

# Audience Snapshot: Young Adults (16-24) and Art Forms in Belfast

We asked 2,200 Belfast residents about their cultural engagement – how they attended and how they participated – in a city-wide survey commissioned by Belfast City Council. The results were fascinating and showed us that a lot of assumptions we hold are in fact incorrect. In this audience snapshot, we delve into the Young Adults age group (16-24) – how engaged they are in Belfast and what art forms they are interested in the most.

We often hear from cultural organisations that although they target young people, this age group is not often seen walking into their buildings, leading to the commonly held assumption that 16-24 years old are the hardest age group to engage. But that is not what our study showed.

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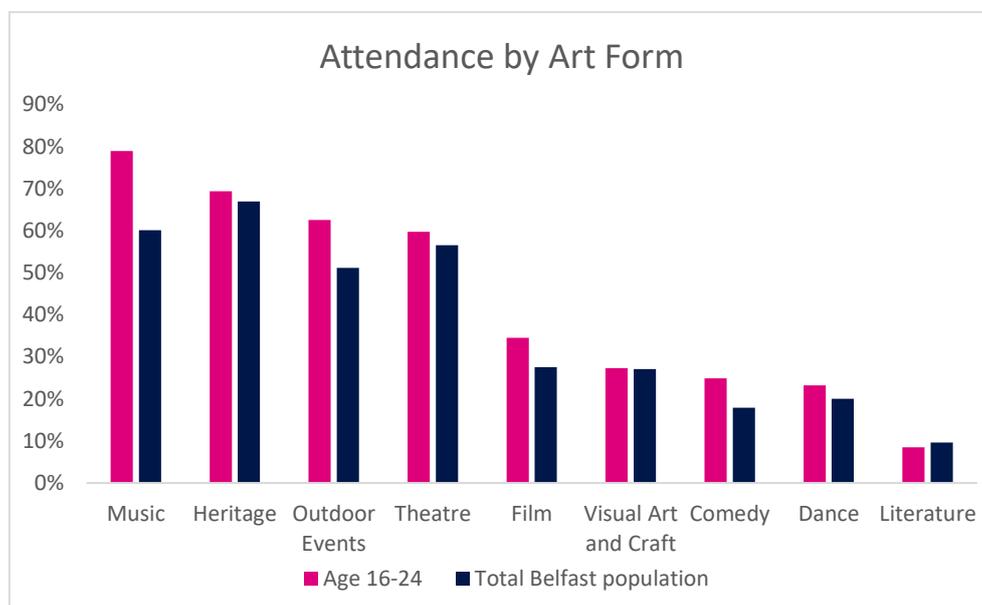
*They ARE actually interested in culture. Compared to other age groups, 16-24 years old had the highest percent of people attending and participating in the majority of art forms.*

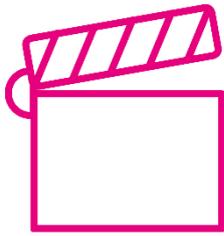
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So then why don't we see them more often attending our events?

## What art forms do 16-24 years old like?

Young adults' levels of attendance were higher than the total Belfast population in most art forms, with the exception of literature participation. But Music was the big winner and for this reason, we dug a little bit deeper into what genres 16-24 years old are into.





89% of 16-24 years old watched mainstream cinema in a venue.



55% attended a rock/pop/country gig.



36% attended an electronic or techno music gig.



36% played a musical instrument.

**Life stage** is the reason why this age group is the most engaged. 16 to 24 years old still attend school and are most likely to be involved in cultural activities within their schools or universities. They have more free time to attend classes or join activities that allow them to socialise and experiment with their friends like outdoor events, music gigs or going to the cinema. The older segment of this age group might be in their first jobs and therefore could just choose to attend or participate because this is something they are interested in.

## How to grow Young Adults Audiences?

### Build a strong relationship

Now we know 16-24 years old are interested in the majority of art forms and are actively engaged in arts and culture. Does your programme represent them? Do you have staff or volunteers in their age range that they could identify with? If they see themselves in your organisation, they will be more likely to visit your venue. The focus should be on relevance – offer an image they will connect with and use the right channels of communication.

### Use their interest in your programming

Music and film are big with young audiences. If this is what your organisation

is about, then think about the different music genres you show on your stage – they particularly like electronic and techno music, but also rock, pop and country.

### Offer opportunities for participation

You could do more than partnering with local schools or presenting workshops based on their interests. Get creative. Another way to attract them is to involve them in your programming process. Let them take over. It's a win-win situation – they will feel included and you will get to know them better for future planning.



## Sources

Please contact our Research Executive Laura Cusick if you'd like more info about Young Adults and Art Forms in Belfast – [researchexec@wewillthrive.co.uk](mailto:researchexec@wewillthrive.co.uk)