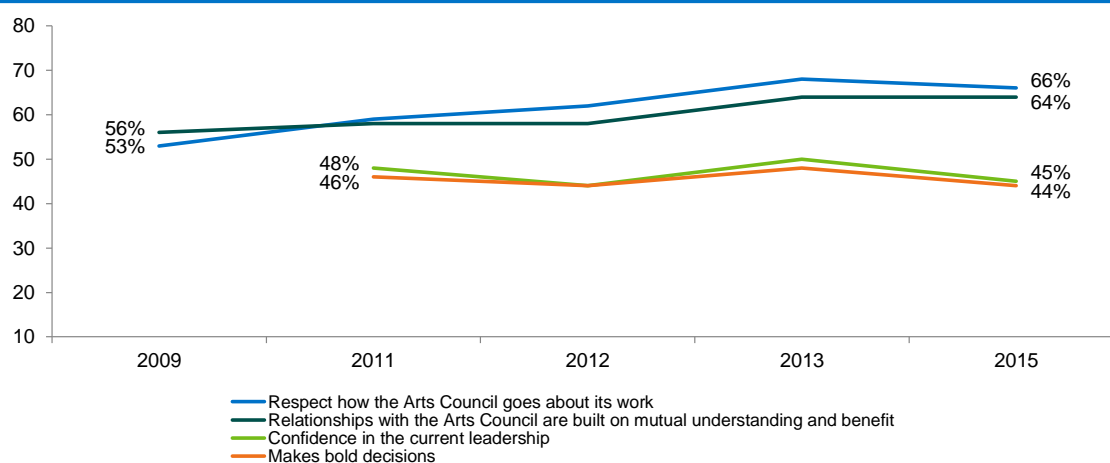
Base: All Arts Council stakeholders (n=1,051); 2 March – 30 March 2015

As the chart below shows, there has been a significant rise in the proportion of stakeholders who respect how the Arts Council goes about its work – from 53% in 2009 to 66% this year – and in feeling that relationships are built on mutual understanding and benefit (from 56% to 64%).

However, the proportion who are confident in the current leadership has fallen significantly this year – from 50% to 45% – while the proportion who feel the Arts Council makes bold decisions has fallen slightly from 48% to 44%.

Respect trends

Q28. Thinking about your relationship with the Arts Council, to what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?



Base: All Arts Council stakeholders : 2015 (n=1,051), 2013 (n=943), 2012 (n=762), 2011 (n=785), 2009 (n=946)

Confidence in the current leadership is highest among those in the museums sector (69%) and those in the Children and Young People sector (58%), but lowest among local authorities (33%) and arts individuals (34%). Again, however, this is driven by a large proportion of local authority and artist stakeholders being neutral or unable to express an opinion, rather than them being actively negative. This suggests that it is a lack of familiarity that drives lower scores. Indeed, those who know the Arts

Council best, and are in contact with is most frequently, are more positive about senior leadership. For example, 58% of those in contact with the Arts Council at least twice a month are confident in its senior leadership, compared to 30% of those who are in contact less than every six months.

That said, stakeholders from local authorities are most likely to say that their relationship with the Arts Council is not built on mutual understanding and benefit (24%, compared to an average of 14% across all stakeholder groups), which implies that more needs to be done to build closer and more open relationships with local authorities.

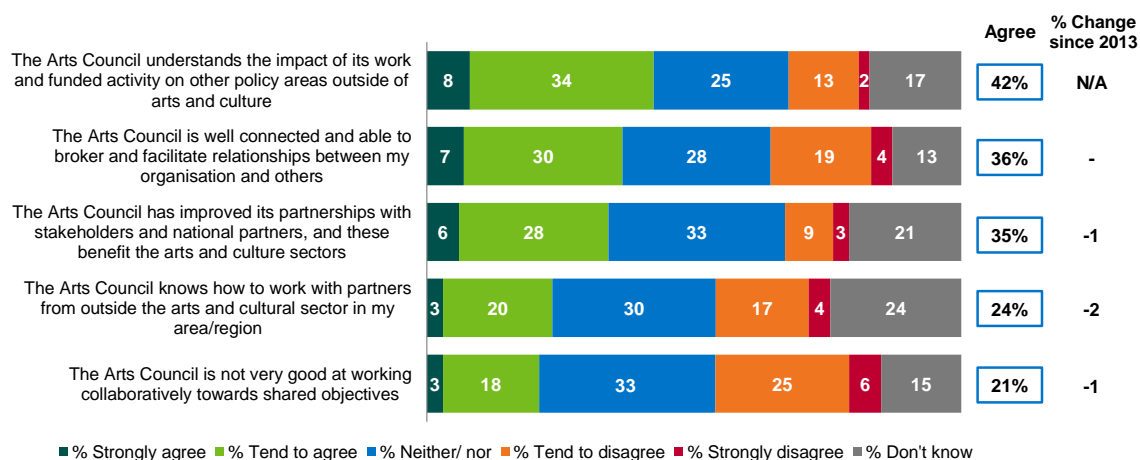
4.7 Working in partnership

On balance, stakeholders credit the Arts Council with knowledge of the impact of its work, and tend to agree that it can work collaboratively. For instance, more agree that the Arts Council understands the impact of its work and funded activity on policy areas outside of arts and culture than disagree (42% compared to 16%). Similarly, on balance stakeholders are more likely to feel that the Arts Council is well connected and able to broker relationships within the sector than not (36% compared to 24%). Further, 31% feel that the Arts Council is able to work collaboratively, but 21% do not.

However, a significant minority of stakeholders are unable to comment on how well the Arts Council works with partners outside the arts and culture sector (24% do not know), or how it works with national partners (21% do not know). This suggests that it may not be doing enough to publicise its partnership activities.

Working in partnership

Q29. Thinking about how the Arts Council relates to other organisations working to support the arts and culture, to what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?



Base: All Arts Council stakeholders (n=1,051); 2 March – 30 March 2015

Some stakeholder groups are more positive about the Arts Council's partnership working than others. For example, stakeholders from the Children and Young People sector tend to be more positive. They are more likely to feel that the Arts Council is well connected and able to broker and facilitate relationships (57% compared to 36% overall), and are more likely to feel that the Arts Council has improved its partnerships with stakeholders and national partners (54% compared to 35% overall).

Those from the museum sector are similarly positive, being more likely to say the Arts Council knows how to work with partners from outside the arts and culture sector (39% compared to 24% overall), that it understands the impact of its work and funded activity on policy areas outside of arts and culture (59% compared to 42% overall), that it is well connected (49% compared to 36% overall) and

that it has improved its partnerships with stakeholders and national partners (57% compared to 35% overall).

In contrast, stakeholders from local authorities tend to be more negative. They are more likely than others to say that the Arts Council does not know how to work with partners from outside the arts and culture sector (38% compared to 22% overall), that the Arts Council does not understand the impact of its work and funded activity on other policy areas (24% compared to 16% overall), and more likely to agree that the Arts Council is not very good at working collaboratively towards shared objectives (30% compared to 21%).

5. Communications

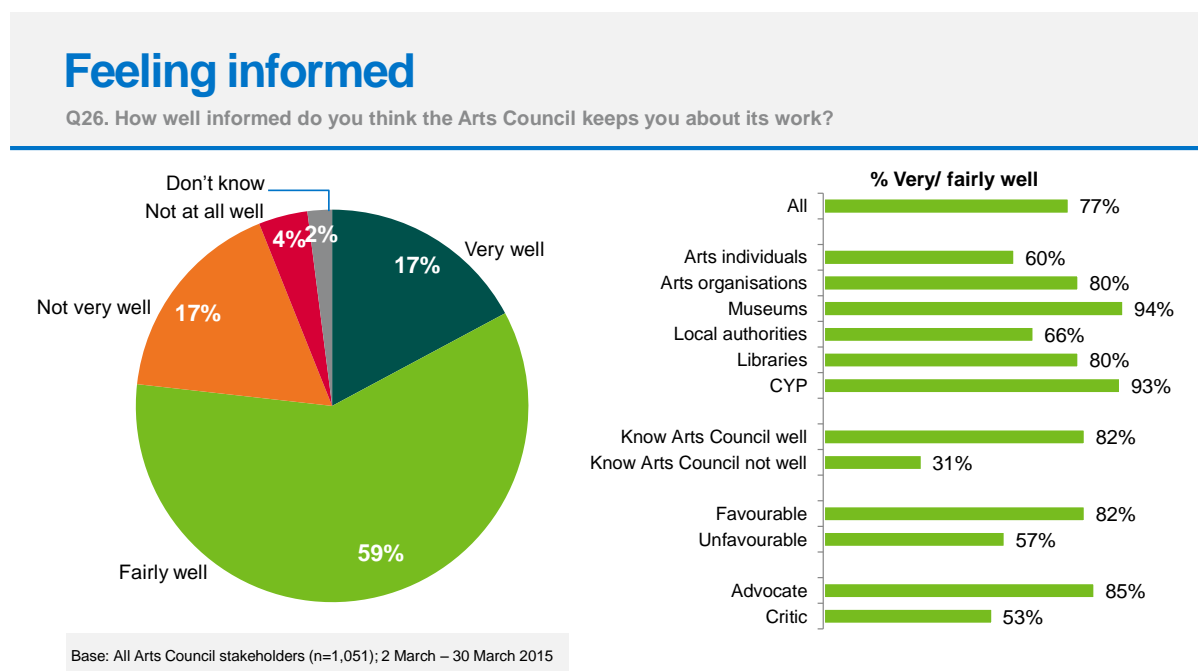
This section outlines how well informed stakeholders feel about the Arts Council, which channels they prefer, and their views on the communications they receive.

5.1 Feeling informed

Most stakeholders feel that the Arts Council keeps them well informed about its work, but a notable minority do not. Overall, 77% of stakeholders feel well informed, but one in five do not feel well informed (21%).

Some stakeholder groups are significantly less likely to feel well informed. While a large majority of those from the museum sector (94%) and from the Children and Young People sector (93%) feel well informed, this falls to 66% of local authority stakeholders and 60% of arts individuals.

Around a third of arts individuals and local authority stakeholders say that they are not well informed by the Arts Council. These are the groups who have the least frequent contact with the Arts Council, and who are least positive about their working relationship, which suggests that more can be done to reach out to these groups and make them feel involved.



Making sure that stakeholders feel informed is important because it is linked to overall perceptions of the Arts Council. For example, 85% of those who would speak highly of the Arts Council to others feel well informed, compared to 53% of those who are critical.

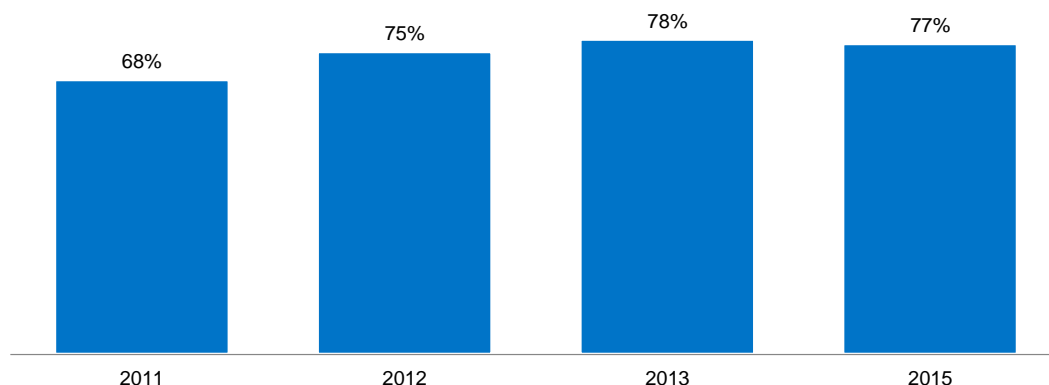
Again, feeling informed is closely related to having a specific point of contact. Nine in ten stakeholders who have a specific point of contact at the Arts Council feel well informed about its work (87%), compared to 42% of those with no formal point of contact.

The proportion of stakeholders who feel well informed by the Arts Council has remained fairly consistent over the last three years. While there was a significant jump between 2011 and 2012 (from 68% to 75%), this proportion has since plateaued. By focusing on developing relationships with arts individuals and local authorities in particular the Arts Council can work towards improving its performance against this metric.

Feeling informed trend

Q26. How well informed do you think the Arts Council keeps you about its work?

% Very/ fairly well

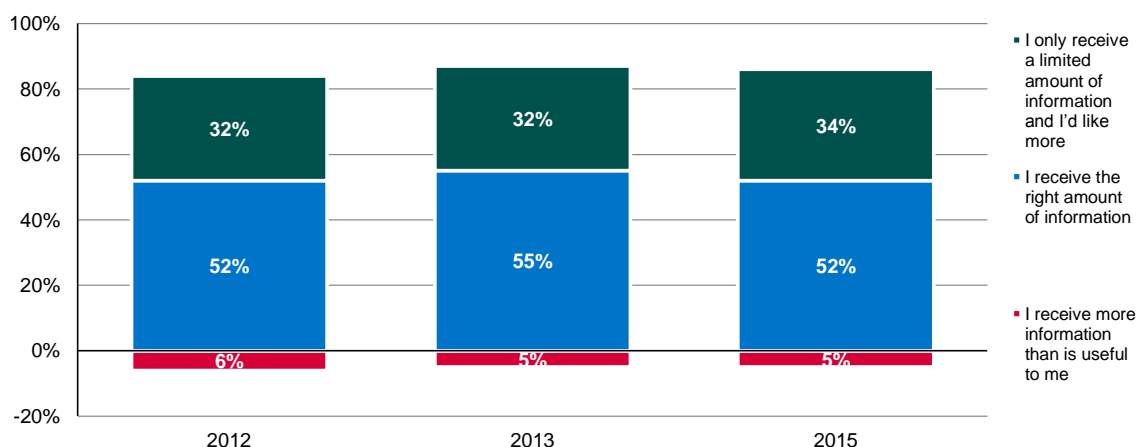


Base: All Arts Council stakeholders : 2015 (n=1,051), 2013 (n=943), 2012 (n=762), 2011 (n=785)

There is clear scope to increase the amount of information that stakeholders receive. Half of the Arts Council's stakeholders say that they receive the right amount of information (52%), but a third (34%) say that they only receive a limited amount and would like to receive more. Just five per cent say that they receive too much information.

Level of information

Q27. Does the Arts Council supply you with enough, too little or too much information?



Base: All Arts Council stakeholders : 2015 (n=1,051), 2013 (n=943), 2012 (n=762)

Those from the Children and Young People and museums sectors are the most likely to say that they receive the right amount of information. However, more than half of stakeholders from local authorities (54%) and 40% of arts individuals say that they would like to receive more information.

5.2 Communications channels

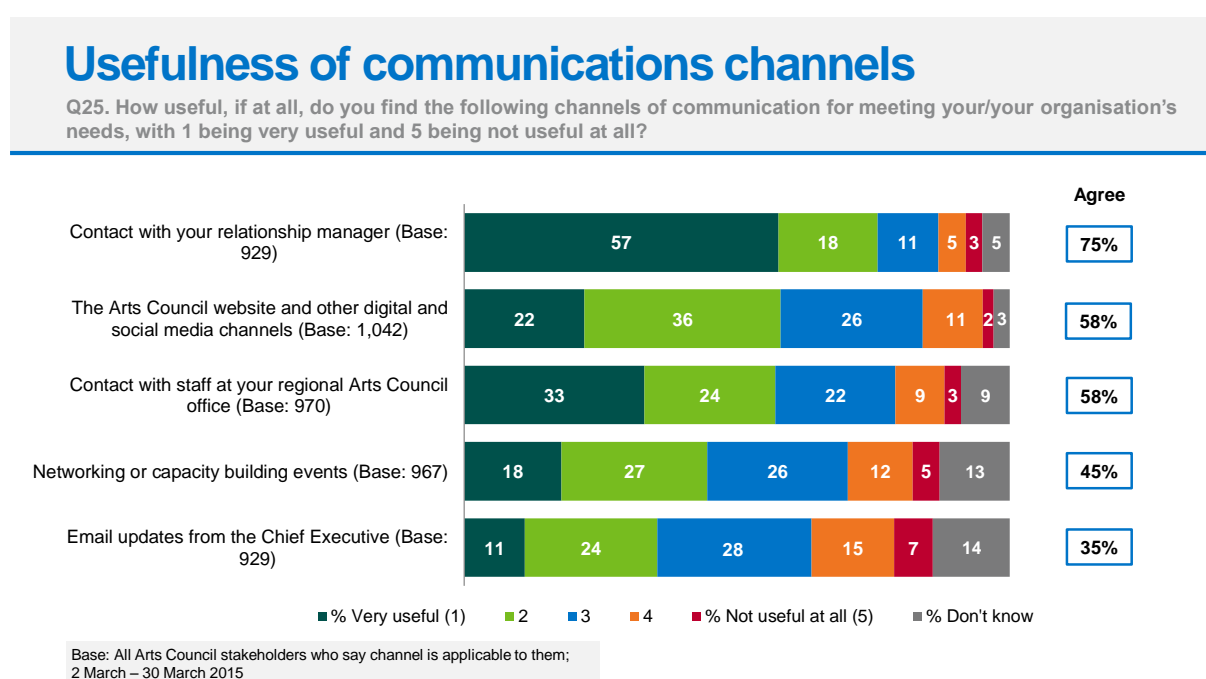
Respondents were asked about a range of communications channels used by the Arts Council to engage with stakeholders, in order to measure the perceived usefulness of each channel⁴.

As found in previous years, contact with relationship managers is considered to be the most useful channel of communication. In total, 75% of stakeholders say that they find contact with relationship managers useful compared to eight per cent who say it is not.

Similarly, stakeholders tend to find contact with staff at regional offices useful: just under three in ten (58%) say contact with regional staff is useful, compared to twelve per cent who do not find it useful.

The Arts Council website and other digital channels are considered useful by 58% of stakeholders, although 13% do not find them useful.

As in previous years, networking or capacity building events (45%) and email updates from the chief executive (35%) are generally considered to be less useful in meeting stakeholder needs.



Contact with relationship managers is most useful for stakeholders in the museum sector (87%), in the Children and Young People sector (78%) and arts organisations (78%).

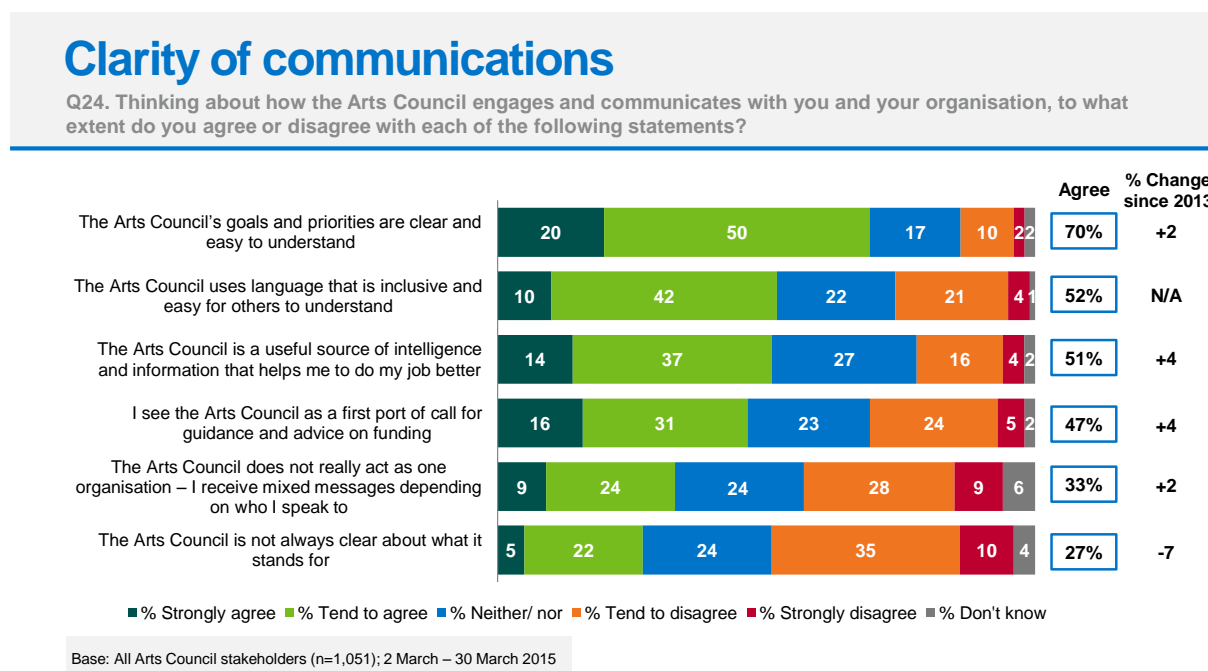
Arts individuals are somewhat different to other stakeholders and are more likely to find contact with staff at regional Arts Council offices useful (66%). They are also more likely than other groups to find the Arts Council website and other digital/social media channels useful (69%).

⁴ A 'not applicable' option was added in this year's survey to ensure that stakeholders rate the usefulness of channels which are relevant to themselves or their organisation. Results have been analysed excluding those who say the channel is not applicable to them, and are therefore not directly comparable with previous years.

5.3 Clarity of communications

The Arts Council is performing fairly well in the clarity, coherence and consistency of the messages and communications it produces, but there remain clear areas for improvement. For instance, while a large majority feel that the Arts Council's goals and priorities are clear and easy to understand (70%), a significant minority question how this is communicated. While 52% feel that the Arts Council uses language that is inclusive and easy to understand, 25% disagree. Further, 27% say that the Arts Council is not always clear about what it stands for.

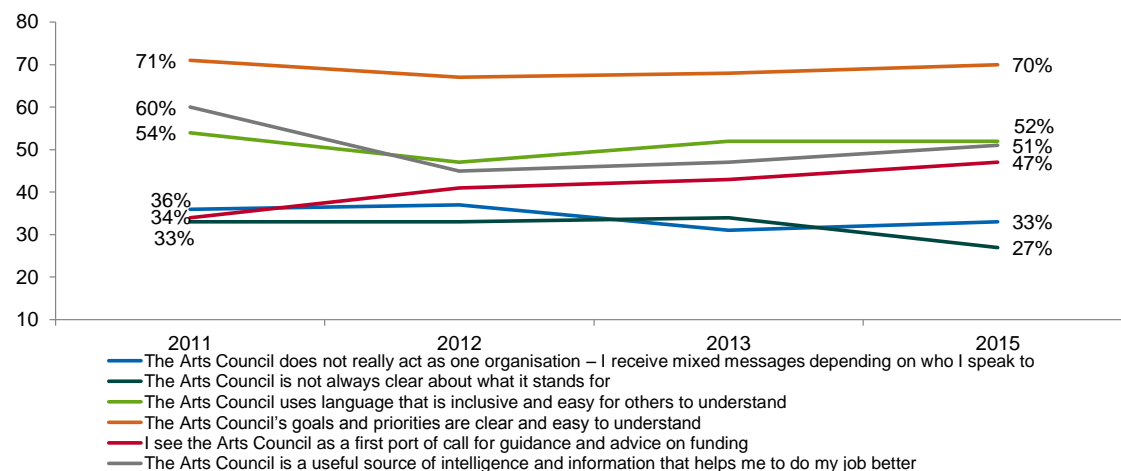
Although around half feel that the Arts Council is a useful source of information (51%) and that it is the first port of call for guidance and advice on funding (47%), a notable minority disagree (20% and 29% respectively).



Against most of these measures the Arts Council is seeing little change. There has been a gradual rise in the proportion of stakeholders who see the Arts Council as a first port of call for guidance and advice on funding (from 34% in 2011 to 47% this year), but other measures, such as being a useful source of intelligence and information, or using language which is inclusive and easy to understand, have remained stable.

Clarity of communications trends

Q24. Thinking about how the Arts Council engages and communicates with you and your organisation, to what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?



Base: All Arts Council stakeholders : 2015 (n=1,051), 2013 (n=943), 2012 (n=762), 2011 (n=785)

Stakeholders from local authorities are the most negative throughout. They:

- Are most likely to say that the Arts Council does not act as one organisation and they receive mixed messages depending on who they speak to (41% compared to 33% overall);
- Are most likely to say that the Arts Council is not always clear about what it stands for (35% compared to 27% overall);
- Are most likely to say that the Arts Council does not use language which is inclusive and easy for others to understand (35% compared to 25% overall); and
- Are most likely to disagree that the Arts Council is a first port of call for guidance and advice on funding (35% compared to 29% overall).

6. Future priorities

This section focuses on what stakeholders perceive to be the Arts Council's future priorities, both in terms of its overall role, and specifically in terms of how it works with its stakeholders in the arts and culture sector.

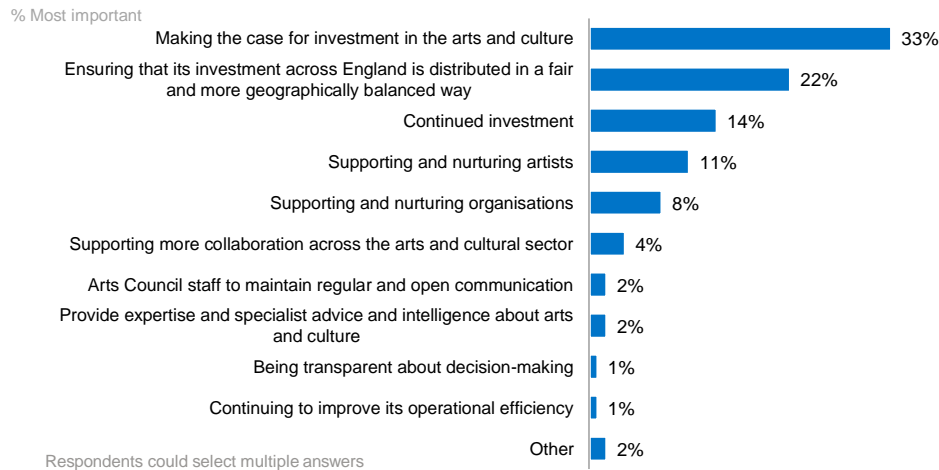
6.1 Future priorities for the Arts Council

In terms of maintaining a level of investment which is sufficient to support the arts and culture infrastructure across the country, the past five years have been a challenging period not only for the Arts Council as an organisation, but for the arts and culture sector as a whole. In this context, it is unsurprising that the top priority for many stakeholders relates to investment in arts and culture – both advocating public investment, and ensuring this is distributed in a way which makes the best possible use of the existing resources.

Reflecting this, advocacy is highlighted as a key aspect of the Arts Council's role. A third of stakeholders (33%) suggest that the Arts Council's most important future priority in the next twelve months should be making the case for investment in the arts and culture. This aspect is considered particularly important among Children and Young People stakeholders (55%), who are significantly more likely than other groups to name advocacy as the most important future priority for the Arts Council.

Future priorities for the Arts Council

Q34. Thinking about the next 12 months, what are the most important things for the Arts Council to continue doing?



Base: All Arts Council stakeholders (n=1,051); 2 March – 30 March 2015

Stakeholders also attach a large degree of importance to how the Arts Council makes use of its funding resources⁵. More than one in five (22%) say the most important future priority in the next twelve months is to ensure that Arts Council investment across England is distributed in a fair and more geographically balanced way.

⁵ A number of answer options, including 'Ensuring that its investment across England is distributed in a fair and more geographically balanced way' and 'Supporting more collaboration across the arts and cultural sector' were added at this question in 2015.

Unsurprisingly, stakeholders based in different regions have very different views on this aspect. Stakeholders in the capital and in the south of England are least likely to see this as a priority. Among stakeholders in London, just one in twenty (five per cent) believes this is the most important priority for the next year, which reflects the higher levels of funding invested in artists and arts and cultural organisations in the capital. Similarly, stakeholders in the South East (13%) and national organisations (17%) are less likely than others to feel that this is the most important priority.

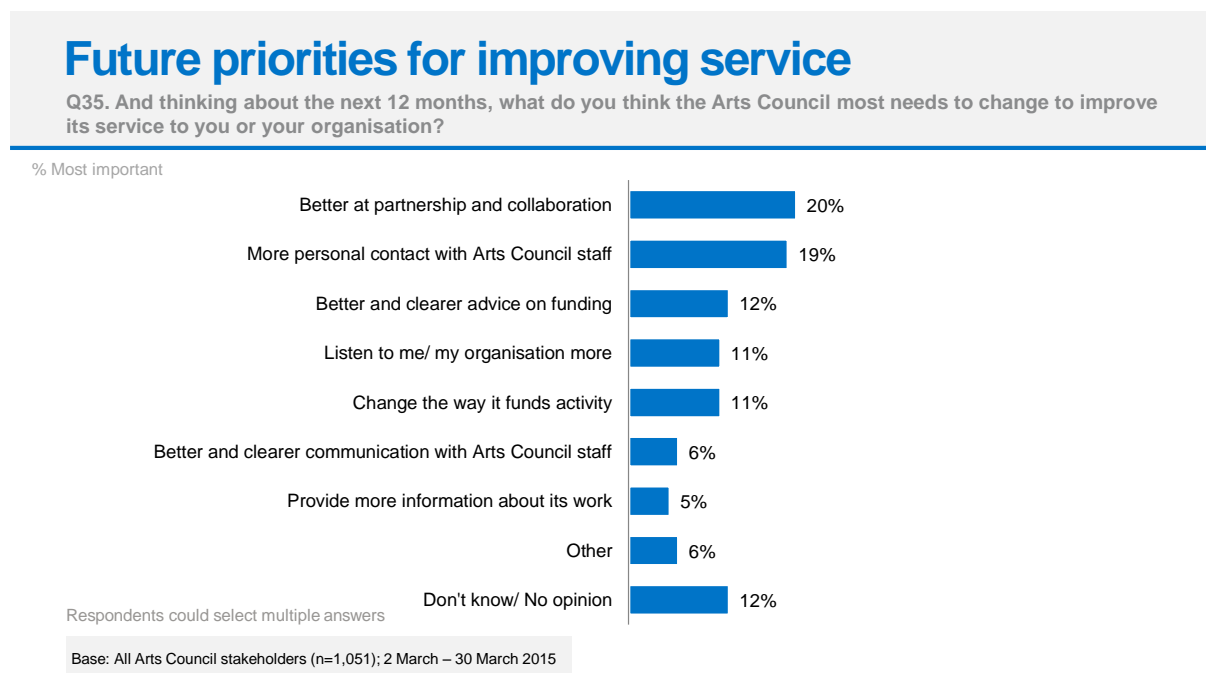
By contrast, stakeholders in the north of England are significantly more concerned about the distribution of investment. More than two in five stakeholders in the North East (43%) feel that ensuring a fair and more geographically balanced distribution of investment is most important in the next twelve months, as do 37% in the North West and 36% in Yorkshire.

A sizeable proportion of stakeholders (14%) see continued investment as the most important priority in the next year, which reflects the vital function of Arts Council funding in supporting arts and culture across England.

Stakeholders also recognise the importance of the Arts Council's core role in supporting artists and arts and cultural organisations across the country, with many citing supporting and nurturing artists (11%) and supporting and nurturing organisations (eight per cent) as the most important priority for the coming year. Arts individuals (42%) are significantly more likely than other groups to perceive support for artists as the most important priority.

6.2 Future priorities for improving service

When it comes to the service provided by the Arts Council to individual artists or organisations, it is clear that many would like to see the Arts Council build closer relationships with its stakeholders in the next 12 months⁶. One in five (20%) say that the Arts Council most needs to become better at partnership and collaboration in the next 12 months, while a further one in five (19%) would like to have more personal contact with Arts Council staff. Further, one in nine (11%) believe the Arts Council needs to listen to stakeholders more.



Grants for the Arts stakeholders in particular, who tend to have less frequent contact with the Arts Council, are keen to have a closer relationship with the organisation, with a third (34%) citing more personal contact with Arts Council staff. Further, many stakeholders who currently have less contact with the Arts Council show an appetite for increasing it. Among those who have contact with the Arts Council less often than every six months, nearly three in ten (28%) would like to have more personal contact with Arts Council staff, as would a quarter (26%) of those who have contact every two to six months.

However, there are also indications that a minority of stakeholders would like to see specific changes about the Arts Council's service in relation to funding. Just over one in nine (12%) indicate that better and clearer advice on funding is the most important thing which the Arts Council needs to change. A further one in nine (11%) would like to see larger-scale changes to how activity is funded.

Libraries (33%) are significantly more likely than other groups to cite changes to funding activity as the most important priority for service improvement.

Stakeholders' priorities for service improvement vary considerably depending on how long stakeholders have been working with the Arts Council. Stakeholders who have a long-standing relationship with the Arts Council are most likely to cite better partnership and collaboration as a priority. A quarter (24%) of those who have been in contact with the Arts Council for more than a decade see this as the most important thing the Arts Council needs to change in the next 12 months

⁶ A number of answer options, including 'More personal contact with Arts Council staff' were added at this question in 2015.

compared to just seven per cent among those who have been in contact with the Arts Council for less than a year.

In contrast, stakeholders who have been working with the Arts Council for a shorter period of time tend to mention more specific concerns about funding. Those who have been working with the Arts Council for less than a year (31%) are significantly more likely to mention better and clearer advice on funding as the most important priority compared to those who have been working with the organisation for between seven and ten years (10%) or more than ten years (eight per cent).

7. Conclusions & Recommendations

Overall, this research presents a positive picture of the Arts Council and its work in championing, developing and investing in the arts and culture in England. The Arts Council is clearly well known among a wide range of stakeholders across the arts and culture sector, and stakeholders generally have a good understanding of its goals and priorities.

More than this, the Arts Council is highly regarded by its stakeholders. A majority of stakeholders are favourable towards the Arts Council and would speak highly of it to other people. Indeed, advocacy has risen significantly since the previous research in 2013. Further, most feel the Arts Council performs its role well, and a large majority of stakeholders say it makes a positive difference to the arts and culture in England.

These positive views of the organisation are underpinned by strong and long-lasting working relationships. In many cases, relationship managers are key to the quality of working relationships, and these individual and personal relationships are widely considered the most useful and effective form of contact with the Arts Council. Moreover, there is a sense that these relationships are broadly stronger and more consistent in 2015 compared to previous years. This suggests that the re-structure in July 2013 has been well managed and that most stakeholders have been only minimally affected, if at all, by the organisational changes which have taken place within the Arts Council in recent years.

Stakeholders in the museums and Children and Young People sectors in particular are markedly more positive about their working relationship with the Arts Council, despite the fact that many stakeholders in the museums sector, and some in the Children and Young People sector, have worked with the organisation for a comparatively shorter length of time. They are also very positive in their views of the organisation as a whole, which reflects the fact that these groups tend to have more contact with the Arts Council and feel better informed about its work. Maintaining these relationships will be vital in ensuring that stakeholders in the cultural sector are fully integrated into the Arts Council's portfolio.

Notably, there is a clear sense that the Arts Council has improved in its work over the past four years. In 2015, stakeholders are significantly more likely to feel that the Arts Council is becoming more effective in its work to achieve the mission of *Great art and culture for everyone*. The Arts Council is also perceived to have a greater impact in several key areas relating to its core role, including supporting arts and cultural organisations to become more sustainable and resilient, enabling every child and young person to have the opportunity to experience arts and culture, and ensuring access to knowledge and learning experiences for all.

Nevertheless, stakeholders do identify a number of concerns. In the context of ongoing reductions to government spending, it is unsurprising that investment and funding remain a clear concern for many of the Arts Council's stakeholders, both in terms of how resources can be maintained, and how they are used to support the arts and culture ecology across the country. However, a number of smaller, more specific issues around how the Arts Council engages and communicates with different stakeholder groups also emerge from this research.

The areas for improvement thus fall into two distinct categories: firstly, investment and funding issues, and secondly, the Arts Council's relationships with its stakeholders.

Below we discuss these emerging issues and offer recommendations for how they can be addressed:

Investment and funding issues

Continue to focus on the Arts Council's role as an advocate for the arts and culture

Securing and maintaining investment in the arts and culture remains a vital concern for stakeholders in the arts and cultural sector.

As the national development agency for arts and culture in England, the Arts Council is perceived to have a pivotal role in advocating public investment. On the whole, the Arts Council is currently believed to be performing well in this regard, with a large majority of stakeholders reporting that they trust the Arts Council to make the case for public funding. Moreover, many of those who believe it has become more effective at achieving its mission specifically refer to its advocacy work.

Nevertheless, stakeholders believe that advocacy should remain the top priority for the Arts Council in the coming year. Particularly in the context of the May 2015 general election, and the uncertainty surrounding the status of arts and culture funding under any future government, there is a sense that the Arts Council will need to be bold in making the case for the value of arts and culture.

Aim for and demonstrate a fair and balanced distribution of funding

Stakeholders highlight the importance of making the best possible use of the available resources. While most believe the Arts Council uses its resources effectively, a sizeable minority feel it is insufficiently flexible in its approach to funding and question how it makes use of resources.

As found in the qualitative research, perceived regional inequalities in funding are a particular area of concern, and there is a feeling that investment and funding are concentrated in the capital and the surrounding areas. Reflecting this, stakeholders in the North East and Yorkshire are less likely to feel that the Arts Council makes a positive difference in their region or local area, and tend to believe that the Arts Council finds it difficult to demonstrate value in its investments.

In the next year, stakeholders would like to see the Arts Council ensuring a fair and more geographically balanced distribution of funding across England, and adopting a flexible approach which supports a fair and effective use of investment and funding. It will be vital to demonstrate to stakeholders what value the Arts Council is bringing to regions outside of London.

Provide a greater level of clarity and detail on investment decisions

As a public body, the Arts Council is naturally subject to a high degree of scrutiny when it comes to the transparency and accountability of its investments. Among stakeholders in the arts and cultural sector, the Arts Council's investment decisions are clearly thought to be informed by a relatively clear rationale at the overall level. Decisions are generally perceived to be supporting a wider strategy, linked to its vision and goals.

However, there is less certainty around how individual decisions are made. As such, a sizeable minority of stakeholders believe the Arts Council finds it difficult to demonstrate the value of its investments, and that individual investment decisions are poorly explained. Some also feel that the Arts Council's decisions are not informed by sound evidence.

This suggests that the Arts Council could do more to explain its investment decisions. While it is clear that more detailed and comprehensive feedback on individual investment decisions would require additional resource, and thus may not be easy to implement, a greater level of detail and explanations more tailored to the individual organisation and its circumstances would be well received by stakeholders, and provide them with a clearer sense of why individual decisions have been made.

React to different motivations among stakeholders by tailoring communications to different stakeholder groups

As the Arts Council's work and funded activity affect a wide range of stakeholders, it is not surprising that stakeholders cite a number of different groups which should benefit most from its work. However, it is clear that stakeholders in different sectors tend to focus on different groups. In particular, there is a clear split among the Arts Council's key stakeholder groups – arts individuals and organisations, and cultural organisations – about which groups should be the main beneficiaries of its work.

Specifically among cultural organisations, such as libraries, museums and local authorities, there is a clear sense that the arts and culture serve a public purpose and that the general public should therefore benefit most from the arts and culture.

By contrast, individuals and organisations in the arts sector tend to focus on the role of art creators, and are more likely to feel that artists should benefit from the Arts Council's work. Similarly, there is less recognition among arts individuals of the Arts Council's role in supporting artistic creativity and innovation, with this group being less likely to feel it has an impact in enabling artistic talent to thrive and in encouraging innovation and experimentation.

This implies that Arts Council could do more to tailor communications on its performance and impact to stakeholders in different sectors. Highlighting the most relevant issues for each sector would ensure that stakeholders have a better understanding of its activity in their area and a clearer sense of what the Arts Council contributes to their sector.

Relationships with stakeholders

Adopt a collaborative approach to working with stakeholders

Overall, the Arts Council clearly has strong working relationships with a variety of stakeholders across the arts and cultural sector, and this is reflected in stakeholders' positive views of the organisation. However, there remains scope to improve these relationships further. In particular, stakeholders identify 'collaborative' as one of the key characteristics which the Arts Council should be aspiring to, but is not yet demonstrating as much as many would like.

To an extent, the Arts Council is currently perceived to be a collaborative organisation, and stakeholders tend to agree that it is able to work collaboratively towards shared objectives. However, there is also a clear sense that it could improve its engagement with stakeholders and partners. In this light, it is unsurprising that stakeholders – particularly those with a long-standing relationship with the Arts Council – highlight partnership and collaboration as a key priority over the next 12 months.

In order to meet these expectations, the Arts Council will need to focus on ensuring a two-way relationship with its stakeholders, as well as communicating the value of its ongoing collaborative work with stakeholders and partners.

Provide tailored information and advice, particularly around funding, for smaller organisations and individuals

Arts individuals, as well as individuals or organisations who are funded through Grants for the Arts, tend to have a more distant relationship with the Arts Council compared to other stakeholders. This group tend to be positive about the Arts Council in their overall views, and their favourability and advocacy ratings are broadly in line with other stakeholders, but they are less likely to feel that they know the Arts Council very well, and feel less well informed about its work.

A particular concern is the process of applying for funding. Being less likely to have a close relationship with the Arts Council, Grants for the Arts applicants also find the application process more difficult than others, which may indicate that they feel less well supported throughout the process and experience more difficulty with the application form.

There is a strong appetite among this group for closer ties with the Arts Council. Stakeholders express not only a desire for a greater frequency of contact with the Arts Council, but also an interest in more personal contact with Arts Council staff. An increase in targeted information and advice would therefore ensure that this group feel more engaged with the Arts Council.

Build closer relationships with local authorities

A key area of concern emerging from this research is the Arts Council's relations with local authority stakeholders. This group are markedly more negative about the quality of their working relationship with the Arts Council, which reflects the fact that they have less contact with the Arts Council and are less well informed about its work. A sizeable minority of local authority stakeholders feel that their relationship with the Arts Council is not built on mutual understanding and benefit, and that the Arts Council does not know how to work with partners from outside the arts and culture sector.

Local authorities also tend to hold more negative views about the Arts Council's performance. To illustrate, they are most likely to feel the Arts Council is becoming less effective in its mission to achieve great art and culture for everyone, and are also more inclined to have doubts about the public relevance of its work.

To address these negative perceptions, the Arts Council will need to do more to build closer and more open relationships with local authorities. In particular, many local authority stakeholders would like to have more contact with the Arts Council. This suggests that more frequent and targeted contact would help support closer and more open collaboration between the Arts Council and its local authority stakeholders, although limited resources may remain a barrier, both to increasing the Arts Council's offer and to ensuring that local authorities have the capacity to work with the Arts Council.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Guide to Statistical Reliability

The respondents to this research are only a sample of the total 'population' of stakeholders. We cannot, therefore, be certain that the figures obtained are exactly those we would have if every stakeholder had been interviewed (the 'true' values). We can, however, predict the variation between the sample results and the 'true' value from knowledge of the size of the samples on which the results are based and the number of times that a particular answer is given.

The confidence with which we can make this prediction is usually chosen to be 95% – that is, the chances are 19 in 20 that the 'true' value will fall within a specified range. The table below illustrates the predicted ranges for different sample sizes and percentage results at the '95% confidence interval'⁷, assuming an infinite population.

Size of sample on which survey result is based	Approximate sampling tolerances applicable to percentages at or near these levels		
	Statistical reliability		
	10%/90%	30%/70%	50%/50%
50 interviews	8.4%	12.8%	14.0%
100 interviews	5.9%	9.0%	9.8%
200 interviews	4.2%	6.4%	6.9%
300 interviews	3.4%	5.2%	5.7%
500 interviews	2.6%	4.0%	4.4%
1,000 interviews	1.9%	2.8%	3.1%
1,051 interviews	1.8%	2.8%	3.0%

For example, on a question where 50% of respondents in a sample of 1,051 respond with a particular answer, the chances are 95 in 100 that this result would not vary by more than three percentage points, plus or minus from a complete coverage of the entire population using the same procedures. However, while it is true to conclude that the "actual" result (95 times out of 100) lies anywhere between 47% and 53%, it is proportionately more likely to be closer to the centre of this band (i.e. at 50%).

⁷ It should be noted that these figures assume a simple random possibility sample design with no design effects; in reality, with quota surveys these are likely to occur and widen the margin of error, so this should be treated as a guide.

Comparing percentages between subgroups and the overall totals

When results are compared between separate groups within a sample, different results may be obtained. The difference may be “real”, or it may occur by chance (because not everyone in the population has been interviewed). To test if the difference is a real one - i.e. if it is “statistically significant”, we again have to know the size of the samples, the percentage giving a certain answer and the degree of confidence chosen. If we assume the “95% confidence interval”, the differences between the two sample results must be greater than the values given in the table below:

Size of samples compared	Differences required for percentage levels significance at or near these		
	Statistical reliability		
	10%/90%	30%/70%	50%/50%
500 and 500	3.7	5.0	6.2
500 and 1,000	3.2	4.9	5.4
1,000 and 1,000	2.6	4.0	4.4
943 and 1,051	2.6	4.0	4.4

For example, when comparing the results from 2015 with 2013 (1,051 compared to 943), where 30% give a particular answer, a difference of 4.0% is required for it to be considered to be statistically significant.

Appendix 2: Sample profile

Stakeholder sample details			
Stakeholder category	Sub-category	Number of respondents	% of respondents
Arts Organisation	National Portfolio Organisation (NPO)	387	37
	Grants for the Arts	239	23
Children and Young People	Bridge Org	10	1
	In Harmony	3	*
	Museums & Schools	5	*
	Music Education Hubs	45	4
	NYMO	4	*
	Other	2	*
Economic Development	Local Enterprise Partnership	2	*
Arts Individual	Grants for the Arts	163	16
Infrastructure	Heritage	1	*
	Other	14	1
Libraries	Public libraries	42	4
	Other	3	*
Local authority	Member	22	2
	Officer	60	6
Museums	MPM	15	1
	Other	34	3

Geographical and attitudinal variables

Variable		Number of respondents	% of respondents
Familiarity with the Arts Council	Well	951	90
	Not well	100	10
Length of contact with the Arts Council	Less than 1 year	61	6
	1-3 years	210	20
	4-6 years	124	12
	7-10 years	143	14
	More than 10 years	508	48
Frequency of contact with the Arts Council	More often than 2 times a month	224	21
	Once a month	250	24
	Every 2-6 months	346	33
	Less often than every 6 months	226	22
Favourability	Favourable	817	78
	Unfavourable	97	9
Advocacy	Advocate	672	64
	Neutral	233	22
	Critic	137	13
Arts Council's performance	Good	792	75
	Poor	70	7
Understanding of Arts Council's goals	Well	920	88
	Not well	125	12
Information about the Arts Council	Well informed	808	77
	Not well informed	219	21
Region	East of England	77	7
	East Midlands	53	5
	London	296	28
	North East	61	6
	North West	119	11
	South East	123	12
	South West	119	11
	West Midlands	69	7
	Yorkshire	104	10
	National	30	3

Appendix 3: Topline results

Overall Perceptions

First of all we would like to ask you some questions about your overall perceptions of the Arts Council.

Q1. **How well, if at all, do you feel you know the Arts Council?**

Base: All respondents (1,051)

	%
Very well	36
Fairly well	55
Not very well	8
Not at all well	1
Have heard of it but know nothing about it	-
Never heard of it	-
Don't know	-

Q2. **How long have you been in contact or working with the Arts Council?**

Base: All respondents (1,051)

	%
Less than 1 year	6
1-3 years	20
4-6 years	12
7-10 years	14
More than 10 years	48
Don't know	*

Q3. **We are interested in your overall impressions, how favourably or unfavourably do you regard the Arts Council?**

Base: All respondents (1,051)

	%
Very favourably	22
Mainly favourably	55
Neither favourably nor unfavourably	13
Mainly unfavourably	7
Very unfavourably	3
Don't know/No opinion	*

Q4. Which of these phrases best describes the way you would speak of the Arts Council to other people?

Base: All respondents (1,051)

	%
I would speak highly of the Arts Council without being asked	29
I would speak highly of the Arts Council if I were asked	35
I would be neutral towards the Arts Council	22
I would be critical of the Arts Council if I were asked	11
I would be critical of the Arts Council without being asked	2
Don't know/No opinion	1

Q5. For each of the following words and phrases please tick those which fit your ideas or impressions of the Arts Council.

You may pick a maximum of six.

Base: All respondents (1,051)

	%
Bureaucratic	44
Strategic	44
Helpful	40
Supportive	39
Accountable	29
Useful	28
Credible	27
Knowledgeable	22
Creative	20
Collaborative	19
Distant	17
Diverse	17
Fair	17
Efficient	16
Responsive	13
Authoritative	11
Expert	10
Honest	10
Closed	9
Elitist	9
Trustworthy	9
Impermeable	8
Nurturing	8
Passionate	8
Confident	5
Decisive	5
Flexible	5
Old fashioned	5
Open	5
Weak	5
Democratic	4
Innovative	4
Bold	2
Dynamic	2
None of these	1
Don't know	*

- Q6. For each of the following words and phrases please tick those which fit your ideas of what you think the Arts Council *should be* seeking to be?

You may pick a maximum of six.

Base: All respondents (1,051)

	%
Creative	42
Collaborative	40
Strategic	38
Supportive	34
Diverse	28
Innovative	28
Accountable	27
Bold	26
Responsive	24
Nurturing	23
Fair	21
Knowledgeable	21
Dynamic	20
Flexible	20
Open	19
Helpful	18
Credible	17
Efficient	17
Expert	15
Passionate	15
Democratic	14
Confident	11
Useful	10
Authoritative	9
Trustworthy	9
Honest	8
Decisive	6
Bureaucratic	1
Distant	1
Elitist	*
Impermeable	*
Closed	*
Old fashioned	*
Weak	-
None of these	*
Don't know	*

Work and Impact

Q7. **Overall, how well or badly do you feel the Arts Council performs as an organisation?**

Base: All respondents (1,051)

	%
Very well	19
Fairly well	56
Neither well nor badly	16
Fairly badly	6
Very badly	1
Don't know/No opinion	2

Q8. **The Arts Council works to achieve great art, libraries and museums for everyone. Do you think that the effectiveness of the Arts Council in achieving this has got better, worse or stayed the same over the past year?**

Base: All respondents (1,051)

	%
Better	22
Worse	20
Stayed the same	41
Don't know/No opinion	17

Q9a. **Why do you say it has got better?**

You may pick as many or as few as you like.

Base: All who say the Arts Council's effectiveness has got better in the past year (236)

	%
The Arts Council has made a good case for continued public investment in the arts and culture	67
The Arts Council is increasing people's awareness of and access to the arts and culture	48
The Arts Council is using its funding well, to invest in a balanced portfolio	47
The Arts Council has improved in the way it supports and develops arts and cultural organisations	43
The vision and goals are ambitious and bring focus	42
The Arts Council has improved the way it makes and communicates decisions	39
There is strong leadership at the Arts Council	25
The structure at the Arts Council has improved things	15
Other (please specify)	8

Q9b. Why do you say it has got worse?*You may pick as many or as few as you like.**Base: All who say the Arts Council's effectiveness has got worse in the past year (207)*

	%
There is less funding available than there was previously	68
The structure at the Arts Council has made things worse	47
The Arts Council is poor at supporting and developing arts and cultural organisations	31
The Arts Council is using its funding poorly and not making the most of the available resources	27
The Arts Council is too inward-looking	25
The Arts Council has made a poor case for continued public investment in the arts and culture	23
The vision and goals are uninspiring	16
There is poor leadership at the Arts Council	16
The vision and goals have not been communicated well	15
The Arts Council wastes money	9
Other	29

Q9c. Why do you say it has stayed the same?
You may pick as many or as few as you like.

Base: All who say the Arts Council's effectiveness has stayed the same in the past year (428)

	%
There is too little funding/too few resources available for the Arts Council to improve its effectiveness	52
The Arts Council has continued to support and develop arts and culture organisations	46
The Arts Council has generally been effective at achieving great art, libraries and museums for everyone over the last few years	27
I have noticed no difference in the Arts Council's performance over the last few years	27
The Arts Council has been focusing on re-structuring rather than its objectives	17
Too little contact to make a judgement	9
The Arts Council's work has little impact within my sector/my region	6
The vision and goals are unclear	6
Other (please specify)	10

Q10. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Arts Council makes a positive difference to arts and culture...

Base: All respondents (1,051)

		Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/No opinion
		%	%	%	%	%	%
A	...internationally	6	25	32	11	3	23
B	...in England	52	39	4	2	2	1
C	...in your region	38	42	9	6	2	3
D	...in your local area	24	37	18	12	5	4

Working relationships

Q11. How often do you have contact with the Arts Council?

Base: All respondents (1,051)

	%
More than once a week	2
2-3 times a month	20
About once a month	24
Every 2-3 months	21
Every 4-6 months	12
At least once a year	16
Less than once a year	6
Never	*
Don't know	*

Q12. And how often would you ideally like to have contact with the Arts Council?

Base: All respondents (1,051)

	%
More than once a week	1
2-3 times a month	21
About once a month	32
Every 2-3 months	21
Every 4-6 months	13
At least once a year	7
Less than once a year	1
Never	*
Don't know	4

Q13. Which of these phrases best describes the most regular contact and working relationships that you currently have with the Arts Council?

Base: All respondents (1,051)

	%
Most of my engagement with the Arts Council is through my regional office	5
Most of my engagement with the Arts Council is through a specific relationship manager	43
Most of my engagement with the Arts Council is through a range of relationship managers	10
Most of my engagement with the Arts Council is through one Executive Director, national director or regional director	1
Most of my engagement with the Arts Council is through a variety of routes, including a relationship manager, a national/regional director and Head Office	15
Most of my engagement with the Arts Council is informal and takes place through a range of different contacts	8
I don't have a regular point of contact	17
Other (please specify)	1
Don't know	-

Q14. How would you rate the quality of your working relationship with the Arts Council overall?

Base: All respondents (1,051)

	%
Very good	42
Fairly good	37
Neither good nor poor	13
Fairly poor	7
Very poor	1
Don't know	*

Q15. Do you think your working relationship with the Arts Council overall has got better or worse over the last 12 months?

Base: All respondents (1,051)

	%
Better	31
Worse	10
Stayed the same	53
Don't know/No opinion	6

Q16a. Why do you say it has got better?

You may pick as many or as few as you like.

Base: All who say their working relationship with the Arts Council has got better (326)

	%
I/my organisation have worked more closely with the Arts Council in the last year	56
I find the staff at the Arts Council helpful and supportive	53
The Arts Council has a better understanding of my/my organisation's aims	46
The Arts Council has a better understanding of my sector	21
The Arts Council has got better at sharing appropriate and useful information	19
The Arts Council has got better at working in collaboration with partners	13
The Arts Council is more open and honest	9
The structure has improved my communication with the Arts Council	8
Other (please specify)	9

Q16b. Why do you say it has got worse?*You may pick as many or as few as you like.**Base: All who say their working relationship with the Arts Council has got worse (110)*

	%
There is no continuity of contact at the Arts Council	42
The Arts Council does not understand my sector as well as it could	36
I/my organisation have less contact with Arts Council staff	35
The Arts Council does not understand or share my/my organisation's aims	34
The Arts Council has got worse at working in collaboration with partners	25
The Arts Council's communication with me is poor	24
The Arts Council does not share information well	17
I do not find the staff at the Arts Council helpful or supportive	16
Other (please specify)	27

Values and Behaviours**Mission led****Q17. How well would you say you understand the Arts Council's goals and priorities?***Base: All respondents (1,051)*

	%
Very well	35
Fairly well	53
Not very well	11
Not at all well	1
Don't know/No opinion	1

Q18. Thinking about the Arts Council's work to achieve great art, libraries and museums for everyone. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

Base: All respondents (1,051)

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/No opinion
	%	%	%	%	%	%
The Arts Council uses its resources effectively to achieve its aims	10	44	25	14	2	5
The Arts Council has a strong sense of mission	30	45	16	6	1	3
The Arts Council has a clear plan or strategy to achieve its mission and goals	18	47	21	7	1	5
The Arts Council sets its goals and priorities based on the needs of artists and arts and cultural organisations	8	37	24	24	3	4
The Arts Council's goals and priorities are relevant to and will meet the needs of the wider public	13	46	21	14	3	3

Q19. Which of the following groups do you think currently benefits most from the Arts Council's work?

Base: All respondents (1,051)

	The most	Second most	Third most	Fourth most	Fifth most
	%	%	%	%	%
Artists	9	31	42	13	2
Cultural organisations	54	30	12	2	1
Government	4	8	12	53	4
The public	31	28	28	9	1
Other	4	3	3	8	27
No other groups benefit	-	1	3	15	67

Q20. Which of the following groups do you think should benefit most from the Arts Council's work?

Base: All respondents (1,051)

	The most	Second most	Third most	Fourth most	Fifth most
	%	%	%	%	%
Artists	24	38	34	3	1
Cultural organisations	13	41	42	3	1
Government	*	*	2	54	14
The public	63	18	18	1	*
Other	2	3	3	17	22
No other groups benefit	-	*	1	23	64

Q21. You said that [INSERT Q19 ANSWER] benefits most from the Arts Council's work, and that [INSERT Q20 ANSWER] should benefit the most. Why?

Base: All who gave different answers for the groups who do benefit most and those who should benefit most (609)

	%
Art should benefit the wider public/ be for everyone	39
Arts Council support should go into supporting all artists/ artists should benefit most	21
Reduce amount of money going into large organisations/ building projects/ admin	14
Arts Council is funded by taxpayers/ public money	12
Artists are at the frontline/ provide creativity/inspiration/ there is no art without artists	8
Imbalance of funding/ regions should benefit as much as large cities/ London	7
Arts and culture should be less elitist/ not just available to the rich	6
Arts organisations should benefit so they can provide help/ support for artists/ provide a link between artists and the public	6
Arts Council/ organisations should be less focused on their own agendas/sustaining themselves	5
Without artists there would be no arts organisations	5
Arts organisations should be looking at educating/ developing public interest/ understanding what the public want/ need/ enjoy	5
Arts Council/ organisations should have a greater presence/ concentrate on taking art out to communities	4
Arts Council seems only to seek to meet Government agendas/ too politically driven	3
Various groups should benefit in different ways/ not ahead or behind other groups	3
They pay for it through National Lottery funding	2
Some organisations/ artists are left out as they feel intimidated by the system/ bureaucracy	2
Priority should be given to artists over organisations	1
Government cuts/the current economic climate has had a large effect on the arts industry	1
Its obvious/self-explanatory	*
None/nothing	1
Don't know/no reason	2
Other	7

- Q22. Thinking about how the Arts Council works to achieve its aims, please tell me whether you think the Arts Council has a strong impact, some impact, limited impact, no impact or you don't know/have no opinion in response to the following statements:**
Base: All respondents (1,051)

	Strong impact	Some impact	Limited impact	No impact	Don't know/No opinion %
%	%	%	%	%	%
Supporting and promoting excellence in arts and culture	48	42	8	1	1
Enabling more people to experience and be inspired by arts and culture	37	47	13	1	1
Enabling artistic talent to thrive	32	50	14	1	2
Supporting arts and cultural organisations to become more sustainable and resilient	27	49	18	2	3
Encouraging innovation and experimentation in arts and culture	25	50	20	3	2
Developing the knowledge and skills of arts and cultural leadership and workforce	16	50	26	2	5
Developing a more diverse arts and cultural leadership and workforce	15	43	32	5	6
Promoting arts and culture that reflect the diversity of contemporary England	20	49	25	3	4
Enabling every child and young person to have the opportunity to experience arts and culture	22	48	24	3	3
Encouraging greater public awareness of and enthusiasm about arts and culture	21	48	27	3	1
Ensuring access to knowledge and learning experiences for all	14	49	30	3	4
Preserving and caring for our cultural collections	36	45	7	1	11

Openness

Q23. **Thinking about how the Arts Council works as an organisation, to what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?**

Base: All respondents (1,051)

	Strongly agree %	Tend to agree %	Neither agree nor disagree %	Tend to disagree %	Strongly disagree %	Don't know/ No opinion %
The Arts Council is open with its stakeholders and partners	12	40	27	10	3	8
The Arts Council is confident in making and defending decisions	15	43	25	9	2	7
The Arts Council is not afraid to challenge me or my organisation to help improvement	21	45	22	5	1	7
The Arts Council seeks feedback from its stakeholders and partners	19	45	16	12	3	6
I find it difficult to challenge the Arts Council if I do not agree with it	14	31	25	18	5	8
The Arts Council listens to and understands my views	8	37	29	17	5	4

Clarity and Communications

Q24. **Thinking about how the Arts Council engages and communicates with you and your organisation, to what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?**

Base: All respondents (1,051)

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/No opinion
	%	%	%	%	%	%
The Arts Council does not really act as one organisation – I receive mixed messages depending on who I speak to	9	24	24	28	9	6
The Arts Council is not always clear about what it stands for	5	22	24	35	10	4
The Arts Council uses language that is inclusive and easy for others to understand	10	42	22	21	4	1
The Arts Council's goals and priorities are clear and easy to understand	20	50	17	10	2	2
I see the Arts Council as a first port of call for guidance and advice on funding	16	31	23	24	5	2
The Arts Council is a useful source of intelligence and information that helps me to do my job better	14	37	27	16	4	2

Q25. How useful, if at all, do you find the following channels of communication for meeting your/your organisation's needs, with 1 being very useful and 5 being not useful at all?

Base: All respondents (1,051)

	1 – Very useful	2	3	4	5 – Not useful at all	Don't know/ No opinion	Not applicable
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Contact with your relationship manager	50	16	10	4	3	5	12
Contact with staff at your regional Arts Council office	31	22	20	8	3	8	8
The Arts Council website and other digital and social media channels	22	35	26	11	2	3	1
Email updates from the Chief Executive	10	21	25	13	6	13	12
Networking or capacity building events	16	25	24	11	4	12	8

Q26. How well informed do you think the Arts Council keeps you about its work?

Base: All respondents (1,051)

	%
Very well informed	17
Fairly well informed	59
Not very well informed	17
Not at all well informed	4
Don't know/No opinion	2

Q27. Does the Arts Council supply you with enough, too little or too much information?

Base: All respondents (1,051)

	%
I receive the right amount of information	52
I only receive a limited amount of information and I'd like more	34
I receive more information than is useful to me	5
Don't know/No opinion	8

Respect

Q28. **Thinking about your relationship with the Arts Council, to what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?**

Base: All respondents (1,051)

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/No opinion
	%	%	%	%	%	%
The partnership between me or my organisation and the Arts Council is based on mutual understanding and benefit	21	43	19	11	3	4
I respect how the Arts Council goes about its work	21	44	22	8	2	2
The Arts Council makes bold decisions in the interests of the arts and culture in England	12	32	32	17	3	4
I have confidence in the current leadership of the Arts Council	12	33	33	9	3	10

Partnership

Q29. **Thinking about how the Arts Council relates to other organisations working to support the arts and culture, to what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?**

Base: All respondents (1,051)

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/No opinion
	%	%	%	%	%	%
The Arts Council knows how to work with partners from outside the arts and cultural sector in my area/region	3	20	30	17	4	24
The Arts Council understands the impact of its work and funded activity on other policy areas outside of arts and culture	8	34	25	13	2	17
The Arts Council is not very good at working collaboratively towards shared objectives	3	18	33	25	6	15
The Arts Council is well connected and able to broker and facilitate relationships between my organisation and others	7	30	28	19	4	13
The Arts Council has improved its partnerships with stakeholders and national partners, and these benefit the arts and culture sectors	6	28	33	9	3	21

Accountability and Trust

Q30. **The Arts Council is a public body which invests public money in the arts. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?**

Base: All respondents (1,051)

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/No opinion
	%	%	%	%	%	%
The Arts Council's decisions are clearly linked to its vision and goals	16	46	22	6	1	8
The Arts Council explains its investment decisions poorly	4	19	28	34	7	9
The Arts Council's decisions are informed by sound evidence	6	33	35	11	3	13
The Arts Council holds the organisations it funds properly to account	20	46	17	8	2	6
The Arts Council finds it difficult to demonstrate the value of its investments	5	27	26	25	6	11
The Arts Council does not learn from experience	4	15	29	31	8	14
The Arts Council is aware of the future challenges and opportunities for the arts and culture in England	22	48	15	6	1	8

Q31. **The Arts Council seeks to be a trusted stakeholder within the arts and cultural sector. With this in mind, to what extent do you trust the Arts Council to do each of the following?**

Base: All respondents (1,051)

	A great deal	A fair amount	Not very much	Not at all	Don't know/No opinion
	%	%	%	%	%
Uphold the arms-length principle. This means making funding decisions which are independent of government.	25	47	16	3	9
Invest to support England's arts and culture ecology in an intelligent way. This means making the best possible use of its resources to fund arts and culture across England.	24	54	15	2	6
Make the case for public funding of arts and culture. This means acting as a strong advocate for the arts and culture sector.	40	43	11	2	4
Bring people together and see connections and opportunities. This means helping people across the sector to work together.	17	49	26	3	5

Q32. The Arts Council operates a range of funding and monitoring processes. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

Base: All respondents (1,051)

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/No opinion
	%	%	%	%	%	%
The Arts Council collects the right amount of data from funded organisations and projects	8	42	20	16	4	10
The Arts Council makes good use of the data it collects from funded organisations and projects	4	18	31	16	5	26
The Arts Council's funding application process is less complicated than other funders	9	30	26	23	6	6
The Arts Council is not flexible or responsive in its approach to funding	5	23	28	32	7	4
The process of applying for funding is bureaucratic and prohibitive	8	25	21	35	9	2
I understand what funding is available for different activities	17	57	10	11	2	2

Q33. Thinking about your most recent experience of applying for [INSERT FUNDING TYPE] funding, to what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

Base: All NPO, MPM and Grants for the Arts applicants (804)

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/No opinion
	%	%	%	%	%	%
The eligibility criteria to apply for funding are clearly explained and easy to understand	35	49	8	5	2	1
The application form for my funding programme was clear and easy to complete	24	45	13	13	4	1
There was sufficient advice and information available to help me complete the application process	30	48	10	6	3	2
Any advice or information I received during the application process was timely, informative and helpful	34	43	12	7	2	2
My application was dealt with in an efficient, fair and timely manner	40	43	8	6	1	1
The decision-making process for funding awards is fair and transparent	19	34	18	16	7	5
Negotiation of funding agreements is done in a clear and constructive way and carried out over an appropriate timescale	22	44	13	14	4	3
<i>Base: All NPO and MPM applicants (402)</i>						

Future priorities

Q34. **Thinking about the next 12 months, what are the most important things for the Arts Council to continue doing?**

Base: All respondents (1,051)

	The most	Second most	Third most	Fourth most	Fifth most
	%	%	%	%	%
Continued investment	14	19	14	12	9
Ensuring that its investment across England is distributed in a fair and balanced way	22	15	8	7	8
Supporting and nurturing organisations	8	14	20	18	12
Supporting and nurturing artists	11	12	15	13	13
Making the case for investment in the arts and culture	33	19	12	9	8
Arts Council staff to maintain regular and open communication with me/my organisation	2	4	8	10	10
Provide expertise and specialist advice and intelligence about arts and culture	2	3	5	9	11
Being transparent about decision-making	1	3	6	7	7
Continuing to improve its operational efficiency	1	1	3	4	7
Supporting more collaboration across the arts and cultural sector	4	7	8	10	12
Other	2	1	1	1	1
Don't know/No opinion	*	*	*	1	1
None of the above	-	-	*	*	1

Q35. And thinking about the next 12 months, what do you think the Arts Council most needs to change to improve its service to you or your organisation?

Base: All respondents (1,051)

	The most	Second most	Third most
	%	%	%
More personal contact with Arts Council staff	19	11	9
Better and clearer communication with Arts Council staff	6	13	14
Better and clearer advice on funding	12	14	14
Listen to me/my organisation more	11	16	14
Change the way it funds activity	11	8	8
Better at partnership and collaboration	20	18	19
Provide more information about its work	5	7	9
Other, please specify	6	2	3
Don't know/No opinion	12	4	4
None of the above	-	6	7

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