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The Impact of Covid-19 on Freelance Arts Workers in the Sheffield City Region

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The University of Sheffield

July 2021

Report from the AHRC-Funded Covid-Response Project:
Responding to and modelling the impact of Covid-19 for Sheffield's cultural ecology - a case study of impact and recovery

Led by Professor Vanessa Toulmin

The Impact of Covid-19 on Freelance Arts Workers in the Sheffield City Region

Sarah Price, Research Associate, University of Sheffield (s.price@sheffield.ac.uk)
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<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/city-region/enhancing-cultural-vibrancy/covid-research-0>

Data in this report comes from an online survey of arts, culture and heritage freelancers in South Yorkshire conducted October 2020 - March 2021 (98 responses) and follow-up interviews with 9 respondents. This represents the first of three phases of data collection, with further surveys and interviews to follow in Summer 2021.

The challenge of documenting how many arts and cultural freelancer there are in South Yorkshire is explained by the Creative Industries Policy & Evidence Centre in the following post:
<https://www.pec.ac.uk/blog/plugging-the-data-gap-freelance-and-self-employed-workers-in-the-creative-industries>

Headline findings

Freelancers' existing work

- South Yorkshire freelancers contribute to the vibrancy of arts and culture in the region, and also take their skills to other cultural events in the UK, internationally and into the digital realm.
- Respondents had multiple sources of income including regular work with arts organisations; gigs as performers or technicians; income derived from royalties, commissions, and ticket sale; and teaching activity. Only 26 respondents (28.9%) had a second job outside the arts.

Impact of Covid-19 on work availability

- Work had decreased dramatically for 71.7% of respondents as a result of projects being cancelled or indefinitely postponed with some being totally out of work since the start of lockdown. Respondents also described having empty diaries with no work booked in future.
- Reduction in work was not felt uniformly throughout the sector. Younger respondents and people of colour saw larger reductions in work. Work reduced “dramatically” for large proportions of respondents working in music and dance, especially for event crew, lighting and sound engineers.
- The biggest barrier in returning to work was the loss of momentum and visibility. Since successful projects often act as a catalyst for future work, having an empty diary is particularly worrying for freelancers, who are likely to have their career put back by not working. Lost opportunities will not automatically return, especially if investments have been lost.
- The barriers faced by respondents in returning to work were strongly influenced by their demographics, with respondents from disadvantaged backgrounds experiencing all barriers at higher rates. Caring responsibilities were a more significant barrier to returning to work for people with children under 18 at home, women, and black, Asian and ethnically diverse respondents. Young people and respondents with a diagnosed mental health condition were more likely to cite loss of momentum as a barrier, and respondents with disabilities or long-term health conditions were more concerned about loss of visibility.

- Respondents showed huge adaptability and creativity in finding new ways to work, forging new partnerships, shifting their practice and finding ways to work online. The interviews captured how freelancers had been coping by treating this as a moment to reflect and forge new directions where possible. However, many did not have the appropriate conditions or equipment for work or still maintenance, let alone development.
- Many participants had taken this time to improve their online presence. However, online work did not in any case generate the same income as the in-person work it was replacing and many pupils and participants were not interested in taking part virtually.

Impact of Covid-19 on income

- Overall, respondents made less than half what they had expected to make in 2020. Income had dropped substantially from almost all sources, including 56.9% reduction in earnings from cultural institutions, a 69.4% drop from local authorities, and 50.0% reduction from schools.
- Examining the income reported for 2019 reveals existing inequalities between respondents. For example, black, Asian and ethnically diverse respondents earned on average £6,889 less than their white counterparts in 2019 and female respondents earned £5,000 less than men.
- The extent to which these inequalities have been affected by Covid-19 is a complex question. In some instances, the pandemic appears to have levelled the field, for example with women and men having similar average turnovers for 2020. However, the gap between black, Asian and ethnically diverse and white freelancers has arguably been widened by the pandemic.
- In a separate survey, arts organisations were asked to report how many freelancers they had hired Mar-Dec 2020 and over the same period in 2020 (38 organisations). Overall, organisations hired 1,124 fewer freelancers over this period, a reduction of 68% from 2019, despite many organisations' attempt to support freelancers where financially possible
- By far the most well-accessed financial scheme was the Self-Employment Income Support Grant (SEISS), which respondents found fairly easy to apply for. Our dataset also contains respondents who have been ineligible for relief as one of many 'Excluded' citizens.
- Arts Council England grants were more complex to apply for, and freelancers in our study rarely had experience of applying for grants before. They felt they lacked the knowledge of how to put together a successful application and relied on help from friends and colleagues.
- While there were no clear demographic differences in the success rate of grant applications, the amount received through Arts Council England grants and Bounce Back Loans were strongly determined by a number of demographic factors. Under-30s, respondents with children at home, Black, Asian and Ethnically Diverse, Male, respondents with diagnosed mental health conditions, respondents with disabilities or long-term health conditions, and respondents from disadvantaged backgrounds received far smaller ACE grants.
- There was a large variation in the amount awarded through various grant schemes to different sectors and roles. Much larger ACE awards were given to visual arts (£18,833 average), music (£19,333), and drama (£15,125), compared to an average of £2,000-£3,000 for museum or heritage, dance, live art and arts for health. More significantly, composers, choreographers, directors or producers received an average ACE grant of £15,125, whereas all other roles received an average of less than £3,000.
- Over half (54.1%) have had to use savings and many were reliant on friends and family for financial support. Freelancers were getting themselves into debt by living on overdrafts, credit cards and using money set aside for tax. 40.7% were worried about covering overheads.
- Event crew, lighting or sound engineers having faced the greatest loss of income of all the professional roles included in this survey; higher proportions of this work force were using their savings (69.2%) and taking out loans (15.4%) compared to other types of roles.

- The measures used by respondents to financially survive this period varied greatly according to demographic factors. Most notably, respondents from disadvantaged backgrounds were more likely to be borrowing money and less likely to be relying on their friends and family for support. Over 50s appear to be fairly self-reliant, under 30s are mostly supported by their family, meaning that it is those in their 30s and 40s who are at greatest risk of getting into debt

Impact of Covid-19 on health and wellbeing

- 76.5% of the freelancers who completed this survey reported that their mental wellbeing was worse since the start of lockdown. Male respondents, under-30s, and respondents with a diagnosed mental health condition experienced even greater levels of distress.
- Personal finances, unemployment and the ability to cover overheads were causing respondents to lose sleep. Worry over personal finances and unemployment was much higher amongst these respondents than the general population.
- South Yorkshire freelancers also rated lower levels of wellbeing and happiness and higher levels of anxiety than the general public. Their mental health was being impacted by loss of work, isolation, and uncertainty about the future, with restrictions leading to a sense of lost identity, skills and motivation amongst freelancers.
- Event crew, lighting and sound engineers reported greater worsening of mental health than respondents in other roles, with 53.8% saying that their mental health was “much worse” compared to 25.5% on average. They are reported far worse scores across the four wellbeing factors.

Looking forwards

- 29.3% of respondents felt that this period would have a lasting negative impact on their ways of working. Respondents were concerned that the pandemic would cause the sector to shrink and 50.5% of respondents were considering or already applying for other work outside the arts sector. Respondents questioned whether they would be able to be financially sufficient in their arts work, particularly young and early career artists.
- The most important skills needed by freelancers to thrive in a post-pandemic world were both general digital literacy and specific skills in developing engaging online work. The expansion of digital arts and culture was thought likely to change the sector permanently, and many hoped that institutions would commit to building a more equitable sector post-pandemic.
- Respondents wanted to see grants that could be used for a variety of purposes, prioritising paid opportunities to make new work and being able to pursue new artistic and business directions. Ultimately, they stressed that artists should be allowed to access it in whatever way was useful to them.
- Participants felt extremely undervalued and unsupported, especially by the government, with a lack of recognition of freelancers’ self-reliance, income generation and contribution to society. The rhetoric around ‘viable’ careers and ‘retraining’ had damaged their belief that they could forge a career in the creative sector, as well as seriously damaging freelancers’ mental health and sense of identity.
- Some were, however, optimistic that audiences and participants would not forget the vital role that arts and culture played in their lockdown lives. Some were hopeful that indefinitely postponed projects would be revised and that a relaxation in restrictions would cause a surge in demand for arts events.

Recommendations

A specific plan must be established to enable arts and culture to 'bounce back', with distinct attention on building up freelancer sector, and developing a new approach towards their role and contribution in the sector.

The impact of the pandemic on career progression, mental health and resilience for freelancers will be both long-lasting and unequal. This report highlights the many ways in which the pandemic has produced or exacerbated inequalities in the freelance arts workforce. Groups which have suffered more include: freelancers from disadvantaged backgrounds who are facing many barriers in returning to work even when opportunities are available; people of colour who were earning far less than white freelancers before the pandemic and have witnessed this income inequality grow larger; young freelancers who have been more severely affected by the loss of momentum at such a crucial time in their career; and event crew, lighting and sound engineers, who have lost the greatest amount of work and income and are reporting incredibly poor mental health.

Freelancers need additional financial support to ensure they are able to survive the pandemic:

1. Many arts freelancers have been excluded from SEISS; the criteria for SEISS need to be revisited to provide support to many of those excluded as a result of setting up their work through PAYE contracts, and to provide support for early career freelancers who do not yet have 3 years of tax returns.
2. Sector-specific extensions of the Job Retention Scheme and SEISS must be made available to industries worst affected by the pandemic, including arts and culture. Even after restrictions are fully lifted, it will take time for the sector to rebuild, for there to be pre-pandemic levels of work available, and for audiences to have the confidence to return in large numbers. The arts and culture sector and its workers will need subsidising until pre-pandemic levels of activity have been restored in order to avoid redundancies and unemployment.
3. The Cultural Recovery Fund should be expanded to provide funding schemes directly aimed at freelancers and arts professionals. This additional CRF funding should be designed to help freelancers make arts and cultural work again, in order to help them restart their careers after such a long break and many lost opportunities. Our data shows that event crew, lighting and sound engineers have been particularly badly affected and should be a priority in future financial support schemes.

Making applications for funding relies on previous knowledge and experience: we have identified the need for a Culture Officer to fulfil a roving brief of supporting and advising small and independent organisations. This is necessary to achieve a more equitable distribution of government funding for the arts by supporting first-time applicants to access Arts Council England funding as well as signposting to other financial opportunities.

In addition, there is a role for larger National Portfolio Organisations to support freelancers in networking, skill development and by providing paid opportunities to create work. In addition, funded networks for freelancers (like the Sheffield Creative Guild) should be a priority for Arts Council England in the next round of funding to support freelancers to rebuild their portfolios after the pandemic and to provide mutual aid and support in light of a looming mental health crisis.

There needs to be recognition in policy terms (at all scales: local, regional, and national) of the role of freelancers in arts & culture. Campaigns around arts and cultural workers "reskilling" or "retraining" into new fields must be stopped in their entirety, as they are having a devastating impact on freelancers' mental health and are likely to put off future workers from this sector.

Those working to support businesses in towns and cities must be more aware of the arts and cultural sector, recognise the economic contribution arts activity makes to their region, and recognise arts and cultural freelancers as entrepreneurs and small business owners. Business support schemes, whether financial, networking, or skill sharing, must be inclusive to arts and cultural workers and designed to be accessible to their ways of working.

While the acceleration of digital arts and culture has provided a wealth of new opportunities for creating and engaging with cultural work, it has also deepened inequalities as part of the digital divide. Those with insufficient internet speed, a lack of space to do work at home (especially for dance professionals), and inadequate equipment have suffered particularly badly in not being able to produce work online during the pandemic. The rollout of superfast broadband must be a priority in an increasingly digital workplace.

Furthermore, while local councils and the Arts Council England should consider grants and loan schemes which enable arts workers to purchase the equipment they need for their business to be successful, a potentially more efficient approach would be to establish cultural digital hubs in every core city. These should provide equipment, software and internet access for the use of arts and cultural professionals. Not only would this reduce inequalities in the arts by providing access to digital equipment to those who cannot afford it, it would also create a space for networking and mutual aid.

Methods

Responses were collected to an **online survey** between 27th October 2020 – 18th March 2021. Owing to the length of time the survey was open, there were some changes in lockdown restrictions during this time. However, restrictions which prohibited in-person arts events were largely consistent during this period, as all events were banned from the announcement of the second lockdown on 31st October 2020 (coming into effect on 5th November 2021). Restrictions remained in effect beyond the end of the survey.

- 98 completed responses
- Age: 20-74, average age 43 with a fairly even spread of responses in ages 25-59.
- Gender: 46.9% female, 44.9% male.
- Ethnicity: 78.6% White British, 9.2% White Other Background, 4.1% Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups, 3.1% Asian Indian.
- Disability: 10.3% have a disability, 15.5% have a long-term health condition.
- Disadvantaged background: 20.6% of respondents felt that they were from a disadvantaged background.
- Most respondents were based in Sheffield (75.3%) followed by Doncaster (8.2%), Rotherham (6.2%), Barnsley (3.1%) and 7.2% lived outside South Yorkshire but worked in the region.

A key aim of this project was to uncover inequalities in the ways in which freelancers in the arts and cultural sector have been impacted by Covid-19. As part of the data analysis, we have compared the data between various demographic factors and based on the type of work undertaken by respondents. The tables below provide information on the ways in which the dataset has been split for comparison and the rationale behind including and excluding certain responses.

Age	Included	Excluded
Q42. Which of the following age groups do you fall into?	Under 30s (12) Over 30s (86)	None excluded from analysis
Children under 18 at home	Included	Excluded
Q43. Number of children under 18 in your household: [open text]	One or more children under 18 in their household (29) No children under 18 in their household (69)	None excluded from analysis
Ethnicity	Included	Excluded
Q44. How would you describe your ethnicity?	Black, Asian and ethnically diverse (8) White (87)	Three responses excluded from analysis for selecting answering "prefer not to say" or describing their ethnicity in a way that was not represented in this list.
Gender	Included	Excluded
Q45. How would you describe your gender? [open text]	Female (46) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wrote "female" "F" or "woman" Male (44) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wrote "male" "M" or "man" 	Eight responses excluded from analysis: 3 as a result of not answering the question. A further five identified their gender in a way that was not male or female, but this group size was too small for meaningful comparison.
Mental health	Included	Excluded
Q34. Do you have a diagnosed mental health condition?	Diagnosed mental health condition (30) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selected "depression", "anxiety" or described a mental health condition in "other" No diagnosed mental health condition (67) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selected "no diagnosed mental health condition" 	One response excluded from analysis for selecting "prefer not to say".
Disability or long-term health condition	Included	Excluded
Q46. Do you identify as a D/deaf or disabled person, or have a long-term health condition?	Disability or long-term health condition (18) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selected "I am D/deaf", "I have a disability", "I have a long-term health condition" No disability or long-term health condition (74) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selected "None of the above" 	Six responses excluded from analysis for selecting "prefer not to say" or not answering the question.

Disadvantaged background	Included	Excluded
Q47. Do you consider yourself to be from a disadvantaged background?	Disadvantaged background (20) Not from a disadvantaged background (71)	Seven responses excluded from analysis for selecting "prefer not to say".
Cultural sector	Included	Excluded
Q6. Which of the following cultural sectors do you primarily work in? Please tick all that apply	Museum or heritage (14) Visual art (35) Music (45) Dance (11) Drama (18) Live Art (15) Film or digital arts (23) Literature and writing (13) Arts for health (21) Community arts (36)	The following sectors were not analysed in this way as the group size was too small for meaningful comparison: Craft (4) Circus (4) Other [open text responses] (7)
Type of work	Included	Excluded
Q7. How would you describe the kinds of work you do in the arts, culture and heritage sectors? Please tick all that apply.	Performer musician actor or dancer (43) Artist designer photographer or film-maker (38) Composer choreographer director or producer (17) Writer editor copywriter or critic (17) Event organiser or promoter (20) Event crew lighting or sound engineer (13) Company director accountant finance or HR (9) Marketer communications or fundraiser (12) Teacher educator or tutor (34) Community arts facilitator or arts for health practitioner (26)	The following sectors were not analysed in this way as the group size was too small for meaningful comparison: Curator archivist or librarian (4) Conservator art handler or art technician (0) Front of house or box office (2) Set designer/decorator costumer designer/maker hair or makeup (2) Manager agent or publicist (3)

In order to understand the experiences of freelancers through the Covid-19 pandemic more fully, we have also conducted **9 semi-structured interviews with selected respondents**.

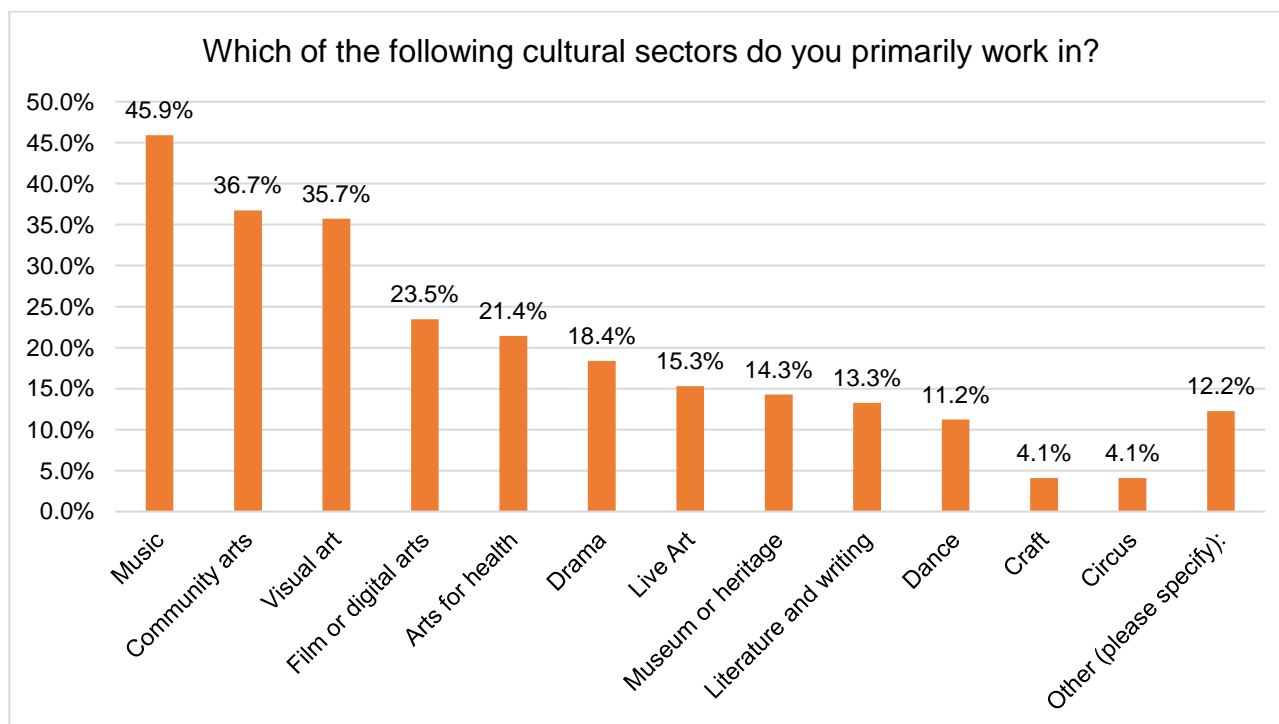
Respondents representing a range of art forms, whose work has been variously impacted by Covid restrictions were invited to interview.

Phase 2 of this study is now underway **with the same respondents completing a second online survey** investigating further: their adaptations to digital work and the likelihood of it continuing once restrictions are removed; the likelihood of them leaving the arts sector; an update on their wellbeing and Covid-related stressors; and whether the relaxations of restrictions in May are opening up new avenues for work. Further semi-structured interviews will be conducted following this survey. A final third phase will take place in July 2021 to track the experience of these 98 freelancers as restrictions ease. £100 shopping vouchers have been offered to respondents to ensure their commitment to the study and will be distributed following completion of the final survey.

Freelancers' existing work

Freelancers who responded to the survey were working in Sheffield (85.7%), Doncaster (25.5%), Rotherham (20.4%), Barnsley (16.3%), Elsewhere in the UK (59.2%), Internationally (23.5%), Online (9.2%). South Yorkshire freelancers not only **contribute to the vibrancy of arts and culture in the region**, but also **take their talent and skills to other cultural events in the UK**, internationally and into the digital realm.

Respondents were asked to indicate the artforms in which they worked, and were able to select all that applied. Respondents were mostly working in Music (45.9%), Community arts (36.7%), and Visual art (35.7%), with representation from all areas of the arts sector and many respondents working in multiple art forms. Women and respondents with children under 18 at home comprised the majority of community arts practitioners and were more likely to be involved in teaching.



People who completed the survey tended to be working as **creative practitioners**, with 43.9% describing themselves as performers, musicians, actors or dancers, and 38.8% as artists, designers, photographers, or film-makers. There was less representation from curators, art

technicians, front of house staff and publicists, but a range of types of jobs across the arts sector were represented.

How would you describe the kinds of work you do in the arts, culture and heritage sectors?	%	No.
Performer, musician, actor, or dancer	43.9%	43
Artist, designer, photographer, or film-maker	38.8%	38
Teacher, educator or tutor	34.7%	34
Community arts facilitator or arts for health practitioner	26.5%	26
Event organiser or promoter	20.4%	20
Composer, choreographer, director or producer	17.3%	17
Writer, editor, copywriter, or critic	17.3%	17
Event crew, lighting or sound engineer	13.3%	13
Marketer, communications, or fundraiser	12.2%	12
Company director, accountant, finance or HR	9.2%	9
Learning and participation coordinator	5.1%	5
Curator, archivist, or librarian	4.1%	4
Manager, agent, or publicist	3.1%	3
Front of house or box office	2.0%	2
Set designer/decorator, costumer designer/maker, hair or makeup	2.0%	2
Conservator, art handler, or art technician	0.0%	0
	TOTAL	98

Respondents were asked to describe their regular sources of income, and most had multiple jobs. These included **regular work with arts organisations** for example as facilitators, **gig work** as performers or technicians, income derived from royalties, commissions, revenue and ticket sales of their own organised events, and around a third also did **some kind of teaching activity**.

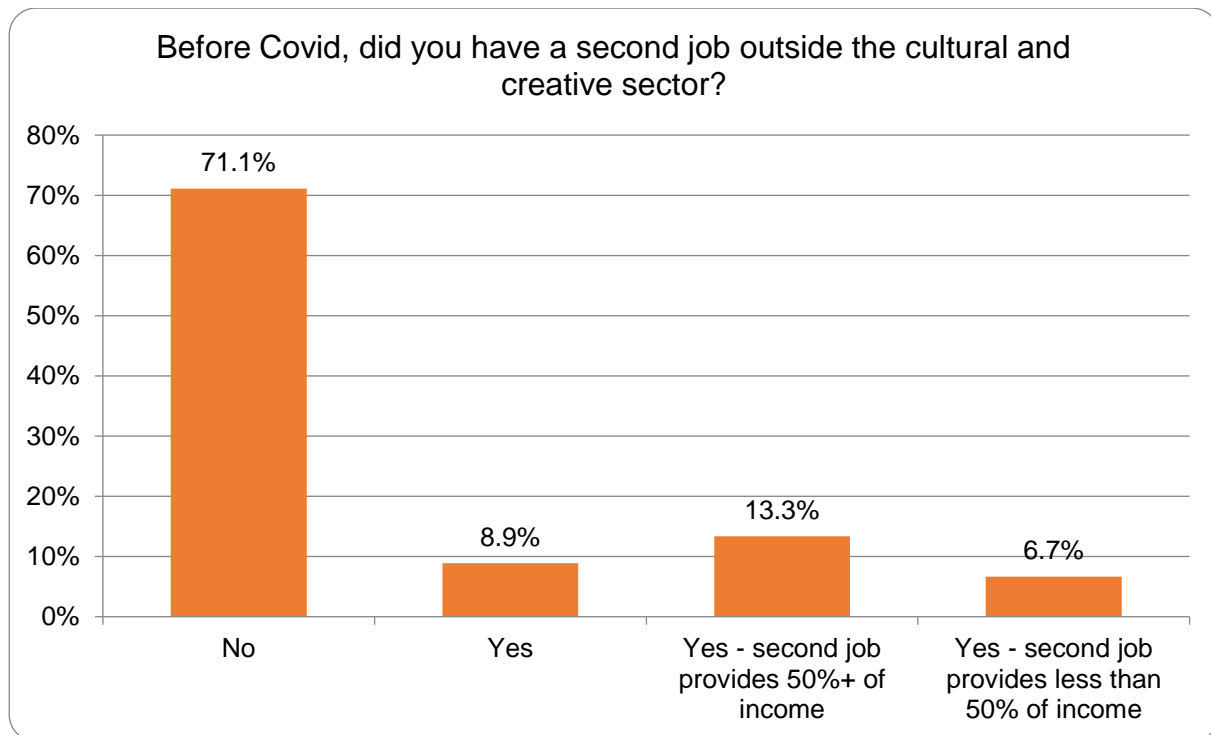
Freelancers and casual arts workers were the target audience for this survey, and 91.8% of respondents were self-employed. Many had **multiple sources of income**, with 21.6% having part-time or full-time contract work, 13.4% being on a casual or zero-hours contract, and 12.2% undertaking voluntary or unpaid work. 8.2% were directors of a limited company, 6.1% were students, 5.2% were contractors or sub-contractors, and 3.1% were undertaking agency work.

Respondents who described themselves as being from a disadvantaged background were more likely have part-time or full-time contracted work (40.0%) and as a result, were more likely to be furloughed. Parents with children under 18 at home were slightly less likely to be freelancers, and slightly more likely to be directors of a limited company, or on part-time or full-time contracts. Again, this made them more likely to be furloughed.

Museum and heritage workers had much greater rates of casual/zero hours contracts (35.7%) (and therefore more likely to be furloughed) and respondents who were contractors or subcontractors (21.4%). Event crew lighting or sound engineers also worked more as contractors or subcontractors (16.7%), and therefore very few were furloughed.

We asked respondents **whether or not they had a second job outside the arts sector**. Following a suggestion from Arts Council England, we amended the question while the survey was still live to ask what proportion of respondents' income this was generated from this second job.

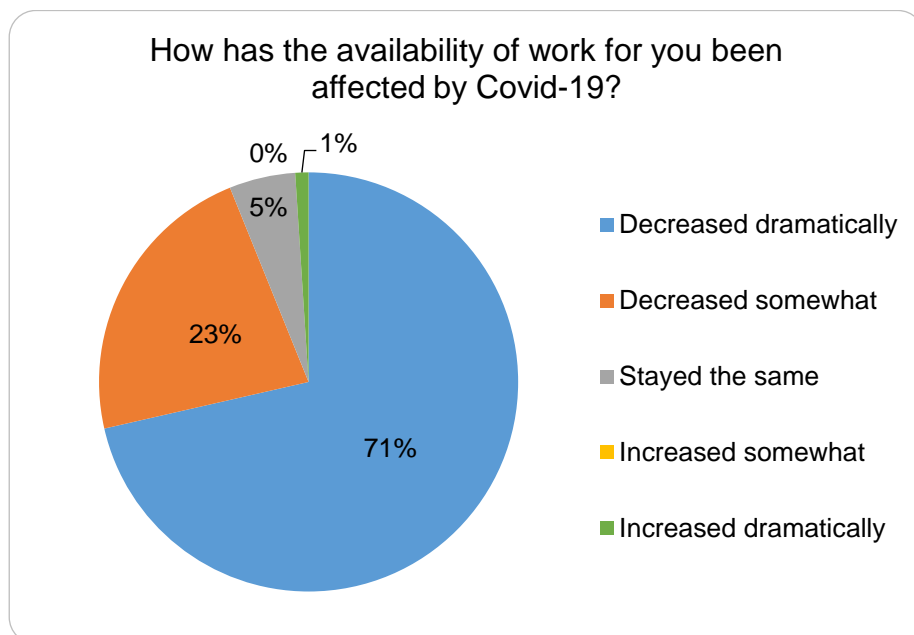
This was an open-text question, but responses approximately break down as follows. In total, **only 26 respondents (28.9%) had a second job outside the arts.**



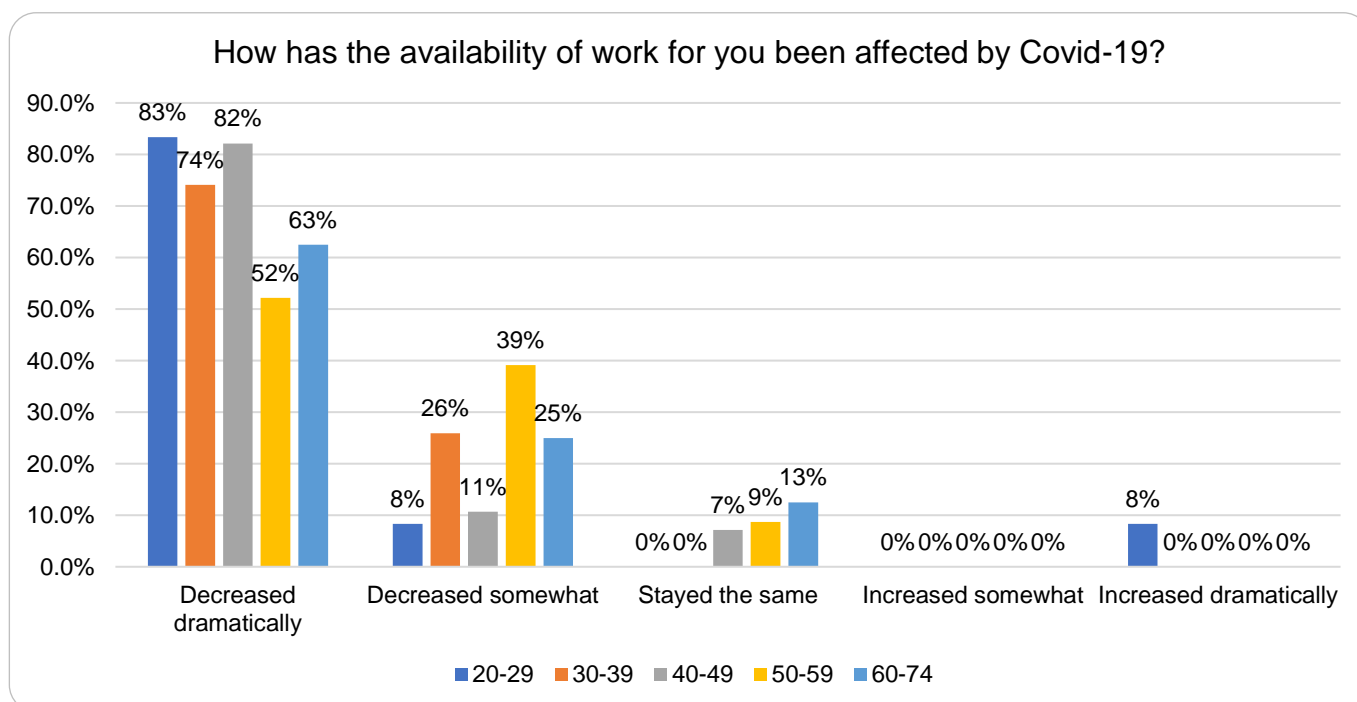
Respondents were more likely to have a second job outside the arts if they: had a diagnosed mental health condition (37.0%), were from a disadvantaged background (35.3%), or were female (33.3%). Respondents were also more likely to have a second job if they were working in the following sectors: Literature and writing (50.0%), Live Art (35.7%), Visual Art (35.7%), and Museum or Heritage (33.3%), and less likely to have a second job if they were working in Arts for Health and Community Arts. Respondents in the following roles were also more likely to have a second job: Company director, accountant, finance or HR (50.0%), Marketer, communications, or fundraiser (45.5%), whereas Event crew lighting or sound engineer and Community arts facilitator or arts for health practitioner were far less likely to have a second job (8.3% and 9.1% respectively had a second job).

Impact of Covid-19 on work availability

Work had decreased dramatically for most respondents (71.7%) and only one respondent had seen an increase in work (their planned projects were not cancelled, and two new projects came about during the pandemic).



Young people appear to have seen larger reductions in work, with 83.3% of under-30s experiencing a “dramatic” decrease in work compared to 69.8% of over 30s. By looking at the change of work availability by age group, we can see that older respondents saw less severe reductions in work, with some even staying the same as before the pandemic.



Work also decreased more for black, Asian and ethnically diverse than white participants. 87.5% of respondents of colour seeing work decrease dramatically compared to 71.3% of white respondents.

Reduction in work was not felt uniformly throughout the sector, with certain art forms and roles being hit harder. Work reduced “dramatically” for large proportions of respondents working in music (84.4%) and dance (81.8%) in particular. Certain roles were more seriously affected, with 100% of event crew, lighting or sound engineers experiencing a dramatic decrease in work, followed by performers, musicians, actors or dancers (83.7%).

The decrease in work primarily came about through **projects and events being cancelled** or indefinitely postponed as a result of the pandemic, and a lack of new work being booked for the future.

Are any of the following statements true for your work?	%	No.
Projects and events that I was due to work on were cancelled	91.8%	90
New offers of work have reduced / stopped entirely	67.3%	66
My hours were reduced for contracted/regular work	21.4%	21
I was on furlough as an employee or director	10.2%	10
The amount of work has stayed the same, but it has been harder to generate income	10.2%	10
My contract was not renewed for fixed term work	7.1%	7
I was made redundant from one or more of my jobs	3.1%	3
	TOTAL	98

We asked respondents to describe in their own words how the availability of work had changed. Respondents described how gigs, tours, shows, exhibitions and workshops had been cancelled during the first lockdown, and that this had in no way returned to normal as arts and cultural events were allowed to restart. Some respondents had been totally **out of work since the start of lockdown**.

All the shows I had already booked in at local venues, including one next month, have been cancelled. ... I have not worked a show since February 26th. (Survey Respondent 02)

I went from a fully booked summer, April - Sept to zero within 10 days. (Survey Respondent 40)

The tour I was on in March got cut short and I've not had a day of normal work since. (Survey Respondent 41)

My industry shut down early August and I was forced to be without any income for six months. (Survey Respondent 64)

Most respondents had a portfolio of different work engagements and described how **different parts of the sector had responded to the pandemic and subsequent impacts on the availability of work**.

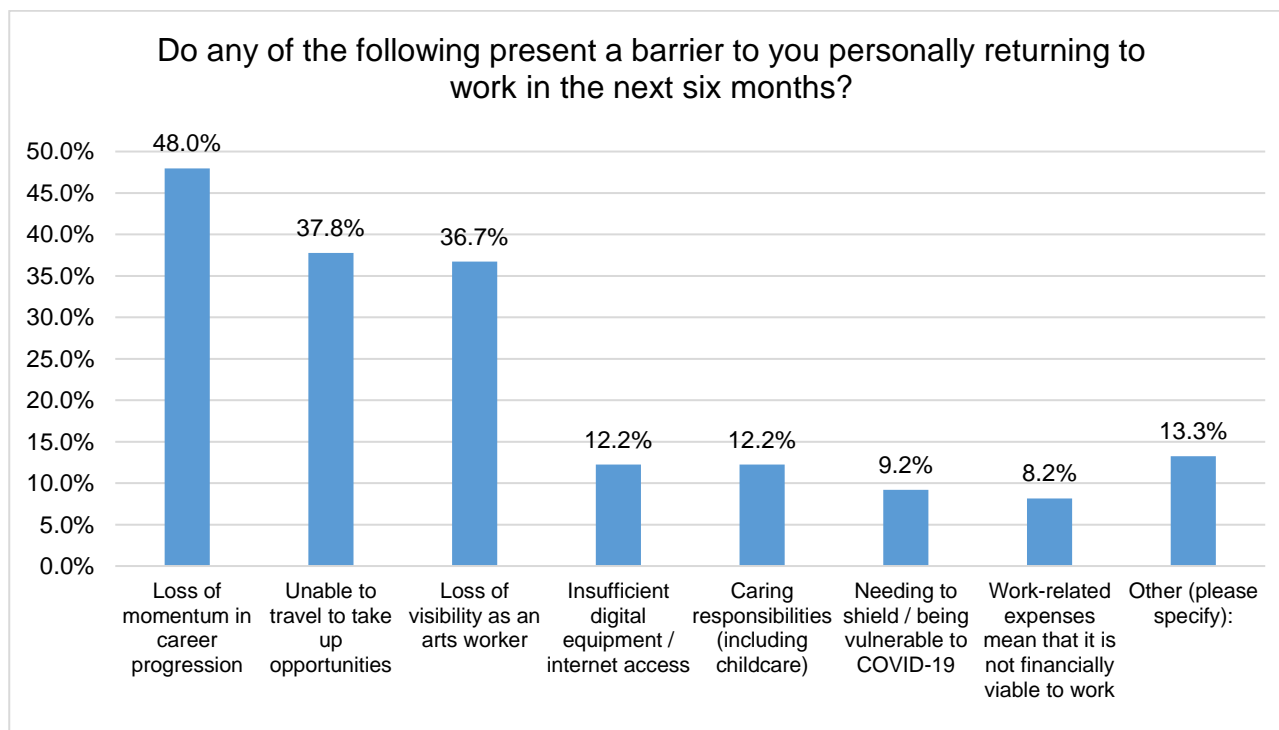
- Schools were concentrating on core subjects and were in some cases not confident in having peripatetic music teaching or arts facilitators conducting workshops (NB responses are from winter 2020/1, and this situation may have changed for summer 2021).
- Community groups– whether happening in person or online – were a lifeline for some but others were not able to go ahead due to participants not being comfortable, or because their usual venues were out of action.
- Similarly, private teaching was able to go ahead online, but with mixed results – some students dropping out, some tutors not happy with moving online.

- While one respondent spoke of getting large amounts of work after devising online content, many commented that online work came nowhere near replacing the number of in-person bookings and did not generate the same level of income.
- Advertised jobs and commissions were competitive and respondents felt very little hope of securing a contract amongst a “tsunami” of applications.

Not only had events and contracts been cancelled during lockdown - respondents also described having an **empty diary** with no work booked in for the future. The uncertainty of the future of Covid restrictions meant that bookings had been **indefinitely postponed** and there was no confidence in booking in-person events in the future. Interviewees described how the cessation of arts events was not simply a pause in their career as some opportunities were lost forever:

As soon as Covid came I lost my [...] work, my live income stream and yeah, all the hopes and dreams of going off to the States to do that, and – sorry - the idea of it just being on pause is not realistic. It's not that we could pick this up this May because I'm next to bankrupt. So any monies that I had that were going to not just fly me over to the States to do the recording, but the recording fees, the contracts, it's gone, I mean I'm just next to bankrupt so it's not happening. (Interview 03)

While some respondents faced tangible barriers to returning to work owing to restrictions on travel (37.8%), caring responsibilities (12.2%), digital exclusion (12.2%) or needing to shield (9.2%), by far the **biggest barriers that respondents faced was around a loss of momentum and visibility** in their careers. Since successful bookings/projects often act as a catalyst for future work, having an empty diary is particularly worrying for freelancers, who are likely to have their career progression put back a number of years by their period of not working. In addition to this is the danger that organisations and businesses may be forced to close or reduce their output, leading to less work available for freelancers.



The barriers faced by respondents in returning to work were strongly influenced by their demographic characteristics.

- Women faced greater barriers around insufficient digital access (17.4% compared to 7.0% for men) and caring responsibilities (19.6% compared to 4.7% for men).

- Black, Asian and ethnically diverse respondents faced greater barriers around insufficient digital access (25.0% compared to 11.6% for white respondents) and caring responsibilities (37.5% compared 10.5% for white respondents).
- Unsurprisingly, respondents who had children under 18 at home made up the majority of people who were facing barriers around caring responsibilities.
- People with a diagnosed mental health condition were more likely to cite loss of momentum as a barrier, and respondents with disabilities or long-term health conditions were more concerned about loss of visibility
- Under-30s felt loss of momentum much more keenly, with 66.7% of under-30s citing this as a barrier compared to 45.9% of over 30s. However, digital equipment and caring responsibilities were not significant issues for young respondents.
- Respondents over 60 years old were more likely to need to shield as a result of being vulnerable to Covid-19.
- Performers, musicians, actors or dancers and composers, choreographers, directors or producers cited insufficient digital equipment or internet connection as a barrier at much higher rates (23.3% and 23.5% respectively).
- Dance professionals cited being unable to travel as a much more important barrier than other respondents (72.7% cited it as a barrier).

Respondents from disadvantaged backgrounds experienced all barriers at a higher rate, with insufficient digital equipment, needing to shield, loss of visibility, and being unable to travel presenting much greater barriers to returning to work compared to respondents who were not from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Do any of the following present a barrier to you personally returning to work in the next six months?	From a disadvantaged background	Not from a disadvantaged background
Loss of momentum in career progression	55.0%	47.1%
Unable to travel to take up opportunities	50.0%	32.9%
Loss of visibility as an arts worker	50.0%	31.4%
Insufficient digital equipment / internet access	30.0%	8.6%
Needing to shield / being vulnerable to COVID-19	25.0%	4.3%
Caring responsibilities (including childcare)	20.0%	10.0%
Work-related expenses mean that it is not financially viable to work	15.0%	4.3%

Respondents showed huge **adaptability and creativity in finding new ways to work** through the pandemic, forging new partnerships, shifting their practice and finding ways to make performance, development and teaching work online.

Pilot of a new on-line/real world model to create new performance work under these very different conditions. Currently creating a full project and applying for funding to roll it out and also employ some other artists. (Survey Respondent 52)

I've developed new skills and worked alongside others to think about innovative ways of producing work. It's been exciting to stretch myself, collaborate with artists I might not have worked with before and create work of a high standard. (Survey Respondent 53)

The more in-depth interviews captured how freelancers had coped with this period by **treating it as a moment to reflect**, refresh their practice and forge new directions.

It was the absence of all those other deadlines and stuff and like, “How do we respond to this situation?” that made us work in that direction. And, also, thinking about our responsibilities as artists to actually do something meaningful that people can engage in that isn’t just streaming. (Interview 01)

However, the optimism of the above comments should be treated with caution, as success was mixed with new adaptations, and many respondents were **downbeat and lacking in hope** that work would return in the near future. Many participants had taken this time to improve their online presence and stay in touch with audiences via social media, however there were concerns that ultimately it was hard to cut through the noise. Frustrations of working from home and the lack of in-person social connection were common, as was disappointment that online work did not ever seem to generate the same income as the in-person gigs it was replacing.

I have struggled to [work online] to be honest, I am not tech savvy and don't enjoy consuming or delivering content through a screen. (Survey Respondent 10)

[I] am also delivering online zoom creative community sessions from home and from studios. This has meant changing what we do and how we deliver it significantly - musical expectations of a session need to be managed - technically and emotionally. (Survey Respondent 15)

Successfully moved all activities online but had reduced ticket prices so income has declined. (Survey Respondent 28)

I think one of the problems with us is that many of us go into [performance] because we don't like looking at computers. I think everything online and spending a lot of time online it's been so hard to adapt to. (Interview 02)

The interviews provided additional insight into the challenges of adapting to delivering content online. Some indicated that their **pupils and participants were not interested in taking part virtually**, whether because they lacked the space, the technological expertise, the equipment or stable internet connection, or simply were not interested in spending yet more time staring at a screen.

I started to teach some of my community dance classes online, there's less uptake there because it's quite a disadvantaged social-economic section of Rotherham so not a lot of people have access to... you know, no strong internet connections or the money to keep supporting themselves as most of them are on furlough. I do manage to take a lot of stuff online, but obviously school workshops and tutoring just fell immediately, and a lot of people just don't want to do online tutoring or hate being online. They've had to take their whole work life online. (Interview 06)

Some [participants] haven't joined the Zoom because they can't bear it, they can't. A lot of people come for that social aspect, you see; they want interaction with others. They'll go to work and then this is their chill time and mixing with other people, that's not work-related, nothing to do with their families, they don't have to worry about the kids for an hour, it's their escape. But when you're doing it at home on your laptop and your kid's going “Are you making tea?” and you're like, “Just a minute, I'm doing my lesson”, then someone knocks at the door... you know.” (Interview 09)

It is also worth noting that **different types of art forms and activities were more or less easily translated to an online activity**. Dance has presented particular problems, whereas some craft activities have been more easily adopted.

I attend an online fitness class, and they work fab, in my opinion, because it's just copy and follow [...] [but] it's more detailed with dance: choreography's more complex. I had to take the choreography down, keep it more simple, easier to follow. (Interview 09)

After two weeks into lockdown I decided to use the free Zoom and get [participants] together [...] We did a bit of making with cereal packets and stuff like that, and just so they could see each other and have a little chat see how everybody was and stuff like that. [...] I started doing very small, making from stuff they had at home, because no one had any tools or materials, and we just started making stuff out of paper and magazines and cereal packets, anything we could find. That went quite well [...] so it developed, it happened on its own.

Impact of Covid-19 on income

Income had plummeted in 2020 for most respondents. Overall, respondents made **less than half** what they made in 2019 and what they had expected to make in 2020. Freelancers without a second job and therefore solely reliant on their income from creative work were even harder hit, losing over 60% of their anticipated income.

*All data in this table excludes two outliers of over £200k.

	Turnover for 2019	Projected turnover for 2020 before Covid-19	Revised expected turnover for 2020	Loss on projected 2020 turnover	Loss on 2019 turnover
All respondents who answered this question in full (n=76)*					
Monthly average	£2,021	£2,143	£904	-£1,239	-£1,116
Yearly average	£24,247	£25,717	£10,850	-£14,867	-£13,396
TOTAL	£1,842,765	£1,954,500	£824,635	-£1,129,865 (-57.8%)	-£1,018,131 (-55.2%)
Only respondents who do not have a second job (n=53)					
Monthly average	£2,211	£2,306	£916	-£1,390	-£1,295
Yearly average	£26,536	£27,666	£10,991	-£16,675	-£15,545
TOTAL	£1,406,407	£1,466,300	£582,535	-£883,765 (-60.3%)	-£823,872 (-58.6%)

Examining the income for respondents based on various demographic factors reveals existing inequalities in work and income generation. On average, Black, Asian and ethnically diverse respondents earned £6,889 less than their white counterparts in 2019. Female respondents earned over £5,000 less than men. Respondents with a diagnosed mental health condition earned £7,599 less than those without a mental health condition, and respondents with a disability or long-term health condition earned over £10,000 less in 2019 than respondents without a disability or health condition. Respondents from a disadvantaged background earned over £5,000 less than those who did not come from a disadvantaged background.

The extent to which these inequalities have been affected by Covid-19 is a complex question. In some instances, the pandemic appears to have levelled the field, for example with women and men having similar average turnovers for 2020. This is also repeated in the case of respondents with diagnosed mental health conditions and those with disabilities or long-term health conditions.

Event crew, lighting or sound engineers saw by far the greatest reductions in income, going from on average £34,973 turnover in 2019 to just £8,100 in 2020, a 76.8% drop.

However, the gap between black, Asian and ethnically diverse and white freelancers has arguably been widened by the pandemic. In 2019, respondents of colour took home 72.6% of the turnover of white respondents, but in 2020 this dropped to just 53.1%. A small widening of the income gap between respondents who are and are not from a disadvantaged background can also be observed.

Respondents	Average turnover for 2019	Average turnover for 2020	Loss on 2019 turnover	% Loss on 2019 turnover
Under 30 (9)	£24,743	£12,754	£11,989	-48%
30+ (67)	£24,180	£10,595	£13,586	-56%
Children at home (24)	£29,296	£12,366	£16,929	-58%
No children at home (52)	£21,917	£10,151	£11,766	-54%
Black, Asian and ethnically diverse (7)	£18,244	£6,071	£12,173	-67%
White (68)	£25,133	£11,443	£13,690	-54%
Female (35)	£21,585	£11,498	£10,087	-47%
Male (34)	£27,120	£10,211	£16,908	-62%
Diagnosed mental health condition (24)	£18,943	£12,087	£6,856	-36%
No diagnosed mental health condition (51)	£26,542	£10,373	£16,168	-61%
Disability or long-term health condition (12)	£14,900	£9,125	£5,775	-39%
No disability or long-term health condition (58)	£25,103	£10,787	£14,316	-57%
Disadvantaged background (16)	£19,856	£8,424	£11,432	-58%
Not from a disadvantaged background (53)	£24,941	£11,573	£13,368	-54%

Respondents were asked to describe their income sources in 2019 and in 2020. **Income dropped substantially from almost all sources**, including a 56.9% reduction in earnings from cultural institutions, a 69.4% drop in income from local authorities, and a 50.0% reduction in income from schools. The only slight increase was seen in royalties, which is understandable given increases in people viewing online content during the pandemic. It should however be noted that this increase in royalties in no way compensates for the losses incurred in other income streams.

Income Source	Income in 2019	Income in 2020	Change in income	% Change
Private Individuals	£468,700	£246,954	£-221,746	-47.3%
Cultural Institutions	£451,840	£194,820	£-257,020	-56.9%
Universities	£174,079	£143,411	£-30,668	-17.6%
Charities	£126,740	£100,805	£-25,935	-20.5%
Local Authorities	£86,928	£26,630	£-60,298	-69.4%
Schools	£82,153	£41,040	£-41,113	-50.0%
Community / Voluntary Groups	£73,866	£43,230	£-30,636	-41.5%
Royalties	£8,802	£9,112	£310	+3.5%

The income received from each of these sources varied according to demographic characteristics, both before and during the pandemic. In 2019, people of colour and women received less income from cultural institutions compared to white and male respondents. Black, Asian and ethnically diverse participants also then saw much greater reductions in this income during Covid-19, as well as seeing huge losses in income from private individuals (e.g. commissions, ticket sales, lessons) which had previously formed large parts of some of their income streams.

Respondents	Average turnover from cultural institutions 2019	Average turnover from cultural institutions 2020	% Loss on 2019 turnover from cultural institutions	Average turnover from private individuals 2019	Average turnover from private individuals 2020	% Loss on 2019 turnover from private individuals
Black, Asian and ethnically diverse	£3,661	£410	-89%	£10,331	£1,837	-82%
White	£6,898	£2,770	-60%	£4,487	£2,852	-36%

Arts organisations were asked in the other survey to report how many freelancers they had hired Mar-Dec 2020 and over the same period in 2020 (38 organisations). **Overall, organisations hired 1,124 fewer freelancers over this period, a reduction of 68% from 2019.**

Many organisations had however sought to support freelancers where financially possible:

Due to the postal project, and another university project that came through later in the year, we were able to employ 15 freelancers paid day rates to work on those projects. We also paid some cancellation fees for lost work in the first lockdown, and supported the grassroots South Yorkshire freelancer hardship fund. (Venues and Arts Organisations Survey 1, Respondent 27)

We continued to pay our two members of staff at their full rate throughout this period (who are employed on a freelance basis) and we continued to fulfil any artist fees that we had committed to and rescheduled these projects for later in the year or until 2021. (Venues and Arts Organisations Survey 1, Respondent 04)

We paid all casual crew as if they were working that month, topping up the furlough scheme where available. Once we reopened in late Aug, we continued to pay all staff what they would have expected during the same period last year, including

those who were not able to come into work for whatever reason. (Venues and Arts Organisations Survey 1, Respondent 06)

We used our reserves to give people who we worked with full time (self-employed) what might be called an honorarium in academia of £1,000 per person as we were worried about their wellbeing. (Venues and Arts Organisations Survey 1, Respondent 02)

Up until the end of April we paid all freelance / casual workers their rota'd work and then put all casual workers who were regularly employed on furlough. (Venues and Arts Organisations Survey 1, Respondent 22)

We asked participants **whether they had applied to any of the grant schemes** that have been set up to help arts workers in financial hardship and whether or not these applications had been successful. Respondents were invited to tell us how much they had received for successful applications; many did not provide this information, but an average of the grants awarded is provided below where possible.

	Considered but did not apply	Applied - unsuccessful	Applied - successful	Yet to hear outcome	Plan to apply in the future	Average award
Actors Benevolent Fund	7	0	1	0	0	-
a-n Artist Bursaries and financial support	13	6	3	0	2	£1,500
Arts Council England	18	4	17	2	3	£8,625
Authors' Emergency Fund	5	1	0	0	0	-
Bounce Back Loan	17	4	8	0	0	£18,450
Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme	8	0	0	0	0	-
Covid-19 Film and TV Emergency Relief Fund	3	1	1	0	0	-
Dance Professionals Fund	2	0	0	0	0	-
Help Musicians	9	3	8	0	0	£867
Livenation 'Crewnation'	2	2	5	0	0	£792
Musicians Union	10	0	5	1	0	£280
PRS Foundation	4	3	0	0	1	-
Self-Employment Income Support Scheme	6	11	51	0	0	£4,985
Theatre Artists Fund	3	0	0	0	0	-
Universal Credit	8	9	13	0	0	£2,948

By far the most well-accessed scheme was the Self-Employment Income Support Grant (SEISS) which was designed to support freelancers through the pandemic. Bounce Back Loans for businesses were also a vital source of financial support, as were Arts Council England emergency

grants. However, it should be noted that a sizeable proportion of respondents were unsuccessful in SEISS and Universal Credit applications.

Respondents were asked **how they found the experience of applying for grants**. In general, the SEISS was seen as a fairly easy application process, although some were deemed ineligible for support (see below). Arts Council England grants were more complex, as freelancers in our study rarely had experience of applying for grants before and felt **they lacked the knowledge of how to put together a successful application** (all of which was compounded by an awful online application portal).

Arts Council and government self-employed scheme were fairly short applications but I personally struggle writing proposals and bids so support was required. (Survey Respondent 08)

There's language in there that we don't use, and the people that read these applications are not necessarily musicians or artists so we don't speak the same language. There's a certain amount of corporate speak, but I don't speak corporate. I mean I have a little bit of speak corporate because I've got friends who are corporate but that sets me... it was only my friend that helped me speak corporate otherwise if I'd done that on my own I would've had even less chance than zero. (Interview 03)

Any new financial aid schemes should be accompanied by applications that are **as simple as possible** – ideally reusing information from other grant applications, since many arts workers have already spent a lot of time proving that they are in need. There should be **straightforward ways of accessing support** for those who may not be used to funding applications. Forms and accompanying materials should strike a tone that is **compassionate and respectful**.

While **many did receive financial relief** through Covid-19 support schemes, especially the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, our dataset also contains **respondents who have been ineligible for relief** as one of many “Excluded” citizens.¹

It took 4 months for me to finally settle towards Universal Credit after trying and failing to qualify for other relief due to an inability to provide yearly reports because I was a freelancer full time for all of 3 months. (Survey Respondent 50)

I have not qualified for any Govt help whatsoever mainly because I set my freelance contracts up on PAYE. (Survey Respondent 20)

Having been self-employed and paying tax for 11 years but taking a year and a half out dramatically reduced the amount I was eligible for [through SEISS] (by approx. 60%). Living with a working partner who is on just over minimum wage excludes you from any other support such as Universal Credits. (Survey Respondent 49)

I was frustrated regarding the 'Self Employed Income Support Scheme' as although I ticked every box because I had been employed in 2018 I was denied any grant support. (Survey Respondent 95)

Bounce Back Loans were a lifeline for some respondents, but have been **difficult or even impossible to access** for others due to the way in which they have been awarded via banks.

Banks have been endeavouring to make it as difficult as possible to apply for the Bounce Back Loan and have now completely halted new applications despite the

¹ “Individuals and businesses entirely or largely excluded from government Covid-19 financial support” as described by the campaign group ExcludedUK, <https://excludeduk.org/>

government announcing they are open until the start of next year. (Survey Respondent 49)

Not a great experience at all. Bounce Back Loan would have helped but I don't bank with the right bank and cannot open a new account so cannot get BBL. (Survey Respondent 51)

Those who were ineligible for Covid relief schemes had to apply for **universal credit**, **encountering difficulties** in getting the money they were entitled to, as well as feeling (or being made to feel) guilty for needing support.

Application [for universal credit] was long and stressful. It took 4 months for me to finally settle towards Universal Credit after trying and failing to qualify for other relief. [...] All this while I was promised I would be backdated to March whatever happens. This didn't happen and as such the £3.7k arrears I accrued from living expenses went unacknowledged and I was therefore expected to use the £638 per month I received in benefits to pay this back. So not good. At all. (Survey Respondent 50)

Universal Credit I applied for after watching the news and googling. My experience with both was very straightforward. Although I can't help but feel guilty and not worthy of receiving both. I feel like there are so many other people with bigger issues than mine that could benefit. (Survey Respondent 69)

Conflicted feelings about support [through universal credit] as thankful for and benefitting from support, but process is unnecessarily complex, stressful and hostile, and a lot of contradictory and buried information. (Survey Respondent 71)

The reduction in income has had serious consequences for respondents' personal finances. **Even those who had received SEISS grants had faced financial difficulties.** SEISS grants were designed to replace net income to allow freelancers to survive this period, but did not cover overheads which were often fixed costs that respondents could not avoid paying (such as insurance, membership subscriptions, and payments on work vehicles. Furthermore, the fact that SEISS grants were calculated on 3 years' previous income meant that freelancers who had recently increased the proportion of freelance work had much smaller grants than they needed to be able to survive.

While there were no clear trends in the success rate of grant applications, the amount received through Arts Council England grants and Bounce Back Loans were strongly determined by a number of demographic factors. Under-30s, respondents with children at home, Black, Asian and Ethnically Diverse, Male, respondents with diagnosed mental health conditions, respondents with disabilities or long-term health conditions, and respondents from disadvantaged backgrounds received far smaller ACE grants.

Respondents		Arts Council England	Bounce Back Loan	SEISS	Universal Credit
Under 30	No. successful apps	1	1	4	4
	Success rate	50%	100%	67%	80%
	Average award	£2,500	£6,000	£7,009	£3,625
30+	No. successful apps	16	7	47	9
	Success rate	84%	64%	84%	53%
	Average award	£9,500	£21,563	£4,715	£240

Respondents		Arts Council England	Bounce Back Loan	SEISS	Universal Credit
Children at home	No. successful apps	6	3	13	2
	Success rate	86%	75%	76%	50%
	Average award	£2,125	£6,000	£3,522	£2,399
No children at home	No. successful apps	11	5	38	11
	Success rate	79%	63%	84%	61%
	Average award	£15,125	£21,563	£5,435	£3,085
Black, Asian and ethnically diverse	No. successful apps	3	0	6	1
	Success rate	60%	0%	100%	100%
	Average award	£2,500	-	£2,626	-
White	No. successful apps	14	8	45	12
	Success rate	88%	73%	80%	57%
	Average award	£9,500	£18,450	£5,391	£2,948
Female	No. successful apps	8	2	24	4
	Success rate	80%	100%	86%	67%
	Average award	£12,400	£50,000	£4,228	£240
Male	No. successful apps	6	5	22	9
	Success rate	75%	56%	79%	69%
	Average award	£2,333	£12,417	£5,487	£3,625
Diagnosed mental health condition	No. successful apps	5	5	13	7
	Success rate	83%	83%	68%	64%
	Average award	£2,333	£21,500	£3,854	£3,666
No diagnosed mental health condition	No. successful apps	12	3	37	6
	Success rate	80%	50%	88%	55%
	Average award	£12,400	£6,250	£5,525	£1,870
Disability or long-term health condition	No. successful apps	7	2	11	1
	Success rate	88%	100%	79%	50%
	Average award	£2,250	£37,500	£4,244	-
No disability or long-term health condition	No. successful apps	10	6	39	12
	Success rate	77%	60%	85%	63%
	Average award	£15,000	£5,750	£5,441	£2,948
Disadvantaged background	No. successful apps	6	2	11	3
	Success rate	67%	67%	92%	75%
	Average award	£2,000	£6,000	£4,179	£1,320
Not from a disadvantaged background	No. successful apps	11	5	36	9
	Success rate	92%	63%	82%	60%
	Average award	£10,833	£27,083	£5,496	£4,033

Across all art forms and all types of roles in the sector, SEISS was the most commonly awarded grant, although only 43.2% of music professionals received a SEISS grant compared to over 70% of dance, drama, arts for health and community arts professionals.

There was a large variation in the amount awarded through various grant schemes to different sectors and roles. Much larger ACE awards were given to visual arts (£18,833 average), music

(£19,333), and drama (£15,125), compared to an average of £2,000-£3,000 for museum or heritage, dance, live art and arts for health.

More significantly, composers, choreographers, directors or producers received an average ACE grant of £15,125, whereas all other roles received an average of less than £3,000.

Type of work	Average Arts Council England Grant Awarded
Performer musician actor or dancer	£2,500
Artist designer photographer or film-maker	£1,750
Composer choreographer director or producer	£15,125
Writer editor copywriter or critic	£2,500
Event organiser or promoter	£2,500
Event crew lighting or sound engineer	No awards
Company director accountant finance or HR	No awards
Marketer communications or fundraiser	£2,500
Teacher educator or tutor	£2,167
Community arts facilitator or arts for health practitioner	£2,300

Over half (54.1%) have had to use savings to get through this period, with savings running low for some and others having used up the money they were saving for a house deposit. 38.4% have been reliant on a partner's income, 22.2% have borrowed money from friends and family and 16.2% have relied on family for support. This implies that **freelancers without strong support networks may be struggling far more severely**; care leavers and single people may be particularly hard-hit. Event crew, lighting or sound engineers having faced the greatest loss of income of all the professional roles included in this survey; higher proportions of this work force were using their savings (69.2%) and taking out loans (15.4%) compared to other types of roles.

To survive this period, have you had to take any of the following measures for your personal finance?	%	No.
Using savings	53.5%	53
Relying on a partner's income	38.4%	38
Using money set aside for tax	24.2%	24
Borrowing money from friends and family	22.2%	22
Using your overdraft	20.2%	20
Using credit cards	18.2%	18
Relying on family / parents for support	16.2%	16
Defaulting on bills	6.1%	6
Taking a mortgage holiday	6.1%	6
Taking out a loan	4.0%	4
Relying on a professional pension	2.0%	2

Most worryingly of all, 24.2% of respondents had been living on money set aside for tax, 20.2% had used overdrafts and 18.2% had used credit card finance, **getting themselves into debt to**

survive this period. If work is not forthcoming as restrictions ease, these respondents may find themselves in a perilous financial situation. Some respondents have also had to give up studio space to reduce outgoings or sell equipment to raise money during this time.

Covid-19 has wiped me out. I'm never going to financially recover from this and has set my life plans back by 5+ years. I was hoping to mortgage a new build this year. Covid has destroyed my savings. (Survey Respondent 55)

I cannot pay my rent and am fast approaching £5000 Rent arrears alone. (Survey Respondent 51)

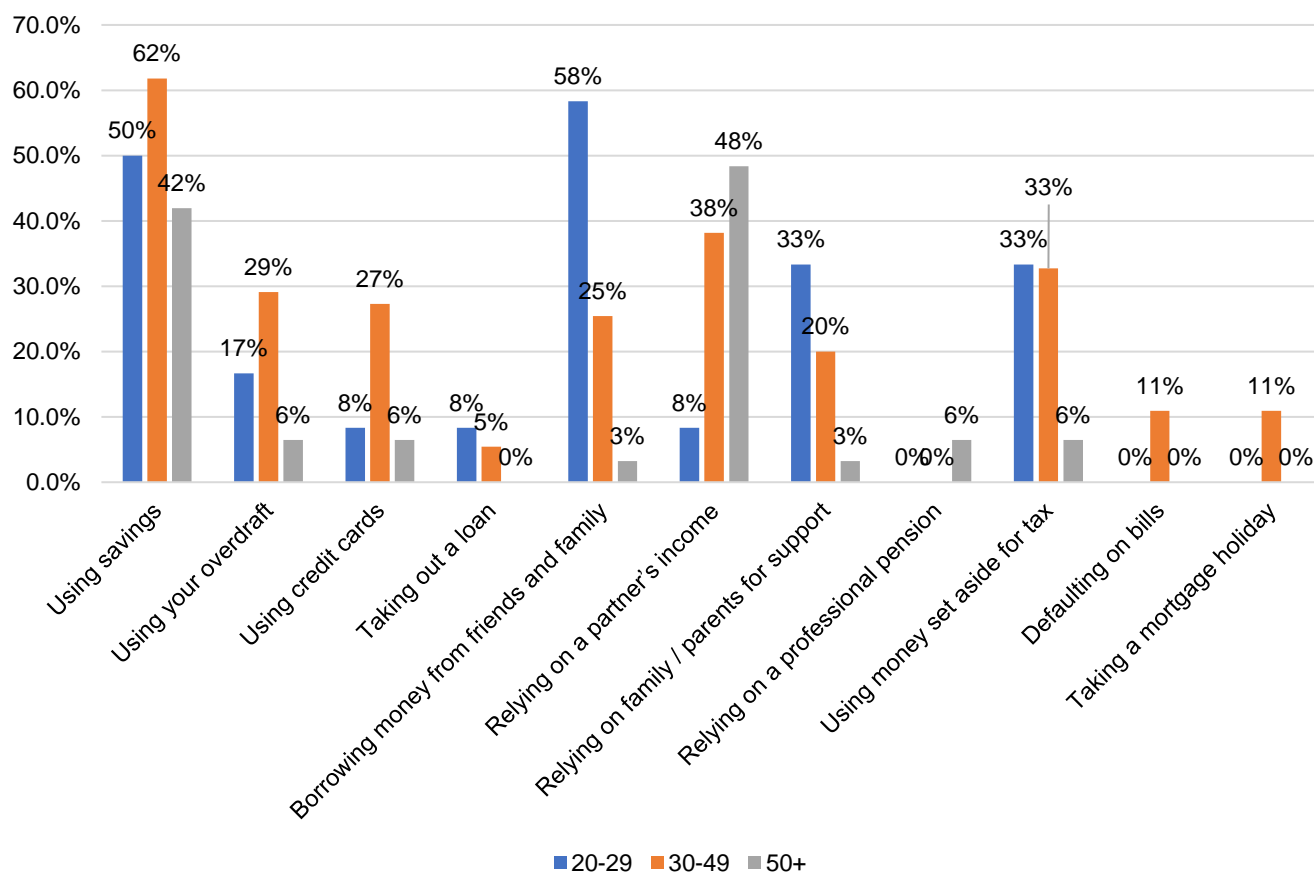
Women and men were nearly identical in their use of savings to survive (54.3% of women and 54.5% of men), and were using overdrafts and credit cards at similar rates. Women were far more likely to be relying on a partners' income (45.7%), whereas men were more likely to have borrowed money from friends and family (31.8%), to have used money set aside for tax (27.3%) and to have defaulted on bills (9.1%).

Black, Asian and ethnically diverse respondents were using overdrafts at higher rates (37.5%) than white respondents (19.5%) and were also much more likely to be relying on a partners' income (62.5%). No Black, Asian and ethnically diverse respondents were relying on family/parents for support, compared to 17.2% of white respondents.

Respondents who describe themselves as coming from a disadvantaged background were more likely to be borrowing money and less likely to be relying on their friends and family for support. Worryingly, 45.0% of disadvantaged participants had used money set aside for tax, with 65.0% using their savings, 35.0% using an overdraft, and 30.0% using credit cards. Without personal networks to be able to rely on for financial support, respondents from disadvantaged backgrounds were getting themselves into greater levels of debt.

Age was a strong determining factor in the ways in which respondents coped financially. Under 30s were most likely to 'borrow money from friends and family' (58.3% - far higher rates than over 30s), use savings (50.0%), use money set aside for tax (33.3%) and 'rely on family / parents for support' (33.3%). 30–49-year-olds used savings at the highest rate (61.8%), as well as using overdrafts and credit cards at far higher rates than under 30s and over 50s, and were the only age group to have defaulted on bills and take a mortgage holiday. This age group were also far more likely to have children under 18 at home (38.2%) and those with children at home were more likely to be using an overdraft, using credit cards, taking out a loan, borrowing money from friends and family, relying on a partner's income, relying on family / parents for support, and taking a mortgage holiday. Overwhelmingly, over 50s used savings and relied on a partner's income. In summary, over 50s appear to be fairly self-reliant and under 30s appear to be supported mostly by their family. It is those in their 30s and 40s who are at greatest risk of getting into debt.

To survive this period, have you had to take any of the following measures for your personal finance?



Respondents were asked whether they had concerns about covering their overheads. This was an open-text question, but responses approximately break down as follows. Of the 34.5% who did not have concerns about covering their overheads, the reasons for that were generally that their partner had a steady income, they had savings to rely on, or they had very low overheads to cover. **40.7% of the respondents were worried about their ability to cover overheads**, with 9.3% providing a mixed response ("I'm managing, but it's far from comfortable"), and 15.1% being ok for the time being but concerned about the future, for example:

I have used savings for now, but if my plans for 2021 are postponed for too long, then I will struggle with personal bills and subscriptions for my work. (Survey Respondent 63)

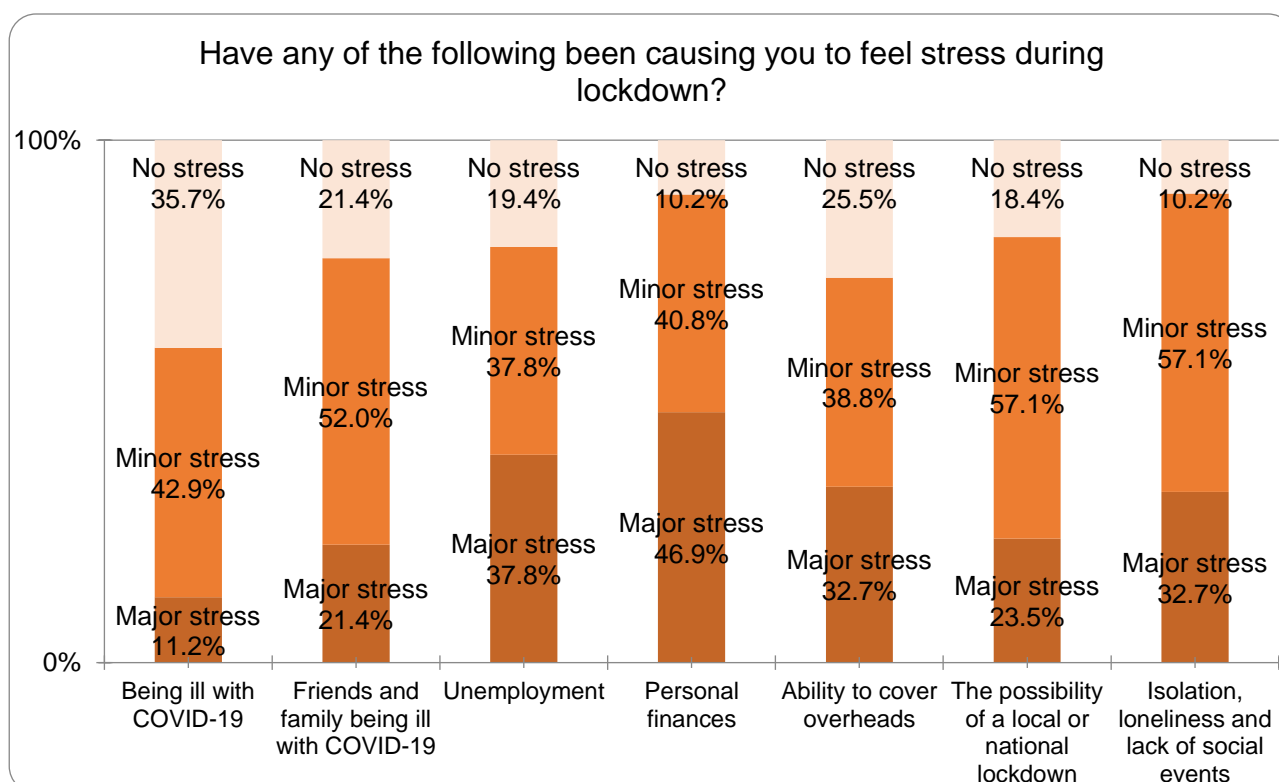
Although manageable in the short term (6-9 months) I am seriously worried about being able to cover the costs of a studio in the medium to long term. (Survey Respondent 58)

Impact of Covid-19 on health and wellbeing

76.5% of the freelancers who completed this survey reported that their mental wellbeing was worse since the start of lockdown, with 25.5% feeling “much worse” and only 6 people having experienced any improvement in their mental health. 28.6% suffered from a mental health condition, with 17.5% reporting experiencing depression and 11.1% having anxiety. Differences in mental health status can be seen across different groups of respondents:

- Male freelancers are experiencing a greater worsening of mental health than female freelancers (36.4% of male respondents said that their mental wellbeing was “much worse”).
- Respondents with children under 18 living at home did not experience as severe a decline in mental wellness.
- Respondents with a diagnosed mental health condition experienced greater declines in mental health during the pandemic.
- Under 30s are experiencing a greater worsening of mental health than over 30s (41.7% of under 30s said that their mental wellbeing was “much worse”).
- Event crew, lighting or sound engineers reported greater worsening of mental health with 53.8% saying that their mental health was “much worse” compared to 25.5% on average.

Respondents were asked whether any of the following factors were causing them to feel stressed. They were given an instruction to “select ‘major stress’ if this is constantly on your mind or keeping you awake at night.” **70.4% of respondents were experiencing major stress** as a result of at least one factor in this question, pointing to a highly stressed population and a potential mental illness epidemic amongst arts freelancers.



- Male freelancers were experiencing greater stress about their personal finances (54.5% experiencing “major stress”) and unemployment (47.7%).
- Respondents from disadvantaged backgrounds were far more stressed about their personal finances (65.0% reporting “major stress”).

- People with a diagnosed mental health condition were far more likely to be feeling stressed about isolation and loneliness (56.3% reporting “major stress”)
- 30-49-year-olds were more stressed with personal finances, likely owing to the financial difficulties described above (60.0% experiencing “major stress”)
- Over 50s exhibited considerably less stress about: their family becoming ill with Covid, unemployment, personal finances, their ability to cover overheads, and possible lockdowns.
- Respondents with a disability or long-term health condition were more concerned about getting Covid or those close to them getting Covid.
- Composer, choreographer, director or producer (58.8% reported “major stress”), Company director, accountant, finance, or HR (55.6%) Community arts facilitators or arts for health practitioners (50.0%) were more worried about unemployment.
- Higher levels of concern about personal finances were exhibited by company directors, accountants, finance, or HR workers (66.7% reported “major stress”); composers, choreographers, directors or producers (58.8%); marketers, communications workers or fundraisers (58.3%).
- Event crew, lighting or sound engineers were most concerned about covering overheads (46.2% reporting major stress), possible lockdown (46.2%) and isolation and loneliness (53.8%)
- Worry about unemployment was highest amongst practitioners working in Dance (63.6%).

While loneliness was the most widespread source of stress (and possibly to be expected during lockdown), personal finances (46.5%), unemployment (37.4%) and the ability to cover overheads (32.3%) were causing stress enough to keep respondents up at night for many respondents.

Worry over unemployment was much higher amongst these respondents than among the general population, when compared with Covid-19 Social Study (April 2021)², where 10-20% of participants reported feeling major or minor stress about unemployment throughout the year-long study (compared to 75.5% in our study). This same study showed 25-35% of the population were feeling stressed about finances, again far lower than the 87.8% of respondents in our study.

Respondents were asked to give a rating for how satisfied they were with their lives, how much they felt their lives were worthwhile and to what extent they felt happy or anxious yesterday. In each rating, 0 = not at all satisfied, worthwhile, happy or anxious, and 10 = completely satisfied, worthwhile, happy or anxious. **Sheffield freelancers rated lower levels of wellbeing and happiness and higher levels of anxiety than the general population**, according to the “Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain” government study.³

Event crew lighting or sound engineers reported far worse scores than the rest of the cohort and showed a troubling mental health state. Their average scores were 3.5 for satisfaction with life, 4.4 for life being worthwhile, 3.8 for happiness yesterday, and 5.2 out of 10 for anxiety.

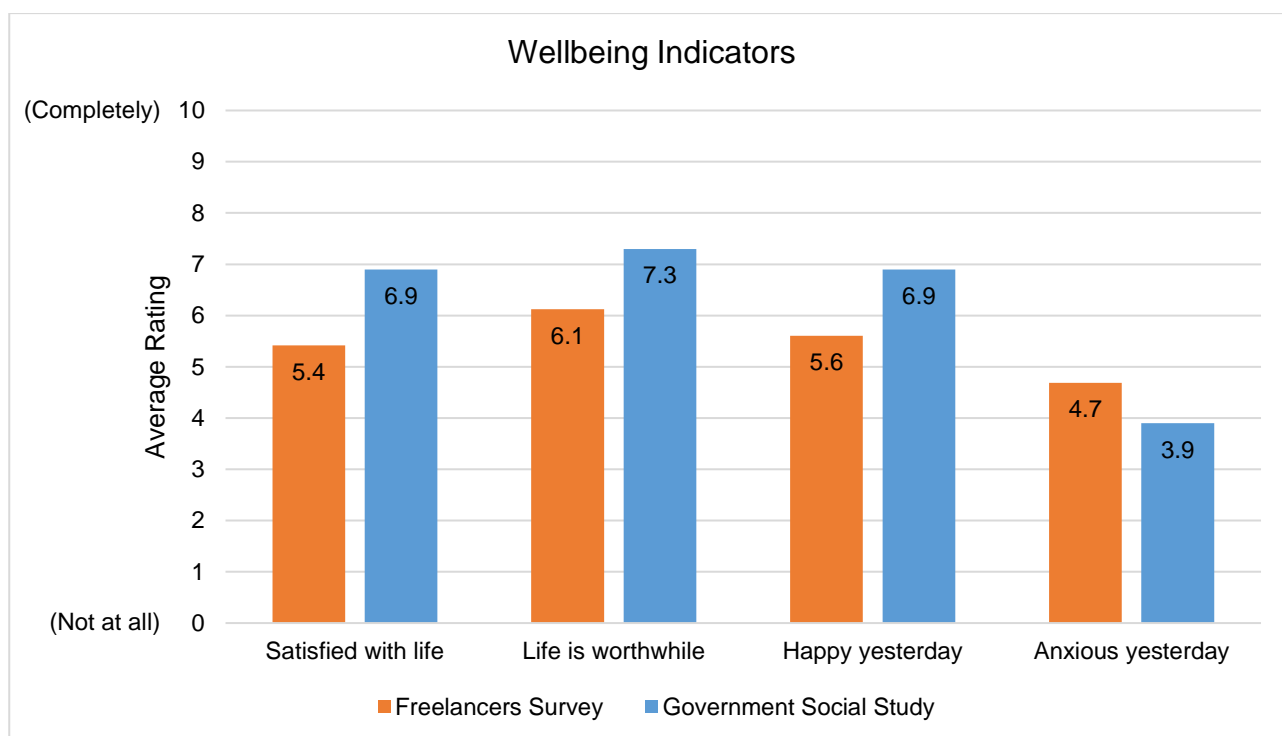
Otherwise, there was little difference in the average scores for different demographic groups such as age, gender or disadvantaged background. The only slight differences were that people with children under 18 at home rated slightly higher levels of satisfaction, happiness and feeling that life

² Fancourt, Daisy, Feifei Bu, Hei Wan Mak, Elise Paul, & Andrew Steptoe. Covid-19 Social Study Results Release 33 (23rd April 2021). <https://www.covidsocialstudy.org/results> Accessed 14/05/2021.

³ Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain dataset. Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey covering the period 7 – 11 April 2021.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandwellbeing/datasets/coronavirusandthesocialimpactsongreatbritaindata>

was worthwhile, and those with mental health conditions and disabilities or long-term health conditions rated slightly lower.



Responses to other questions in the survey also highlighted the ways in which **respondents' mental health was being impacted by the loss of work, isolation, and uncertainty about the future**. While these factors are likely to be affecting the mental health of much of the general public, the interviews shed light on the ways in which restrictions had led to a **sense of lost identity, skills and motivation** amongst freelancers.

The main issues that I've had to deal with have been [...] a loss of self. [...] You've found the one career that you think you're going to be particularly really good at and you've worked really hard to build that up and then it's taken away [...] and then you have to find something else but then you're not really trained in anything else, you have a loss of self, you have like, "Have I wasted years of my life?" (Interview 04)

As well as having no motivation, I've had injuries as well, which I think were probably exacerbated by the stress of dealing with the pandemic, so it's been harder to recover. I think I will need a couple of months to just really get back to peak fitness again. (Interview 02)

I was just at the beginning of my career, and just in that point where I put in a lot of my own money into it, like working as many shifts as I could and pouring all of my money into equipment and going out and travelling from place to place to try and expand the business and everything. And then after I was basically told that I couldn't work anymore, all of that investment is seemingly... I'm starting again, essentially. (Interview 08)

Respondents had found support in some local networks in the arts sector such as the Festival Mentoring Network and Sheffield Theatres writers' development scheme. National networks tended to be found through private groups on Facebook or shared hashtags on Twitter. **Respondents relied heavily on informal networks and social contacts they had in the industry already**, suggesting early career arts workers without established networks of peers may have felt more isolated. Even when networks were available, the stress of the pandemic means that peers were not always emotionally available to support each other.

We [arts workers] all feel the same way, but we're all quite alone in it (Interview 02)

In group chats, no one was posting anything, no one was chatting. Because no one's got anything to say, because no one's doing anything to say anything about. You're all kind of just waiting. (Interview 09)

There have been a lot of talking shops, which are great in a way but have a limited impact in other ways, they are after all just more time staring at a screen, and a lot of the time what is the use of talking about the sector when we can't actually do our job? (Survey Respondent 10)

Initial analysis suggests that women were more likely than men to have engaged with support networks, and that respondents from disadvantaged backgrounds were less likely to engage with support networks.

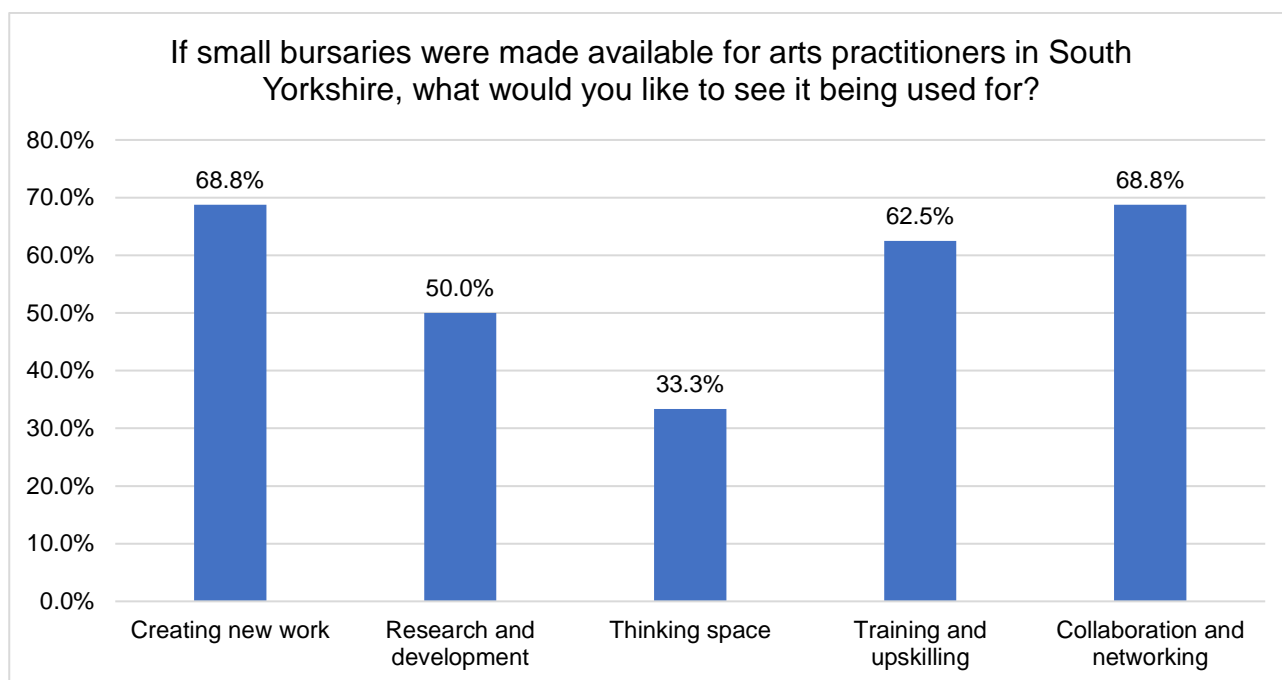
Looking forwards

The most important skills needed by freelancers to thrive in a post-pandemic world were centred on digital output, both general digital literacy and specific skills in developing engaging online work.

What new skills will arts workers need for a post-Covid era? Would you like to see training available for any of these skills?	
Digital skills	Computer skills, building and maintaining a website, writing marketing copy, understanding the pros and cons of different platforms and equipment
Video-making	Video-making, filming, video editing and production skills, audio production, podcasting, streaming
Business skills	Monetising online work, publicity, marketing to audiences, developing output in more commercial ways, bid-writing support
Resilience	Adaptability, finding work, motivation, support
Connecting with audiences	Building audiences, co-creation with diverse communities, reaching an international online audience
Health and wellbeing	Health and safety knowledge (especially in Covid restrictions), mental health awareness and first aid
None	Arts workers have the necessary skills to produce work once they are allowed to do so again

The group of participants who felt that they did not need any new skills some of the most privileged in the group: mostly male, exclusively white, exclusively not having a disability or long-term health condition, mostly without any diagnosed mental health conditions.

At the time of conducting this survey, a freelancers' fund was being put together by Sheffield council, the Cultural Consortium and the University of Sheffield. We therefore asked for respondents' input on the design of the grant scheme.



Respondents' wishes for the bursaries varied greatly depending on demographics:

- Interestingly, 100% of Black, Asian and ethnically diverse respondents and 100% of under 30s wanted to see grants used for collaboration and networking.
- Respondents from disadvantaged backgrounds and respondents with disabilities or long-term health conditions wanted thinking space – perhaps as a result of having second jobs and responsibilities that means they have not been able to treat the pandemic as a time for reflection.
- Under 30s wanted training and upskilling far more than over 30s, and were less interested in thinking space.

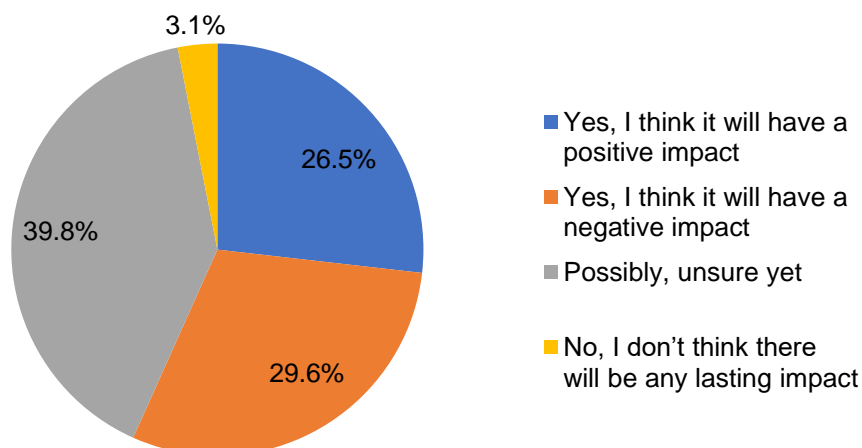
Respondents wanted to see **grants that could be used for a variety of purposes**, prioritising paid opportunities to make new work and being able to pursue new artistic and business directions. Ultimately, they stressed that artists should be allowed to access it in whatever way was useful to them.

Artists are fairly good at knowing what they need to prioritise - giving an open option would be helpful rather than getting them to jump through hoops.

Any of the ideas on the list are valuable. It's up to the artists to decide which of these ideas they want to work on, or other ideas for that matter.

29.3% of respondents felt that this period would have a **lasting negative impact on their ways of working**. Only 3 respondents felt that Covid would not have a lasting impact on their work or creative process, meaning that most were preparing themselves for needing to work in new ways in the post-pandemic work.

Can you foresee this period having a lasting impact on your way of working or creative process?

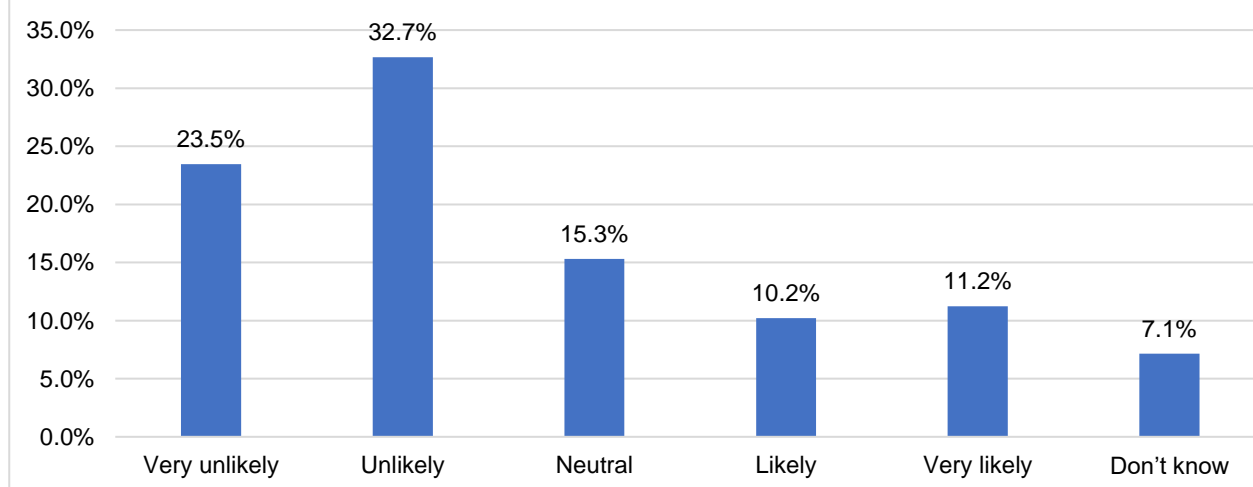


The huge expansion of digital arts and culture was also noted, with respondents feeling like we were **unlikely to go back to exactly the same kinds of work as before the pandemic**. Some also felt that community work would become more important, and that there were opportunities to make a fairer arts ecology following the pandemic, but only if those with the power commit to change and funding is not only given to institutions but also reaches freelancers and grassroots movement.

There is very little support for individuals. There seems some support for institutions and large companies [...] but individuals who make up the most vulnerable part of that workforce haven't. And I know the institutions need money, but it just feels like it's continuing whatever inequalities are already in the system anyway. (Interview 02)

Respondents were very concerned about the potential availability of work beyond the end of the pandemic and whether there would be enough work on offer for freelancers. 56% of respondents felt that **they would still not return to normal levels of work after 1 year** (i.e. winter 2021).

In a year's time, how likely do you think it is that you will have the same amount of work as before lockdown?



Respondents were concerned that the **pandemic would cause the sector to shrink**, meaning less work was available in the long run. The fact that no one knows when arts and culture will be

able to return to 'business as usual' was itself part of the problem, and there were concerns that audiences may have lost the habit of going out to events and will remain uncomfortable in crowds.

I don't know what, how and if it will ever get back to the way it was. I mean, we don't know. I'm not really an optimist. I feel that we're going to be dealing with this for several years, I think. (Interview 01)

The evidence that I've seen from people that I know and then talking to them now, as opposed [to] a year ago, it's like the wind's been taken out of everybody's sails a bit. Nobody still really knows what the music scene is going to look like in four, five years' time. [...] A lot of venues don't exist anymore [...] a lot of smaller festivals, smaller independent charity festivals that are no longer going to be happening as well because the infrastructure has had to essentially disappear. (Interview 08)

The thing is, once people are getting back to work and getting back to school, they're tired because they're not used to doing all that time out and about working or at school, they're normally sat in their bedroom, that when they get home they're more tired now. Hopefully, they'll get back into the swing, but I think at the minute... yes, I think at first it's going to be tricky to get people back in. (Interview 09)

50.5% of participants were considering or already applying for other work outside the arts sector. Again, this varied across demographics:

- Women (23.9%) were more likely to have applied for jobs outside the creative sector than men (9.1%). However, men (20.5%) were more likely to be considering leaving the sector permanently compared to women (8.7%).
- There was no real difference in propensity for leaving the sector between Black, Asian and ethnically diverse and white participants.
- If anything, disadvantaged people were less likely to be leaving the sector – but more likely to already be doing work outside the sector.
- Under-30s were more likely to be looking for other work, but a bit less likely to consider leaving the sector permanently.

Have you applied for any work outside the creative sector?	%	No.
I have applied for jobs outside the creative sector	17.3%	17
I have begun part-time or full-time work outside the creative sector	16.3%	16
I was already undertaking part-time or full-time work outside the creative sector	19.4%	19
I have increased the number of hours I am working outside the creative sector	8.2%	8
If the situation remains the same, I plan to apply for jobs outside the creative sector in the next three months	25.5%	25
I am considering leaving the creative sector permanently	13.3%	13
I have decided to leave the creative sector permanently	1.0%	1
	TOTAL	98

Respondents were questioning their career in the arts for two main reasons. Firstly, **they wondered whether they would be able to be financially sufficient in their arts work**. This was particularly pertinent for young and early career artists, who had not yet established themselves in the industry and had fewer connections and less of a reputation to help them get through the pandemic: “As I was early on in establishing myself as an artist, I worry that I may never be able to, and question whether it's a viable career” (Survey Respondent 30). We are looking further into the impact of career stage on the experience of the pandemic in Phase 2 of this study.

Secondly, **participants felt incredibly undervalued and unsupported**, especially by the government. The rhetoric around ‘viable’ careers and ‘retraining’ had damaged their belief that they could forge a career in the creative sector, as well as seriously damaging freelancers’ mental health and sense of identity. Again, this is being explored in more detail in Phase 2 of this study.

There has been a bit of a focus around, “Is this... are you viable?” kind of chat, and that's been devastating to hear because it's not a case of really any of us saying we think that we're better than anything else, it's just a case of we provide a huge amount of support for the economy, but also we provide people, everyday people with a release in their life. [...] The discussions that have been had around whether or not being an artist is an actual career or an actual job, that's been devastating to hear, devastating, and that's regardless of financial support, regardless of anything, it's just like the worst thing that you ever think in your head is, “Am I a job's worth, am I just doing absolutely nothing, am I a louse and a sponge or whatever?” and then to hear people say that they think you are, that's been probably the toughest thing. (Interview 04)

Participants were, however, **optimistic that audiences and participants would not forget the vital role that arts and culture play in their lives**. Some were hopeful that indefinitely postponed projects would be revised and that a relaxation in restrictions would cause a surge in demand for arts events.

In those few things that I've done, people still want to come and see things in person, so I feel like there will be a bit of a boom after things have got back. (Interview 02)

I think theatres will come back booming and people will want to go out to them, but I feel like there's a long road to recovery with it. (Interview 06)

I think with the announcements, there's been a slight picking up of gentle hope [...] We're all just bubbling at the minute and I think when we can, it'll be an explosion. [...] I think there's going to be magic out there and I hope that enough people cling to the arts to bring it back. (Interview 06)

Appendix 1: Phase 1 Questionnaire

Thank you for your interest in this survey. This survey is part of a project called "Investigating the impact of Covid-19 on arts and culture in Sheffield City Region". Lockdown has been catastrophic for South Yorkshire's cultural ecology - this project will document that impact, and inform policy to help the culture, arts and heritage in the region get back on their feet.

You are invited to participate as a freelancer or casual worker in the cultural and creative sector who lives or works in South Yorkshire. Taking part in this survey will help us to collect vital information on the impact of Covid-19 on freelancers in the arts.

We are able to offer a £100 Love2Shop voucher to respondents who complete all three surveys (maximum 110 people): (1) this survey, (2) a short update survey in March/April 2021, and (3) a final survey in July 2021. This voucher is intended to allow more people to take part in the survey, compensating you for your time and any inconvenience in taking part and is not intended to influence your answers.

Please do read the Information Sheet here in order to find out more about how your responses will be used and the legal basis for processing your data. If you have any questions about the project or if you are able to help us to reach more people, please don't hesitate to contact the research team - Dr Sarah Price s.price@sheffield.ac.uk.

Please note: In order to capture the full impact of the pandemic on freelancers, we will be asking information on your income for this period and how it differs from your usual earnings. These questions are entirely voluntary, but if you do want to provide this information, it will be helpful to have the following to hand:

- Your turnover for 2019 and sources of income
- Projected turnover for 2020 before the pandemic
- Anticipated turnover for 2020 and sources of income, excluding Covid support or hardship grants.
- Any Covid support or hardship grants applications that were successful or unsuccessful (e.g. Covid-19 Film and TV Emergency Relief Fund, Crewnation, Help Musicians, Self-Employment Income Support Scheme)

Preview the full survey without entering any responses [here](#).

Consent

1. Consent form: please do not continue until you are fully aware of what your participation in the project will mean. Email s.price@sheffield.ac.uk if you have any questions.

- ☐ I have read and understood the project information sheet dated 02/02/2021 (link above) and have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project. Please do not continue until you are fully aware of what your participation in the project will mean.
- ☐ I am over 18 and I agree to take part in the project. I understand that taking part in the project will involve completing this online questionnaire.
- ☐ I understand that I can withdraw from the study up to the point of submitting my responses. I understand that I do not have to give any reasons for why I no longer want to take part and there will be no adverse consequences if I choose to withdraw.
- ☐ I understand that in order to be eligible to receive the £100 voucher, I need to complete the three surveys in this study as described above. I know that I can refuse to answer any questions within the surveys without negative consequences.
- ☐ I understand my personal details such as name, phone number, address and email address etc. will not be revealed to people outside the project.

- ☐ I understand and agree that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs. I understand that I will not be named in these outputs unless I specifically request this.
- ☐ So that the information you provide can be used legally by the researchers: I agree to assign the copyright I hold in any materials generated as part of this project to The University of Sheffield.

2. I do / do not give permission for the survey responses that I provide to be deposited in UK Data Archive so it can be used for future research and learning.

- ☐ I give permission
- ☐ I do not give permission

3. Before lockdown, in which of the following places were you regularly working?

- ☐ Sheffield
- ☐ Doncaster
- ☐ Rotherham
- ☐ Barnsley
- ☐ Elsewhere in the UK
- ☐ Internationally
- ☐ Online

4. Please provide your postcode: _____

We will be running an update to this survey every few months to see how things have changed as Covid-19 restrictions change around the country. We would like to contact you by email to let you know about these updates. Your email address will be used for the sole purpose of informing you about these surveys and you can opt out of receiving these messages at any time by replying to one of our emails.

5. Email address: _____

The University of Sheffield will act as the Data Controller for this study. This means that the University is responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. According to data protection legislation, we are required to inform you that the legal basis we are applying in order to process your personal data is that 'processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest' (Article 6(1)(e)). Further information can be found in the University's Privacy Notice <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general>.

Work

6. Which of the following cultural sectors do you primarily work in? Please tick all that apply:

- ☐ Museum or heritage
- ☐ Visual art
- ☐ Craft
- ☐ Music
- ☐ Dance
- ☐ Drama
- ☐ Live Art
- ☐ Circus
- ☐ Film or digital arts
- ☐ Literature and writing

- ☐ Arts for health
- ☐ Community arts
- ☐ Other (please specify):

7. How would you describe the kinds of work you do in the arts, culture and heritage sectors?
Please tick all that apply.

- ☐ Performer, musician, actor, or dancer
- ☐ Artist, designer, photographer, or film-maker
- ☐ Composer, choreographer, director or producer
- ☐ Writer, editor, copywriter, or critic
- ☐ Curator, archivist, or librarian
- ☐ Conservator, art handler, or art technician
- ☐ Event organiser or promoter
- ☐ Event crew, lighting or sound engineer
- ☐ Front of house or box office
- ☐ Set designer/decorator, costumer designer/maker, hair or makeup
- ☐ Company director, accountant, finance or HR
- ☐ Manager, agent, or publicist
- ☐ Marketer, communications, or fundraiser
- ☐ Teacher, educator or tutor
- ☐ Community arts facilitator or arts for health practitioner
- ☐ Learning and participation coordinator

8. Please describe your regular sources of work in the cultural, arts and heritage sectors: _____

9. Which of the following describe your employment before Covid-19? Please tick all that apply

- ☐ Freelance / self-employed
- ☐ Casual work or zero-hours contract
- ☐ Contractor or sub-contractor
- ☐ Agency work
- ☐ Director of a limited company
- ☐ Part time or full-time contract
- ☐ Apprenticeship / trainee
- ☐ Full-time / part-time student
- ☐ Voluntary or unpaid work
- ☐ Other (please specify):

10. Before Covid, did you have a second job outside the cultural and creative sector? If so, what proportion of your income comes from your second job(s)? _____

Impact of lockdown on work availability

11. How has the availability of work for you been affected by Covid-19?

- ☐ Decreased dramatically
- ☐ Decreased somewhat
- ☐ Stayed the same
- ☐ Increased somewhat
- ☐ Increased dramatically

12. Are any of the following statements true for your work? Please tick all that apply

- ☐ Projects and events that I was due to work on were cancelled
- ☐ I was on furlough as an employee or director
- ☐ My hours were reduced for contracted/regular work
- ☐ My contract was not renewed for fixed term work
- ☐ I was made redundant from one or more of my jobs
- ☐ New offers of work have reduced / stopped entirely
- ☐ The amount of work has stayed the same, but it has been harder to generate income
- ☐ Other (please specify):

13. Can you describe in your own words how the availability of work has changed for you since the outbreak of Covid-19? _____

14. Do any of the following present a barrier to you personally returning to work in the next six months?

- ☐ Caring responsibilities (including childcare)
- ☐ Needing to shield / being vulnerable to Covid-19
- ☐ Insufficient digital equipment / internet access
- ☐ Loss of momentum in career progression
- ☐ Loss of visibility as an arts worker
- ☐ Unable to travel to take up opportunities
- ☐ Work-related expenses mean that it is not financially viable to work
- ☐ Other (please specify):

Whilst this has been challenging for many people, we know that arts workers have also innovated during this time with creative responses to the crisis. We want to celebrate the fantastic work being done in our region.

15. Please tell us about any ways in which you have adapted your way of working or creative practice during the pandemic:

Impact on income

We would like to know whether your income has changes as a result of the pandemic. This information will help us to document the full impact of Covid on freelancers in the region, and will be used anonymously to lobby for support where it is missing. If you are happy to provide this information, please answer the following questions. If not, simply click "next page" to skip these questions.

All the information that we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential and will only be accessible to members of the research team.

16. What was your turnover for 2019? _____

17. Approximately what proportion of your income from 2019 was derived from the following sources?

- ☐ Arts and cultural institutions (e.g. theatre, galleries)
- ☐ Local authorities
- ☐ Charities
- ☐ Community and voluntary groups
- ☐ Universities

- ☐ Schools
- ☐ Private individuals (e.g. commissions, ticket sales, lessons)
- ☐ Royalties
- ☐ Other / more information:

18. Before the outbreak of Covid-19, what was your projected turnover for 2020? _____

19. What do you anticipate your turnover being for 2020? Please exclude any grants you may have received as part of a Covid support or hardship scheme. _____

20. Of your anticipated turnover for 2020, what proportion is derived from the following sources? Again, please exclude any Covid support or hardship grants.

- ☐ Arts and cultural institutions (e.g. theatre, galleries)
- ☐ Local authorities
- ☐ Charities
- ☐ Community and voluntary groups
- ☐ Universities
- ☐ Schools
- ☐ Private individuals (e.g. commissions, ticket sales, lessons)
- ☐ Royalties
- ☐ Other / more information:

21. Do you have any concerns about your ability to cover overheads, now or in the future? _____

22. Are you applying / have you applied for any of the following financial support to compensate for the effects of the pandemic? Not applicable / Considered but did not apply / Applied – unsuccessful / Applied – successful / Yet to hear outcome / Plan to apply in the future

- ☐ Actors Benevolent Fund
- ☐ a-n Artist Bursaries and financial support
- ☐ Arts Council England
- ☐ Authors' Emergency Fund
- ☐ Bounce Back Loan
- ☐ Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme
- ☐ Covid-19 Film and TV Emergency Relief Fund
- ☐ Dance Professionals Fund
- ☐ Help Musicians
- ☐ Livenation 'Crewnation'
- ☐ Musicians Union
- ☐ PRS Foundation
- ☐ Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (Government)
- ☐ Theatre Artists Fund
- ☐ Universal Credit
- ☐ Other:

23. For any successful applications, how much did you receive? _____

24. What were your sources of information about these support schemes and what was your experience of the application process? _____

Personal finance

25. Have you applied for any work outside the creative sector?

- ☐ I have applied for jobs outside the creative sector
- ☐ I have begun part-time or full-time work outside the creative sector
- ☐ I was already undertaking part-time or full-time work outside the creative sector
- ☐ I have increased the number of hours I am working outside the creative sector
- ☐ If the situation remains the same, I plan to apply for jobs outside the creative sector in the next three months
- ☐ I am considering leaving the creative sector permanently
- ☐ I have decided to leave the creative sector permanently
- ☐ Other (please specify):

28. To survive this period, have you had to take any of the following measures for your personal finance?

- ☐ Using savings
- ☐ Using your overdraft
- ☐ Using credit cards
- ☐ Taking out a loan
- ☐ Borrowing money from friends and family
- ☐ Relying on a partner's income
- ☐ Relying on family / parents for support
- ☐ Relying on a professional pension
- ☐ Using money set aside for tax
- ☐ Defaulting on bills
- ☐ Taking a mortgage holiday
- ☐ Other (please specify):

27. If you would like to give us any additional information about the impact of Covid-19 on your income, please do so here: _____

Impact on health and wellbeing

We would like to know whether your mental health has been impacted by the pandemic as well. If you are happy to provide this information, please answer the following questions. If not, simply click "Next Page" to skip these questions.

All the information that we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential and will only be accessible to members of the research team.

28. How does your mental wellbeing now relate to the month before lockdown?

- ☐ It is much worse
- ☐ It is a bit worse
- ☐ It has stayed the same
- ☐ It is a bit better
- ☐ It is much better

29. Have any of the following been causing you to feel stress during lockdown? Select 'major stress' if this is constantly on your mind or keeping you awake at night. No stress / Minor stress / Major stress

- ☐ Being ill with Covid-19
- ☐ Friends and family being ill with Covid-19
- ☐ Unemployment
- ☐ Personal finances
- ☐ Ability to cover overheads
- ☐ The possibility of a local or national lockdown
- ☐ Isolation, loneliness and lack of social events

Next we would like to ask you four questions about your feelings on aspects of your life. There are no right or wrong answers.

If you are concerned about your mental health, you can find help and support at the following places: Sheffield IAPT (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies), The Samaritans, MIND, the Mental Health Charity

30. Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?

0 (not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (completely)

31. Overall, to what extent do you feel that the things you do in your life are worthwhile?

0 (not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (completely)

32. Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?

0 (not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (completely)

33. On a scale where 0 is "not at all anxious" and 10 is "completely anxious", overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?

0 (not at all) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (completely)

34. Do you have a diagnosed mental health condition?

- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ No diagnosed mental health condition
- ☐ Depression
- ☐ Anxiety
- ☐ Other:

Staying connected

35. Please tell us about any steps you have taken to keep your audiences or participants engaged with your work through lockdown: _____

36. Have there been any support networks that have kept you connected to other arts workers during this time? What could be done to help you further? _____

Longer term

37. Can you foresee this period having a lasting impact on your way of working or creative process?

- ☐ Yes, I think it will have a positive impact
- ☐ Yes, I think it will have a negative impact

- ☐ Possibly, unsure yet
- ☐ No, I don't think there will be any lasting impact

Please can you explain why you have chosen this answer? _____

40. In a year's time, how likely do you think it is that you will have the same amount of work as before lockdown?

- ☐ Very unlikely
- ☐ Unlikely
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Likely
- ☐ Very likely
- ☐ Don't know

Any further comments on how the availability of work may change long-term: _____

41. What new skills will arts workers need for a post- Covid era? Would you like to see training available for any of these skills? _____

42: If small bursaries were made available for arts practitioners in South Yorkshire, what would you like to see it being used for?

- ☐ Creating new work
- ☐ Research and development
- ☐ Thinking space
- ☐ Training and upskilling
- ☐ Collaboration and networking
- ☐ Other/more information:

Demographics

We know that Covid-19 has affected people in very different ways as a result of their age, ethnicity or health status. If you are willing to give us some information about yourself, this will help us to better understand your responses.

42. Which of the following age groups do you fall into?

43. Number of children under 18 in your household:

44. How would you describe your ethnicity?

- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Arab
- ☐ Asian / Asian British - Bangladeshi
- ☐ Asian / Asian British - Chinese
- ☐ Asian / Asian British - Indian
- ☐ Asian / Asian British - Pakistani
- ☐ Asian / Asian British - Any other Asian background
- ☐ Black / African / Caribbean / Black British - African
- ☐ Black / African / Caribbean / Black British - Caribbean
- ☐ Black / African / Caribbean / Black British - Any other Black / African / Caribbean background
- ☐ Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups - White and Asian
- ☐ Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups - White and Black African

- ☐ Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups - White and Black Caribbean
- ☐ Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups - Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background
- ☐ White - English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
- ☐ White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- ☐ White - Irish
- ☐ White - Any other White background
- ☐ Any other ethnic group

If you would like to describe your ethnicity in a way that is not represented in this list, please write it here:

45. How would you describe your gender? _____

46. Do you identify as a D/deaf or disabled person, or have a long-term health condition?

- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ I am D/deaf
- ☐ I have a disability
- ☐ I have a long-term health condition
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Other / more information

47. Do you consider yourself to be from a disadvantaged background?

- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

48. Has your access to work during the pandemic been in any way influenced by your demographic characteristics? Do you feel that you have been fortunate or unfairly disadvantaged during this period?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

We would like to interview some respondents to find out more about their experience of culture, arts and heritage during lockdown. If you are interested in taking part, please leave your details here and we will contact you with more information.

49. Your contact details will be used for the sole purpose of inviting you to take part in an interview. You can opt out of receiving these messages at any time by replying to one of our emails. Your contact information will be kept securely and will not be shared outside the research team.

50. Do you have any final comments or information that will help us to understand your answers?

Appendix 2: Phase 1 Interview Schedule

1. Could you tell me a bit about the work you were doing before the pandemic, and how that's been affected by Covid restrictions?

- Prompts for income, amount of work available, type of work

2. What do you anticipate the consequences of this being for your career?

- Contacts, momentum, visibility

3. Have you adapted your work to cope with these changes?

- Changes to practice, digital

4. Have you had any support to cope?

- Financial support, support networks, support from the city region
- Encountered any gaps in support?

5. [The way in which they describe work being affected] What has been the impact on you personally?

- Affected health and wellbeing? Or home life?

Thinking about your wider networks...

6. How has your experience compared to any other arts workers you know?

- Have you noticed any inequalities in the way people have been affected by the pandemic?

7. [Depending on the kind of work they do] Have you got any insights into how this has affected your audiences / participants / visitors?

Thinking about arts in South Yorkshire more broadly...

8. Has the arts and cultural sector here pulled together or separated?

9. In your opinion, how does South Yorkshire compare to other places in supporting freelancers?

- Any initiatives elsewhere that you would like to see?