

Museum Directors Research 2026



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Cover image: Kids Aloud event at Manchester Art Gallery
© David Oates / Art Fund 2025

Foreword

Published every two years, our Museum Directors Research offers a snapshot of the day-to-day realities of running a public museum, gallery or historic house. It also gives museum leaders the opportunity to share their aspirations, ambitions and concerns with Art Fund, sector colleagues, funders and decision-makers.

In 2026, this biennial temperature check points to renewed confidence and positivity. The clarion call for bolder national funding and investment has been heard, and the tremulous financial situation of recent years calmed. However, we are not out of the woods. The overall picture remains fragile, with many organisations struggling to meet rising overheads and the needs of their workforce, audiences and buildings. Over the past two years there has been a decrease in exhibitions activity, including borrowing, loans and tours – with fewer exhibitions being programmed and opening hours reduced. Visitor numbers continue to recover with growing engagement from communities, schools and learning groups. The central message is clear: most museums are operating with too few staff, and those staff are under-resourced.

These competing pressures – rising (and ever-increasing) costs, strain on infrastructure, and diminished capacity – is having a particularly acute effect on organisations' ability to care for, manage, present and interpret their collections. For Art Fund, whose founding mission is to help museums and galleries to enrich and share these collections, this rings alarm bells. The need for investment has never been more urgent, and the opportunity more pressing. Directors want to do more – deepen community engagement with their collections, accelerate digitisation and enhance their holdings. Last year we responded to this need by investing £1.3 million to drive innovative collections work in museums and galleries across the UK in the final round of our Reimagine funding programme. But this is a fraction of what is required.

As Art Fund develops our next strategic framework, launching in 2027, we look forward to working in partnership with the sector and other funders to ensure that our three central ambitions – to support art, grow audiences and amplify the sector – can be as effective and impactful as possible over the next five years, with a restated commitment to collections and increasing access to museums for everyone at the heart of this strategy.

This year's research also highlighted the role of Art Fund as both a champion for the sector and a critical friend. Building on nearly 125 years of independence, Directors told us that our ability to advocate to government and policymakers and make the case for museums as shared public spaces of creativity, imagination and trust was crucial. After the May 2026 national and local elections in parts of the UK, museums and sector support bodies must act together, clearly, confidently and with one voice. We need to secure the investment and policy backing museums require, and to assert their value: not only for the economic and social benefits they deliver, but for the culture, connection and belonging they create.

We are indebted to the organisations that make up Art Fund's 1,000+ network of museums, our brilliant grantees, and every museum director who contributed time, consideration and insight to this report – thank you. Continuing a hugely valued partnership for another iteration we are very grateful to Wafer Hadley for leading this research so expertly and thoughtfully. And a final but sincere thanks is due to Lucy Bird, policy and research lead, whose direction and oversight have guided this project from start to finish.

Rachael Browning
Director of Programmes & Policy

About This Research



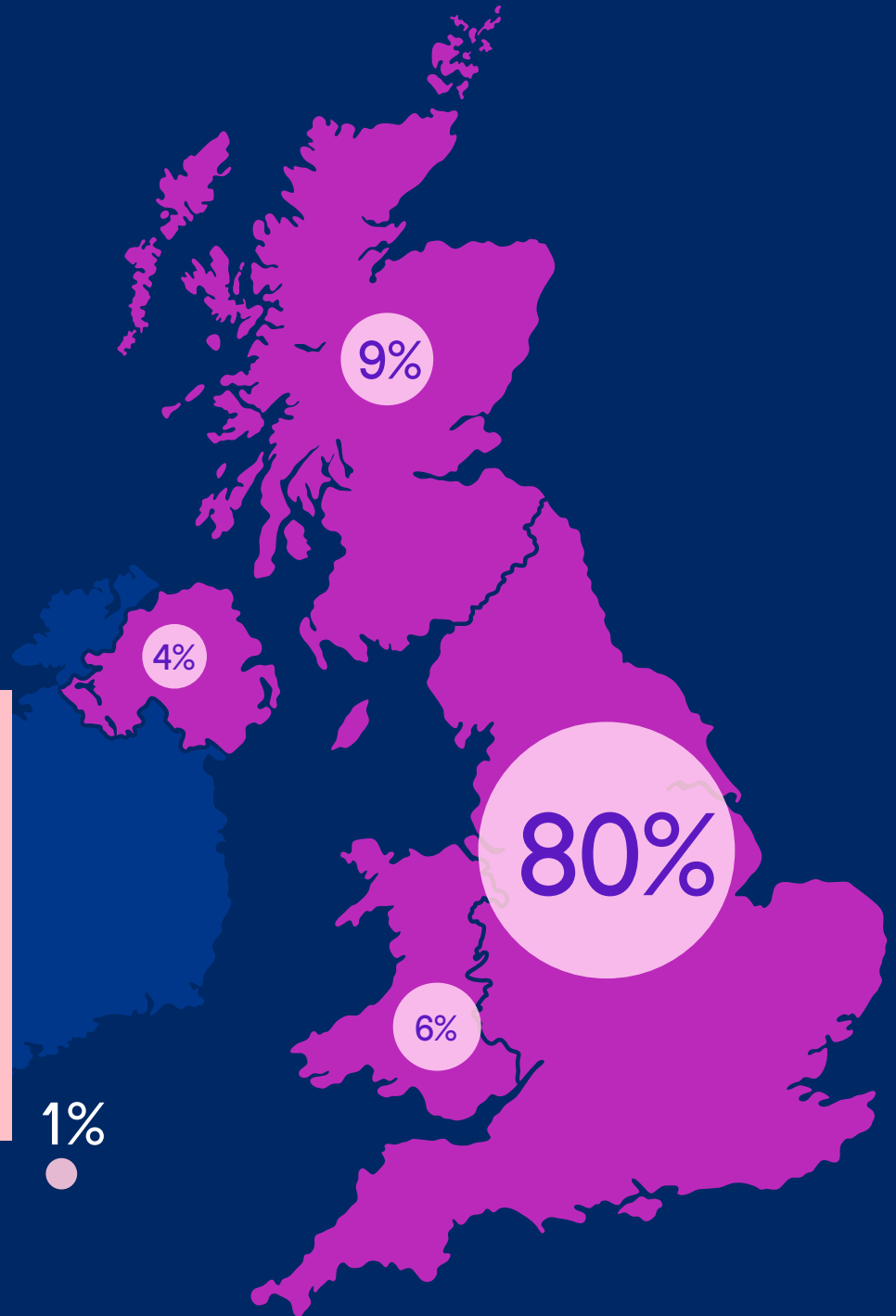
Methodology & Responses

This mixed methodology research was carried out between January and March 2026. It included:

- An online survey (329 director responses)
- Four focus groups and individual interviews with directors

The sample is broadly representative of the sector across the UK and similar to previous years.

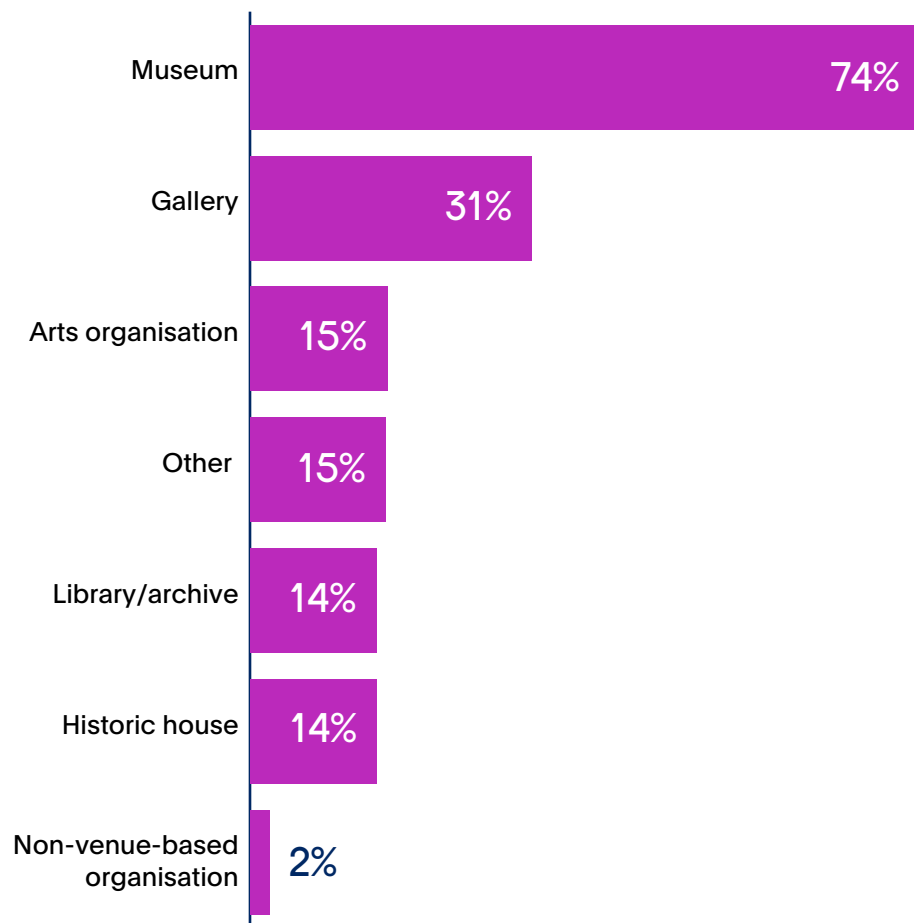
Figures have been rounded up for ease of reading. The number of responses to each question is shown as N=x.



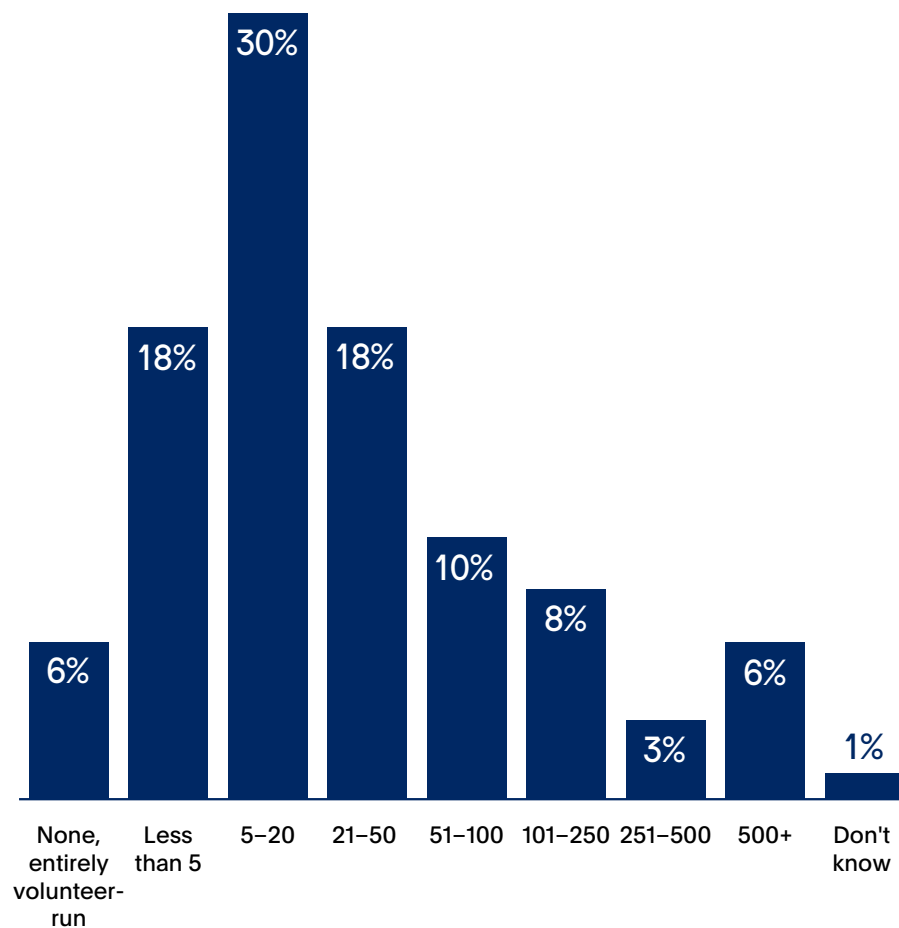
GOVERNANCE TYPE (N = 326)	% OF ORGANISATIONS
Independent (inc CIC and CIO)	61%
Local authority	21%
University	9%
National	5%
Other	4%

Respondents

Type of organisation (multi-selection)
(N = 329)



Number of staff
(N = 324)



Throughout this report we have used the term 'museums' to include the breadth of organisations within the research, except where specific differences between organisation types have been noted.

The Funding Landscape



Funding

Income has increased but has not kept pace with rising costs.

For many organisations in our survey, the financial picture in 2025/26 has been an improvement on previous years. Increases in government and arts councils' support have brought some respite. The Museum Renewal Fund in England, Arts Council England funding extensions and Creative Scotland settlements for visual arts organisations in Scotland, were cited as particularly important.

While these financial interventions are very welcome, the focus on project and capital funding masks the challenge for most organisations of covering day-to-day operations. Wage inflation and other cost increases present the biggest headache for organisations as core funding isn't keeping pace. Revenue funding is not meeting these increased costs.

The proportion of museums engaged in different types of fundraising and income generation looks very similar to 2024. The majority are engaged in earning their own income and this is the area with the most widespread increases, against a backdrop of a difficult commercial operating environment.

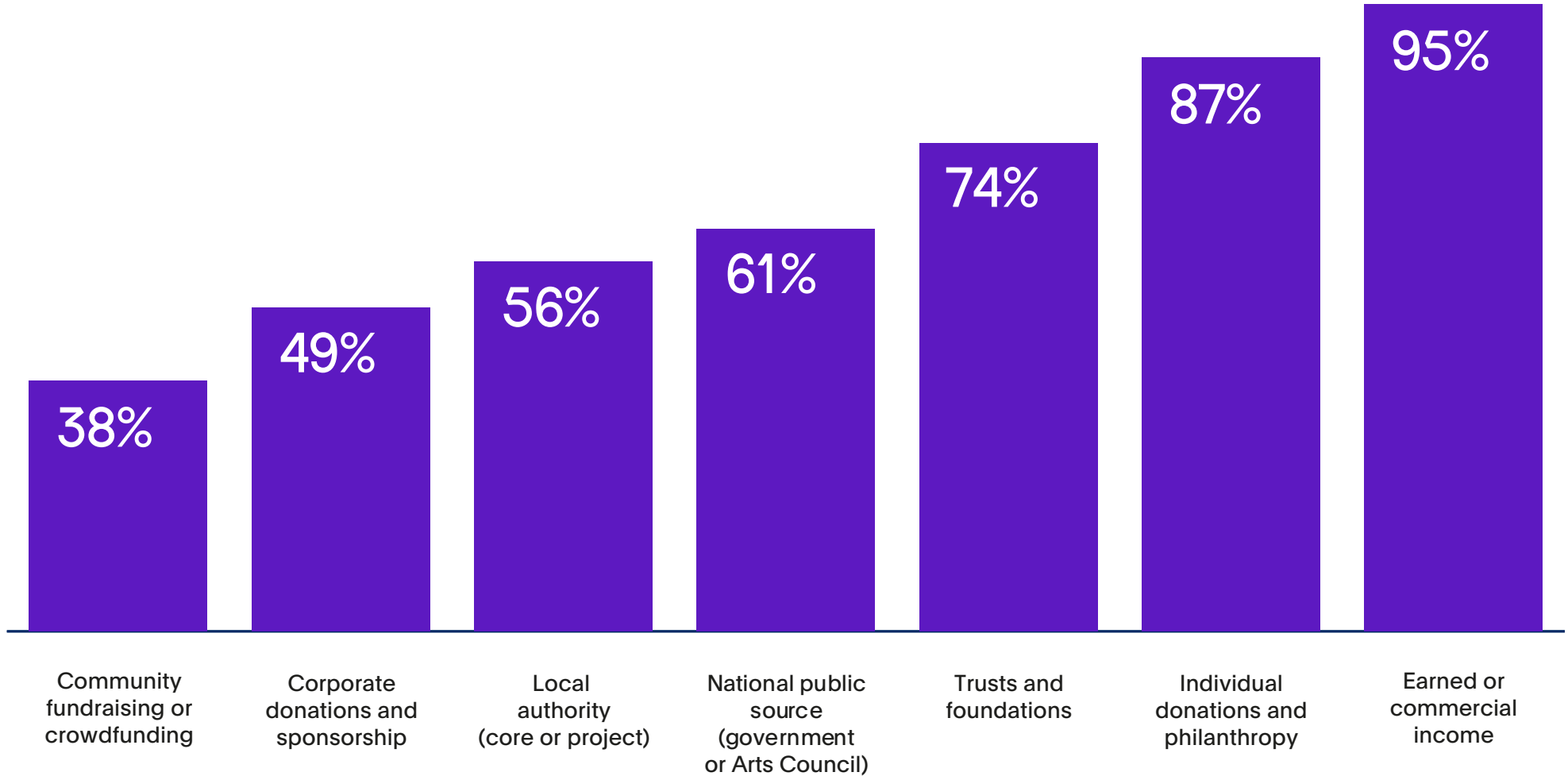
There has been a small increase in the percentage of organisations receiving support through Trusts and Foundations. However, survey respondents reported heightened competition for such funds.

A small upward trend can be seen in individual donations and philanthropy, particularly at national museums.

As expected local authority funding cuts have been implemented, and the situation remains precarious for some in this part of the sector as they await the impact of local government re-organisations and local elections.

Income Sources

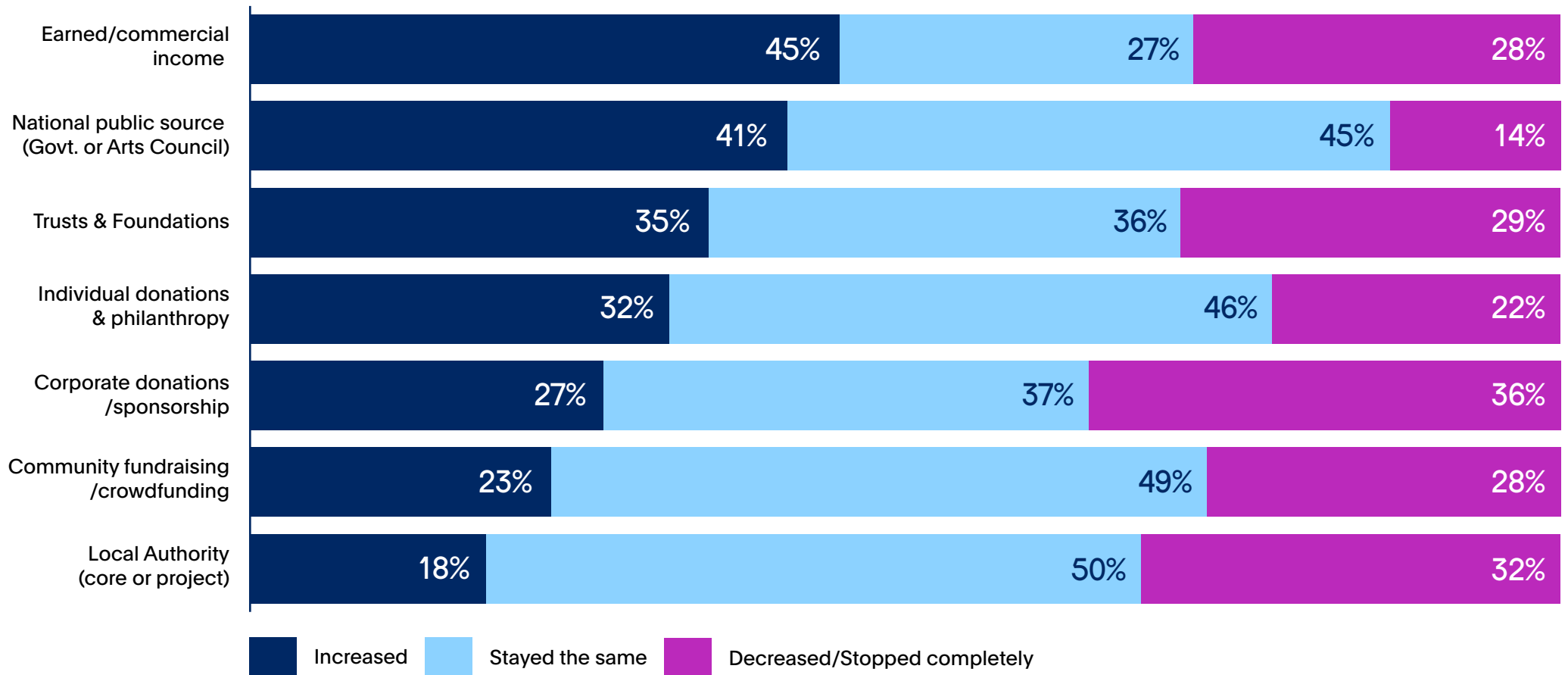
Proportion of museums engaged in different types of income generation/fundraising in 2025/26 (N = 307)



Income Sources

2025/26 compared to 2024/25

Thinking about the funding you received in 2025/26, how does this compare with the previous financial year?



In their own words

There is so much capital [funding] around, but there isn't the revenue to facilitate the capital.

National, Wales

National minimum wage increases... for the last two years, we haven't been able to afford to uplift any Senior Management Team salary because we've just had to concentrate on everybody else.

Independent, England

[Arts Council NPO funding 2025/2026] Although there was a small uplift for the extension year, this was less than the pay awards for those posts we fund with ACE funding and therefore, in real terms, it was a decrease.

Local Authority, England

We are seeking fewer and fewer grants for one-off projects, as what we need is consistent, sustainable funding to continue to deliver programmes of work.

Local Authority, Scotland

The corporate funding landscape in Scotland is extremely challenging due to activist intervention and organisational and funder fear.

Independent, Scotland

We're in a better position now than we've been in for a long time.

Independent, England



Visitor to Fragment and Form: Emii Alrai, Mónica Mays, Dominique White at Henry Moore Institute with Mónica Mays, *Long limbs pump abductors ashes to ashes* 2024. Courtesy the artist, Blue Velvet and Henry Moore Institute. Photo: Michael Godsall

Collections, Exhibitions & International Ambitions



Collections

Community engagement with collections is embraced, but there is a long-term decline in core collections activity.

Engaging communities with collections is now a regular activity for the vast majority of collections-holding organisations. This work is valued and important and has risen in prominence steadily over the past few years with funders' support.

Meanwhile many core collections activities (particularly cataloguing) remain 'on the back burner'. Despite relatively high levels of documentation, digitisation and conservation work, organisations admit to doing the bare minimum as they lack staffing capacity, expertise or facilities. This holding pattern has been seen over many years and is becoming critical. Internal financial constraints are the main barrier to collections work, but respondents also identified a lack of relevant funding streams to support this activity, unless also combined with community engagement. Collections care and collections management were seen as priorities for Art Fund support, particularly to tackle the backlog.

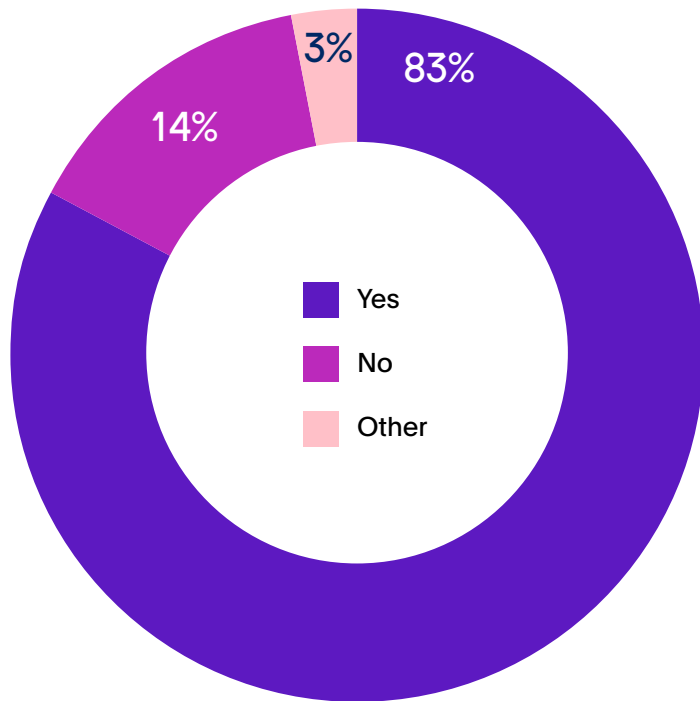
Expertise is needed, particularly outside the Nationals, where up to a quarter of museums lack appropriate expertise. The loss of curatorial roles, frozen posts and the undervaluing of curatorial skills are felt keenly in the sector. In some cases, specialist collections knowledge is being lost as a generation of curators reach retirement.

Lack of storage and storage conditions remain unresolved for many museums. The V&A East Storehouse has raised expectations of what storage solutions could look like among stakeholders, but the reality across the sector is very different. This has led to a renewed focus on the question of deaccessioning, particularly among local authority museums. This reiterates the need for an investment in cataloguing to inform thoughtful conversations about what should be kept and how to make space for new and more relevant acquisitions. It is interesting to see a small but significant drop in the number of organisations planning to buy or acquire new works in 2026/27 compared to two years ago. Nevertheless, acquisitions are perceived as a core Art Fund priority.

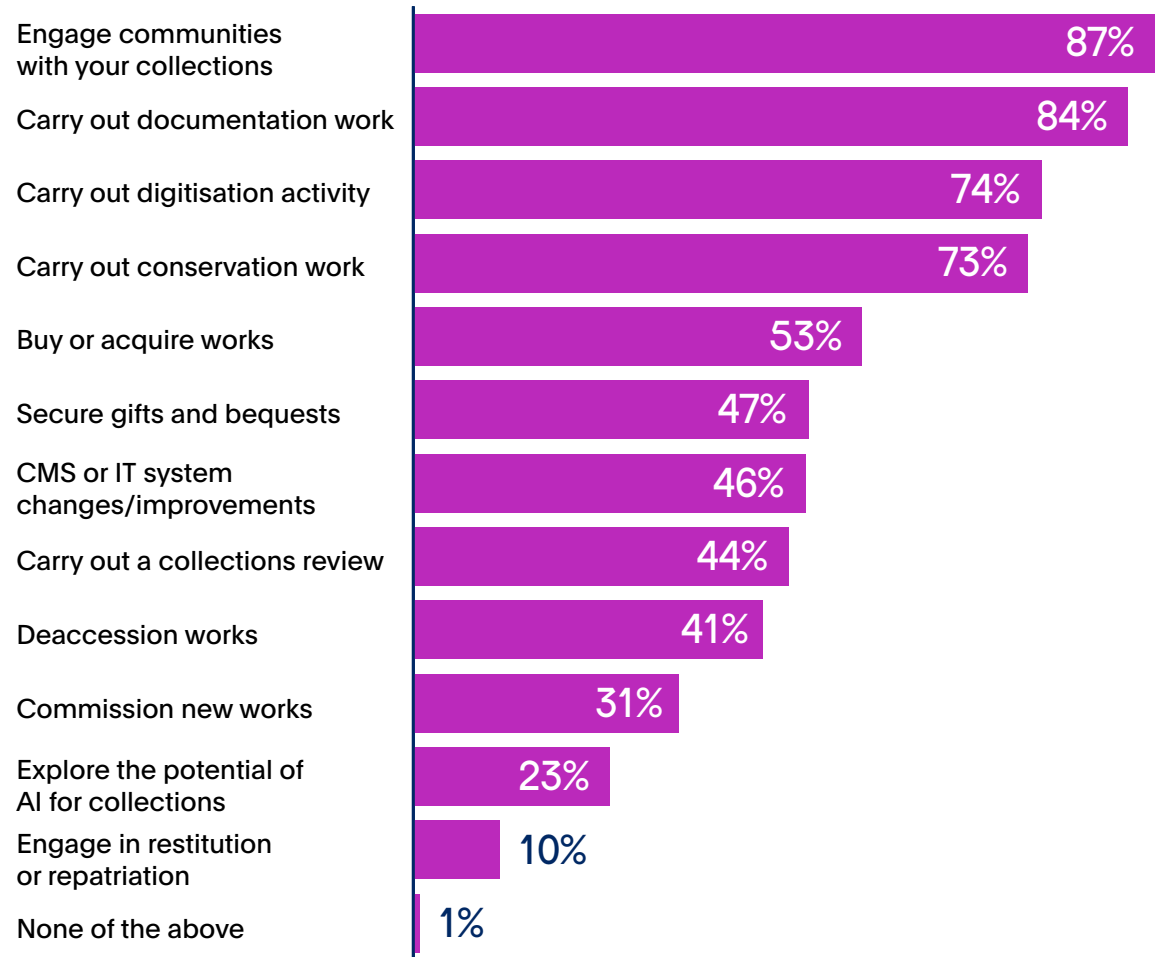
National museums appear to be leading the way in exploring the potential of AI for collections, with University museums also engaging in this area. Both National museums and University museums remain significantly more likely to be involved in restitution and repatriation than other types of museum.

Collections

Does your organisation have a collection?
(N= 306)



Thinking about work on your collections, in 2026/27 do you intend to do any of the following (N = 255)



What, if any, are the main barriers to undertaking collections activities in your organisation?

(N= 253)

85%

Team size and capacity

42%

Lack of display space

22%

Limited volunteer management and training

67%

Internal financial constraints

34%

Digital or technological challenges

9%

Limited knowledge of the collection

52%

Lack of relevant funding opportunities

23%

Lack of specialist expertise

4%

None of the above

In their own words

Collections

Rationalisation and disposal [of collections] is key, and peer/expert support would be valuable.

Local Authority, Scotland

Conservation of collections in Wales can be difficult to access and is costly due to travel etc.

Local Authority, Wales

Lack of storage space has led to the stores being inaccessible due to objects being kept on floors.

Local Authority, England

Some of the curatorial staff... with their PhDs and their years of curatorial expertise are on the same grade as the admin officer.

Independent, England

I think there is a conversation [to be had] about collections-based expertise and trust and knowledge, and just what it costs to fund that.

Independent, Scotland

One of the big funds that is missing is funding to help address cataloguing backlog.

Independent, England

I think [Art Fund] should be supporting cataloguing and digitisation... cataloguing is so important for the legitimacy of institutions...there are creative ways to think about collections and storage and access in new and exciting ways.

National, England



Sir John Soane's Museum after-dark.
© Alexander Newton / Sir John Soane's Museum

Exhibitions

Partnership working on exhibitions is thriving.

Since 2024, there seems to have been a small but noticeable decrease in many exhibitions-related activities, such as borrowing, loans and tours. Buying-in temporary exhibitions is down 10% since 2024. Conversely, partnership working to develop exhibitions is thriving, with over two thirds of organisations now working in this way, with other museums, with universities or with communities. Reusing and recycling exhibition materials is also now becoming the norm across the sector.

Claims for Museums and Galleries Exhibition Tax Relief (MGETR) appear to have decreased slightly, with 42% having made a claim since 2024. This is in spite of testimony to the significant financial benefits the tax relief brings to many museums. Claims among local authority museums remain almost non-existent due to the set-up requirements. Claims outside England also seem to be somewhat lower. Contemporary art institutions are calling for the parameters of the tax relief to be re-evaluated to keep pace with changing artistic practice. Art Fund MGETR resources can be found [here](#).

Half of organisations are currently working internationally or working on international collaborations. This is much higher among National and University museums, and most are keen to expand this work. There is also significant interest among Independent museums in exploring international working. Art Fund could be in a position to strengthen international dialogue and support co-commissions and co-acquisitions, both within the UK and beyond.

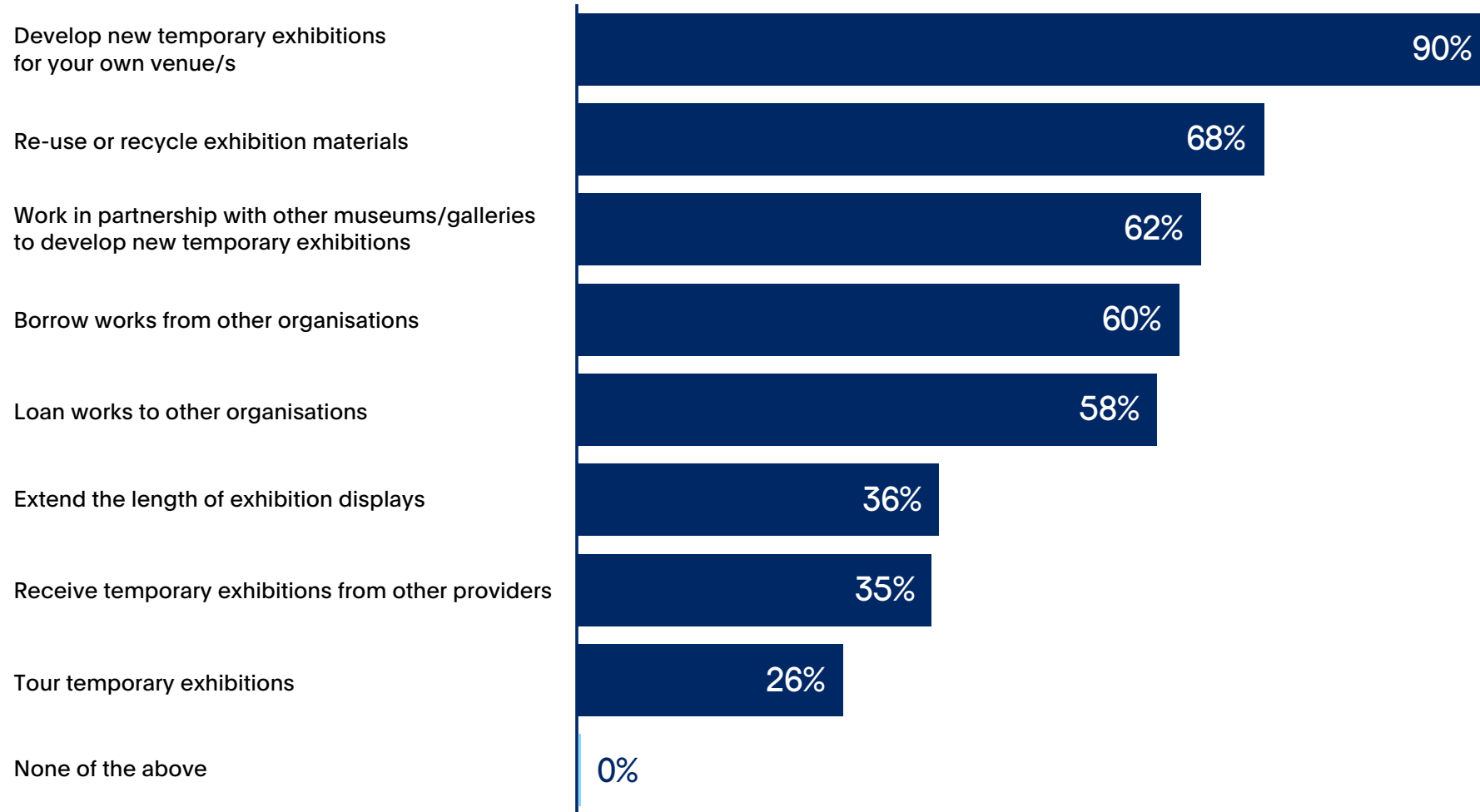
For organisations in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland 'international' also includes partnerships with English and Irish museums and each other. The main benefits articulated include revenue opportunities, broader audience engagement and enhanced institutional profile, alongside the potential for knowledge exchange. For organisations in Northern Ireland, Art Fund's support for touring and loans in and out of the country is vital.

Working with artists was highlighted as a top priority for Art Fund support over the coming five years, particularly among Independent museums across the four nations. This might be financial support to engage artists on exhibitions, community work or learning, or resources to help organisations find, commission and work with artists in a range of contexts.

2026/27 Exhibition Intentions

In 2026/27 do you intend to...

(N= 273)

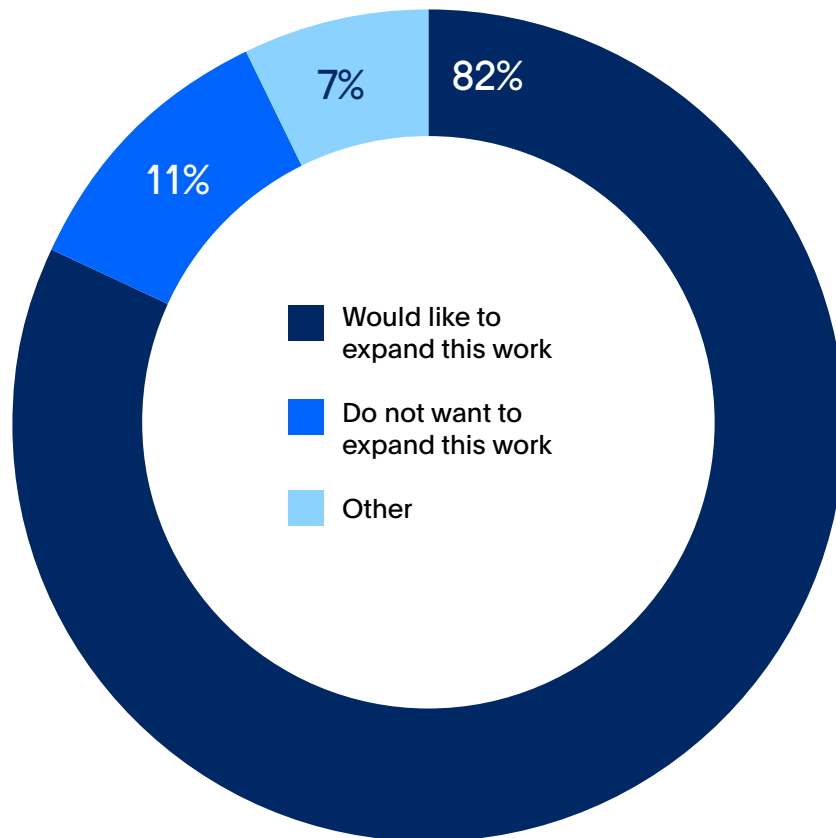


Working Internationally

Does your organisation currently work internationally or engage in international collaborations? (N = 303)

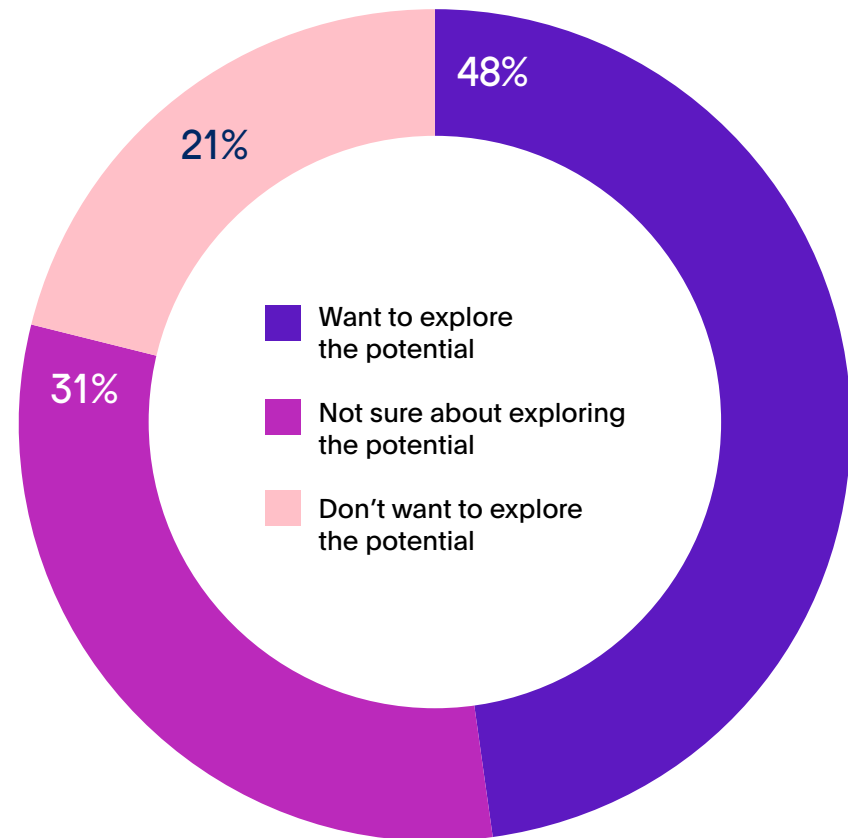
Currently work/collaborate internationally

49%



Not currently working/collaborating internationally

51%



In their own words

Exhibitions and International

We work with stakeholder organisations and creative practitioners to develop new exhibitions.

University, England

When I arrived, there was curator, assistant curator, a collections officer, and two technicians, both of whom had experience in designing and mounting exhibitions. Now there's me and there's an assistant curator, who is also half the marketing officer because we lost our marketing budget year before last and everybody else on the team.

Local Authority, Wales

We have attempted to secure touring partners for exhibitions next year, but without success so far. We are exploring all avenues for exhibition funding, but are finding it extremely hard. There are vanishingly few opportunities to apply for exhibition support.

Independent, Scotland

Due to staffing limitations, four exhibitions per year have been reduced to two per year – still good!

Independent, Northern Ireland

[Through international work we'd be] Promoting Northern Ireland and Northern Irish art. Making new connections, developing networks and partnerships for future exhibitions and projects.

Independent, Northern Ireland



Pitt Rivers Museum. Evenki Reconciliation Ceremony 2024
© Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford

The Audience Picture



Visiting

Changing audience visiting patterns reflect significant internal and external changes.

There is a general continued upward trend in audience numbers across the sector, but the picture is more mixed than it was in 2024. At that time 57% of respondents reported an increase in overall visitor numbers compared to 44% now, with a fifth reporting decreased numbers. University museums are more likely to have seen audiences increase compared to other parts of the sector, reflecting an enhanced focus on audience development, partnerships and community engagement.

The mixed picture is a result of both internal and external changes. Many organisations have reduced the number of exhibitions they offer annually (particularly Local Authority museums), finding it unsustainable to fundraise and deliver at previous levels. Over a third have, or will, reduce their opening hours and a fifth have brought in new entrance charges. In some cases (but not all) these changes have affected visitor totals. But there are also reports of highest figures ever for events and exhibitions, as visitors carefully choose where to spend limited money and time. Many directors voiced frustration at not being able to respond to increased demands from visitors, communities and partners due to limited staffing.

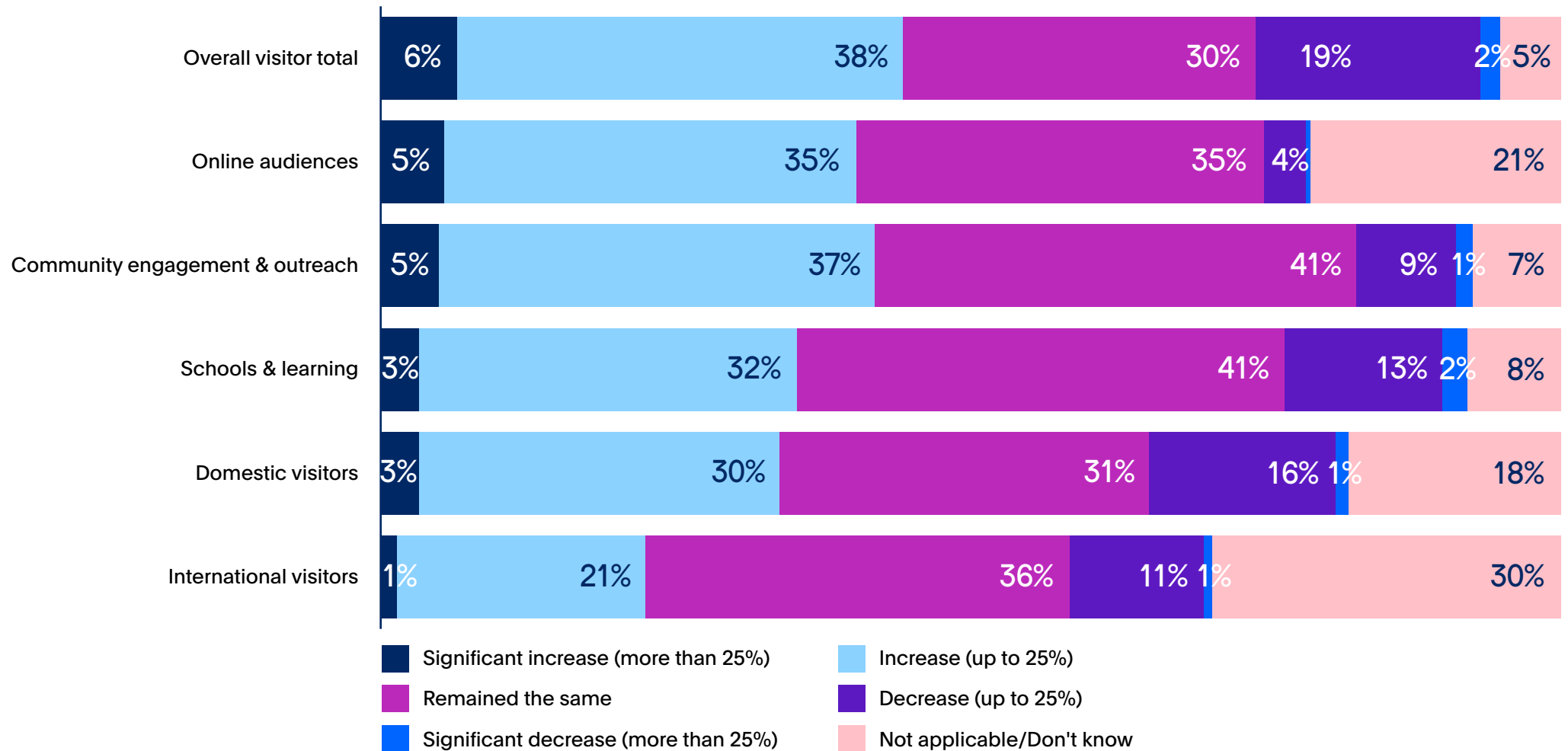
Climate change is beginning to impact visitor behaviour, with hotter summers and wetter winters affecting where audiences feel comfortable.

Commitment to free entry remains strong in the sector and is mandated for many. One in five organisations have introduced 'pay what you can' schemes with generally positive results.

Audience Totals 2025/26

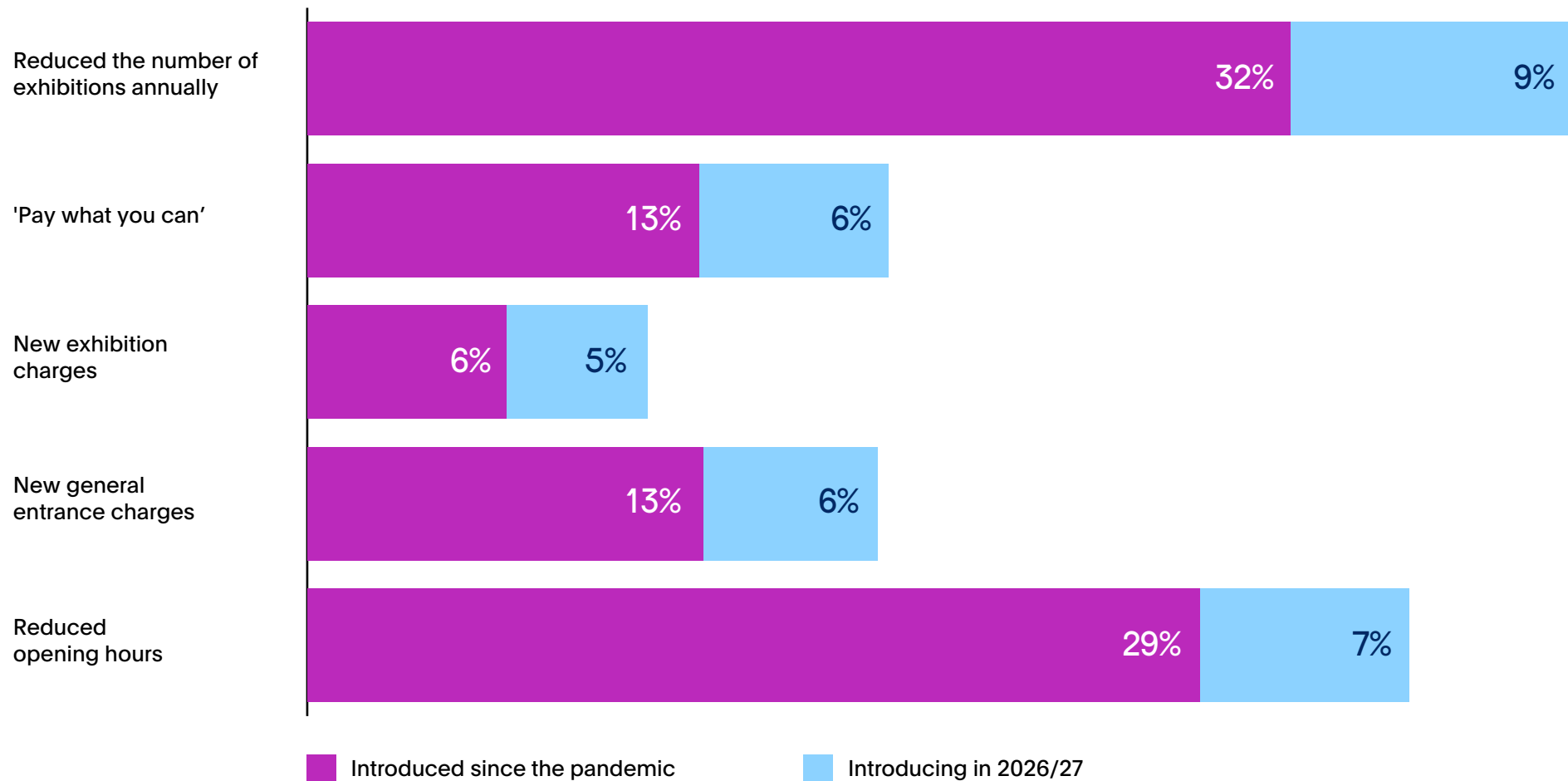
Compared to 2024/25

How do this year's visiting and participation figures compare to 2024/25? (N= 320)



Changes to the visitor offer

Have you made any of the following adjustments to your visitor offer since the pandemic, or do you intend to do so in 2026/27? (Select all that apply) (N = 295)



Engagement

Balancing the twin demands of access and income generation is becoming increasingly difficult.

The schools market continues to grow, with increases particularly at National museums. There have been distinct winners and losers here, however. Free offers and easy access win out over charges and increasingly unaffordable coach hire. Organisations identified the need for Art Fund support to engage schools, particularly among Scottish museums and galleries.

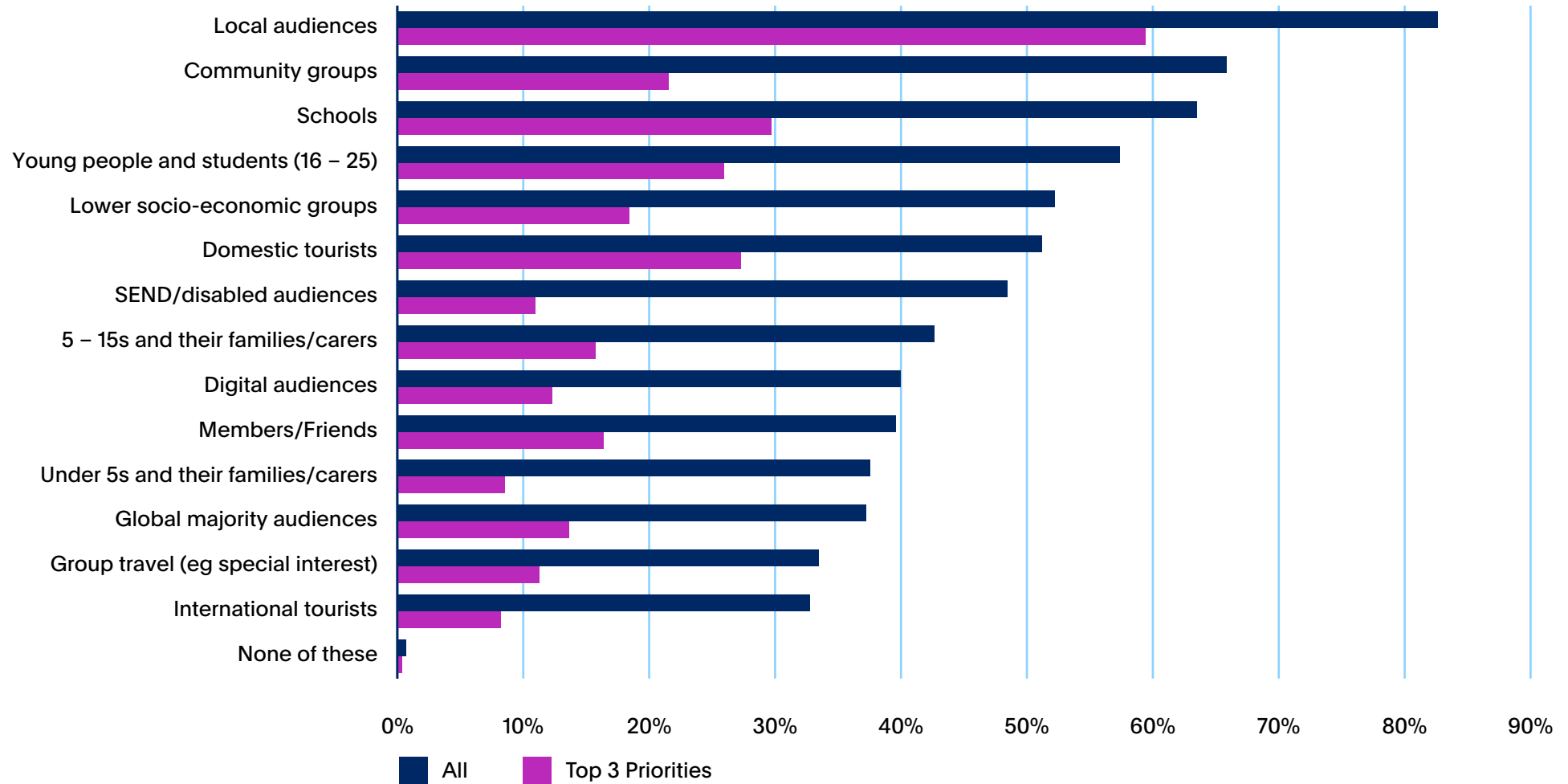
The number of organisations focusing on lower socio-economic groups as an audience development priority has decreased since 2024. While this audience remains key for many of the Nationals, and there are some excellent examples of access schemes at paid-for sites, the emphasis on income generation has perhaps dented organisations' ability to make this a focus.

Half of museums operate memberships schemes, with Nationals and Independents more likely to do so. There are fewer memberships schemes generally outside of England. Schemes for adults are the most common. Less than a quarter of organisations with schemes offer student or young person memberships, but they are seen as a priority for Art Fund development for National, University and Local Authority museums.

Respondents were keen for Art Fund to help them to grow and diversify audiences, as well as deepen levels of engagement. There is demand for Art Fund's help to reach audiences that individual organisations are struggling with or have limited capacity to target, such as under 5s and their families. Art Fund's ability to bring artists into the engagement dynamic is also highly valued.

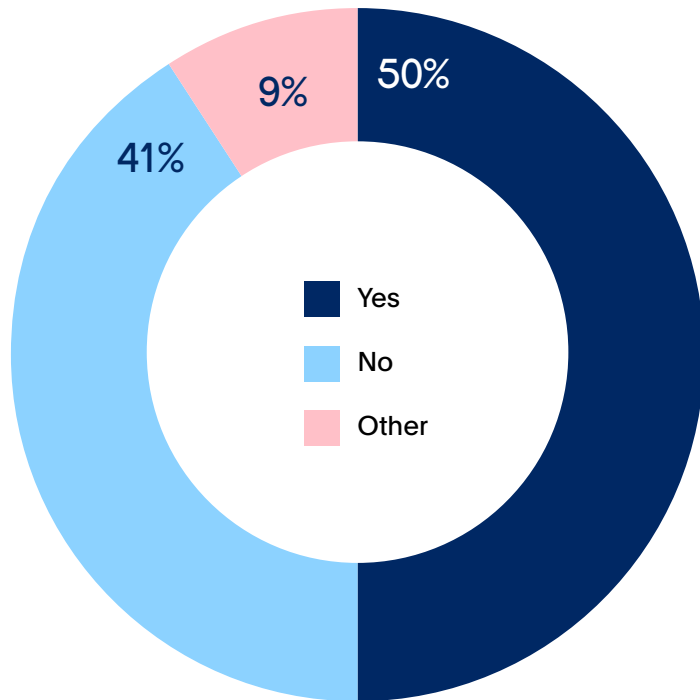
Audience Development in 2026/27

Which of these audience development areas are a focus for your organisation in 2026/27? (Select all that apply and top 3 priorities) (N = 293)

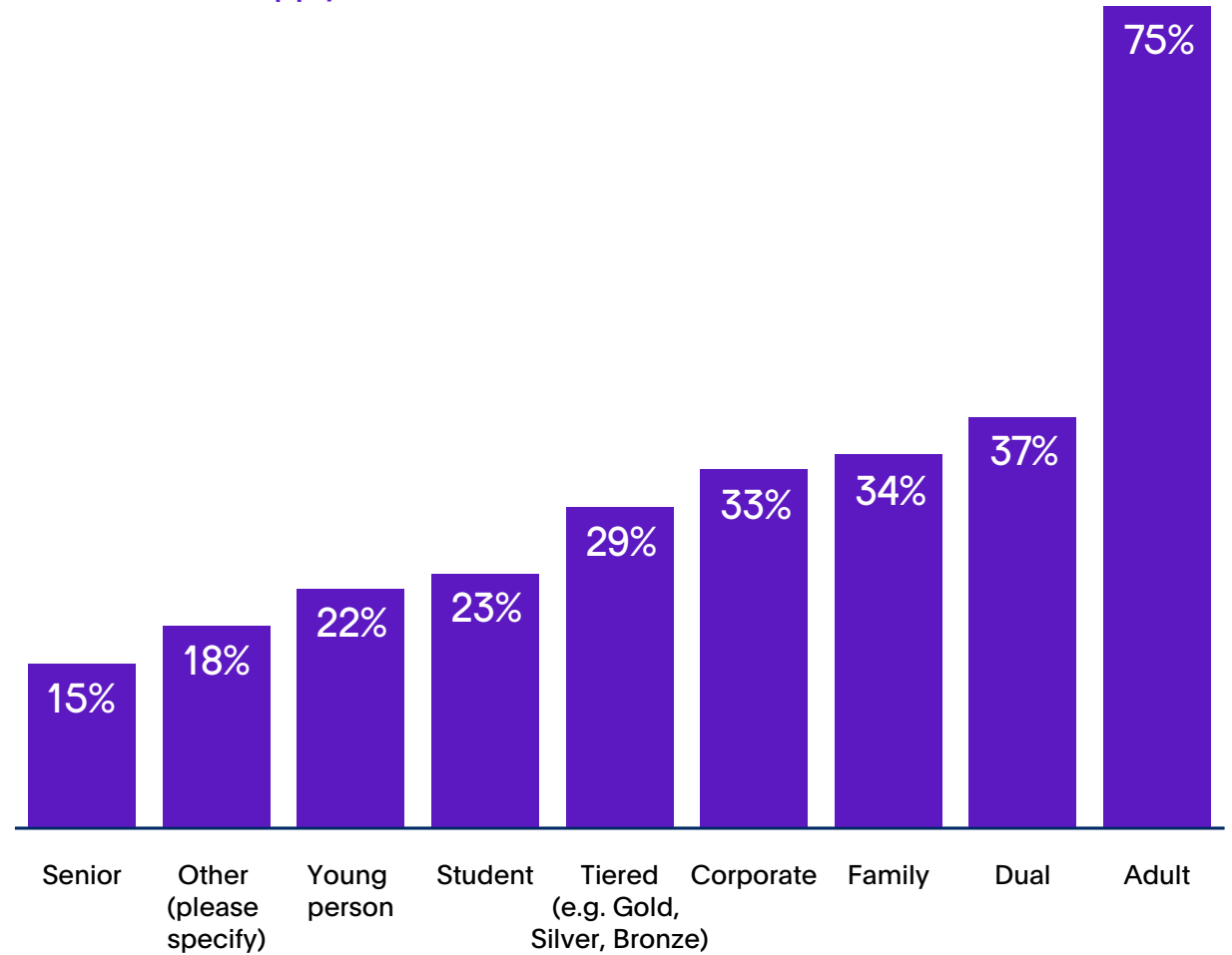


Membership schemes

Does your organisation have any kind of paid Membership scheme? (N = 295)



What types of Membership scheme do you offer? (Select all that apply) (N = 147)



In their own words

Audiences

[Visitor] Demand is just growing... Can we actually meet the demand and do it without affecting the staff?

Independent, Scotland

We've just had the best ever Christmas... in terms of visitor numbers, which has been pretty amazing.

Independent, Wales

We have completely changed our exhibition model and ...it means that we're in a bit of a lull in terms of the turnover of exhibitions. We have completely shifted away from those big blockbuster temporary exhibitions where you might do two a year because for us it's completely unsustainable.

Local Authority, England

Free activities do quite well, and the more premium end of the market is doing quite well... People will pay for that one amazing experience. But there's quite a lot of those kind of middle experiences, perhaps not doing quite as well.

Independent, England

We're getting 10 requests per week on average for partnership, collaboration, support, whether that's from within the university, our communities, artists, and we can't even meet with people fast enough to digest the requests and then respond.

University, England

If we can catch teachers and we can catch early years, then we can be strategic.

National, England



Pippa Hetherington, *Cuttings 1820–2020*, installation in Soft Power: Lives Told Through Textile Art, RWA, 2025. Youth Arts & Health Programme 2025. Artwork © Pippa Hetherington. Photo Alastair Brookes – KoLAB Studios / RWA.

Advocacy & Amplification



Challenges & Opportunities

Lack of staff/capacity, funding shortfalls and building maintenance are the biggest challenges for museum directors right now.

The consistent message coming through this research is the difficulty of having too few staff to fulfil the demands of a modern museum. This is now the biggest challenge. None of the new funding in the sector has really addressed this.

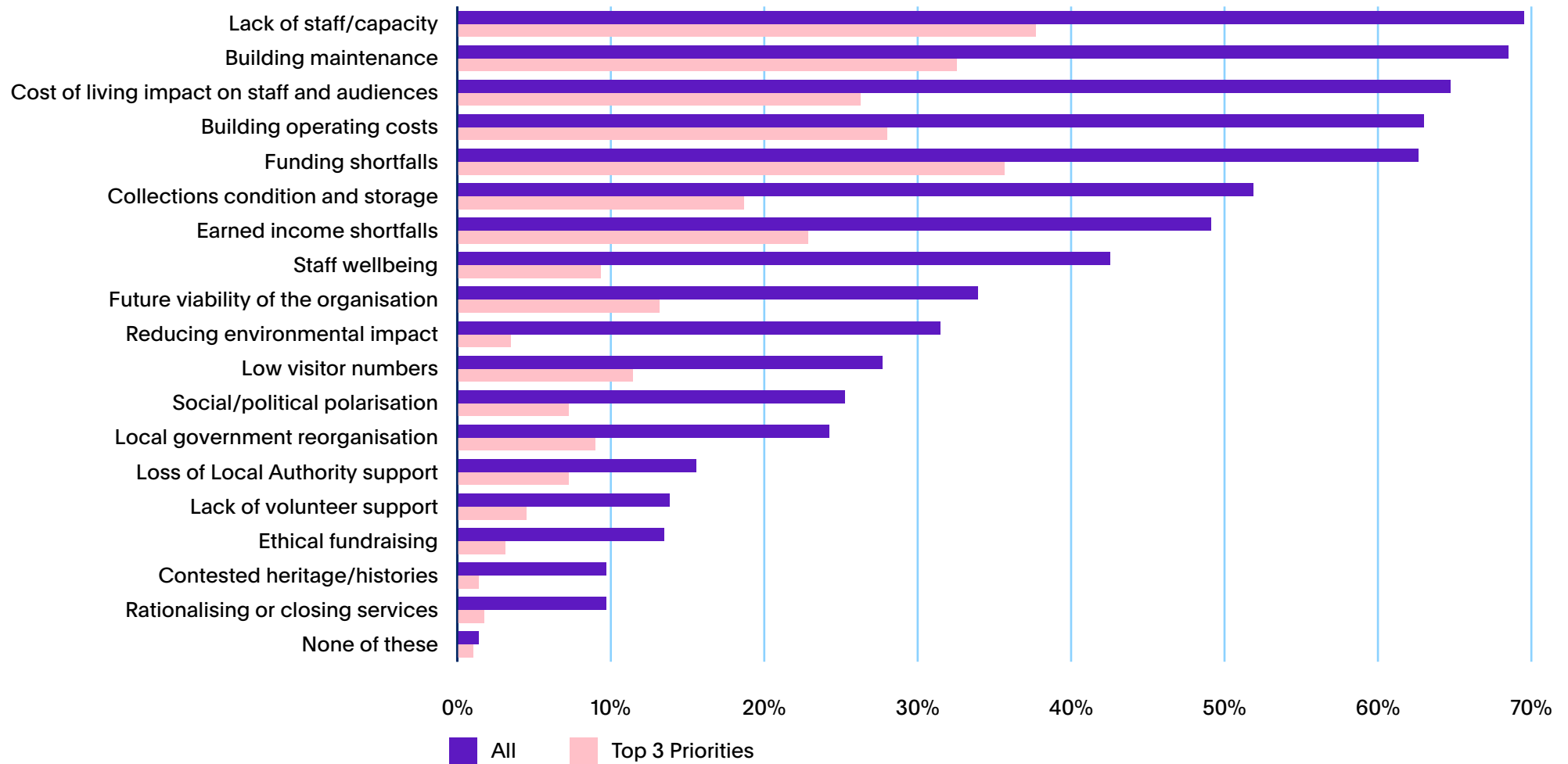
Many directors report long-term declines in the number of posts while expectations have soared, putting immense pressure on the remaining team. This is where funding shortfalls are most apparent, made more difficult by wage inflation. Concerns over staff wellbeing and cost of living challenges may have decreased somewhat since the last survey, but they remain very much on directors' minds.

While there is more money in some areas for building and capital works, building maintenance is still troubling, with 68% identifying this as a challenge. This is particularly the case for Independent and Local Authority museums. Climate change is having an impact here too as older buildings struggle to manage increased rainfall and require air conditioning in summer.

Alongside the challenges, directors identified some areas of new potential for the sector. These focused on innovation, particularly new funding models and the use of AI in museums operation and engagement, and broader impact, in education, health and wellbeing.

Current Challenges

Looking to the new financial year (2026/27) what are the challenges facing your organisation?
(Select all that apply and top 3 challenges) (N= 289)



In their own words

Challenges and opportunities

We've had an 11-year permanent recruitment embargo...I've got five out of a staff of 20...So that is really challenging in terms of the quality of the service that we deliver.

Local Authority, Northern Ireland

[For us it's] Moving beyond permanent precarity. It is always stressful, but it is increasingly so in this racially hostile environment where larger funded organisations want to work with us but not pay. It is extractive behaviour, masking as diversity and inclusion.

Independent, England

The particular financial challenges we face result from the crisis in funding for Universities, and the subsequent measures bought in to reduce budgets and staffing in all areas of the University.

University, Scotland

I can't comfortably sit here and say that we're taking real good care of our collections.

Local Authority, England

I think the challenge is always revenue funding and it's how we address that.

National, England



Boy Looking at Water Feature, Enginuity, February 2025.
© The Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust.

Elections

Protecting the central value of museums to national identities.

This research was carried out prior to the May 2026 elections in Wales and Scotland, and the Council elections in England. The majority of organisations in these nations identified Art Fund's advocacy to government and decision-makers as a top priority. In both cases, the strongest suit may come from messages built around what could be lost with policy changes.

In Wales, big changes were seen as inevitable in the Senedd, so the emphasis is on safeguarding the government policies that have played well for museums, such as the Priorities for Culture, Future Generations Act, anti-racist and play sufficiency commitments, that are seen as innovative by other nations. Making the case for museums and their impact, particularly on education and well-being, is a strong message to take forward, focusing on new members of the Senedd who may not have heard these arguments before. There is a sense of optimism about culture in Wales at the moment that needs to be harnessed.

In Scotland, reflecting back to MSPs the central part that Scottish culture plays in its national identity and therefore its tourist magnetism is a strong narrative. At a more practical level, there is no regular funding for museums in the way that English museums can access Arts Council England national portfolio support. This could be a key area of advocacy.

Local government re-organisation is altering the parameters in a number of areas. The challenge for many individual organisations is having the figures to hand that demonstrate their impact on learning, health and wellbeing, community cohesion and place-making on the local economy. Pooling data from existing studies could help here, along with lobbying for investment in the developing central data observatory. Understanding more about what Reform values in culture could also be informative. Art Fund could helpfully liaise more closely with the Local Government Association on advocacy for museums in the changing local government arena.

Art Fund's UK-wide profile and independence is seen as a key strength in advocating for museums with local and devolved governments. Close collaboration with other sector bodies to ensure a coherent approach to political lobbying is a given.

In their own words

Elections

We've had, things like the anti-racist plans, Future Generations, priorities for culture, there's funding coming through the Federation of Museums and Arts Galleries, funding through Welsh Government, Arts Council. How is that going to carry on?

Local Authority, Wales

The Senedd is going to look different - no matter what the outcome, it's not going to look how it's looked for the last 25 years.

Independent, Wales

There's no doubt that Scottish government liked to make a fuss and be seen to make a noise about the value of culture... there's an interesting moment [now], thinking about culture as a reflection of, but also a dynamo of national identity, [which] may or may not shift.

Independent, Scotland

Many councils are having to do this [local government re-organisation] at pace which causes a situation where Local Authorities focus on the big issues where most of the political reputation is focused. Museums and culture are towards the bottom of a very long list.

Local Authority, England

I had two Reform cabinet members walk around with me last week, and I was...talking about efficiency and outcomes...responding to customer need - they loved it. They were all over it.

Local Authority, England



Jo Blaker, *Playful Family Walk*, 27 August 2021. © Jo Blaker.
Photo: David Lindsay, courtesy Yorkshire Sculpture Park.

Advocacy

Be bold on behalf of all museums.

Advocacy to government and decision-makers is clearly a top priority for Art Fund attention, focused on measurable outcomes and impacts. There is another message too about advocating for museums for the increasingly rare value that hold in society as a 'public good' - as shared civic spaces, places of authenticity, safety and of trust. Directors talked passionately about this role.

Creating opportunities for philanthropy is also high on the list of priorities for Art Fund support, particularly among Independent and National museums. Organisations, particularly those smaller and outside London, often lack the capacity, organisational culture or know-how to identify potential philanthropic donors and 'make the ask'. Helping to identify donors with local links, brokering relationships and providing training for staff would be all be welcome interventions. However, the sector acknowledges that incentivising philanthropy is not easy in the UK and should not be a replacement for public funding.

There is broad support for all the work Art Fund does to amplify the sector. Directors are keen that Art Fund plays to its unique strengths as an independent organisation with a significant public and sectoral profile. This means encouraging museums to be bold, progressive and innovative, particularly at a time when some timidity is seen to be creeping in. Art Fund can be a critical friend and illuminate the way forward.

In their own words

There is something about our spaces across the sector that do not make demands on people to be consumers...places for people to spend valuable time together, to engage with each other, to slow down, to think and do something slightly differently, either by themselves or with family members.

Independent, Scotland

The tried and tested sources of funding are not enough for the needs museums have now. For those of us outside the international brands of museums, we have little if any access to private philanthropy.

National, Wales

Our current global challenges are revealing societal disconnect from history. How can museums best be supported to respond to this?

Independent, England

Acting as a champion and broker [Art Fund could] deliver the Hodge Review recommendation to develop a strategic framework for the museums [in England].

Local Authority, England

[We need] Continuing support for museums and a recognition of the vital services we deliver to our communities in the form of health and wellbeing activities, contributions to placemaking and the local economy.

Independent, Scotland

I think looking at museums as 'places of authority' and how we can use that to target dis/misinformation could be an interesting avenue for museums to make themselves more relevant.

Local Authority, England



Discovering the stories behind the stories at the Roald Dahl Museum. © The Roald Dahl Museum

Summary & Next Steps



The State of the Sector

The 2026 Museum Directors Research finds greater optimism in the sector than has been seen previously. This reflects the new areas of investment and increased demand for what many museums offer. However, we still see a mixed picture.

Revenue costs are the sector's Achilles heel, particularly with increasing wage bills. Low staffing levels leave museums struggling to meet rising demand, expectations and potential.

The hidden challenge of collections care and management is becoming more critical. Now may be the time for a sector-wide investment in cataloguing to unlock new stories, identify items to be deaccessioned and create space for new and more relevant objects. This goes hand-in-hand with safeguarding curatorial expertise.

There are changing exhibition patterns emerging as museums experiment with new models of delivery, with fewer exhibitions overall, greater partnership work in the development and more environmental awareness. The impact of climate change on audience visiting behaviour is starting to be felt.

With the political shifts resulting from the May 2026 elections, the focus is on how to make the strongest case for the instrumental and intrinsic value of museums at a time of change.

Art Fund's Role

This research identifies areas of need across the sector and highlights where Art Fund's interventions can be most effective.

While support for **Acquisitions** remains a top priority for many, **collections care and management** are areas of wider need that go to the heart of Art Fund's mission. Over the next five years Art Fund will work closely with the sector to develop its packages of support, alongside championing the role and diversity of **curators** and collections experts to deliver this work.

Touring and loans are core to Art Fund's work. The flagship programme, *Going Places*, is opening up new opportunities for partnerships, particularly across the four nations and this, alongside international potential, is an area of growing interest.

Museums are clearly hungry to work more with artists as creatives, producers, interpreters and facilitators. Art Fund is well placed to help make these ambitions a reality and to strengthen the sector's ability to find, commission and support artists in this way.

Art Fund's direct relationships with audiences are seen as vital, with the research showing strong endorsement for continued activity to **grow, diversify and deepening engagement with audiences** over the next five years. Work with **teachers and schools** and **early years** are top priorities for the sector.

Over the past five years, Art Fund's role as an **advocate for the sector** to Government and decision-makers has risen in value within the sector. For many, this is a primary role for Art Fund in the coming five years, promoting museums as trusted sources and spaces and linking to new opportunities for philanthropy.

As Art Fund develops its next five-year strategy (2027 – 2031), this research can provide a vital steer to ensure Art Fund remains responsive to need.

Get in touch

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