

**IMPACT & INSIGHT TOOLKIT:**

**DEMOGRAPHICS QUESTIONS REVIEW**

**REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A RICHER SET OF DEMOGRAPHICS  
QUESTIONS FOR THE TOOLKIT**

Prepared by Claire Booth-Kurpnieks, Counting What Counts  
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## DEMOGRAPHICS QUESTIONS REVIEW AND REPORT

### 1. What do we want to do?

We want to develop a new bank of questions to cover a more in-depth overview of a survey respondent's demographic information.

### 2. Why is this needed?

As both academic and policy research will attest, the production and consumption of culture in the UK is stratified along the lines of age, gender, ethnicity, disability and social background; for example, socio-economic background, current occupation and education level (Bennett et al., 2008; Leguina and Miles, 2017; O'Brien et al., 2017, Chan and Goldthorpe, 2007; Oakley and O'Brien, 2015). Another intersecting issue is geographical location (Leguina and Miles, 2017).

In 2015, Arts Council England (ACE) established their 'Creative Case for Diversity' in which their National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) must demonstrate, in ways that are appropriate to that organisation, how they are "integrating diversity" into their artistic programme, "engaging a diverse range of people in developing and delivering their programme"; "identifying and prioritising resource to deliver diverse work" (ACE, 2020a). This has been integrated into the 2020-2030 Let's Create strategy through the 'Inclusivity and Relevance' investment principle which aims to "address the persistent and widespread lack of diversity and inclusivity in cultural organisations' leadership, governance, workforce and audience" by asking organisations to "demonstrate how they are listening to the voices of the public, including children and young people, artists and creative practitioners... [and] how they are reflecting what they hear in the planning of their work" (ACE, 2020b).

Despite widening participation being a priority for cultural policy, Taking Part data suggests that there has been little movement over the past decade (The Warwick Commission, 2015; Jancovich and Stephenson, 2021). Taking the last 'normal' year of participation, 2018-2019, the survey found that 87.6% of people in higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations had engaged with the arts in the last 12 months, compared to 78% of those in intermediate occupations and 68.6% of survey respondents in routine and manual occupations. These figures were similar in both the 2017-2018 and 2016-2017 surveys. Prior to this, survey respondents were grouped into higher and lower socio-economic groups; in 2018-2019 this found that 85.4% of those in the 'upper' group had participated in the arts in the past 12 months, compared to 67% in the lower' group. This demonstrates an increase in participation in both groups of about 2% since 2008-2009 ('Upper' was 83.3% and 'Lower' was 64.6%), but the gap in participation has been stable.

Looking at ethnicity in 2018-2019, 79.3% of White respondents had participated in the arts, compared to 59.7% of Asian respondents, 68.5% of Black respondents and 66.5% of respondents who had stated their ethnicity as 'Other'. On the other hand, 88.7% of survey respondents who described their ethnicity as 'Mixed' had participated in the arts in the last 12 months. The survey data from 2017-2018

suggests that this gap had widened between 'White' respondents, and those from 'Black', 'Asian' or 'Other' ethnic backgrounds. It is difficult to compare to data of previous years as ethnicity had previously been grouped in 'White' and 'Black or ethnic minority' categories.

In terms of more regular participation, this becomes an issue of equity as, according to the Warwick Commission in 2015, "the wealthiest, better educated and least ethnically diverse 8% of the population forms the most culturally active segment of all", accounting, between 2012 and 2015: for 28% of attendance to live theatre; 44% of attendance to live music; 27% of attendance to visual arts. Across these artforms, this highly engaged 8% accumulates £216 per head of Arts Council England funding.

In considering this gap, as well as recognising the inequity of access to cultural experiences that some communities face, The Warwick Commission also points to a mismatch between "the public's taste and the publicly funded cultural offer - posing a challenge of relevance as well as accessibility" (2015, 34). This is often positioned as a 'participation deficit' (Miles and Gibson, 2017), in which cultural consumption is the norm and therefore individuals and communities who fail to participate are 'not normal' and need to be fixed (Oakley and O'Brien, 2015). The focus here is on widening engagement with the current publicly funded offer, rather than looking critically at "the policies, projects and practices that create and sustain structural inequities in regard to how different people's cultural lives are valued and supported" (Jancovich and Stephenson, 2021, 7). In other words, if people are not participating in publicly funded culture, then is the relevant culture being funded?

Similar issues arise when it comes to cultural production. Following on from Du Gray et al.'s "circuits of culture" (1997), and more recently Holden's "cultural ecology" (2015), there are well-known flows between those who produce and those who consume culture. There certainly is a relationship between inequalities of production; inequalities of consumption; inequalities of representation (Oakley and O'Brien, 2015). Carey et al. (2020), in their report for the Policy and Evidence Centre, find that those from privileged backgrounds "dominate key creative roles in the sector, shaping what goes on stage, page and screen" (2).

However, in their 2017 special issue of Cultural Sociology, O'Brien et al. suggest that simply having "a more diverse workforce does not necessarily translate into more diverse representation", when decision-makers, often still the default 'white-male' "consider the productions that foreground issues of marginality or minority experience a risky investment" (O'Brien et al. 2017, 275). In fact, as found in the research of Anamik Saha, published in the same issue, work seeking to engage 'new audiences' can in fact work to reproduce "reductive representations of race" (O'Brien et al. 2017). Moreover, the *Panic! Social Class, Taste and Inequalities in the Creative Industries* report suggests that "the taste patterns of cultural workers are substantially different from those of the rest of the population" (Brooke et al., 2018, 2).

Adding further demographic questions to the Toolkit gives us the opportunity to help organisations think reflectively about how the work they are making is relevant to the communities in which they are working, providing more context about the effectiveness of their programme (Jancovich and Stephenson, 2021). At present,

organisations can collect information about the demographics of their audience through their Audience Finder surveys. However, while this connects data on who is attending and their motivation for doing so, the Toolkit would be able to add to this data considerations around whether the creative intentions of a work were felt by different demographics within an audience. We know that there is an appetite for this as some organisations have already added in more comprehensive demographics questions to their surveys. Moreover, by including demographics questions in both Toolkit and Audience Finder, organisations will be able to gain a greater insight of their audience in seeing if the demographic of each survey matches up. For example, are some subsets of the audience filling in Toolkit whereas others are filling in Audience Finder?

In doing so, it would help fill the gap identified by Oakley and O'Brien in their critical literature review *Cultural Value and Inequality* about "the fine-grained understanding of minority and ethnic cultural consumption and its relationship to cultural value" (2015, 7) as well as the gap of publicly available data on cultural consumption and social class. Moreover, if we encourage self-assessors to also fill in the demographics questions, it will potentially offer much needed insight into who is producing cultural experiences and products, and how they are consumed. As such, developing this data which connects creative intentions, cultural experiences, and demographics, will be of great use to other researchers and policy makers, as well as affording CWC opportunities for analysis.

### 3. What questions can we add?

It has been recognised that an intersectional approach is needed to understand inequities in cultural production and cultural consumption (Brook et al., 2018). Consequently, we need to develop a set of questions that strikes a balance between quantity of questions and the utility of data that they will collect. It has been recognised by research done previously with ACE that organisations are keen to collect this information if the rationale for doing so is clear (Oman, 2019).

The Toolkit survey already collects data on age, gender and location (through the provision of postcode data). In addition, we will consider adding questions relating to ethnicity, disability, sexuality, religion and social class. Organisations will be able to choose which of these questions are relevant to their audiences and evaluations. The first 4 of these relate to 'protected characteristics' of the 2010 Equality Act, and have established questions that are used across surveys. It is recommended to follow the Harmonised Census questions in this instance to allow for cross-comparison with other national data sets. As a point of comparison, surveys that collect demographic data about cultural production and consumption have been reviewed, including: Audience Finder, Taking Part, Arts Council England's Annual Survey for NPOs, as well as questions from the 2021 census (see Appendix 1).

#### 3.1. Protected Characteristics questions

##### 3.1.1. Ethnicity

All surveys reviewed follow the convention of the Census question. It is recommended that the Toolkit follows the same convention. Recommended question:

What is your ethnic group?

**White**

English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British

Irish

Gypsy or Irish Traveller

Roma

Any other White background (free text- write in 'other' response)

**Mixed or Multiple ethnic group or background**

White and Black Caribbean

White and Black African

White and Asian

Any other Mixed or Multiple background (free text- write in 'other' response)

**Asian or Asian British background**

Indian

Pakistani

Bangladeshi

Chinese

Another other Asian background (free text- write in 'other' response)

**Black, Black British, Caribbean or African ethnic group or background:**

Caribbean

African background, write in below

Any other Black, Black British or Caribbean background (free text- write in 'other' response)

**Other ethnic group or background:**

Arab

Any other ethnic group (free text- write in 'other')

**Prefer not to say**

### 3.1.2. Disability

The Taking Part survey, Audience Finder and the Census all include a multi-part question. Both Taking Part and the Census ask the question '*Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illness lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?*' (Yes/No/ Prefer not to say) followed by a question asking, '*Do any of your conditions or illnesses reduce your ability to carry out day-to-day activities?*' (Yes, a lot/ Yes, a little/ Not at all).

Audience Finder asks, *‘Do you identify as a D/deaf or disabled person, or have a long-term health condition?’* (Yes/ No/ Prefer Not to say) followed by, *‘Are your activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?’* (Yes, limited a lot/ Yes, limited a little/ No/ Prefer not to say).

The NPO Annual Survey follows a similar convention to Audience Finder, which they described as following “the social model of disability” but does not have a follow up question. As we are trying to limit the number of questions being added to the survey, this approach is recommended here. Recommended question:

Do you identify as a D/deaf or Disabled person?

**Yes**

**No**

**Prefer not to say**

### 3.1.3. Sexual Orientation

When asking respondents to describe their sexual orientation, Taking Part and the Census both use the options: Heterosexual or Straight/Gay or Lesbian/Bisexual/Other Sexual Orientation. The NPO Annual Survey, following feedback from organisations and consultation from the LGBT foundation, amended their options to: Bisexual/Gay Man/Gay Woman or Lesbian/Heterosexual (or straight)/ Queer (or none of the above)/Prefer not to say. It is recommended that the Toolkit follows the consultation carried out by ACE, including the category ‘Queer’. Recommended question:

Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

**Bisexual**

**Gay Man**

**Gay Woman (or Lesbian)**

**Heterosexual (or Straight)**

**Queer (or none of the above)**

**Prefer not to say**

### 3.1.4. Religion

Neither Audience Finder nor the NPO Annual Survey collect data about the religion of respondents. This raises questions about whether this is a useful question for aggregating data; however, religion is a protected characteristic and may be relevant to some forms of cultural participation. Taking Part and the Census both ask the same question; it is therefore recommended that this question is used.

Recommended question, if relevant:

What is your religion?

**No religion**

**Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant, and all other Christian denominations)**

**Buddhist**

**Hindu**

**Jewish**

**Muslim**

**Sikh**

**Any other religion (specify)**

**Prefer not to say**

### 3.1.5. Socio-economic status or background

As recognised above, social class and its intersection with other protected characteristics is the biggest factor in the structuring of cultural participation and production in the UK. Recent work on data for social mobility has been helpful in clarifying relevant questions relating to a person's socio-economic status. In general, this is a combination of a person's socio-economic background and their socio-economic destination.

The Cabinet Office in 2018 recommended several questions to assess someone's socio-economic background:

- The type of school a person went to
- Whether a person was on Free School Meals as a child
- The parental qualifications and parental occupation of a person at age 14

The question about parental occupation at age 14 was considered the most robust and is recommended if only one question is to be used to assess someone's social background (Social Mobility Commission, 2021).

However, research commissioned by ACE and undertaken by Dr Susan Oman found, during a consultation with 15 NPOs, that this was the most difficult question for people to answer (Oman, 2019). This was because:

- 1) They did not know the answer
- 2) The question did not 'fit' their perception of their lives
- 3) They did not understand the relevance of the question or what it was intended for

This research found that if the context of the question was explained - why the question was being asked and what the data will be used for - the barriers to answering the question were alleviated (Oman, 2019). Consequently, the recommendation from this consultation was to include the question with the same wording as the Cabinet Office, with a contextual statement that explains the rationale behind the question; for example, "we are asking this question so we can better understand access to the arts and culture and what barriers there may be". This has since been adopted by the Social Mobility Commission (Social Mobility Commission,



2021). We may consider putting this as a precis before all demographics-focussed questions.

Recommended question:

What was the occupation of your main household earner when you were about aged 14?

We are asking this question so we can better understand access to the arts and culture and what barriers there may be.

- **Modern professional & traditional professional occupations** such as: teacher, nurse, physiotherapist, social worker, musician, police officer (sergeant or above), software designer, accountant, solicitor, medical practitioner, scientist, civil / mechanical engineer.
- **Senior, middle or junior managers or administrators** such as: finance manager, chief executive, large business owner, office manager, retail manager, bank manager, restaurant manager, warehouse manager.
- **Clerical and intermediate occupations** such as: secretary, personal assistant, call centre agent, clerical worker, nursery nurse.
- **Technical and craft occupations** such as: motor mechanic, plumber, printer, electrician, gardener, train driver.
- **Routine, semi-routine manual and service occupations** such as: postal worker, machine operative, security guard, caretaker, farm worker, catering assistant, sales assistant, HGV driver, cleaner, porter, packer, labourer, waiter/waitress, bar staff.
- **Long-term unemployed** (claimed Jobseeker's Allowance or earlier unemployment benefit for more than a year).
- **Small business owners** who employed less than 25 people such as: corner shop owners, small plumbing companies, retail shop owner, single restaurant or cafe owner, taxi owner, garage owner.
- **Other** such as: retired, this question does not apply to me, I don't know.
- **I prefer not to say.**

Answers to this question are then grouped into three socio-economic categories for analysis:

- **Professional backgrounds** – modern professional & traditional occupations; senior or junior managers or administrators.

- **Intermediate backgrounds** – clerical and intermediate occupations; small business owners.
- **Lower socio-economic backgrounds** – technical and craft occupations; routine, semi-routine manual and service occupations; long-term unemployed.
- **Exclude** – other; I prefer not to say.

These can then be self-coded to the three-class version of the NS-SEC backgrounds to compare with other national datasets.

Social destination is generally understood through a person's level of education attainment, their current job role and type of work. Although, as the purpose of the question here is not to ascertain whether a person is upwardly mobile but what level of cultural participation they may have been exposed to, the latter might not be relevant for public surveys. However, it may be relevant to understand the diversity of self-assessors that are using the platform. Taking Part and the Census include questions on: education, asking the highest level of education attainment achieved; employment status, asking whether they are employed, self-employed, temporarily away from work, or on maternity/ paternity leave; as well as type of work, so asking the respondent to describe the nature of their work and job title. Taking Part also asks if, as part of their work, they were responsible for supervising others or managerial responsibilities. Audience Finder asks the question about employment status only. ACE is currently reviewing appropriate social destination questions for audiences, which we may be able to align with in the future.

For 'peer' reviewers or 'self' assessors, Oman's working paper highlighted that there are particular difficulties of classifying jobs within the cultural and creative industries as they do not easily align with other sectors. However, within ACE's Annual NPO survey, some broad categorisation of staff roles is offered, for example:

- **Specialist Staff:** those working within an area of artistic specialism. This includes directors, choreographers, producers, programmers, curators, conservators etc., and includes the artistic/ museum director. This category also includes educational, marketing and audience development staff.
- **Managers:** executive or senior management, for example chief executive, executive director, finance director, chief accountant, general manager, human resources manager and legal advisor.
- **Artists:** artists, dancers, actors, singers, musicians, writers, composers and designers, as well as any other producing artists.
- **Other Staff:** administrative and technical staff, for example finance, reception, box office or ticketing staff, and lighting or sound technicians.
- **Board/ Governing Body:** elected or appointed members who oversee the organisation's activities.

At present, it is not known how useful it would be to use these categories as it is anticipated that most people filling in the Toolkit survey as 'self' assessor or 'peer' reviewer would come under the 'specialist staff' category, although it would be interesting to see how this compares to 'artists' evaluating their own work.

## 4. Actions

Following a review by the CWC team, and consultation with colleagues at ACE, we have introduced the recommended questions on the protected characteristics of ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, religion, and the recommended question on socio-economic background. At present we are unable to make recommendations for a question about the socio-economic destination or status of audience members. We will continue to review this in consultation with ACE.

The extended demographics questions have been set up in a template that users can select when creating a new evaluation. When selecting this template, all the protected characteristics questions will be included in the public survey by default.

Organisations can use these additional 5 demographic questions to provide further context to their Toolkit data. This will help organisations to gain a deeper understanding of their audiences and their experiences, and to think reflectively about the relevance and effectiveness of their programme for different audiences.

For now, we will not be including the extended demographics in the survey templates for self-assessors and peer reviewers. The additional data from the extended demographics questions will only offer insights when it is aggregated and analysed. This will not offer any immediate insight into evaluated works for the individual organisations who will be collecting this data, which is the primary focus of the Toolkit.

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