

DO the audience agency

Tea Break

Outdoor Arts: Audiences and Impacts

26 November 2025

# Welcome to a session about Outdoor Arts!

- What does the data say?
- How has The Audience Agency's research contributed to this knowledge?
- What are the consequences of this insight for our work?



Presented by Jonathan Goodacre, Senior Consultant (TAA)

Contribution from Sho Shibata, Outdoor Arts UK

# The interesting case of Outdoor Arts



Imaginarius Festival, Santa  
Maria Da Feira, Portugal, 2017

# Outdoor Arts – what is it?

- Outdoor Arts comprises of producers, festivals, artists, and commissioning organisations presenting artistic work in outdoor public spaces.
- The range of artforms includes dance, circus, theatre, carnival, and installation (visual arts or sound art).
- Most of our activities take place in public spaces as festivals (e.g. town centres) and are free-to-access for audiences.

Outdoor Arts UK



Global Streets, Greenwich + Docklands  
Internatioanal Arts Festival, Woolwich, London

# Outdoor Arts – difficulties for research and data



Acrojou, Stockton International Riverside Festival, 2013

- Events are often free so not much ticketing data
- Audiences are often free to roam, join in, leave, taking place in public spaces making surveying difficult
- Performances can be short, of varying length, unpredictable, in different locations and moving between places (eg. parades, carnival etc) making surveying difficult.
- The weather can have an influence on all sorts of factors
- People are there to enjoy themselves not answer questions!

# A starting point



SECTOR EVIDENCE / Cultural Participation Monitor

## Cultural Participation Monitor

**The Audience Agency's nationwide longitudinal (ongoing) panel survey of changing views about participating in creative and cultural activities through the recent and ongoing crises, and beyond.**

# Cultural Participation Monitor

ARTS/HERITAGE ACTIVITIES (INCLUDING FILM) - IN-PERSON - Last 12 months	CPM Wave 11 overall
Film at a cinema or other venue	58%
Museum	50%
Visited a library	41%
Historic park or garden open to the public	38%
Visited a city, town or high street because of its historic character	38%
Historic house, castle, stately home	38%
Other live music performance/gig	29%
Exhibition or collection of art	28%
Music festival	26%
Visited a religious building (NOT for worship)	24%
<b>Other outdoor festival, carnival or street arts (in everyday surroundings)</b>	<b>22%</b>
Play at the theatre or other venue	19%
Musical at the theatre or other venue	18%
Other live entertainment (including comedy, cabaret)	15%
Children/ family arts event including pantomime	15%
Classical music performance/event (inc. concerts, opera, other)	11%
Event connected with books or writing	10%
Archaeological site	10%
Dance event (inc. ballet, contemporary dance, other)	9%
Visited an archive	4%
Other arts event – In person	3%
Other heritage place	3%

Wave 11 (2024)

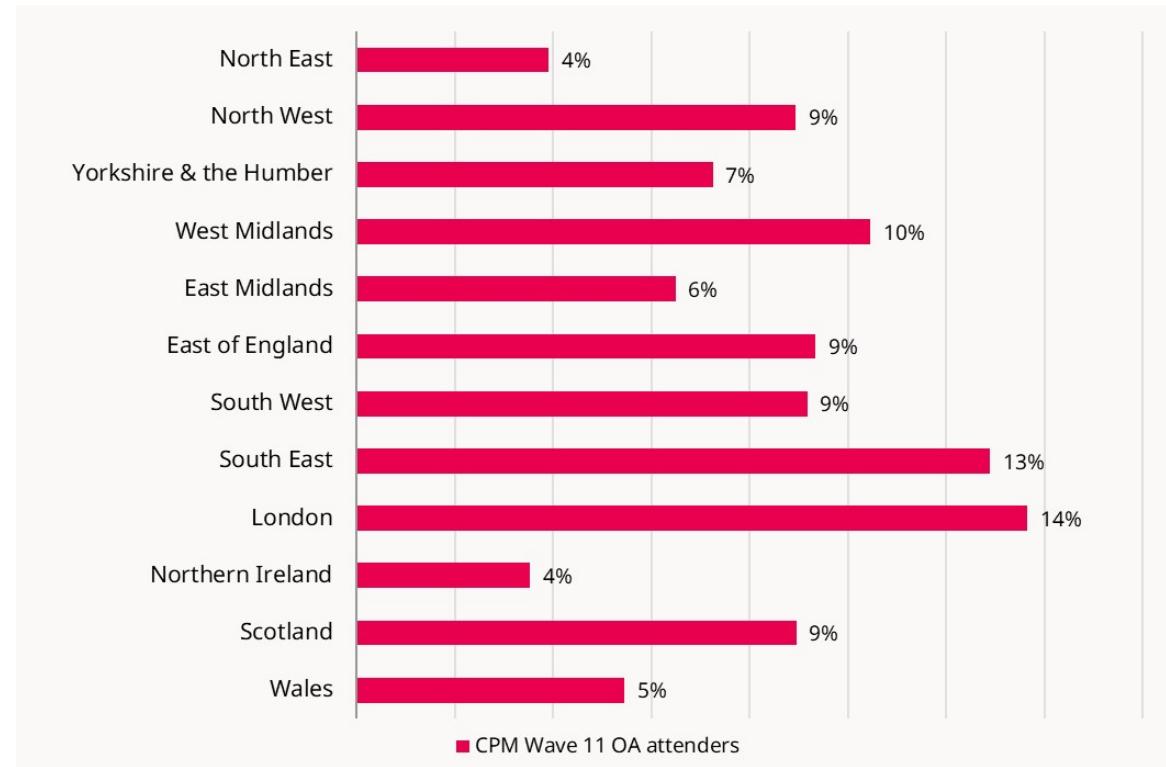
*What people say they have  
done / attended in the last  
12 months*

# DCMS Participation Survey + CPM

Attended an arts event in the last 12 months	DCMS 2024/25 Participation survey	CPM Wave 11 overall
Unweighted base	34,298	2,445
An arts festival and or carnival (for example, a food, craft or other cultural event)	22%	22%

# Outdoor Arts Geography

Region	CPM Wave 11 OA attenders
North East	4%
North West	9%
Yorkshire & the Humber	7%
West Midlands	10%
East Midlands	6%
East of England	9%
South West	9%
South East	13%
London	14%
Northern Ireland	4%
Scotland	9%
Wales	5%



Let's turn back the clock ...



Bauckerie Bacul, Out There Festival, Great Yarmouth, 2014

# Let's turn back the clock ... to 2013

## Outdoor Arts Insight pre-2013

- Outdoor Arts not usually highly funded.
- Sometimes thought as not having high artistic quality
- Arts organisations producing and presenting wide range of work
- Attendances (apparently) high
- Not clear why people attended
- Audiences appeared to be more diverse and representative of the population

→ Lack of good research to understand Outdoor Arts audiences

## So ...

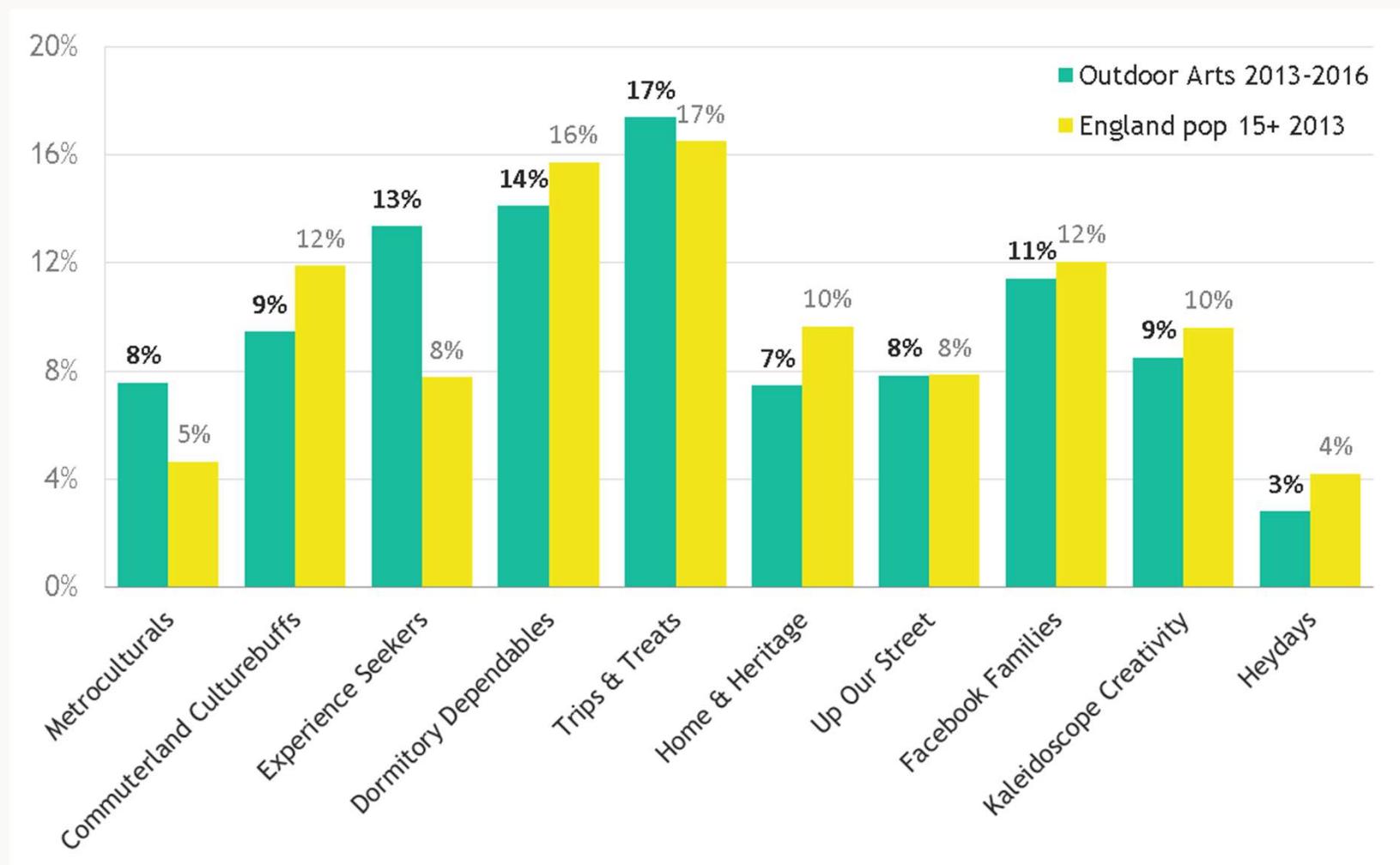
The Audience Agency collaborated with ISAN (now Outdoor Arts UK) to undertake one of the most extensive pieces of research ever undertaken into Outdoor Arts audiences

- 35+ UK organisations working in outdoor arts took part
- Special questionnaires devised delivered face to face and by e-survey)
- From 2013 - 2016 there were around 30,000 respondents of questionnaires at Outdoor Arts events.
- Surveys compared to secondary data and incorporated profiling with the new Audience Spectrum system

## Outdoor Arts audiences – what did the research show?



# Outdoor Arts Audience Spectrum profile



## Outdoor Arts audiences – what the research showed

- Large audiences overall (eg. 500,000 attenders in 2016)
- A diverse audience representative of the population
- Many not normally engaging with arts and culture
- An ethnically diverse audience
- Outdoor Arts valued for connection with place and community
- Quality of performance and experience rated highly (97% rated the quality of experience as 'good' or 'very good')

# What did audiences think?

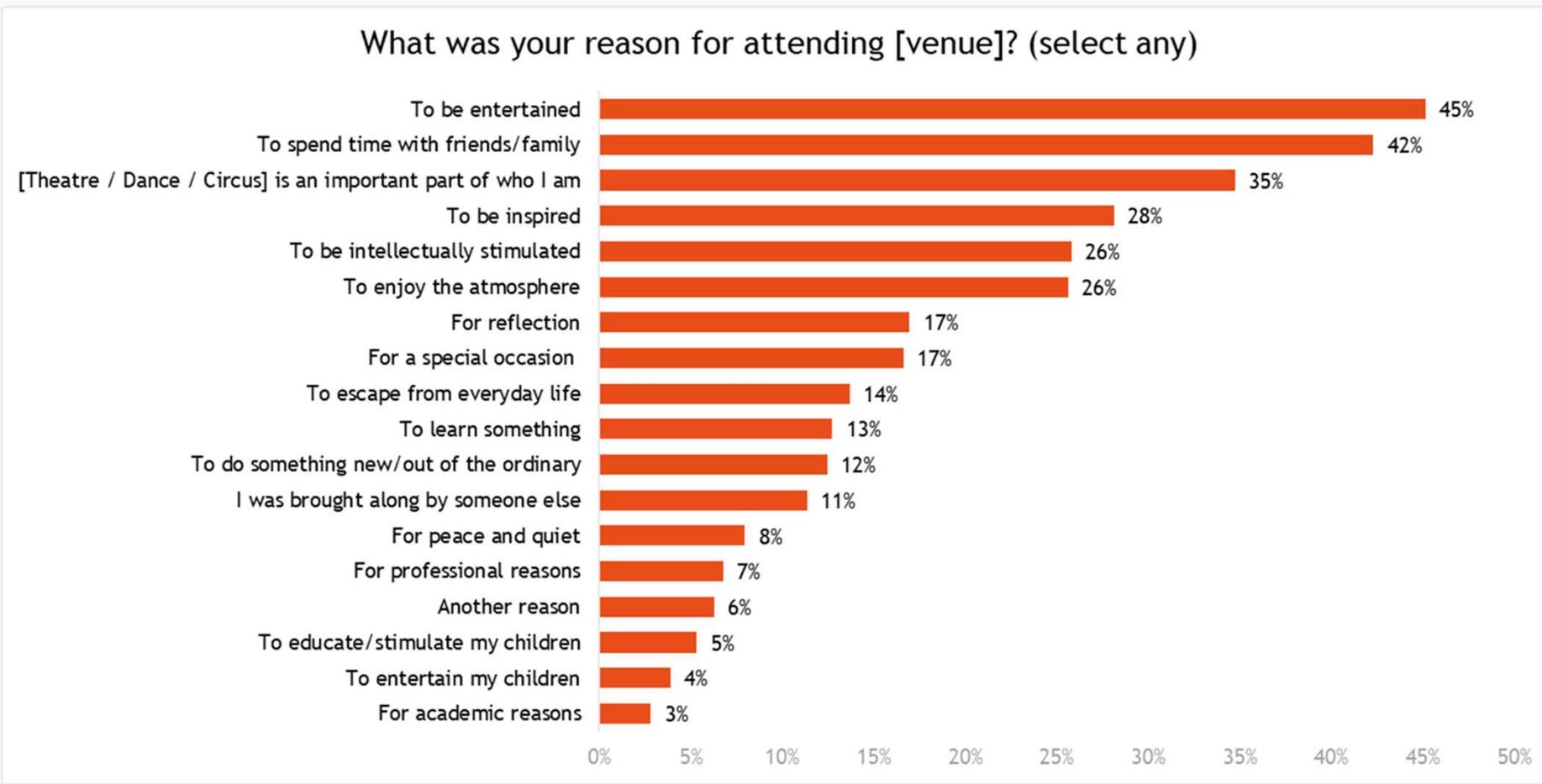


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## Why does Outdoor Arts appeal?

- Different kind of space – not in a conventional venue – fewer barriers
- Often non verbal performance
- Usually free to attend (no ticket price)
- Interactive / participatory
- Chance encounters, surprises and unexpected
- Social and community experience important to enjoyment
- Unpretentious promotional communication
- Appropriate work coming from knowledgeable programming
- Proactive audience development initiatives

# Motivation to attend outdoor arts event (UK 2013-2017)



## Why do they come?

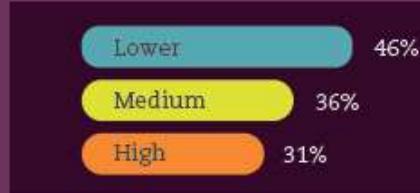
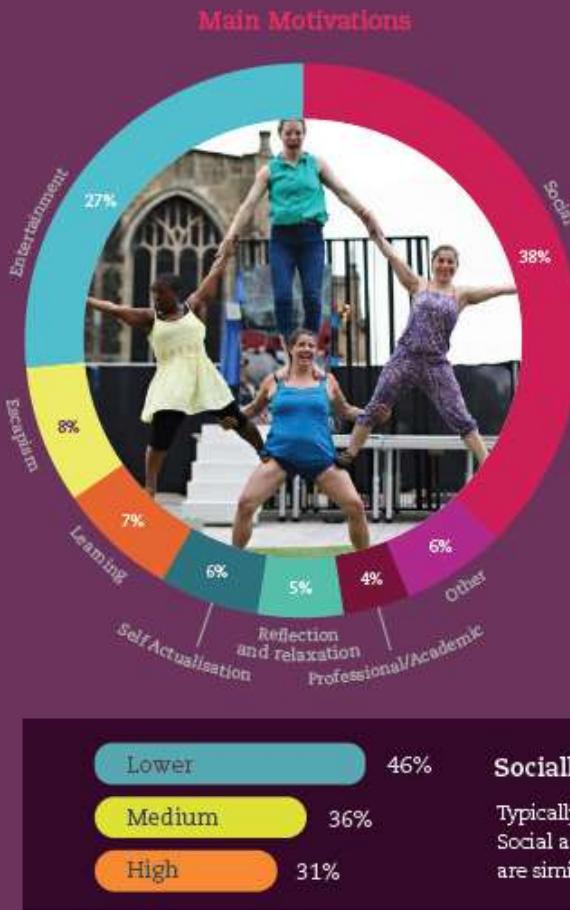
Fun with friends



Atmosphere  
**Friends**  
Entertainment  
Entertain my children  
Who I am  
Something New  
**Family**  
Imagination

**80%**

Families are 80% motivated by social and entertainment reasons.



### Socially Motivated

Typically, lower cultural engagers are most likely to cite Social as their main motivation, though overall motivations are similarly spread across engagement levels.

**54%**

of survey respondents aged 16 – 34 identify their main reason for attending as being primarily **Social**, though this decreases steadily with age.

Older respondents, those aged over 55, are more likely than younger cohorts to cite **Entertainment** as their main motivation and are increasingly inclined towards **Learning**.



Returning and first-time attendees express very similar motivations.

*"There is an element of the unknown to this performance that created quite a talking point!"*

# The Big Picture

What do we know about Outdoor Arts audiences?

## Collective

In some places Outdoor Arts has been proven to bring disparate parts of a community together.

## 25-44

Outdoor Arts is especially attractive for the 25-44 age profile, although it draws across all age groups overall.

## Engaging all levels

It is good at attracting people with different levels of interest, not just cultural frequent flyers.

## Local

Outdoor Arts is predominantly local and is valued for its interaction with the community.

## Mixing artforms

There is delight at the way events combine artforms, mixing the traditional with the modern and the spectacular with the intimate.

## 84%

Attendees enjoy being able to engage as part of a group (84%), especially with friends, but also as adult and children groups.

## Social

Motivations for attending are overwhelmingly social, though entertainment value and perceptions of quality are important.

## 8/10+

The quality of experience is rated highly, with 84% of respondents recommending the event at 8/10 or higher.

# The importance of the social and community experience



Hull Freedom Festival 2019

# Leave when you want to?



Lifeline,  
Galway  
Community  
Circus, 2022.

# Global Streets 2015-2025

- 10 years of international outdoor arts events taking place in public places around England
- Partnership of 12 arts organisations led by Greenwich + Docklands International Festival (GDIF)
- The Audience Agency has been the evaluator on the project over the whole project enabling consistency of research results

<https://festival.org/global-streets/>



## GLOBAL STREETS: 10 YEARS IN NUMBERS



350+

artists and 58 productions

400+

free performances

124,500+

participants

2,750,000

digital reach

76%

of audiences say that Global Streets events give them pride in their local area

75%

are low or mid arts engagers

90%

would like to see more Global Streets events in the future

29%

are from non-White British backgrounds

11%

identify as Deaf/disabled/neurodiverse

80%

say Global Streets events changed their view of how British high streets and public spaces can unite people

83%

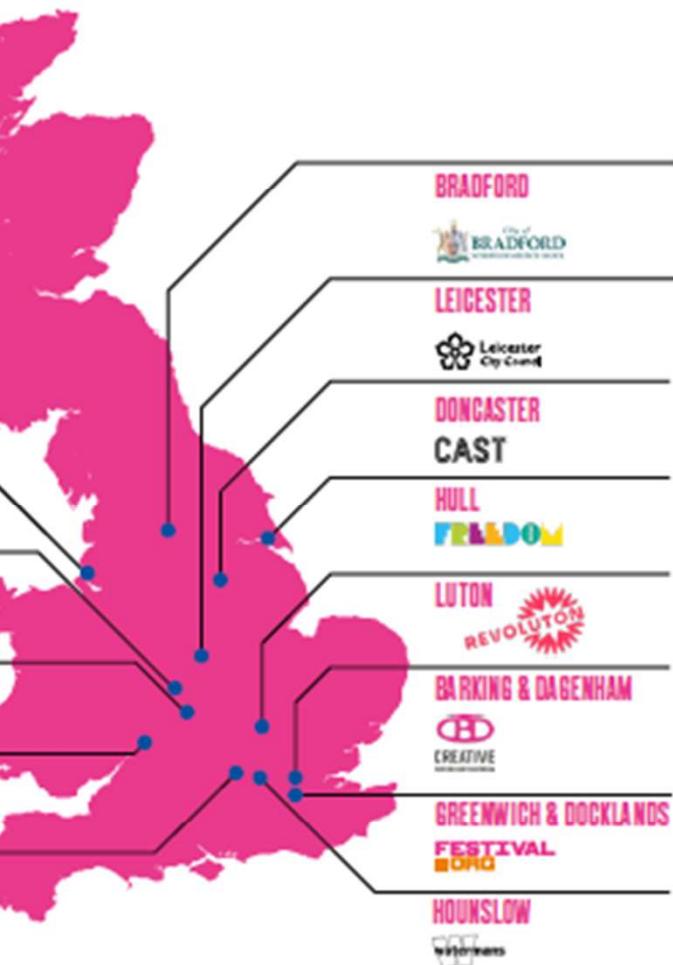
say that they are motivated to attend Global Streets events to do something together with family and friends

67%

say that Global Streets events help them to feel connected to other people in their area

1,000,000+  
AUDIENCE MEMBERS

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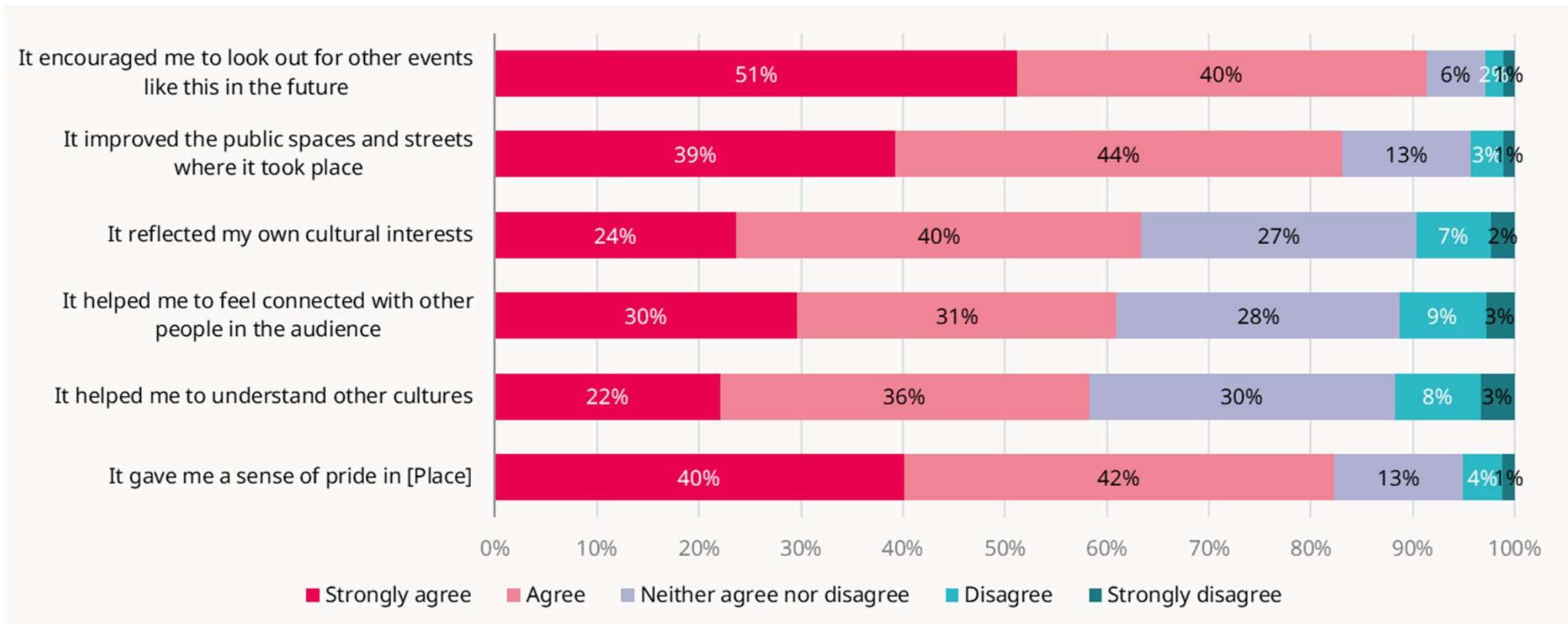
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# Global Streets 2024/25 (most recent seasons)

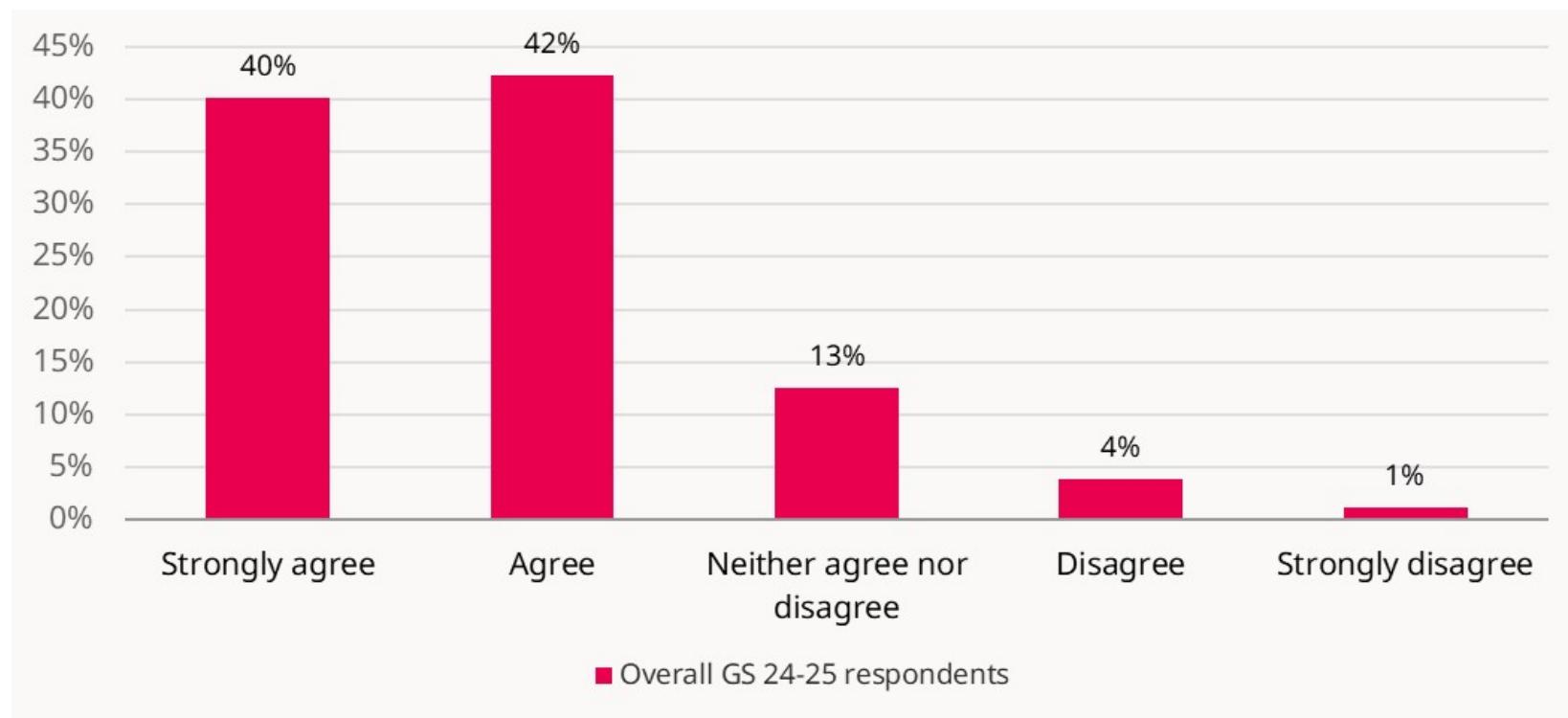


# Place making?

It gave me a sense of pride in [Place]		Overall GS 24-25 respondents
Base		1,088
<i>Margin of error</i>		3%
Strongly agree		40%
Agree		42%
Neither agree nor disagree		13%
Disagree		4%
Strongly disagree		1%

# Place making?

It gave me a sense of pride in [Place]



# GLOBAL STREETS: TRANSFORMATIONAL EXPERIENCES IN OVERLOOKED PUBLIC PLACES

Global Streets events help change the way people feel about their high streets, towns and cities by engaging in memorable moments of discovery, wonder and conviviality, revealing local spaces in a new, positive light.

## Moments of Joy

Global Streets presents international productions on high streets, parks and estates that offer unique and unforgettable experiences which live on in the memory of local families and communities. These encounters bring collective joy and offer moments of togetherness across different cultures, connecting people with each other and to the wider world.

**80%**

of audiences reported that Global Streets events gave them a renewed sense of pride in their local area



Left: Compagnie Moza's *Morphosis* (France) invited families and young children to build a continually evolving bamboo structure in Stratford Park and Barking Green, celebrating collaboration and the joy of exploration and play.

Above: Stephanie Lüning's large-scale installation *Island of Foam* (Germany) transformed Birmingham and Liverpool city centre with mountains of rainbow coloured foam, temporarily transforming these everyday spaces with vibrant colours.



I felt as though I was a part of something special like we are all working towards the greater good!

Participant, Luton

## Lighting up city centres

With year-round touring stretching into the winter months Global Streets transforms town and city centres with extraordinary light-based installations and promenade events, to deliver breathtaking, immersive experiences for local audiences.

**82%**

of audiences reported that Global Streets productions helped improve the public spaces and streets where they took place



Left: Sergey Kim's *Neighborhood* (USA) displayed glowing white garments on a laundry line in the streets of Liverpool - Turkish pants, a traditional Jewish dress, a Moroccan djellaba - representing the cultural and ethnic mix of residents in the city, connecting communities through the universal act of drying laundry.



We'd not seen the city centre so full before. I feel privileged to live in Leicester!

Audience member, Leicester

Above: Atelier Siu's *Evanescent* (Australia) took over Leicester city centre as well as neighbourhoods in Charlton and Barking and Dagenham, bringing together an awesome fusion of sculpture, light and sound to brighten darker days.

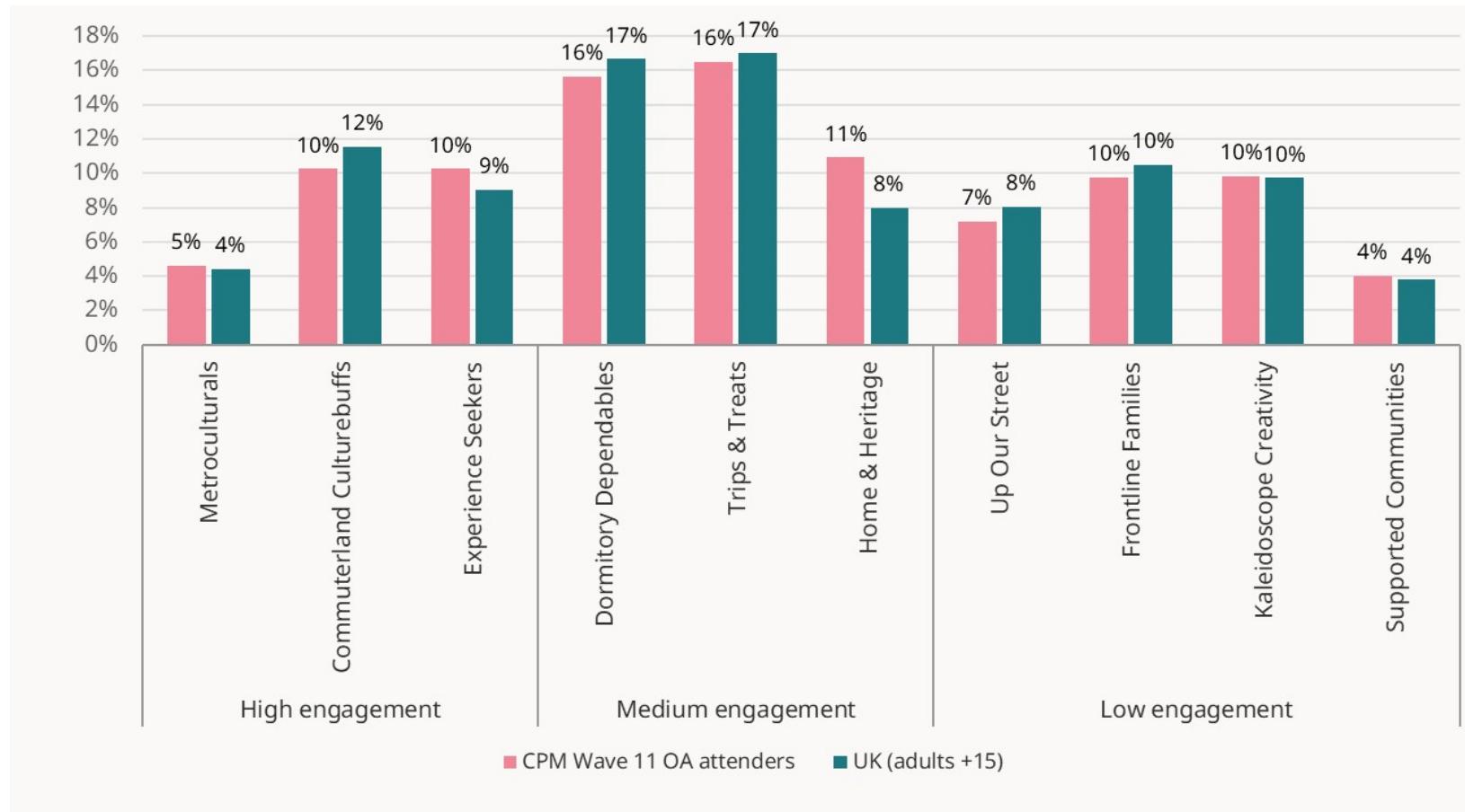
Being outdoors presents many possibilities



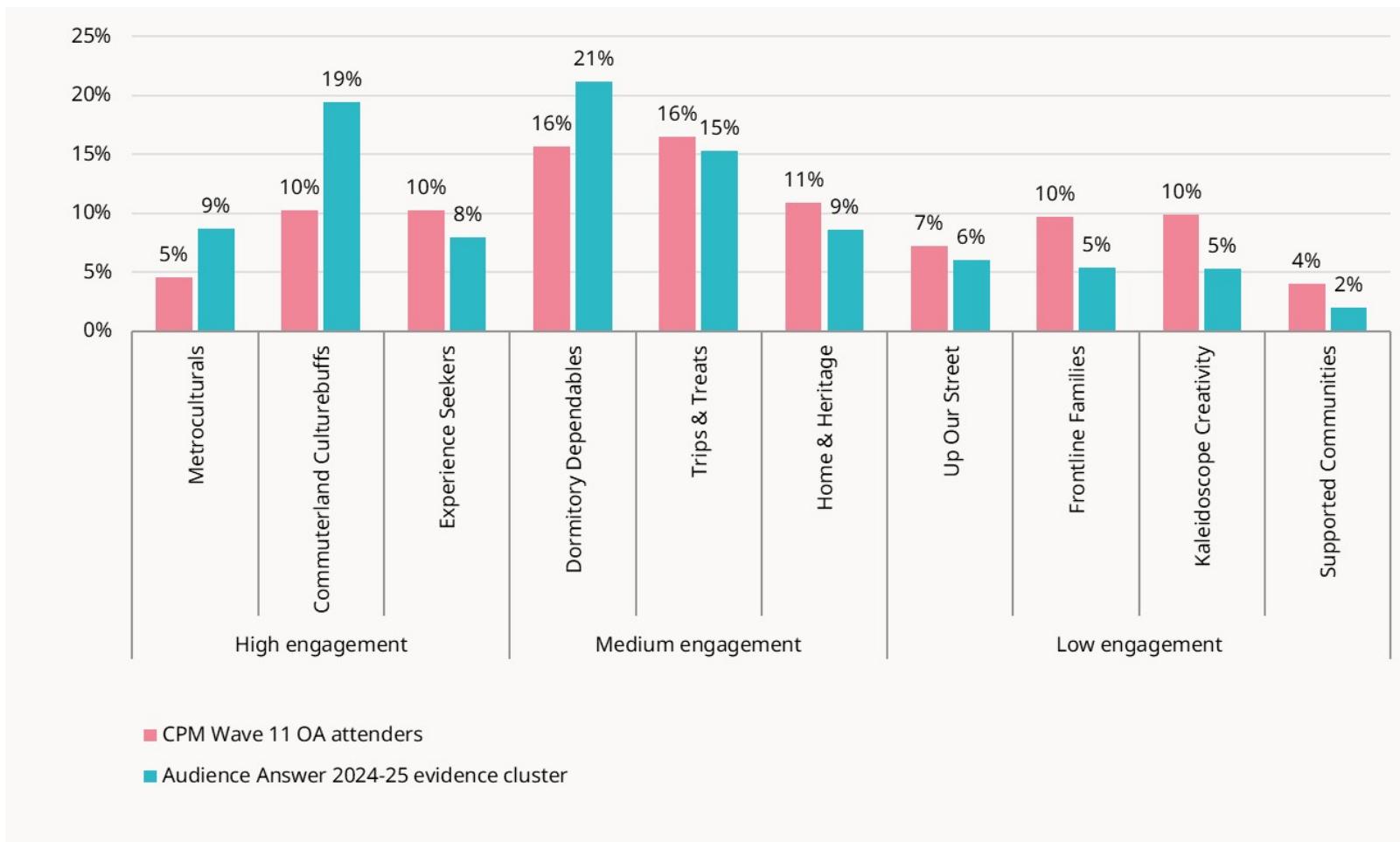
Roald Dahl Celebrations, Cardiff

# The situation now

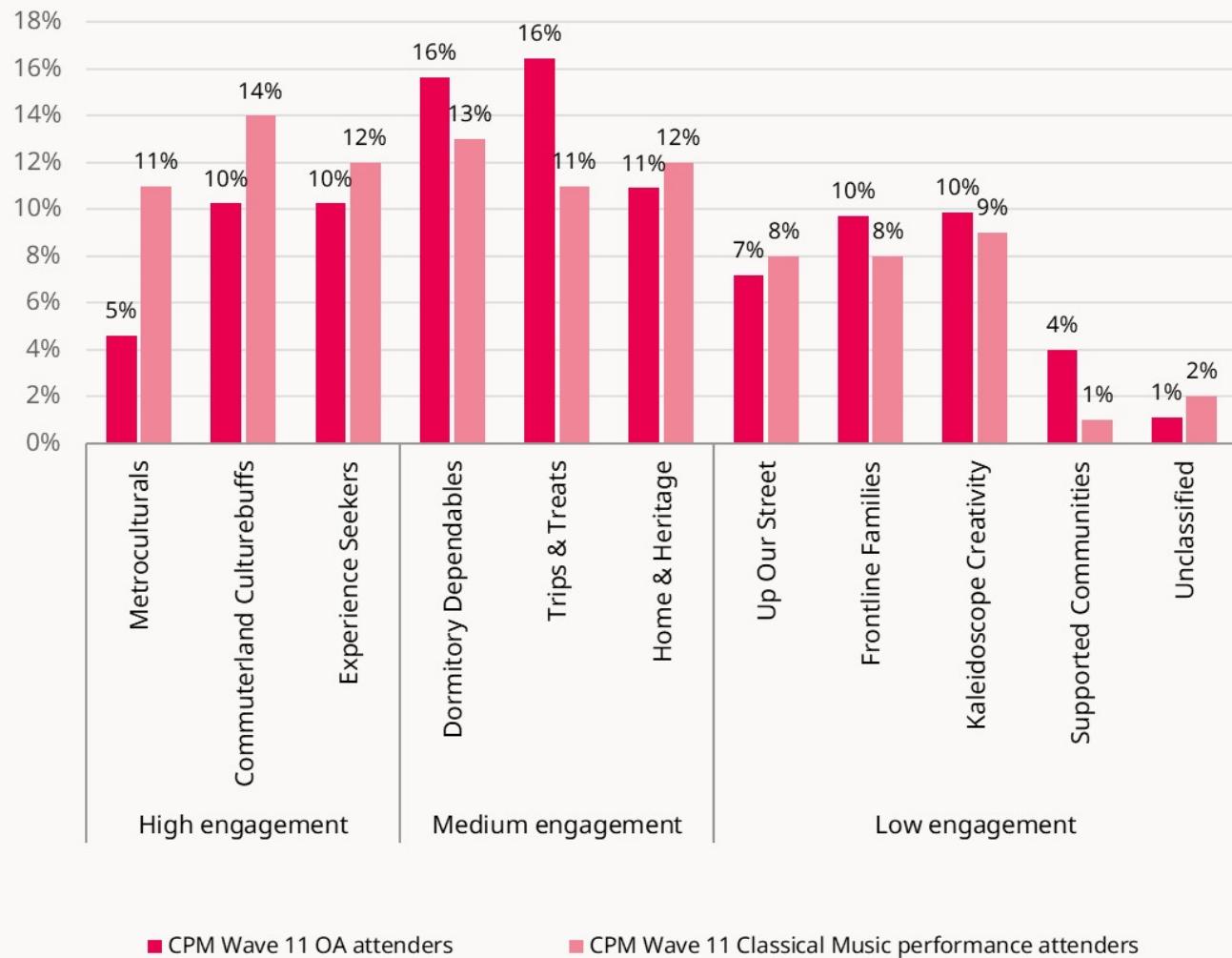
The recent CPM data (wave 11) shows continuity. Eg. Audience Spectrum



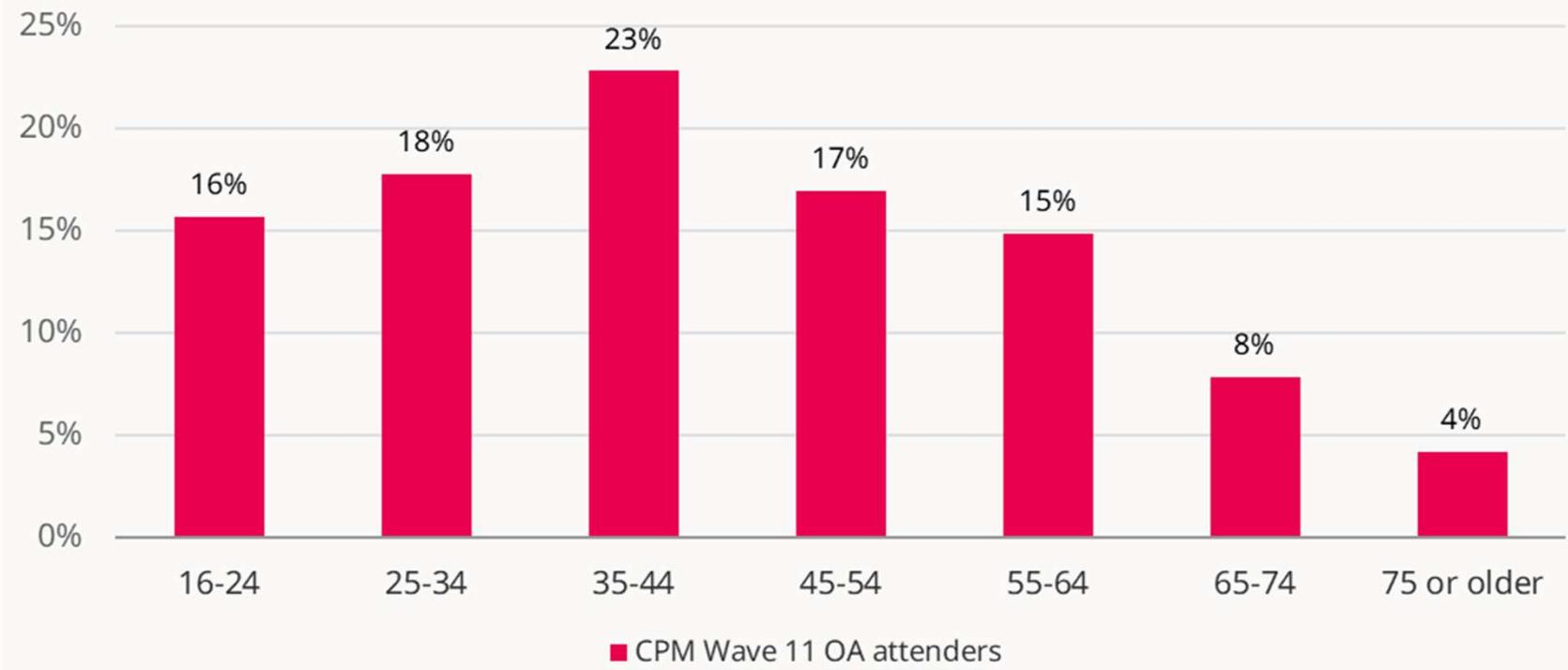
# Outdoor Arts vs Audience Answers overall

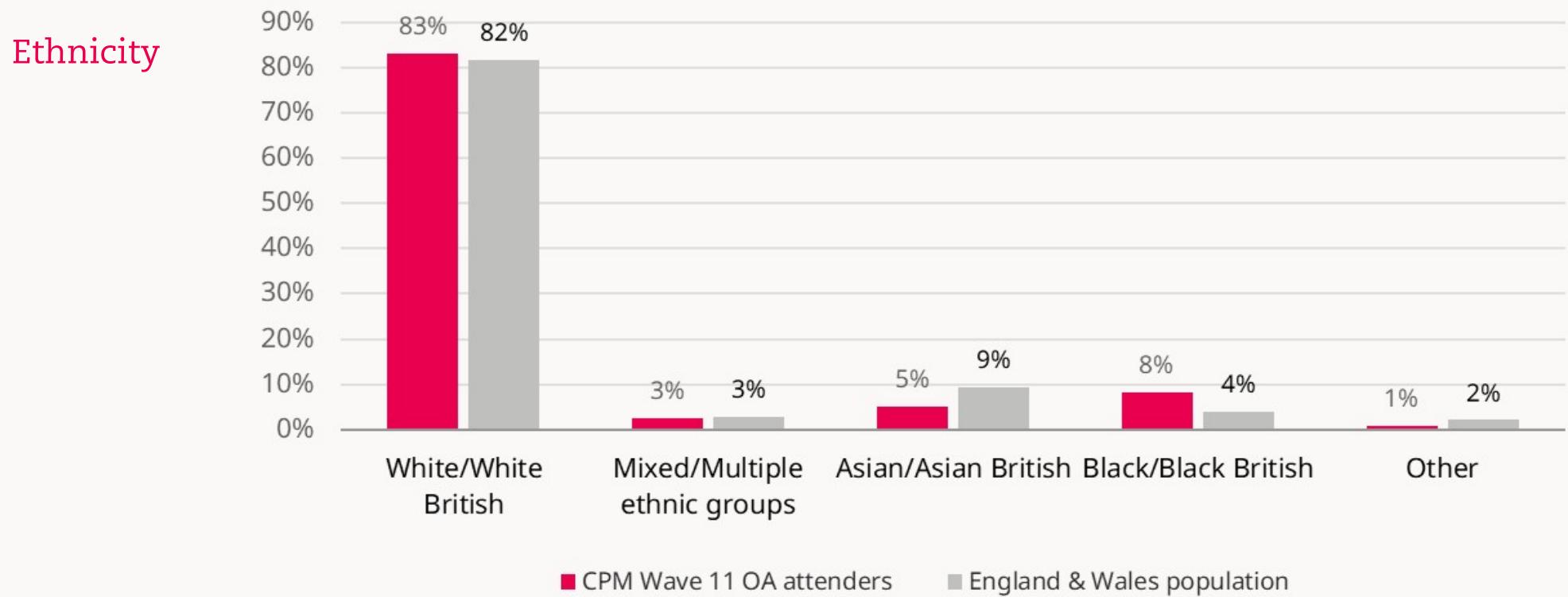


## Outdoor Arts vs Classical Music



## Age groups







Out  
door  
Arts uk

# Thank you

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