

COMMUNITY ARTS
PROVISION IN
BELFAST CITY COUNCIL
2015-16





FOREWORD

COMMUNITY ARTS PARTNERSHIP

Community Arts Partnership is the lead organisation in Northern Ireland in the development, support and delivery of community arts projects which the organisation combines with independent advocacy for community arts and community based art activity.

Our organisation's key emphasis is work facilitated in areas of social and economic deprivation.

CAP advocates, in line with the policy orientation followed, until the recent departmental restructure, by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL), *"pro-actively harnessing the transformative power of the creative and cultural sectors to tackle disadvantage and support a confident, creative, informed and healthy society ..."*

And beyond that, encourages the view that the Arts should be utilised

"..to promote social and economic equality and tackle poverty and social exclusion."

CAP therefore advocates for and welcomes the extension of arts activities, of access and participation in the arts for the general population, but in particular for those experiencing poverty and social exclusion.

Throughout the process of compiling information regarding a snapshot of arts activity in the Belfast City Council area, CAP aims not only to provide a general picture of the extent of provision for creative engagement but to highlight patterns where provision might be in need of increased support.



INTRODUCTION

In the Belfast City Council's "Cultural Framework for Belfast: Action Plan 2016-2020, a number of challenges are put forward.

For the Council with regards Arts and Heritage,

"...the challenge, in a rapidly globalising world, is to connect Belfast to its arts and heritage, developing cultural programmes that reflect and engage with our people and communities, their issues and interests."

And beyond that

"...Culture and arts can showcase Belfast as a distinctive, dynamic and world-class place to live in, work in, and visit."

The Council also recognises in the document, that

"...Community arts, outreach and audience development all create opportunity and encourage people to learn new skills."

and

"...This improves social cohesion and quality of life, building confidence at an individual, community and whole-city level."

TRANSFORMATIVE POWER

Community Arts Partnership believes in the transformative power of the Arts.

Our working definition of Community Arts, as contained in the Arts Council of Northern Ireland's Community Arts Policy, co-developed with the community arts sector, is


"Community art is a process of harnessing the transformative power of original artistic expression and producing a range of outcomes: social, cultural and environmental. Looked at politically, socially, culturally and/or economically, community arts aim to establish and maximise inclusive ways of working, providing an opportunity for communities and their participants to continue to find ways to develop their own skills as artists and for artists to explore ways of transferring those skills. Through this process, community arts aim to maximise the access, participation, authorship and ownership in collective arts practice."

Put simply, community arts practice develops original creative thinking, activity and outcomes to affect positive change.

CAP's work is also governed by the ideas expressed in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.

"Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits."

[Article 27: Right to participate in cultural life](#)



Using this approach it would be considered of positive value for the general health and well-being of the Belfast citizenry to have substantial provision of Arts activities, something which appears coterminous with the general outline put forward in the Belfast City Council's Action Framework document. Between the 2011 and 2016 CAP had been commissioned through a Service Level Agreement to carry out a range of supports and offer information gathering for the Council in the aid of the advocacy for the sector. This "snapshot" represents the final survey of this information. It is disappointing that having acquired the ability and indeed trust to translate a range of inputs and observations from host of funded organisations and community venues into one document (that simultaneously transfers this information into a digital resource of where participation is to be seen across the city) that we are no longer in a position to offer this service.

THE PROCESS OF GATHERING INFORMATION

This report, a snapshot of arts provision in the Belfast City Council area, is based upon information provided to Community Arts Partnership by organisations CAP works with in our engagement programme, discussions with administrative staff and centre users at Belfast City Council run Community Centres including the centres brought under council administration from other council areas last year, administrative staff of the independent Community Centres, and staff of a range of selected arts organisations supporting more community-focused creative activity throughout Belfast.

CAP held focus groups, prioritised, in many instances, face to face meetings, bolstering the information gathered with discussions over the phone and by email contact.

We have produced a multi-layered interactive google map, populated by the research information and offering a general picture of creative engagement throughout the Belfast City Council confines.

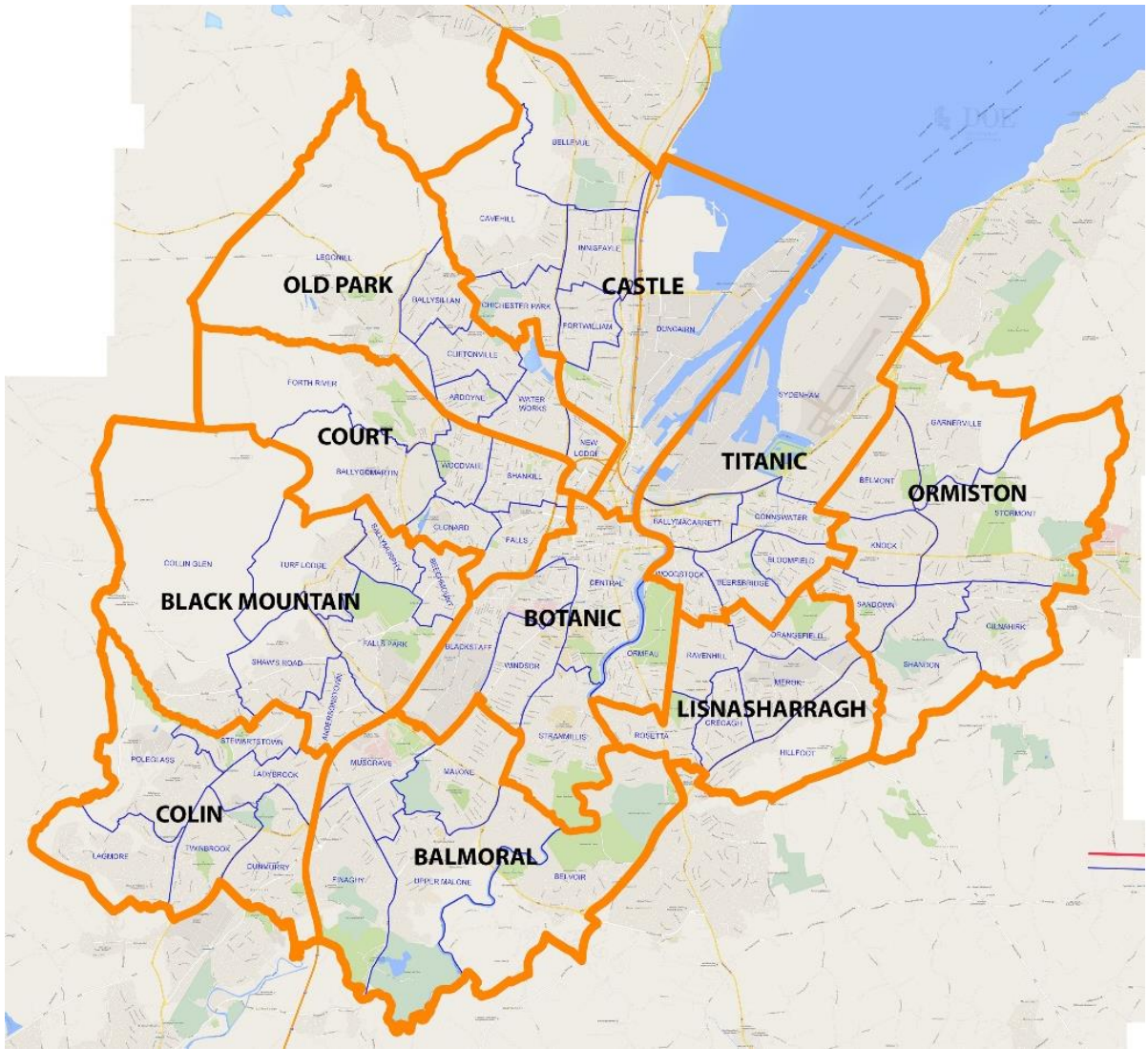
The **map is set out in District Electoral Areas and the Wards** within them - based on the 2014 electoral restructure.

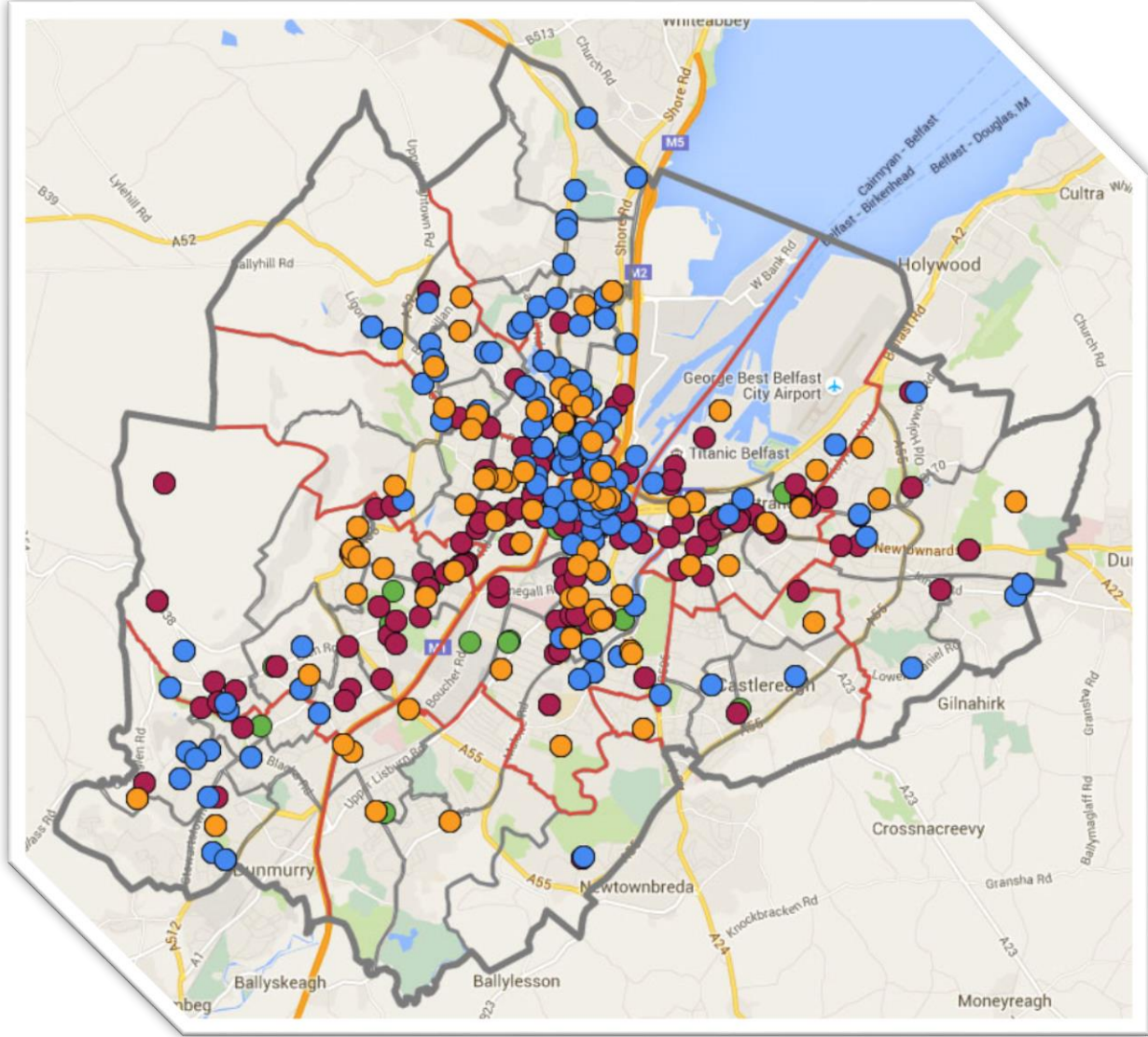
We have also produced tables which collate the activities ward by ward, with cross referenced spread sheets to enable greater levels of understanding. (See tables below)

Through the digital maps one can look at activity through various filters, e.g. CAP project groups, Arts Council Regularly Funded Organisations, Belfast City Council Community Centres, Independent Community Centres and through the work of selected arts organisations carried out beyond their home base. You will also find contact information for each specific project.

We have mapped **more locations this year than last**, partly through receiving more information from the selected organisations, partly through desk research using CAP's peerless comprehensive weekly bulletin, Community Arts Weekly, for activities taking place in the Belfast City Council area, and partly through some of our selected organisations having increased their outreach work from last year's survey. This is not an exhaustive analysis of all community-based creative intervention, rather, it offers an overview and a geographic signposting to concentrations of community engagement across the city.

Last year the map had 281 locations, this year **we document 586** (with many venues facilitating multiple activities, workshops and events).





CLICK [HERE](#) TO GO TO THE GOOGLE MAP

(If the link doesn't work, please go to <http://bit.ly/2gGRQKE>)



THE FINDINGS

GENERAL PICTURE

With regards provision of arts activities we can say that a **similar pattern emerges** as that identified in the snapshot conducted in 2014-2015.

There is a **high level of provision in the District Electoral Areas (DEA's) which encompass Belfast City Centre** and the areas which are in close proximity to the city centre.

The Botanic District Electoral Area has 20.5 % of provision, Castle 20.1%. Oldpark 14.2%, Court 12.6% and Titanic in inner East Belfast 11.9%.

These areas make up almost 80% of documented provision.

As one travels out from the city centre and the inner suburban areas, **arts provision decreases dramatically**.

Black Mountain documents 10.4%, and is somewhat of an aberration, because as we move out from the city centre and surrounding areas, Ormiston scores 3.92%, Collin 3.07%, Lisnasharragh 1.71% and Balmoral 1.54%.

WARDS

With regards provision within the wards of the District Electoral Areas, and this information is easily accessible in the tables found below, Duncairn has 16.8% of all documented activity, Central Ward has 15.1%, these two wards accounting for nearly 32% of all activities.

From there, provision drops markedly, with New Lodge accounting for 4.84%, Shankill 4.67%, Waterworks 4.15%, Ballymacarrett 3.81 and Connswater also at 3.81%.


SUPPORTING PEOPLE IN AREAS OF DEPRIVATION

The mapping shows **strengths and weaknesses regarding supporting those who live in areas of deprivation** to engage creatively.

When we look at provision in the top 10 wards experiencing high levels of arts provision in our survey, and compare that ranking with those wards experiencing high levels of deprivation, recognising that what we are offering here are approximations because the Multiple Deprivation statistics are based on the previous council structures which don't match the 2014 DEA and Ward configurations, we see that 7 of the ten wards would fall within the top 20 areas with extremely high levels of deprivation.

Looking at our tables, the area where the largest documenting of arts activity takes place, Duncairn experiences the 14th highest level of deprivation, Central Ward is approximately 11th, New Lodge 3rd, Shankill 4th, Waterworks 16th, Ballymacarrett 18th and Falls 2nd.

While this suggests that there are high levels of provision in some areas with very high levels of deprivation, wards such as Crumlin, Clonard, Ardoyne, Twinbrook, Upper Springfield and Colin



Glen which rank 5th through to 10th respectively in the Multiple Deprivation rankings, receive small amounts of provision; Crumlin, Clonard, Upper Springfield and Colin Glen all receive 1.87% of documented provision, with Twinbrook receiving 1.04% and Ardoyne on 0.87%.

PROVISION IN AREAS OF LOW DEPRIVATION

As a counterpoint to the figures available to us from areas which experience high levels of deprivation, when we look at provision in areas of low deprivation, and here we are talking about provision from community arts organisations, arts council funded organisations, council run community centres as well as information gleaned from CAP's communications, we find that there is very little provision.

The areas with the highest MDM rankings, i.e. areas with low levels of deprivation, Finaghy 550th, Stranmillis 563rd, Malone 564th, Stormont 576th and Gilnahirk 578th score respectively 0.17, 1.56 (Stranmillis Ward has The Lyric Theatre based there so this alters the figure markedly), 0.00, 0.87 and 0.67 with regards provision of publically funded arts activities.

It would be reasonable to conclude that these figures show that organisations in receipt of public funding tend to deliver programmes, workshops or events to people in areas experiencing high levels of deprivation.

The question then emerges, **what kind of arts activities are people receiving?**

While we are unable to provide an exhaustive study there are some distinctions that can be made between artistic activities.

We have plotted venues, the start and end points of parades, of festival showpieces, but what about participatory activities?

What about the creation of new artists, of new creators?

Community Arts practice has at its fundamental core the mission to develop and transfer artistic skills, to increase participation, to develop the authorship and ownership of creative activities, to increase capacity, and to develop audiences through connectivity to the artistic process.

We can offer some delineation of activities of this nature and we offer two tables which show the extent of community arts provision.

The first table offers figures for Community based Arts activities which can be loosely categorised as Participatory Arts, effectively arts practice which aim is to encourage participation in creative activities...

"Participatory art is an approach to making art in which the audience is engaged directly in the creative process, allowing them to become co-authors, editors, and observers of the work..."

The second table, labelled Community Arts, accepts a sharper, **more detailed definition**, outlined on page 2 of this report

"Community art is a process of harnessing the transformative power of original artistic expression and producing a range of outcomes: social, cultural and environmental. Looked at politically, socially, culturally and/or economically, community arts aim to establish and maximise inclusive ways of working, providing an opportunity for communities and their participants to continue to find ways to

develop their own skills as artists and for artists to explore ways of transferring those skills. Through this process, community arts aim to maximise the access, participation, authorship and ownership in collective arts practice."

AVAILABILITY OF COMMUNITY-BASED PARTICIPATORY ARTS

In order to offer figures for comparison we have included under the label Participatory Arts (as defined above) the following organisations – Community Arts Partnership, New Lodge Arts, Wheelworks, Arts for All, Beyond Skin, Young at Art, Belfast Community Circus School, Terra Nova Theatre Company and The Beat Carnival.

The table below documents Botanic Ward receiving 19.46 per cent of Participatory Arts activities, Castle 17.81%, Old Park 15.53%, Court, 12.84%, Titanic 12.63% and Black Mountain 11.18.

At Ward level a similar pattern emerges as that of Arts provision generally where Wards experiencing high levels of deprivation are in receipt of Participatory Arts activities; Central 14.41%, Duncairn 13.98%, New Lodge 5.16%, Shankill 4.73%, Connswater 4.08%, Ballymacarett 3.87%, Falls 3.22%, Sydenham 3.01%, Waterworks 2.79% and Beechmount 2.36%.

Seven out of the top ten wards receiving the highest level of Participatory Arts provision are within the top twenty most deprived wards with Beechmount within the top 50 most deprived wards.

This information suggest that publicly funded organisations which offer community based, Participatory Arts activities tend to facilitate their programmes, by and large, in areas of multiple deprivation.

Table 1.1 Participatory Arts by District Electoral Area

DEA		%	DEA		%
Botanic	94	19.46	Black Mountain	54	11.18
Castle	86	17.81	Ormiston	20	4.141
Old Park	75	15.53	Collin	16	3.313
Court	62	12.84	Balmoral	8	1.656
Titanic	61	12.63	Lisnasharragh	7	1.449

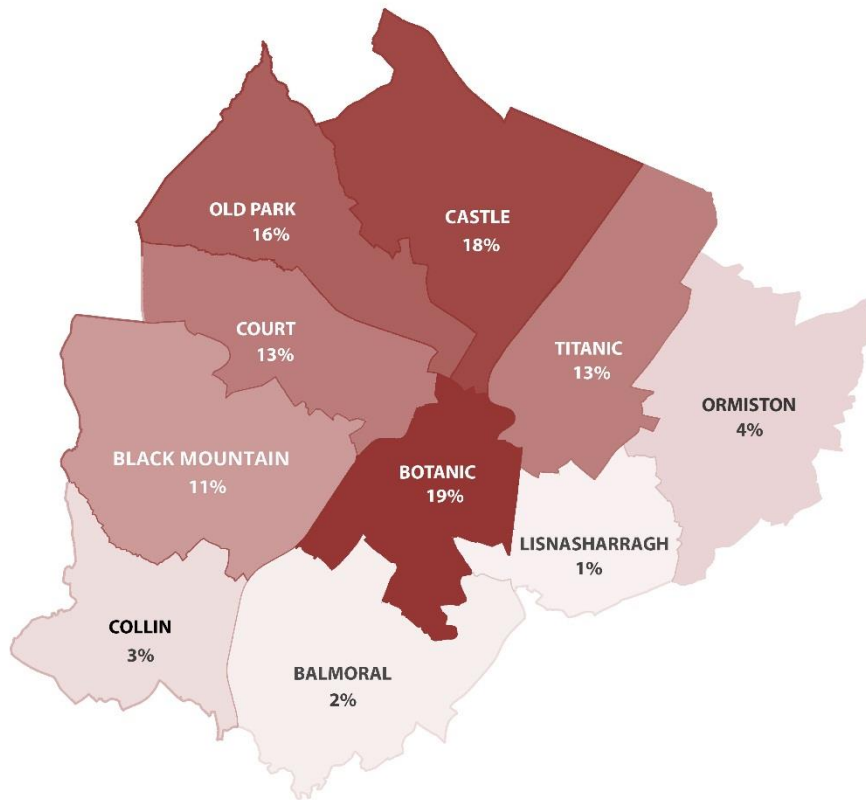


Table 1.2 Participatory Arts by Wards

DEA		%	DEA		%
Central	67	14.41	Belmont	4	0.86
Duncairn	65	13.98	Woodstock	4	0.86
New Lodge	24	5.161	Ardoyne	4	0.86
Shankill	22	4.731	Innisfayle	4	0.86
Connswater	19	4.086	Knock	4	0.86
Ballymacarrett	18	3.871	Andersonstown	4	0.86
Falls	15	3.226	Ballymurphy	4	0.86
Sydenham	14	3.011	Musgrave	3	0.645
Waterworks	13	2.796	Gilnahirk	3	0.645
Beechmount	11	2.366	Ballygomartin	3	0.645
Turf Lodge	10	2.151	Belvoir	3	0.645
Clonard	10	2.151	Forth River	3	0.645
Woodvale	9	1.935	Beersbridge	2	0.43
Falls Park	9	1.935	Orangefield	2	0.43
Collin Glen	9	1.935	Cregagh	2	0.43
Ormeau	8	1.72	Shandon	2	0.43
Poleglass	8	1.72	Garnerville	2	0.43
Stranmillis	7	1.505	Cavehill	2	0.43
Shaw's Road	7	1.505	Rosetta	2	0.43
Fortwilliam	6	1.29	Upper Malone	1	0.215
Ligoniel	6	1.29	Finaghy	1	0.215
Blackstaff	6	1.29	Ladybrook	1	0.215
Ballysillan	6	1.29	Merok	1	0.215
Windsor	6	1.29	Stewartstown	1	0.215
Twinbrook	6	1.29	Malone	0	0
Stormont	5	1.075	Dunmurry	0	0
Chichester Park	5	1.075	Ravenhill	0	0
Cliftonville	4	0.86	Lagmore	0	0
Bellevue	4	0.86	Hillfoot	0	0
Bloomfield	4	0.86	Sandown	0	0

AVAILABILITY OF COMMUNITY ARTS

With regards the table below which documents Community Arts practice based on Community Arts Partnership's definition, and the definition accepted by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, we have included the organisations - Community Arts Partnership, New Lodge Arts, Wheelworks, Beyond Skin, Belfast Community Circus School and the Beat Carnival.

The figures suggest that again the bulk of this activity is concentrated on people living in areas experiencing deprivation and social exclusion.

In the district electoral areas, Botanic receives 19.46% of community arts provision, Castle 17.81%, Old Park 15.53%, Court 12.84%, Titanic 12.63% and Black Mountain 11.18%.

The figures for the wards show that Central receives 14.41%, Duncairn 13.98%, New Lodge 5.16, Shankill 4.73, Conswatter 4.08%, Ballymacarrett 3.87%, Sydenham 3.01%, Waterworks 2.79% and Beechmount 2.36%.

This accounts for over 50% of all Community Arts provision and the majority of that activity takes place in areas which experience the highest rates of deprivation.

Why might this distinction matter?

It would be Community Arts Partnership's view that properly resourced community arts activities with artist facilitators trained in community arts practices, maximise the dialogical potential for greater skills transfer, increased capacity building, a richer creative experience generally and enhanced processes and outcomes.

With the We have documented Community Arts provision and when compared to all provision, Participatory Arts accounts for 82% and Community Arts offer 38% of all documented provision.

Table 2.1 Community Arts by District Electoral Area

DEA		%	DEA		%
Castle	54	23.8938	Black Mountain	12	5.30973
Old Park	46	20.354	Collin	11	4.86726
Botanic	42	18.5841	Ormiston	10	4.42478
Court	27	11.9469	Balmoral	6	2.65487
Titanic	13	5.75221	Lisnasharragh	5	2.21239

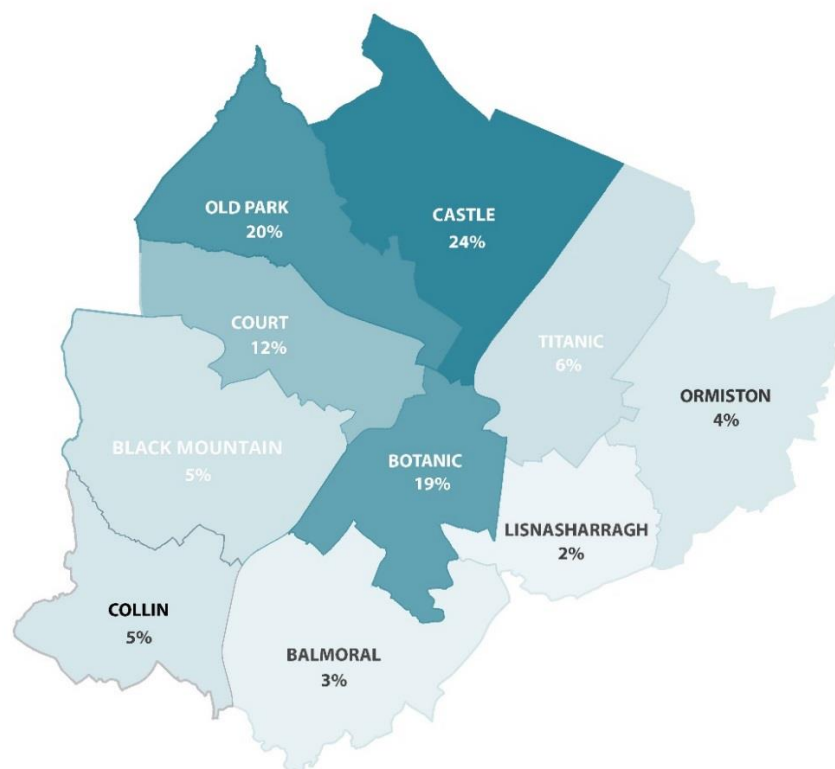


Table 2.2 Community Arts by Wards

DEA		%	DEA		%
Duncairn	38	16.8142	Rosetta	2	0.88496
Central	30	13.2743	Ardoyne	2	0.88496
Waterworks	17	7.52212	Belmont	2	0.88496
New Lodge	16	7.07965	Knock	2	0.88496
Shankill	14	6.19469	Upper Malone	1	0.44248
Ormeau	5	2.21239	Finaghy	1	0.44248
Poleglass	5	2.21239	Belvoir	1	0.44248
Ligoniel	5	2.21239	Andersonstown	1	0.44248
Sydenham	5	2.21239	Ballymurphy	1	0.44248
Stranmillis	4	1.76991	Falls Park	1	0.44248
Fortwilliam	4	1.76991	Cavehill	1	0.44248
Innisfayle	4	1.76991	Ladybrook	1	0.44248
Chichester Park	4	1.76991	Stewartstown	1	0.44248
Twinbrook	4	1.76991	Orangefield	1	0.44248
Falls	4	1.76991	Merok	1	0.44248
Musgrave	3	1.32743	Cregagh	1	0.44248
Collin Glen	3	1.32743	Garnerville	1	0.44248
Turf Lodge	3	1.32743	Shandon	1	0.44248
Shaw's Road	3	1.32743	Stormont	1	0.44248
Windsor	3	1.32743	Woodstock	1	0.44248
Bellevue	3	1.32743	Beersbridge	1	0.44248
Clonard	3	1.32743	Malone	0	0
Ballysillan	3	1.32743	Beechmount	0	0
Cliftonville	3	1.32743	Blackstaff	0	0
Gilnahirk	3	1.32743	Lagmore	0	0
Connswater	3	1.32743	Dunmurry	0	0
Ballymacarrett	3	1.32743	Ravenhill	0	0
Woodvale	2	0.88496	Hillfoot	0	0
Ballygomartin	2	0.88496	Sandown	0	0
Forth River	2	0.88496	Bloomfield	0	0

AVAILABILITY OF INTERCULTURAL ARTS (CAP + BEYOND SKIN + TERRA NOVA)

With regards arts activities which aim to connect practitioners with the idea of social change, we have provided a table which documents Intercultural Arts activities.

As Northern Ireland’s demographic profile changes with the arrival of people from Eastern Europe, the nations of Africa and elsewhere, increasingly Intercultural approaches to arts activities are going to be required if creative engagement is to be fully inclusive.

As a working definition, the following extract comes from Community Arts Partnership's, Programme for Intercultural Arts Support's (PICAS) Intercultural handbook, "Between Ourselves"...

"...rather than ignoring diversity (as with guest worker approaches), denying diversity (as with assimilationist approaches) or overemphasising diversity and therefore reinforcing walls between culturally distinct groups (as with multiculturalism), interculturalism is about explicitly recognising the value of diversity while doing everything possible to increase interaction, mixing and hybridisation between cultural communities.

Interculturalism is also about addressing issues of cultural conflict or tension (religious customs and requirements, communitarianism, women's rights etc) through public debate, with the involvement of all stakeholders.

Effectively Intercultural arts practice would "recognise the value of diversity", "increase interaction, mixing and hybridisation" and "address conflict."

Using this definition we have included Community Arts Partnership, Beyond Skin and Terra Nova Theatre Productions in these calculations.

With regards provisions, at a District Electoral Area level, Botanic has 20.77% of Intercultural Arts provision, Court has 16.88%, Castle 14.28%, Old Park 11.68% with Titanic and Botanic receiving 10.38% respectively.

At Ward level, Central Ward and Duncairn dominate with 14.28% and 11.68% with the table showing a drop off then to Shankill and Turd Lodge both receiving 5.19%, Musgrave and Clonard both receiving 3.89%.

As a percentage of total provision **Intercultural arts activities account for just over 13% of documented arts activities** which, given the changing cultural make-up of Northern Ireland, might be an area where increased support is required.

Table 3.1 Intercultural Arts by District Electoral Area

DEA		%	DEA		%
Botanic	16	20.7792	Black Mountain	8	10.3896
Court	13	16.8831	Balmoral	5	6.49351
Castle	11	14.2857	Ormiston	3	3.8961
Old Park	9	11.6883	Collin	2	2.5974
Titanic	8	10.3896	Black Mountain	8	10.3896

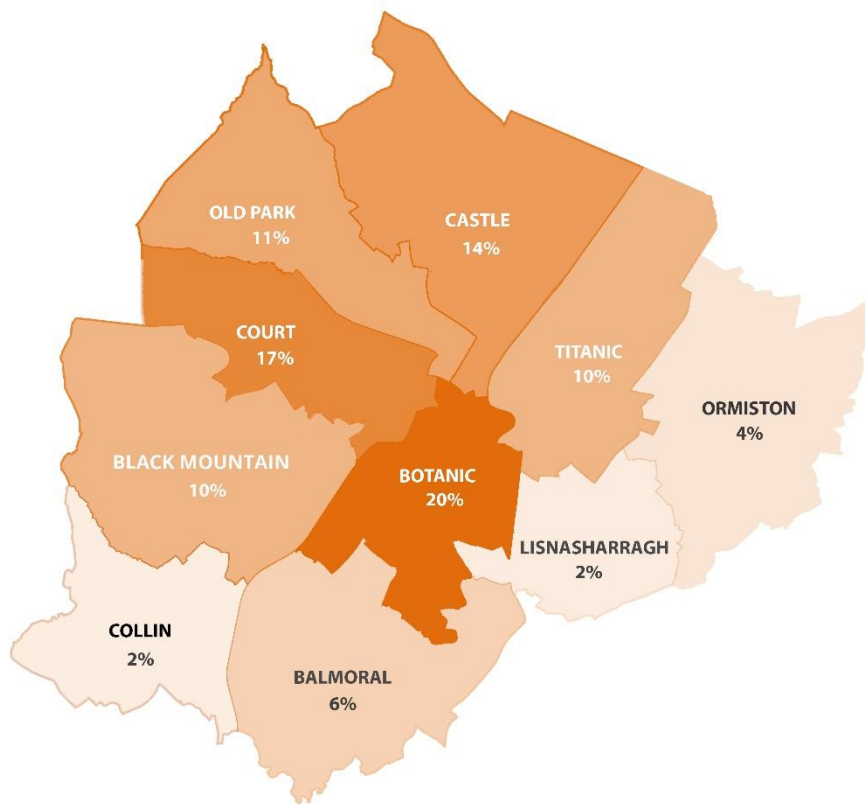


Table 3.2 Intercultural Arts by Wards

DEA		%	DEA		%
Central	11	14.2857	Ballymurphy	1	1.2987
Duncairn	9	11.6883	Falls Park	1	1.2987
Shankill	4	5.19481	Orangefield	1	1.2987
Turf Lodge	4	5.19481	Stormont	1	1.2987
New Lodge	3	3.8961	Woodstock	1	1.2987
Musgrave	3	3.8961	Beersbridge	1	1.2987
Clonard	3	3.8961	Beechmount	1	1.2987
Waterworks	2	2.5974	Chichester Park	0	0
Ormeau	2	2.5974	Collin Glen	0	0
Sydenham	2	2.5974	Bellevue	0	0
Falls	2	2.5974	Cliftonville	0	0
Windsor	2	2.5974	Gilnahirk	0	0
Ballysillan	2	2.5974	Knock	0	0
Connswater	2	2.5974	Belvoir	0	0
Ballymacarrett	2	2.5974	Andersonstown	0	0
Woodvale	2	2.5974	Cavehill	0	0
Belmont	2	2.5974	Ladybrook	0	0
Poleglass	1	1.2987	Stewartstown	0	0
Ligoniel	1	1.2987	Merok	0	0
Stranmillis	1	1.2987	Cregagh	0	0
Fortwilliam	1	1.2987	Garnerville	0	0
Innisfayle	1	1.2987	Shandon	0	0
Twinbrook	1	1.2987	Malone	0	0
Shaw's Road	1	1.2987	Blackstaff	0	0
Ballygomartin	1	1.2987	Lagmore	0	0
Forth River	1	1.2987	Dunmurry	0	0
Rosetta	1	1.2987	Ravenhill	0	0
Ardoyne	1	1.2987	Hillfoot	0	0
Upper Malone	1	1.2987	Sandown	0	0
Finaghy	1	1.2987	Bloomfield	0	0

COMMUNITY CENTRES

In discussion with Belfast City Council Community Centres the narrative last year was, in general, that very little arts activity took place in council run community centres.

Where activity did take place it was generally conducted by outside groups teaching dance, or the occasional writing or art class.

In some centres community arts or crafts groups had a presence but it was evident that most of the local writers groups had ceased to exist.

The discussions undertaken this year offered a similar narrative.

Most of the community centres had very little in the way of direct arts provision, e.g. Braniel, Cregagh, Clonduff, Concorde, Dee Street, Donegal Pass, Downshire, Duncairn, Girdwood, Horn Drive, Markets, North Queen Street, Olympic and Suffolk suggested minimal provision with whatever arts activities which were on offer coming from outside organisations.

In these centres there were occasional dance groups, craft workshops or specialty arts groups and on occasion after school arts activities.

"We don't really have a budget to offer the kind of regular arts activities you seem to be asking about. Most of what happens with regards arts...that happens by people coming in or groups getting funding and using the centre.....we do have a good after schools programme and we leave out arts materials for that.....but we don't run writers groups or music lessons or anything like that..."

Community Centre Staff

Some centres had more provision than others either because more outside groups used the facilities, or there were long running local arts or crafts groups as regular users.

Ardoyne, Concorde, Divis, Donegall Pass, Finaghy, Hammer, Inverary and Ligoniel appeared to have far more usage than other centres.

There were a couple of community centres which deserve special mention because in one instance the objective of the centre was to increase artistic provision and creative engagement, with a priority on community and participatory arts practice, and in another the centre was aiming to establish a higher level of arts provision for young people.

Knocknagoney Community Centre offered writing groups, after-school arts and crafts, youth arts and crafts, adult drama classes and youth drama classes, various dance classes including dance workshops for older people, art and craft groups for older people and circus skills classes.

Highfield Community Centre engaged Community Arts Partnership and the TRASH Fashion project

"We have had an arts focus here because we think the arts in whatever form has so many benefits. We bring older people together to write...they produce plays...we have adult drama classes...the impact on the older people is fantastic....builds their confidence, reduces isolation and being part of the arts activities helps create a sense of community. For younger people apart from the enjoyment of dance or painting or being involved in drama ...there is a sense of reducing anti-social behaviour in the area."

Community Centre Administrator

community arts activities in the centre for young people and intends to continue and extend that provision.

"It's been a wonderful success bringing in the TRASH fashion workshops to the centre. We have a great turnout of local young people, we've worked with other communities and we've created excitement around an arts programme. We will definitely be looking to increase arts projects and we want to get the TRASH fashion project back next year."

Community Centre Staff

INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY CENTRES

Here a **similar narrative** emerges from Council managed facilities where either there is very little, if any, arts provision or the bulk of provision comes from outside organisations.

In one instance there was no arts provision at all, in Percy Street there are dance classes for older people and occasionally outside arts activities, in Ballymacarrett/Connswater we were told there were supervised arts classes for children with special needs however there were initiatives, like that from Partisan Productions, that did support participation in dramatic arts..

There were some interesting views put forward regarding the **difficulties in offering arts activities...**

"We have a lot of physical, sporting activities taking place at our centre. It can be very noisy and so we don't always have the facilities, quiet areas, purpose built rooms, which can be allocated for creative writing or music classes much as we would like to do that."

Shaftesbury Recreation Centre

"What we find is that arts activities are sort of built in to our general youth programmes or for special events, a festival or a music event for example. We would love to initiate music classes or arts classes but the set up just isn't right for that...having said that we know the importance of the arts and the impact arts can have...not just the fun element it brings but the impact socially."

Shaftesbury Recreation Centre

This suggests that centre managers might be open to dedicated arts programmes if funding was made available to them to initiate arts activities.

ARTS ORGANISATIONS

CAP selected a number of organisations last year which were known for reaching out" and working in diverse settings in arts project delivery. Last year the report documented the provision offered by **New Lodge Arts, Wheelworks, Arts for All, Creative Exchange, Beyond Skin and Belfast Exposed**. A few organisations added information this year, primarily **Young at Art, Strand Arts Centre, Eastside Arts Partnership, Feile an Phobail, Beat Carnival, Belfast Film Festival, Belfast Circus School and Terra Nova theatre Company**. Many others were approached and who, for a range of reasons, were unable to respond.

In any case, this gives us a far richer and more detailed map of where provision takes place throughout Belfast.

FUNDING PRESSURES

With regards the organisations themselves, it was suggested to us that there were some factors which altered their capacity to deliver quality arts projects year on year. **Funding cuts had made a difference to what was on offer** with some organisations scaling down projects in order to deliver to as many recipients as in previous years.

Some organisations suggested that they were implementing cost cutting measures; reducing contact hours, reducing delivery days, reducing artists non-contact or preparation time, in order to deliver the same quantity of arts provision as in previous years. Other organisations were facilitating projects using their premises as venues, some concentrating more on delivering projects outside of Belfast aiming to secure funding in other council areas and some were, regrettably, having to dramatically reduce the amount of community-engaged work .

Almost all of the organisations we contacted said that for the arts projects they offered, they were all substantially oversubscribed and that they...

"Simply had to turn community groups and schools away, "...simply because the funding isn't there to deliver more workshops or classes."

Beyond Skin

"We could deliver 4 or 5 times what we offer presently if the funding was available...the phone never stops ringing...we've worked a fair bit this year in the Belfast City Council area...probably more than last year, but by and large we work in rural areas where we seem to be able to get a hearing from local councils about increasing arts activities in their area."

Beyond Skin


"We do work in the Belfast City Council area although nowhere near as much as we would like and nowhere near as much as we could do. We have tended over the last number of years to venture out into rural areas, we do workshops, into schools, classes, long term work with groups...we just don't seem to work as much in Belfast..."

Belfast Exposed

FURTHER INSIGHTS

We can suggest from the information available to us that determined **efforts are being made** to supply arts activities, whether this is presented in the form of events, community festivals, parades or whether this takes a more participatory form, in areas which experience the highest levels of deprivation.

We could also suggest, as our report did last year, that while we can see many strengths with regards provision, it is evident that there are **weaknesses that require attention**, with areas experiencing far higher levels of activity because of the efforts of particular organisations or centres.



However, there persist many areas experiencing deprivation where the participatory arts offer has not translated into active creative engagement.

This report might have documented this to an even greater extent had the current DEA and Ward Multiple Deprivation Measures been available to us but they are currently still being re-shaped to account for changes via Local Government Reform processes and the development of so-called Supercouncils.

It is clear also that our Belfast City Council run **community centres appear to be somewhat underused with regards arts activities** in general, and community arts practices in particular. Whilst organisations like CAP and others are operating at or above their resourced capacity, it seems clear that there is a real tangible opportunity for greater provision and uptake in these centres and new ways to encourage active and interactive participation needs to be explored beyond digital platforms or one-size fits all marketing.

It is further evident that some administrative staff at Council run community centres do employ arts activities, particularly **community arts activities, as a central element in the creation of a vibrant, creatively-engaged community** that increases the attractiveness, and therefore the footfall in their centres and also allow for greater community-including activity to enhance their centrality locally.

The aim of this approach is **to catalyse social cohesion, reduce social difficulties**, increase a range of health and wellbeing benefits associated with confidence and skills and capacity building, in some instances adopting arts-led approaches to reduce anti-social behaviour, social isolation, interface tensions etc etc. In hosting and utilising arts provision, to instrumentally develop positive local social consequences, the primary disciplines of the arts are also fostering increased awareness of the cultural offering across the city as well..

THE QUESTION OF WHAT KIND OF ARTS ACTIVITIES ARE ON OFFER?

We have documented the coverage of arts provision in a general sense throughout Belfast via our digital maps, tables and spreadsheets.

We have also shown that there might be **further investigation required** to look at areas where there is very little provision especially in areas where deprivation is experienced at its highest level. Given that almost one in three people in Belfast are economically inactive and areas of multiple deprivation remain stubbornly high, there are clearly challenges to the resourced-provision currently employed.

We have also shown, within that snapshot, that there are different approaches regarding participation, from voluntary and participatory arts, through to other forms of community arts and intercultural arts practice for example.

WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

It is evident to us that where there are specific and well-resourced programmes like that of Community Arts Partnership, (or indeed others included in the Participatory Arts, Community Arts or Intercultural Arts tables), there is very likely to be an on-going relationship not only through



THIS YEAR'S RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM LAST YEAR

On first examination of the evidence and findings from this snapshot report one can see patterns emerging in terms of capacity and geography associated with arts practice in the city.

One can also discern that there is a variety of volume that art practice achieves across the city. For an organisation like Community Arts Partnership it is food for thought.

There has always been need to champion proactively the participation in the arts and this is where key agencies have played a vital role over the years. It seems once again however there is perhaps a necessity to develop piloted sampling programmes and to seek out that participation rather than wait for those groups to come forward.

Community Arts Partnership like some many organisations funded by Belfast City Council are currently working at their maximum funded capacity. However, there is every possibility that organisations working in this area could remodel their community offering to generate participation or at least create the opportunity to develop an awareness of the routes to access arts participation.

Large-scale programmes, funded through the likes of the Creative and Cultural Fund, will always be welcomed by groups and organisations that recognise the opportunity. But it seems that there are other groups for whom this recognition will not arise. In looking at areas transitioning from one council into a new super council area, there may well be a range of opportunities through community planning services, that can specifically support awareness raising and capacity building in the arts, never mind the huge opportunity to use the arts to as a means to consult on a range of other services.

A proactive programme of sampling workshops, designed to give insight not just to potential participants from the community, but also to their leaders and committee members, might insure better take up and greater readiness to seek out creative opportunities. In some of the new transitioning council areas, even though centres that had a certain level of capacity, were not valuing that opportunity in the arts. In some of these former council areas, we understand the arts budgets were incredibly small on an annual basis. Again perhaps wedded to the new realities around increasing rates payments, there may also be a strategy that can better harness community engagement via participatory introductory arts practice.

ORGANISATIONS THAT ARE PART OF THIS REPORT

Aisling Ghear Theatre Company	Creative Exchange	Polish Educational and Cultural Association
An Droichead	Crescent Arts Centre	Prime Cut Productions Ltd
Andersonstown Music School	Cultúrlann McAdam Ó Fiaich	Prison Arts Foundation
Array Studios	Dance Resource Base (NI) Ltd	PS Squared
Arts & Business NI	Digital Arts Studios	QSS @ Bedford Street
Arts and Disability Forum	DU Dance	Red Barn Gallery
Arts Care	Dumbworld Ltd	Redhead Thread
Arts for All	EastSide Arts	Reminiscence Network Northern Ireland
ArtsEkta	Feile an Phobail	Replay Productions Limited
Beat Carnival	Fenderesky Gallery	Spanner in the Works
Belfast Circus School	Flaxart Studios	Spectrum Centre
Belfast Exposed	Folktown Market	Strand Arts Centre
Belfast Film Festival	Golden Thread Gallery	Streetwise Community Circus
Belfast International Arts Festival	Kabosh Theatre Ltd	Terra Nova Productions
Belfast Music Society	Kids in Control	Tether Festival
Belfast Print Workshop	Linen Hall Library	The Black Box Trust
BelfastTrad	Maiden Voyage (NI) Ltd	The Gathering Drum
Belvoir Players Amateur Dramatic Society	Moving on Music	The Grand Opera House Trust
Beyond Skin	Naughton Gallery	The John Hewitt Society
Big Telly Theatre Company	New Lodge Arts	The Lyric Theatre (NI)
Bright Young Things Drama	NI Opera	The MAC
Bruiser Theatre Company	NI Piping & Drumming School	TheatreNI
C.S. Lewis Festival	Northern Ireland Muslim Family Association	Tinderbox Theatre Company
Cahoots NI Ltd	Northern Visions Ltd.	Townhouse Gallery
Catalyst Arts Ltd	Oh Yeah Music Centre	Ulster Orchestra Society Ltd
Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival	Open Arts	Ulster Youth Choir
Cinemagic	Open House Festival	Ulster Youth Orchestra
Colin Neighbourhood Partnership	Paragon Studios	Ulster-Scots Community Network
Common Grounds Café	Partisan Productions	UU Festival of Art and Design
Community Arts Partnership	Photo Works North / Source	Wheelworks
Craft and Design Collective	PLACE	Young at Art
Craft Northern Ireland	Platform Arts	Youth Action Northern Ireland
Craic NI	Play Resource Warehouse	

Organisations that provided information ■ Regularly funded organisations* ■ Other organisations ■

* These organisations have been assigned only their office.