

Why arts and culture matter

There is growing evidence that art and culture has a positive impact on society: participation in the arts can contribute to social cohesion, reduce social exclusion and isolation, and make communities feel safer and stronger. Children and young people from low-income families who take part in arts activities are three times more likely to get a degree than those who do not¹, with evidence that 'the arts can improve a young person's cognitive abilities by up to 17%, and contribute to raising young people's attainment in Maths and English – particularly for children from low-income backgrounds.'² The All-party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Well-being Inquiry concluded in 2017 that the arts can help keep us well, aid recovery, and support longer lives, better lived.³ The 2018 Taking Part survey⁴ showed that children whose parents were of higher socio-economic status attended arts events when growing up much more than those who were disadvantaged. Those from black and minority ethnic groups were also less likely to have been encouraged to participate in arts events. The survey identified a number of reasons why engaging with the arts as a child has an impact on adult engagement including familiarity with the experience of participating and attending arts events and being comfortable and welcome in arts environments. The importance and benefits of engaging with children and young people with the arts is further supported by the Young People's Cultural Journey's report produced by Arts Connect which found that the development of passions starts early⁵.

We believe that arts engagement is a powerful means of communication as well as self-expression with participation in the arts having a strong capacity for helping build both self-esteem and empathy, as stated by the Arts Council England's Be Creative Be Well report. The arts have a measurable impact on individual health and well-being with dance in particular encouraging young people to be physically active, which is vital in light of the an obesity crisis.



Motionhouse dancers perform touring production Charge

¹ *The Value of Arts & Culture to People and Society, Arts Council England 2011*

² *Key Research Findings: the case for cultural learning, CLA 2017*

³ *Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Wellbeing. All-Party Parliamentary Group on Art, Health and Wellbeing, 2017 (National Alliance for Arts, Health & Wellbeing, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Arts& Humanities Research Council, Kings College London Royal Society for Public Health and Guys & St Thomas Charity)*

⁴ *Taking Part survey, UK Government 2018*

⁵ *Young People's Cultural Journeys, Arts Connect, June 2018*