LIVERPOOL IRISH

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FESTIVAL

19–29 OCTOBER 2023

FESTIVAL REVIEW

Bringing Liverpool and Ireland closer together using arts and culture.

liverpoolirishfestival.com

Company Limited No.4800736. Registered Charity No.1100126

Image: Brave Maeve feat. Maeve and Stu Harrison. (c) E Smith

Liverpool Irish Festival
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FESTIVAL REVIEW 2023

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Liverpool Irish Festival is a member of ***Creative Organisations of Liverpool*** (***COoL***); a diverse collective of key arts organisations in Liverpool, championing the arts; changing perceptions; creating possibilities.

Families and friends dance in the Samhain Céilí at ***Liverpool Irish Centre, #LIF2023***.

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Children play with specially commissioned Liver Bird puppets, made by ***The Armagh Rhymers*** for ***Liverpool Irish Festival***.

OVERVIEW

Liverpool Irish Festival's 2023 theme was "anniversary" drawing on our 21st Festival and major event anniversaries, such as 25-years of *The Good Friday Agreement*, 100-years of Irish independence and 175-years since the Irish Famine. As ever, we drew people in to discussions; shared new concepts and encouraged interaction to fight isolation, embrace technology and acknowledge change. Our four strands of work continued, showcasing 1) *In:Visible Women*, 2) *Nook and Cranny Spaces* 3) *Family Days* and 4) the *Liverpool Irish Famine Trail,* enriching the programme.

In Nov 2022, we were pleased to have been nominated for *Best International Reach* in the ***Liverpool City Region Creativity and Culture Awards***. This year we've been nominated for *Best Artist/Creative Of The Year* in the same awards and as *Most dedicated arts organisation North West 2023* in the ***SME News*** awards.

Of 51 Festival events (2022:60) plus six exhibits (2022:9) held in 2023, nine were live virtual events (2022:11). Though we cancelled three events (not featured in the above counts), two were replaced with an online session (counted) and one has been commuted to 2024 (not counted), to provide deeper audience focus and connection with St Brigid's Day, benefitting artists and audiences. The marginal decrease in event count reflects a lower budget and loss of eight ***Pride of Sefton*** boat tours (engineering works).

Even so, combined, they create a 2023 audience of 46,592 +148 views-to-date (VTDs. 2022: 32,243+1,690 (40,933); 2021:25,915+8,703 (34,621) and 2020: 23,323 (pre VTDs)). This is a growth of 14%!

Our longstanding vision of improving public realm, high-profile work (e.g., our *Tate Exchange* and ***Palm House/Art Arcadia*** residencies) was thwarted by COVID in 2020-21 However, over that period, artists produced a lot of work. This meant 2022 produced a bumper year for exhibits, such as Martin McCoy's *Sweeney's Unquiet Islands* (***The Williamson***), which proved our ability to curate full exhibition programmes. Our continued partnership with ***Bluecoat Display Centre*** continued in 2023, providing a physical, month-long exhibit.

Combined, we developed 127 exhibition days, including *#GlobalGreening* (2022: 237; 2021: 66; 2020: 87; 2019: 89).

The primary difficulty for us in public realm and exhibition terms is the long lead times needed by venues versus the Festival's continued 'project' status.

We've moderated *#GlobalGreening* visitor figures since 2020, to account for COVID, calculating visits at 90% of our standard population multiplier (0.39%). This results in a 2023 visitor figure of 37,586 (increased due to 17 venues lighting). It is almost twice the 2021 figure, despite maintaining the 90% moderation.

Liverpool Pride expanded hugely, with a march of 20,000. We marched with a cohort of Irish services, and using our population multiplier of 0.39% believe we were seen by more than 3.5k people. These figures mean the Festival attracted more than 4,400 people to its events, despite the ticket buying climate, cost of living crisis and local/global politics.

After our 2021 ***National Lottery Heritage Funds*** (***NLHF***) success, work began on the *Liverpool Irish Famine Trail,* releasing a book (summer 2022) and developing an incredible, voluntary *History Research Group*, who've undertaken 1,464 hours+ of volunteer time since they began. In 2023 we received £3.1k from the Consul General to bridge a resource gap between funds, which helped develop our relationship with ***Strokestown National Famine Museum and Trail*** eventually leading to another successful ***NLHF*** grant (£99,650).

On HR management, we've sustained a volunteer Board, reducing to seven; recruited and sustained a volunteer team of 13 across front-of-house and *Liverpool Irish Famine Trail* roles and maintained a paid *History Research Group* lead.

Excitingly, after years of attempts, we have expanded the team to include a part-time Festival Co-ordinator, after success with funding from the Irish Government (£10k of a needed £15,725PA).

Following years of discussion, we moved our Director to PAYE in 2023, accepting the additional pay burden to become *IR35* compliant.

We made 10 funding applications (inc. one sponsorship) totalling £274,819.6 and were awarded £129,963 or 47% (2022: £947,265 bringing in £110,380 or 14%; 2021: £1,068,372 bringing in £115,183 or 10.8%). Greater detail on this can be found in ***Funding***. 7 of 10 bids received funding. What seems like a significant drop is due to the 3-year ***ACE*** NPO approach in 2022 and the £674k *Community Renewal Fund* in 2024. The % increase in awards shows we are travelling in the right direction.

Liverpool's October calendar remains competitive, with

- *Black History Month* throughout and *Liverpool Biennial* alternate years), followed closely by ***Homotopia*** and ***DaDaFest***
- increasing numbers of Hallowe'en events, with commercial venues diluting city event messages
- impacting football schedules
- and half-terms affecting local travel out of the city.

Events were on-sale by early September. For green and economic reasons we changed printing approaches. Instead of a 30k 46-page newspaper run with 28k delivered to homes (2021: 30k 36-page), we created 60k A2-folded leaflets delivered to 55k Merseyside homes, and just 7k 56-page newspapers, delivered to our participating venues. This came in for the same costs as 2022 (C£15k), with much wider reach. PR time was increased, after 2022 was found to be too tight.

Despite carbon emissions involved in newspaper production (see ***Travel imprints and carbon tracking***), the newspaper fulfils several important annual functions, producing

- non-digital reach and a multi-generational gift
- another arts platform, extending storytelling
- meaningful event cross-sells and in-depth articles
- a Festival legacy
- speaks locally, whilst providing online content for international audiences.

Beginning with a new PR and Comms lead in August meant we missed long leads in to printed press, but with so much news on changing Prime Ministers, war in Ukraine, cost-of-living crisis, we would have had difficulty even if we'd had a year lead. With a new consultant, in a short space of time, we achieved 4,500,638 (2021: almost 3m) in press reach and strong social media representation.

We generated 250 hard copy audience surveys and 24 digital. (2022: 307 total surveys; 2021: 359 hard copy+33 digital=392; 2020: 72 survey+50 poll=122; 2019: 490; 2018: 359; 2017: 342).

Lower than previous years, data is harder to collect with fewer volunteers (just 5 front-of-house volunteers this year) and more suspicion around data collection. We continue to note how few people complete a whole survey -picking and choosing questions.

#LIF2023 top 3 descriptors matched *#LIF2022*'s as "**fun**", "**interesting**" and "**inspiring**" versus…

- **2021:** "**fun**", "**entertaining**" and "**interesting**"
- **2022:** "**interesting**", "**informative**" and "**joy**".

We can directly name 98 artists/contributors we worked with in 2023 (2022: 123; 2021:174; 2020: 107); presenting work from at least 110 more (dancers, musicians, filmmakers). The Festival developed 32 commissions, one of which included 40 individual pieces of art, given to the public. These include photo-stories, articles, podcasts, films and songs (2022: 42; 2021: 34; 2020: 31; 2019: 21); on a turnover (to date) of £114,869 (2022: £104,457; 2021: £89,050; 2020: £104,184; 2019: £78,228). Significant to our turnover reporting in 2023 is ***National Lottery Heritage Fund*** much of which will be bound over for 2024.

We continue to recognise our Festival as unique in its field, being the only arts and culture *led* Irish festival in the world. Our specificity is key: celebrating Liverpool's unique connection to Irish communities, its international standing and our determination to address Irish representation (its diasporic peoples and Irish culture) engages visitors. We'd like to export this more and feel our representation was changing things for Irish people in England. The *#CCEN*'s success is a marker of this.

As ever, 'go raibh maith agat' to everyone involved in the Festival and the organisation we've become: artists, partners and sponsors; collaborators and networks; venues, friends and every visitor and audience member that joins us, however they join us. We look forward to seeing them -and you- next year, 17-27 Oct 2024.

Emma Smith – Artistic Director and CEO
Liverpool Irish Festival

2023 HEADLINE ACHIEVEMENTS

- Over 168k visits in 5-years at over 270 events and exhibits, with 46,592 +148 in 2023 (2022: 40,933)
- *#LIF2023* showed work from 98 artists, creatives and speakers (2022: 123; 2021: 174; 2020: 107; 2019: 143; 2018: 197; 2017: 126). In 5-years this means we have worked with 645 artists. Though this number seems down, we worked with our 98 artists on 175 occasions in 2023
- A press reach of 6m (2022: 4,5m, 2021: 2.97m; 2020: 6.27m; 2019: 23m)
- 95.8% (2022: 94.91%: 2021: 92.54%) of audiences rated the Festival as 8/10 or above, with an average score of 9.58 (2022: 9.37; 2021: 9.18)
- 97.79% (2022: 95.24%; 2021: 93.15%) of visitors are quite or very likely to recommend the Festival, providing a revealing a 9.77:10 average score (2022: 9.45; 2021: 9.3)
- Of our local audiences, we have representation from 77.5% of Liverpool's residential postcodes (27:40 residential post codes in Liverpool). Overall, 75% of audiences are local, 23% are national and 2% are international (2022: 75/21/4; 2021: 68/28/4)
- Over 20% of our audience self-identity as disabled and over 18% with an LGBTQI+ sexuality (2022: 18% and 15.61%; 2021: 16.82% and 7.63%)
- Partners are key. We worked with 85 this year, including partners, sponsors and funders (2022: 84; 2021: 81; 2020: 61; 2018: 59; 2017: 55; 2016: 30). That's 341 in 5-years
- 1 Jan-31 Dec 2023 we were awarded public income grants totalling £127, 463 (2022: 1 Jan-31 Dec: £92,093 with £5,803 due for collection in 2023; 2021:1 Jan—2 Dec 2021: £115k)
- Received a 2022 nomination for the *LCR Culture and Creativity Awards* as an organisation recognised for our 'International Reach' and a 2023 Artist/Creative of the year nomination, as well as winning *Most dedicated arts organisation North West* in the 2023 ***SME News*** Awards
- Sustained membership of ***COoL***, ***Baobab***, ***Irish In Britain*** and ***Shift***. Our Director is Chair of *#CCEN* and co-Chair Liverpool's *Festival Forum*; a director of the ***LCR Culture Network CIC*** as well as sitting on the *Liverpool arts and culture sector Race Equality Action Group*. We've sustained membership of the Irish Embassy's *Emigrant Support Advisory Committee* and presented, on behalf of the Irish Government, at the 2023 *Global Civic Forum* (Dublin, Apr 2023) as well as undertaking a research mission to Strokestown
- Our *History Research Group*, led by John Maguire, have undertaken 1,464 volunteer hours to date
- As an organisation we have moved to PAYE, taken on a second team-member and held a Board visioning Day in 2023.

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AND CEO (AD&CEO) STATISTICS

Meetings, video and telephone calls

- 2023 257+9 days training
- 2022 308
- 2021 303
- 2020 257
- 2019 255
- 2018 276
- 2017 188

Email outputs

Emails (averages based on a 260-day year)

- 2023 6,342., 24.4 per day
- 2022 6,219, 23.9 per day
- 2021 5,987, 23 per day
- 2020 4,788, 18.4 per day
- 2019 5,993, 22 per day
- 2018 6,427, 25 per day.

Time worked

31 Oct 2022-28 Oct 2023, the AD&CEO worked for 1778.19 hours (254 7-hour days). This is 22 more days than most people working a 35-hour week, but less than the 60x7-hour days more worked in 2021. This is based on a working year of 232 days (260, less 20 holidays and 8 bank holidays). However, this means that, as of 1 Dec, 0 of

38 days of PAYE holiday have been taken and must be by March 2024. Though we have reduced the Director's working hours, the job is still overburdened. It is hoped that the Festival Coordinator will ease this in 2024.

General work

- Delivered 10 monthly Board reports
- Continued Festival representation at following network meetings: ***Creative Organisations of Liverpool*** and connected *Race Equality Action Group*; *Community Cohesion Forum*; *Festivals Forum* (recently co-opted as co-Chair), ***Baobab***, *Liverpool Writes*, *Cultural Connectedness Exchange Network* (Chair), *Emigrant Support Advisory Committee* and became a Director of the ***LCR Culture Network CIC***
- attended and presented on 'culture' at the Irish Government's *Global Civic Forum* (Dublin, April 2023)
- research exchange trip to Strokestown (5 days)
- hosted artist's from Derry and Dublin
- worked on delivering Year 3 of our five-year ***Business Plan* (linked here)**
- website updates and completion of a 9-day *Digital Boost* course, improving SEO across the site and accessibility scoring for prose
- enewsletters and social media updates
- Festival collateral including 1 x 56-page newspaper; 1 x ***ACE*** aligned survey data processing/analysis; 4 x animated posters, and 4 print posters, 1 x 60k 8page A2 leaflet
- 9 funding applications and one sponsorship, plus the management and liaison required for these
- continued sales of 96-page book about the *Liverpool Irish Famine Trail* and commission of *Brave Maeve*, on which we served as editor.

Events and exhibits

- 2023 49 events, 6 exhibitions, generating 127 exhibition days
- 2022 60 events, 9 exhibits, generating 237 exhibition days
- 2021 60 events, 3 exhibits, generating 66 exhibition days
- 2020 48 events, 4 exhibits generating 68 exhibition days
- 2019 75 events, 4 exhibits generating 89 exhibition days.

FUNDING

- 2023 9 grant applications and one sponsorship totalling an ask amount of £274,850 (this looks low, but in previous years we made multi-year ***ACE*** *NPO* and ***UK Community Renewal Fund*** applications, which vastly increased the total applied for)
- 2022 9 grant applications and one sponsorship totalling an ask amount of £947,265
- 2021 15 grant applications and one sponsorship totalling an ask amount of £1,068,372
- 2020 22 grant applications and one sponsorship totalling an ask amount of £393.7k.

Demonstrating our shift in ambition, time investment and energy, we've made more ambitious asks in the last few years, approaching fewer small funds/funders. Using an 'ask to grant' calculation, we've increased our success rate from 10.78% 2021 and 13.87% in 2022 to over 42%.

Our ***Arts Council England*** national portfolio approach in 2022 was unsuccessful, altering our ***Business Plan*** with a move to annual grant approaches, which also failed in 2023. At Board level we made the decision to deliver 2023's Festival without ***Arts Council*** funding, which we would mop up with our reserves, grown in previous years, but by being as frugal as we could.

We've picked up the lack of representation with ***Irish In Britain*** with a view to pursuing this with ***ACE*** in 2024. No Irish organisations were accepted for multi-year funding, despite our previous in-depth conversations with the national funder about Irishness as a protected characteristic. This is hugely disappointing. At the time of writing, we're seeking ways to draw attention to this imbalance and the lack of support for Irish creativity in England, given that Irish people are known to be England's fifth largest migrant group. Despite our ***ACE*** decision, we were successful with

- sustaining City Council *Cultural Arts Investment Programme* (*CAIP*), being awarded a multi-year bid submitted for 2023-2026, including £20,347 in 2023
- uplifts in Irish Government *Emigrant Support Funding* from £11.5k to over £25k across three applications. One continues core funding; one provides 2/3 funding for a part-time Festival Coordinator and the last provides a contribution for running the *#CCEN*
- we sustained ***Tourism Ireland*** sponsorship and advertising
- a £99.5k grant from ***The National Lottery Heritage Fund*** to further develop assets for the *Liverpool Irish Famine Trail*. This is a significant addition to our grant funding, and secures our *History Research Group* and lead for another 15 months.

Ticket buying audiences continue to present concerns; a lack of industry evidence on Liverpool's ticketing means comparison is difficult, though anecdotally we know compared with football or celebrity names 'culture' is a hard sell in Liverpool, in part on account of the amount of free activity available.

Net ticket income generated via ***Eventbrite***, for the 17 (2022:30) events the Festival ticket-managed, raised just over £2.5k, the same as in 2022 (2020: £528 across 15 events). Advertising garnered £2,400, up from £1,850 in 2022 (up on Covid years, but still down on pre-Covid times). This included £1,000 from ***St Helens Libraries***.

CULTIVATING AND INSPIRING AUDIENCES

RECOMMENDATION, RE-ATTENDANCE AND QUALITY RATINGS

In 2021, we changed our quality and recommendation monitoring, moved from 5* to 10* rating, as shown below:

Experience	Poor	>	>		Excellent	
5* star count - used 2016-2020 incl.	1	3	4		5	
Recommendation likelihood	Very unlikely/ wouldn't	Might/ might not	Quite likely		Very likely/will	
10* star count - used from 2021	1	6	7	8	9	10
Recommendation likelihood	Absolutely would not/hated the experience	>	>	>	Telling people now/ exceptionally positive experience	

Analysis reveals the following:

Attendance/ recommendation	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	5-year av.
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	**%**	%
Attended before?	49.67	56.35	49	42.77	68.66	48.50	49.43	**53.62**	52.60
Will attend again?	93.56	95.3	98.9	97.55	96.52	99.33	99.15	**99.50**	98.41
Recommend the Festival? 4*+/ post-2021 8*+	96.29	96.6	96.2	95.11	92.65	93.15	95.24	**96.79**	94.59
Quality? 4*+/post-2021 8*+	94	96.6	95.13	93.96	96.46	92.54	94.91	**95.81**	94.73

RECOMMENDATION RATES

At over 95%, our recommendation rates and rate for quality remain staggeringly high. Sustaining these year-on-year is a significant achievement. Variations occur due to venue mix, weather conditions and staff/artist behaviours as well as programme, front-of-house experience, etc. To repeat high scores, we demonstrate that we work well with partners and audiences, create positive spaces and set expectations appropriately. We're confident audiences attending our shows

- experience welcoming, high-quality events that chime with or above expectations
- want to return
- will make and hear positive word-of-mouth recommendations.

Even with feedback biases* (e.g., only people who have extremes of experience or are well-engaged are likely to complete a form) this is a positive achievement and strong indicator of our high-quality event delivery. We stated in 2019 we may never exceed that year's figures; to have surpassed that again this year is sensational.

In 2023 64% of survey completions marked us 10:10 (2022: 69%; 2021: 57%), with a further 20% (2022: 11%) and 12% (2022:15%; 2021: 19.7% and 15.82%) awarding 9/10 and 8/10 respectively, amassing 96.8%+ for 8-10 scores (2021: 93%). ***Arts Council England*** believe anything up to and including 6/10 is -effectively-underwhelming, so it's important for us to score high, which we're achieving.

We are sad to see that our artist experience ratings dropped in 2023, with just 21 surveys submitted. Just 53% of our artists awarded us 10:10 for their experience, compared with 64% in 2023 and just 94% rating us 8:10 or above (2022: 95%). 6% marked us at 6:10 Just 4.73%, whereas we were not marked lower than 7:10 in 2022. In thinking through why this might be the case, we believe there was some disappointment around ticket sales and, consequently, some belief in more targeted sales approaches and ticket sale support.

Correlating with above, in 2023 94% of artists think there is an 8:10 or more chance they would recommend the Festival (2022: 98%), with 81% awarding a 10:10 figure (2022: 69%). Given the complexity of artist liaison and the nature of the work we undertake often being emotive, over long periods of time and with funding always a consideration, we are extremely proud of these ratings especially as we did not have ***ACE*** funds in 2023.

RE-ATTENDANCE

Reattendance is growing slightly, year-on-year with over 99%+ stating they would like to attend again. This must be seen as positive, though in some peer groups new attendances may be highly prized.

Year Attended event previously/Would attend again (%)

- 2023 54/99.5
- 2022 49/99
- 2021 48.5/99
- 2020 69/97
- 2019 43/98

In 2020 we put the repeat attendance variance down to a local audience, due to COVID, with less travel from afar. Where they were given at all - and in the context of form processing - we believe "no" answers (for reattending) primarily come from overseas visitors (who clearly see their opportunity to reattend as limited or a misunderstanding of the rate system).

As a breakdown, 46% of 2023's audiences are new (2022: 51%). 30% (2022: 25%) have attended an event within 12-months; 11% (2022: 6%) in 1-2-years, 5% (2022: 9%) in 2-3-years, 3% (2022: 5%) in 3-5-years and 4% in over 5-years (static). This shows retention in more recent visits, which is positive.

Having managed a 20.5% return rate (2022: 25%) on artists surveys, it is worth noting that 100% of artists who responded to our survey said they would like to work with us again, matching 2022's figures.

CONTEXT

We generated 274 (2022: 307) audience surveys in 2023 (and 21 artist surveys (2022:32)), combining hard-copy and online, but with a much smaller cohort of volunteers and in harder GDPR times. This is lower than 2021's 393 surveys (achieved with 2.5x-the-volunteers). We are taking percentages from the total answers and not all people answered all questions. Thus, the above audience statistics are based from answers ranging from 0-274 entries. Seeing common sense explanations for variance is reassuring and acknowledging how figures track with previous years is heartening. They show we keep and grow audiences in roughly equal measure. Those who are not coming back year-on-year may yet do so. We believe this to be reflective of our newspaper mailings hitting 'warm' and new areas *and* that people are more aware of our time in the cultural calendar.

ANNUAL ENGAGEMENT AND MONITORING

NOTES ON AUDIENCE VALUES

The events sector is still developing ways to calculate digital versus virtual audiences, with funders and sponsors handling data differently. For consistency of monitoring, we have adopted the following stances using "analyst's prerogative":

- to maintain year-on-year figures, we are using principles adopted in 2020 to calculate total visits, which include ticketed attendances and head counts for in-person events + total views to date for work we have made available online within the year (following peers at ***Writing on the Wall***). Breakdowns are available and can be appraised as the sector demands
- 'Views to date' include '1 min views' on ***Facebook*** and '3 min views' on ***YouTube****;* the metrics they use to calculate 'views/visits'.

We've dropped 1.25 measures for online events. With so few online only events in 2023 this seemed a confusing addition.

When reading ***Participants and Audiences***, it's worth noting that ***Arts Council England*** defines audience engagement using event categories, such as 'Workshops', 'Performances', 'Events', etc, to determine 'depth of engagement' versus 'passive exposure'. Our workshops and 'other' (e.g., walking tours, *Cultural Connectedness*) demonstrate deep/committed engagement rather than passive engagement, such as gallery counts where it is hard to evidence someone's understanding/interaction from attendance alone (e.g., *#GlobalGreening*).

EVENT AND AUDIENCE GROWTH/DEVELOPMENTS

Previously we've worked on multiple cultural calendar events, including *#GlobalGreening* for St Patrick's Day, *Derry City and Strabane District Council*'s young people's festival: *Rewire*, Liverpool's *River Festival* and *Liverpool Pride*. Such events raise our profile; show Irishness as connected with/sharing other communities and develops new audiences. Since COVID, some of these events have not yet returned and we are finding audience numbers have not returned to full, pre-2020 strength, with more people booking for tickets (free and paid) and making last-minute attendance decisions. This can lead to disappointing results and lower in-person figures than anticipated. We have used booking counts for events where people did not turn out and in-person counts for where there was walk-up, tec. This is to try and reflect engagements, though it is not ideal. Music and theatre continue to be difficult to sell tickets for and we did struggle to maximise audiences for these despite best efforts.

Rich online content has continued to drop, though will likely rise in 2024 as we develop assets for our Trail app. With no ***ACE*** funding, digital commissions were put on hold, in favour of quick-to-turn around commissions and in-person eventing. Correspondingly, 'view-to-date' visits drop in 2023.

We recognise these can be important for reaching/developing new audiences. Our animated posters were attractive, easy to access and well-linked with our programme and literature. They expand our multi-disciplinarity, committed collaborator status and dedication to creative opportunities, whilst providing year-round documentation and representation. We hope to return to more of these in future.

Being able to move to online provision is useful in the event of bad weather, transport strikes, significant city or sporting events, which can detrimentally affect audience behaviours, by hampering our ability to penetrate the market with information and attract audiences (paid or unpaid). We must remember that reliance on one space in the calendar leaves us vulnerable; we have proven that spreading activity –atop Festival delivery, e.g., to St Brigid's and St Patrick's Days, *Pride*, etc- locates new audiences, provides opportunities and builds engagement. It would be advantageous to build rich content online, but this is where we are restricted by our capacity and in - house skills.

Total audience

Year	Total (inc. views-to-date)/without views-to-date	Year	Total (inc. views-to-date)/without views-to-date
• 2023	46,740/45,623	• 2019	36260
• 2022	40,933/39,243	• 2018	24,232
• 2021	34,621/25,918	• 2017	8505
• 2020	23,323	• 2016	8812.

This presents a 5-year (2019-23 inclusive) growth of 21.3%.

Sell out events included: *North Circular* (film), *Liverpool English with Tony Crowley* and South Liverpool Walk, with strong (unticketed) interest in the Family Day, Samhain Céilí and Irish Memories morning. The ***PK's*** seisiúns remained popular despite poor weather. We were pleased with the Family Day turnout, which rivalled previous years, despite there being a football derby that afternoon.

Our ***Music to Yeats***, ***Green and Blue*** and ***Two Plays*** audiences were upsettingly low despite good billing and a number of social media posts leading up to and during the Festival. It seems it has never been harder to sell tickets and sector friends are all reporting 80-90% of pre-COVID figures still, along with the issue of non-attendance.

Fat Dan Productions present *Brendan Sun of Dublin*, ***#LIF2023***

In ‘real’ terms we drew 4,403 + 3634 (***LCR Pride***) = 8,037 (2022: 4,739; 2021: 4,086) live attendances across ‘live’ and ‘live-virtual’ events, presenting a 60% growth overall, or 93% of our 2022 figure if only counting non-***Pride*** events. A further 37,586 attended witnessed *#GlobalGreening*, with 148 (2022: 1,689 follow up viewings/views-to-date). That we underpin the success of the Festival with activities across the year builds on previous learning and crystallises the importance of partnership work and collaboration. This gives a total view to date in 2023 as: 45,730.

PARTICIPANTS AND AUDIENCES

Participants and visitors*

Year		Expected	Achieved	Visitor total	% growth	% (actual vs expected)
2016	Events	3608	5569			
	Exhibits	975	3243	**8812**		192.28
2017	Events	6495	7252			
	Exhibits	1030	1253	**8505**	-3	113.02
2018	Events	19625	23309			
	Exhibits	760	923	**24232**	**185**	118.87
2019	Events	28790	32841			
	Exhibits	2180	3419	**36260**	**50**	117.08
2020	Events	1019	9094			
	Exhibits	19670	14229	**23323**	**-36**	112.73
2021	Events	4961	4086			
	Exhibits	18550	21832	**25918**	**11**	110.24
2022	Events	4214	4739			
	Exhibits	25860	34504	**39243**	**51**	130.49
2023	Events	4940	8037			
	Exhibits	20640	38555	**46592**	**19**	182.14

* All figures are derived from audience counters, ticket counts or extrapolations from automated door counts. Does not include follow up views/views to date.

Left: Caelainn Hogan, author of *Republic of Shame*, presented a great partnership opportunity in 2022, between the Festival and *The Institute of Irish Studies* at ***University of Liverpool***, attracting Ambassador Fraser to the Festival and additional events.

In 2023, to continue the relationship and develop our Mother and Baby and County Care Home work with ***Fréa***, the Festival commissioned Caelainn to write an article on the subject, using 10-years of *The McAleese Report* as a means of anchoring this with the *#LIF2023* theme (anniversary).

LIVE PROGRAMME BUILD

Live programme build	W, P, E, O or X?	W= Workshops (céilí, classes, family day, lecture)	P= Performances (music, theatre, etc)	E= Events (talks, music seisiúns)	O= Other (River Festival, walking tours, boat tours)	Total	% year-on-year growth
2016	No of each	5	14	27	7	53	
	% of live programme	9	26	51	13	100	
	Visitors/ participants	1046	2124	2052	347	5,569	
	% total audience	19	38	37	6	100	
2017	No of each	17	31	16	1	65	
	% of live programme	26	48	25	2	100	
	Visitors/ participants	436	5088	2459	100	8,083	45
	% total audience	5	63	30	1	100	
2018	No of each	13	34	18	10	75	
	% of live programme	17	45	24	13	100	
	Visitors/ participants	566	2829	1675	18239	23,309	188
	% total audience	2	12	7	78	100	
2019	No of each	17	12	12	7	48	
	% of live programme	35	25	25	15	100	
	Visitors/ participants	301	863	4523	27154	32,841	41
	% total audience	1	3	14	83	100	
2020	No of each	8	14	4	2	28	
	% of live programme	29	50	14	7	100	
	Visitors/ participants	803	3641	375	4275	9,094	-72
	% total audience	9	40	4	47	100	
2021	No of each	12	18	9	21	60	
	% of live programme	20	30	15	35	100	
	Visitors/ participants	129	868	2865	224	4,086	-55
	% total audience	3	21	70	5	100	
2022	No of each	19	9	11	20	59	
	% of live programme	32	15	19	34	100	
	Visitors/ participants	417	983	2888	1477	5,765	41
	% total audience	7	17	50	26	100	
2023	No of each	4	9	18	20	51	
	% of live programme	35	25	25	15	100	
	Visitors/ participants	48	497	2437	5055	8,037	39
	% total audience	3	21	70	5	100	

NB The table above considers live programme only, including views to date associated with live programme. Exhibits are not counted here.

Left: Girl interacts with an ***Armagh Rhymers*** puppet as part of the *Family Day* at ***Museum of Liverpool***.

EXHIBITION FIGURES

Audience attendances	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020		2021			2022			2023		
W, P, E, O or X?	No.	Aud.	No.	Aud.	No.	Aud.	No.	Aud.	No.	Aud.	No (live aspect).	Aud.	Viewing opps provided	No (live aspect).	Aud.	Viewing opps provided	No (live aspect).	Aud.	Viewing opps provided
Workshops (W)	5	1046	17	436	13	566	17	301	8	803	12	129		19	417		4	48	
Performance (P)	14	2124	31	5088	34	2829	12	863	14	3641	18	868		9	489		9	497	
Event (E)	27	2052	16	2459	18	1675	12	4523	4	345	9	2865		11	2622		18	2437	
Other (O)	7	347	1	100	10	18239	7	27154	2	1275	21	224		20	1211		20	5055	
Exhibitions (X)	4	3243	3	1253	4	923	4	3419	3	14229	3	21832		10	34504		6	38555	
Views to date (e.g., online premieres; illustrated posters, event films), not previously collected												8703	33		1689	6		148	3
Total	**57**	**8812**	**68**	**9336**	**79**	**24232**	**52**	**36260**	**31**	**20293**	**63**	**34621**		**69**	**40933**		**57**	**46740**	
Pre views to date total												**25918**			**39243**			**46592**	

#LIF2023's 'exhibits' are classified as

- *#GlobalGreening*
- *Liver Harp and Seek*, a guerilla exhibition by Pam Sullivan
- *Brave Maeve* (book release and collections)
- Níamh Grimes's jewellery *In the Window* (***Bluecoat Display Centre***)
- The materials library at ***Liverpool Everyman***
- Myth and Legend at ***St Helen's Libraries***.

This makes a total of 6 exhibitions, with attendance figures totalling 38,555 (2022: 34,504 + 663 VTDs; 2021: 21,832). Generally, we err on the side of caution using conservative estimates across our figures. We know the bulk of this is taken up with *#Global Greening* (37,586; which generated 17 exhibition days. The remaining 4 exhibits had an audience of 969 visits, over 4 shows.

Exhibitions in popular venues can add large audience values. Ideally, we'd do more of these at ***Tate*** or within ***Liverpool Biennial***. For instance, Casey Orr's *Saturday Girl* (2019, ***Tate Liverpool***) welcomed 13,283 people through the doors, though we estimated a 15% engagement with the work, totalling 1,992. Long lead times are required, with guaranteed funds, which our project status makes complicated.

We assign *#GlobalGreening* to 'exhibition' rather than 'event' measurements, to account for engaged and passive audiences. It also means that, as a growing part of our work, we understand its shifting pattern and peaks and troughs within our figures. We count *#GlobalGreening* using 0.39625% of local population multiplied by the buildings used and the number of nights they light for. In 2020-21 we reduced the figures by 40% to account for COVID reductions in foot traffic; this year have continued to use 90% of this.

Actual exhibition figures are an extrapolation of building figures and/or official counts. We use 15% of visitor rates for ***Bluecoat Display Centre***, based on the necessity to pass the window display to access the till. This does not account for street rate from College Lane, which is a feature of this form of display, hence the title *In the Window*.

Left: Jo Pue (right) leads the melody makers musicians in song at the *#LIF2023 Family Day* at ***Museum of Liverpool***. They additionally played at the Festival's launch and plan to work collaboratively with the Festival and other partners in 2024.

TICKET PRICING AND AVERAGES

Average ticket price*

Year	Total events	Number paid events	% of total events (paid)	Number free events	% of total events (free)	Av ticket price	No. of tickets issued at paid events (including comps)	Income *if* average ticket price was redeemed (gross income indicator, not accounting figure)	Income *if* average ticket price was redeemed against anticipated audience/ planned activity (expected audience)	**Average across all events (including free events)**
2016	53	27	50.9	26	49.1	£16.72	2714	£ 45,378		£3.17
2017	69	34	49.3	35	50.7	£ 7.35	1550	£ 11,393		£9.39
2018	75	43	57.3	32	42.7	£ 8.30	3784	£ 31,407		£9.04
2019	48	19	39.6	29	60.4	£ 9.96	1158	£ 14,208		£4.82
2020	31	2	6.5	29	93.5	£ 6.75	170	£ 1,148		£4.59
2021	60	20	33.3	40	66.7	£ 8.43	709	£ 5,977	£ 17,872	£7.12
2022	69	18	26.1	51	73.9	£10.87	677	£ 7,360	£ 7,665	£6.35
2023	52	15	28.8	37	71.2	£13.00	671	£ 8,723	£ 15,145	£4.00
5-yearr a	**52**	**15**	**26.9**	**37**	**73.14**	**£9.80**	**677**	**£7,483.15**	**£8,136.30**	**£5.38**

* Based on the average ticket price, this being the median value between full and concession price, multiplied by the number of purchases made. Does not account for complimentary tickets or free events.

In 2023 we ran ticketing on ***Eventbrite*** for 17 of our events, 8 of which were free. In total, we gained £147.45 in donations, against free events, and took £2,595.69 in against an attendance value of 671 tickets (£3.87 av ticket price, closely reflecting the information in the table above).

Ideally, we'd give ourselves a long run-in for tickets sales, going live with programme in August on as many channels as possible. The earlier we're on sale, the better our promotional capabilities and chance of repositioning are. In 2023 we saw this with two events: Maz O'Connor's workshops and Sue Rynhart's *You, Me or the Wallpaper*. The latter is a large-scale (for us), high quality, but niche piece, funder by ***Culture Ireland***. Cancelling the show during the Festival, to reposition within our St Brigid's Day programme, will -I hope- better serve the artist funders and the audiences who should see it. We'll dedicate time to targeting female-led and focussed groups and try harder to reach in to targeted communities rather, than basing promotion on the general Festival calls. Maz's workshops were moved from in-person to online more than trebling attendees. We've also moved the event to a more music-related venue, which may bring its own audience, too. This will serve as a test case for this type of decision making.

It must be noted that team capacity, programme size and late funding announcements contribute to capacity, capability and successful promotion. ACE decisions certainly pushed our promotion window -particularly press- to be later than we'd like.

Ticket sales in Liverpool remain a struggle and below national expectancy. Both the City's music and theatre consultations (established to understand Liverpool's 'guest list' economy and difficulty in raising ticket income) were shelved at the outbreak of COVID. We know events that *should* sell, sometimes don't (e.g., ***Kíla***, Lisa Lambe gigs), though others have success. We can evidence that ticket buying is dropping; a note consistent with anecdotal peer feedback. Ticket purchases in 2023 are half that of 2019.

Liverpool is not a wealthy city. With many self-starters, a guest-list and friend community populate the box office scene on 'comps'. With free content available, many occupy their time and energy at free gatherings rather than paid events. We must get paid activities listed with two paydays ahead to help spread costs, especially in a cost-of-living crisis.

Free events are a critical part of our public function, doing much to engage deeply with communities and audiences, fulfilling stakeholder/funder missions and maintaining our egalitarianism, charity status and barrierless access. That said, expectation on free events is -worryingly- high. Despite providing 3 hours of entertainment, free party bags full of toys and sweets, in 2022 parents still said that food would be welcome at the (already free) *Samhain Céilí*. These are hard times and whilst large commercial offerings (football, Christie Moore) may find audiences, our audiences are struggling.

AVERAGE AGE

Averge age												
Year	X	X	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**		
Category	Av (round 1)	Av (round 2)	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Multiplier	%
Under 16	8	8	7	11		5	0	2	6	5	40	1.97
16-19/17-24	17.5	20.5	10	25		20	0	22	13	11	225.5	4.33
20-24/25-34	22	29.5	46	95		30	0	57	41	27	796.5	10.63
25-44/35-44	34.5	39.5	119	52		70	2	54	39	26	1027	10.24
45-54	49.5	49.5	86	75		51	16	57	44	42	2079	16.54
55-64	59.5	59.5	172	90		44	27	80	72	68	4046	26.77
65+ (Life expectancy 81*)	73	69.5	139	5		54	23	61	45	53	3683.5	20.87
75+	N/A	75						12	16	19	1425	7.48
PNTS	36.5	36.5	2	8		44	4	13	5	3	109.5	1.18
Completions			581	361		318	72	358	281	254	52.9	100
Total form fillers			606	361		359	72	393	281	275		
% answering questions			95.87	100		88.58	100	91.09	100	92.36		
Av age of visitor			**51.7**	**39.2**		**44.5**	**59.6**	**48.8**	**50.0**	**52.9**		
Facebook average age modifer	22.6						**41.1**					

* *The Global Burden of Diseases, Injuries and Risk Factors Study*, 2013 (GBD 2013)

The above data reflects audience survey responses. Lack of hard evidence in 2020 (COVID) means we augmented surveys with a ***Facebook*** follower age analysis to bolster a lack of data-gathering. What it doesn't reveal is people bringing children or reporting for those under 16.

It suggests that since 2016 we had been reducing the average age of a visitor, but post-COVID this has slowly risen again. Anecdotally, we know this can't be the case, given the content of the *Family Day* and *Samhain Céilí* and the attendances we see there – what we know is it is hard to motivate younger people to complete surveys.

If equal representation from each age category was represented, using 2021's age categories (i.e., 12.5% each), the average age of a visitor would be 41.5. In 2023, we were well above that. 2020's social media augmentation could be a better way of identifying our real age reach, if aggregated across platforms. This is a possible area for follow up in future.

Total artists worked with:		123		98
Age - artists	Number selecting this category	% of response cohort	Number selecting this category	% of response cohort
17-24	2	6.25	0	0.00
25-34	3	9.375	1	4.76
35-44	4	12.5	4	19.05
45-54	8	25	4	19.05
55-64	9	28.125	6	28.57
65-74	3	9.375	3	14.29
75+	3	9.375	3	14.29
Total respondents	**32**	**100**	**21**	**100**
% artists that responded		25.81		21.43
Av age of a Festival artist		52		56

We only manged to get 21% of artists and collaborators to supply survey responses this year. In future, we may need to tie tis in to contracting to build a better data set. However, what it does show is our artists tend to be middle aged (c.50+), though we do have decent representation in the 25+ and 35 categories, too.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (THE CREATIVE CASE)

Inclusion goes beyond physical access or ethnicity tolerance. It begins with the belief people should be safe from oppression and supported to engage. Further to our 2019 inclusion statement, we've continued to underpin our actions with additional statements, protests, representational activism and work with the *Liverpool city region arts and culture sector Race Equality Manifesto Action Group*.

Our ***Artistic Policy*** was overhauled in 2021 (with other policies following in 2022), to ensure it rang true with renewed intelligence around equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and since then we've aimed throughout our organisation -trustee to volunteers- to work smarter to include, represent and attract those from diverse backgrounds.

We're still very white (though that whiteness is divided by those identifying as British and Irish), with an average Board age membership of 49 (11 years lower than the national average of 60). We've an even gender split, but have little non-binary representation.

Embracing intersectional and progressive approaches to our organisation, work, rigour and outlook; we undertook this work with specific reference to ***Arts Council England***'s "***Creative Case***", a strategy to redress diversity by creating deeper inclusion and reducing barriers in ***ACE*** funded work.

As well as looking internally, we are working externally, actively engaging in ***Creative Organisations of Liverpool***'s EDI Task Group (formed Dec 2020) and as members of the ***Baobab Foundation*** (since Apr 2021). Our continued representation of Irishness via the *Cultural Connectedness Exchange Network* (*#CCEN*) has led to over 60 named members (up from 53), including artists and commissioners and is attended by the Irish Embassy and the Consul General.

Our work with single and dual-heritage groups, specific audiences and key city partners, such as ***Writing on the Wall***, ***Pagoda Arts*** and ***Liverpool Pride*** -alongside the work in communities we'll do with the *Liverpool Irish Famine Trail*- remain instrumental to diversifying our work, participants, audiences and team.

In 2020 the Festival wrote a letter to ***Arts Council England*** to consider their handling of 'White British' and 'White Irish', after ***ACE*** feedback in 2019 raised concern. Having stressed that 'Irish' has protected character status within inclusion frameworks, we reiterated that blindness towards such distinctions was '**othering**' (more here: **http://www.otheringandbelonging.org/the-problem-of-othering/**; in previous reviews we have included much on 'Irish othering', so refer readers wanting more information to **this link (scroll to last section))**. Sadly, this did not help us -or any other Irish arts organisation- secure national portfolio status. We continue to challenge this decision and have sought support from ***Irish In Britain*** on this subject.

The ***ACE*** communiqués prompted us to establish the ***Cultural Connectedness Exchange Network*** in late 2020. Meetings continued a 6-weekly rotation thereafter, including 3 in-person practice days, attended by 15, 18 and 27people, respectively, from across England, Wales and Ireland, always including a deep-dive discussion on 'diversity within Irishness'. Working with people who experience racism was a feature of both and has led us to the statement "You are your ancestor's wildest dreams".

Our practices ensure we factor equality practices in all we do; contracting, trustee recruitment, programming, artists and audiences. For the size of our organisation, we believe we punch hard for our weight. It would be peculiar for the Festival to attract 50% Black audiences, when Liverpool's Black population is 2.8 % (2011 census) and Ireland's is 1.4%, but by the very nature of our work, we should attract individuals from across the diversity spectrum. To have a high white-Irish count reflects our representation of -and mission to celebrate- Irish arts and culture; but if we miss other groups most closely aligned (such as LGBTQI+, disabled or cross-class groups) with this we must consider why.

NOTES ON DATA COLLECTION; ENTRY AND ISSUES WITH IDENTITY DATA

Year-on-year (YOY) figures for ethnicity and nationality raise points to note. Prior experience shows asking people to specify 'ethnicity' and/or 'nationality' in freeform spaces result in variance and incompletion e.g., "white", "black", "Scouse", "UK"; part answers. In 2018 we asked for 'Ethnicity' and 'City and country of birth' (to determine nationality ourselves), coding replies to data models, but this lacks nuance. In 2019, the question read: 'Your city and country of birth (nationality)' and 'Your ethnicity/ethnicities', which still presented issues with comprehension.

Asked about 'ethnicity', many write "British" or "Irish" rather than "White" or "Asian", along with freeform answers such as "Scouse", "European" and "why does it matter?". Presenting box-check answers misses many combination answers. Similar issues present with 'sex', 'gender' and 'sexuality', with more people misunderstanding 'sexuality' for 'gender' than ever before.

Where a mark is entered with no intelligible answer, we attribute them as 'Prefer not to say'. Where an aspect of ethnicity is offered, we try to fairly attribute it, e.g., "Scouse" may not mean 'white', but would more than likely mean they identify as born or primarily raised in Britain and therefore their entry is attributed as 'Unknown ethnicity – British'.

'White British', 'White Irish', 'Anglo-Irish', 'British', 'Irish' and 'white other' audiences generate just under 90% of our audience (2022:60%; 2020: 83%; 2019: 66%). We see annual fluctuations in international audience and -with freedom of choice- more people identifying as 'Anglo-Irish'/'Irish-British' and variants thereof. Increased numbers ignore the question entirely 14% (2022: 12%) and others do not fully understand/appreciate the question, leaving answers such as 'white', which makes it difficult to ascribe ethnicity, hence the use of 'white other'. We have attributed these as fairly as we know to, but within the realm of GDPR this is difficult.

'Anglo-Irish' is a heavily politicised term and can infer systemic class issues. Whilst mindful of this, we can do little about entries for freeform answers, as incorporating a well-populated selection structure overcomplicates and dominates the form, simultaneously alienating people not wholly reflected by one category. As identity politics rise and generations blend, a flexibility around terms will need consideration (think "black Irish"/"Irish Black"/"Black and Irish", each holding distinct and discrete meanings).

Experience teaches us some funders do not necessarily instantly recognise 'white' artists and audiences (even when noted as Irish) as having discrete identity within protected characteristics. Although we continue to advocate for Irishness, given our understanding of white-on-white racism and Irishness as othering, it remains a sobering, hard-fought and ugly piece of learning. Nevertheless, it affirms our position as a representational voice, energising work on overturning assumptions, increasing inclusion and working on intersectionality. Our involvement in cultural dialogue with city and national networks, outlined above, indicates our ongoing commitment and influence in this field.

INTERSECTIONAL PROGRAMMING

As part of our commitment to *Black Lives Matter*, we stated we would ensure 25% of our programme would be driven by intersectional matters, including: ethnicity; non-binary gender and sexuality and neurodiverse (in time) work. Our *In:Visible Women* programme strand should also ensure greater female representation. The following indicates the total of events that have an association with either of these themes.

Year	Female visibility	Ethnicity/identity
• 2023	13/57 or 22% of total programme	14/57 or 25% of total programme
• 2022	21/69 or 30% of total programme	26/69 or 38% of total programme
• 2021	19/63 or 30% of total programme	18/63 or 28.6% of total programme
• 2020	9/31 or 29% of total programme	8/31 or 25.8% of total programme

Combined programme figures

Intersectional programming combined figures (e.g., the two themes above combined and aggregated to reflect a % of total programme)

- 2023 23.5%
- 2022 38%
- 2021 29.36%
- 2020 27.4%

In 2023 we struggled to identify multi-ethnic Irish people who wanted or were available to deliver work. After our ***ACE*** decisions came through, we were successful in raising ***Black History Month*** funding of over £4k, which was only announced in late August. Due to the timing we were unable to find artists to complete the roles we funded for (artists already engaged for Oct by then) and therefore were not able to run with our young Irish voices music night or our Irish and Black composers night. This was in spite of consultation with ***#IAmIrish*** and the *Black Irish Voices Music Board*, ***Liverpool Music Board*** and other promoters in the field.

We're saddened we have not done better on this measure this year. Though within close range of our target, we always hope to excel. Failing to represent greater diversity in Irishness this year, is a driver for improvement in 2024.

That said, the programme percentage doesn't reflect the hours we have spent addressing race equality/inequity in our city and sector, or our work with ***Pagoda Chinese Community Arts Centre*** on a joint venture with ***National Museums Liverpool***. This work will lead to a migrant voices exhibit, in the reworked ***International Slavery Museum*** and a Chinese memorial, for which we have helped to raise £35,000 this year.

As noted in 2022, as language develops and definitions change- we might want to consider what we mean by ethnicity/identity. 100% of our work is focussed in 'identity', but we have scored ourselves against racial identity as a driver for content this year.

We might also want to start considering separate intersectionality counts, such as Irish nationality versus British, non-binary sexuality or gender experience and it pays no consideration to class. This can pose issues as a gay artist may not want their work to be considered as 'gay art' just 'art'. Unless the content is to be centred on the intersectionality in question, should it be counted as such?

PLACE OF BIRTH VS RESIDENT NOW

Audience birth place and residence today												
Total audience	36260		23323		34621		40933		46740			
Year	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023			
Place of birth	**N°**	**%**	**N°**	**%**	**N°**	**%**	**N°**	**%**	**N°**	**%**	**% - ***	**Total aud n°**
Local	160	45	32	44	134	34	106	40	116	48	42	22404
National	124	35	24	33	137	35	113	43	79	33	29	15258
International	64	18	13	18	50	13	44	17	47	19	17	9078
Not known	11	3	3	4	72	18	1	0	32		12	0
Survey count	359	100	72	100	393	100	264	100	274	100	100	46740
	348		69		321		263		242			
Local/interest group breakdowns												
Liverpool	114	32	24	33	114	29	93	35	86	53	31	24967
LCR	26	7	8	11	18	5	12	5	30	19	11	8709
Manchester	13	4	2	3	11	3	8	3	12	7	4	3484
ROI	37	10	7	10	24	6	32	12	24	15	9	6967
NI	12	3	9	13	13	3	17	6	9	6	3	2613
Totals and checks	202	56	50	69	180	46	162	61	161	100	59	46740
% of surveys represented	56	X	69	Cross-	46	X	61	X	59	Cross-check		100
Total audience	36260		23323		34621		40933		46740			
Year	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023			
Residence at time of survey	**N°**	**%**	**N°**	**%**	**N°**	**%**	**N°**	**%**	**N°**	**%**	**% - ***	**Total aud n°**
Local	252	70	52	72	218	55	198	75	181	75	66	35103
National	69	19	15	21	91	23	56	21	55	23	20	10667
International	9	3	2	3	12	3	10	4	5	2	2	970
Not known	29	8	3	4	72	18	0	0	33		12	0
Survey count	359	100	72	100	393	100	264	100	274	100	100	46740
	330		69		321		264		241			
Local/interest group breakdowns												
Liverpool	184	51	41	57	78	20	164	62	130	70	47	32493
LCR	40	11	10	14	38	10	34	13	49	26	18	12247
Manchester	12	3	0	0	16	4	9	3	4	2	1	1000
ROI	8	2	1	1	4	1	8	3	4	2	1	1000
NI	8	2	7	10	2	1	3	1	0	0	0	0
Totals and checks	252	70	59	82	138	35	218	83	187	100	68	46740
% of surveys represented	70	X	82	X	35	X	83	X	68	Cross-check		100
"Total audience number" is an extrapolation from survey data across total audience size.												

Headlines for this year's figures show us retaining a 75% local audience, with fluctuations in the national and international attendance, moving 2% each way, taking us to 75/23/2 versus 75/21/4 local, national/international in 2022. Such variance can be down to survey hits. The fact that we have no-one attending from Northern Ireland is a clear indicator that the survey has not accounted for everyone.

Answers to birthplace were down again – just 59% - showing people don't like to answer this question.

What is appreciable are the number of people attending born in the Republic of Ireland (ROI) and Northern Ireland15% and 6% respectively in 2023 (2022: 18% and 4%). It's pleasing to see that - of our local audiences – a large percent are from the region.

It should be noted that answers indicating a place of birth or residency, does not necessarily suggest nationality or ethnicity.

Artist birth place and residence today						
Total artists worked with	123			98		
Year	2022			2023		
Place of birth	Nº	%	% - *	Nº	%	% - *
Local	14	11	44	7	7	33
National	11	9	34	9	9	43
International	7	6	22	5	5	24
Not known	0	0	*	0	0	*
Survey count	32	26	100	21		100
	32			21		
Local/interest group breakdowns						
Liverpool	12	35	46	13	13	81
LCR	2	13	8	0	0	0
Manchester	1	18	4	0	0	0
ROI	7	100	27	1	1	6
NI	4	0	15	2	2	13
Totals and checks	26	81	100	16	76	100
% of surveys represented	81			76	Cross-check	

Total artists	123			98		
Year	2022			2023		
Resident at time of survey	Nº	%	% - *	Nº	%	
Local	18	43	56	13	13	62
National	11	17	34	6	6	29
International	3	0	9	2	2	10
Not known	0	100	*	0	0	*
Survey count	32	160	100	21		100
	32			21		
Local/interest group breakdowns						
Liverpool	14	0	64	13	13	81
LCR	4	0	18	0	0	0
Manchester	1	0	5	0	0	0
ROI	3	0	14	1	1	6
NI	0	0	0	2	2	13
Totals and checks	22	69	100	16	76	100
% of surveys represented	69	Cross-check		76	Cross-check	

What is shows is that our artists are 24% (2022: 22%) international at birth, but only 10% (2022: 9)% at residency, suggesting the people we work with come from abroad to live locally. Thus, as you would expect for a Liverpool Irish Festival, we are working with diaspora artists.

The 80% gap in completions tells us this can only serve as a indicator, but in doing so, shows we di have attendances from Northern Ireland, which the audience surveys lack! It's interesting to note that 19% of our artists came in from the island of Ireland and shows we do import work, but that 81% are Liverpool artists shows a good grounding in platforming Irish work generated locally.

Left: ***Shakespeare Playhouse North*** turns green for *#GlobalGreening* 2023

ETHNICITY AND NATIONALITY

ETHNICITY AND NATIONALITY - AUDIENCES

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	No	%
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0	0.00
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.56	0.00	0.58	0.76	0	0.00
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0.55	0.00	2.86	0.00	0.00	0.58	0.76	1	0.42
Asian or Asian British - or other Asian background, not otherwise listed here	0.18	1.66	0.26	0.56	0.00	0.87	0.38	1	0.42
Black or Black British - African	0.37	0.00	0.00	0.56	0.00	0.29	1.53	0	0.00
Black or Black British - Caribbean	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.76	0	0.00
Black or Black British - other	0.00	0.55	0.26	0.56	1.39	0.00	0.76	1	0.42
Chinese	0.74	0.00	0.26	0.28	0.00	0.00	0.00	1	0.42
Mixed - white and Asian	0.37	0.28	0.00	0.28	1.39	0.29	0.38	1	0.42
Mixed - white and Black African	0.00	0.00	0.26	0.56	0.00	0.29	0.00	0	0.00
Mixed - any other mixed backgrounds	0.92	0.00	0.78	1.11	1.39	2.91	2.29	7	2.93
White - British	67.28	19.34	26.75	21.17	26.39	38.66	37.40	57	23.85
White - Irish*	25.32	7.18	3.90	3.62	27.78	11.63	11.45	26	10.88
White - Anglo-Irish*	0.00	0.28	0.26	1.39	1.39	2.62	0.76	5	2.09
White - any other white backgrounds	0.92	2.49	19.48	13.93	4.17	5.23	3.44	40	16.74
Unknown ethnicity - Irish*	0.00	20.44	18.70	10.31	8.33	0.00	0.00	56	23.43
Unknown ethnicity - British	0.00	28.73	20.00	14.21	6.94	0.00	0.00	14	5.86
Unknown ethnicity - Anglo-Irish*	0.00	4.14	0.78	1.67	8.33	0.00	0.00	15	6.28
International mixed ethnicities	0.00	4.42	0.52	0.28	5.56	2.33	1.91	11	4.60
Irish Traveller, Roma, Sinti or other nomadic community (not collected un						0.29	0.00	0	0.00
I would prefer not to say	0.00	6.63	2.08	1.39	0.00	1.74	1.15	1	0.42
Other	3.33	0.00	2.86	5.85	0.00	31.69	36.26	2	0.84
Notknown/did not answer	0.00	3.87	0.00	21.73	6.94	0.00	0.00	0	0.00
Completions	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**239**	**100**
Total feedback forms collected	609	362	490	359	72	393	307	274	274
% answering question	88.83	97.13	78.57	79.27	100.00	87.53	85.34	87.23	87.23
*All Irish referencing groups	25.32	32.04	23.64	16.99	45.83	14.24	12	104	42.68
***All Irish referencing groups %**	**25.32**	**32.04**	**23.64**	**16.99**	**45.83**	**45.93**	**12.21**	**43.51**	**43.51**
Combined 'White British', 'White Irish', 'Anglo-Irish',	83.09	82.60	70.61	66.30	83.33	58.14	53.05	213	89.12
Other mixed ethnicities	19.14	25.74	25.45	10.58	7.00	8.14	45.80	23	9.62

In 2022, a key point to note from this table is the decrease in people identifying as 'Irish' being almost the same as the growth in 'other'. Those not providing an answer has lowered, in favour of people stating 'Prefer not to say'.

In 2023, we offered an 'other' box and have assigned codes based on their description. This has rebuilt the Irish identifying groups back and shows the power of data inputting and analysis. However, whereas we might have been pleased that 'other' may have included a terrific amount of diversity, this is not the case, with just under 10% claiming non-white identities. However, in a city with a much smaller percentage diversity per population, we are proud this is up and higher than it has been since 2019, 2022 notwithstanding. Nevertheless, more needs to be done to ensure Black and other ethnic communities are comfortable within our programme.

NATIONALITY - AUDIENCES

Nationality descriptor (audience)	2022	% of answers	2023	% of answers
Anglo-Irish'/'British Irish'/'English and Irish'/'Irish and British'/'Irish and English'/'British'/'British/UK'/'Northern Irish'/'British European'/'English'/'Scottish'/'Welsh'/'Welsh/Irish'	201	69.31	173	65.53
Irish'	66	22.76	69	26.14
European	6	2.07	10	3.79
From somewhere outside Ireland, the UK or Europe	12	4.14	7	2.65
Mixed	2	0.69	4	1.52
Gave non-sensical answer/other	3	1.03	1	0.38
Total	**290**	**100.00**	**264**	**100.00**
% of answer completions	**94.46**		**96.35**	

Though we screened for nationality historically, we didn't formally report on it until 2022. It's worth noting that many people confuse ethnicity and nationality, making figures indicative rather than precise. People pick many variants, which we have distilled in to the categories offers, making it hard to analyse, especially when trying to compare 'Anglo-Irish' with 'English Irish', etc.

We've made no assumptions about Anglo-Irish/English British etc and combined them, only separating out those as 'Irish' that make no other distinction. There are likely to be Northern Irish people, who state Irishness among these. 'Northern Irish' identifiers are brought in under British and UK answers. It's interesting to note more than 25% of visitors identify as Irish with a further 6% being from outside UK, Ireland or Europe.

ANALYSIS – AUDIENCE AND ARTIST

Collecting intersectional data continues to prove complicated. The politicisation of data - of which we are a part - means people are increasingly aware of good and bad practices, but also fatigued by the process.

In 2023, 21/98 (2022: 32/123 or 26%; 2021: 20/174 or 11.5%) artists completed the survey, despite repeat requests. As you are only as good as the data you can collect and process and we must do better.

Black Lives Matter has been an important educator, atop new GDPR regulations (2018-19) and contemporary dialogue around gender and sexuality. Asking for identity-linked data is 'loaded' and, ultimately, commonly off-putting. A key note to add is that in 2021 many (109) described themselves as 'other' in answer to ethnicity questioning. This is a data analysis issue rather than a common descriptor. Most often 'other' has had to be used when a partial answer was offered from which a full answer could not be selected from the categories.

This is not the whole picture though – many in our audience describe themselves as "Irish"; in good conscience we cannot assign such a description to 'White Irish'. Having processed everybody's forms putting these in as 'Other' we have only just recalled the 'Unknown ethnicity – Irish*' category used in previous years. Consequently, we have added 'Other' to our 'Irish referencing groups' to try and give a picture of this, whilst also flagging an issue with people's ability to select 'ethnicity' as different from 'nationality'.

What we see is that we attract over 20% Irish or Irish related audiences, with a 'White British' audience of roughly 25%. Our 'other mixed communities' are tracking at just under 10%.

It's important to draw attention to our ability to attract Irish people under *The Creative Case*, as Irish nationality/Irishness as a protected characteristic within ethnicity and identity frameworks and this can be overlooked.

Another concern is our inability to reach our Chinese Irish community members, who - having faced horrific racism throughout COVID - remain reluctant to engage beyond their well-known networks. We continue to try to improve this and hope our work with Pagoda over the coming years, on the migrant stories and Chinese memorial project- will assist this.

Below: Festival friend, former Board member and founding member of the ***Liverpool Hreat Hunger Commemoration Committee***, Greg Quiery, leads an Irish heritage walk from William Brown Street.

ETHNICITY AND NATIONALITY– ARTISTS

Ethnicity data - artist	2021		2022		2023	
	No	**%**	**No**	**%**	**No**	**%**
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Asian or Asian British - or other Asian background, not otherwise listed here	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Black or Black British - African	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Black or Black British - Caribbean	0	0.00	1	5.00	0	0.00
Black or Black British - other	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Chinese	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Mixed - white and Asian	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Mixed - white and Black African	0	0.00	1	5.00	0	0.00
Mixed - any other mixed backgrounds	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
White - British	0	0.00	8	40.00	5	23.81
White - Irish*	3	15.00	19	95.00	12	57.14
White - Anglo-Irish*	17	85.00	1	5.00	2	9.52
White - any other white backgrounds	0	0.00	1	5.00	2	9.52
Unknown ethnicity - Irish*	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Unknown ethnicity - British	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Unknown ethnicity - Anglo-Irish*	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
International mixed ethnicities	0	0.00	1	5.00	0	0.00
Irish Traveller, Roma, Sinti or otl	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
I would prefer not to say	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Other	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Notknown/did not answer	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Completions	**20**	**100**	**32**	**160**	**21**	**100**
Total feedback forms collected	20	20	32	32	21	21
% answering question	100	100	100	100	100	100
*All Irish referencing groups	20	100.00	20	100	14	66.67
***All Irish referencing groups %**	**100**	**100**	**63**	**100**	**67**	**67**
Combined 'White British', 'White Irish', 'Anglo-Irish',	20	100.00	29	90.63	21	100.00
Other mixed ethnicities	0	0.00	3	45.80	0	0.00

Working with or attracting white people -Irish or not- is not done at the isolation and rejection of other marginalised groups, but references Ireland and its diaspora's cultural cohesion. As identified, our artist's data does not substantiate that we know we worked with Black artists, but our audience figures do show a blended audience. We are dedicated to improving access for groups who experience racism and will continue to push to change these figures so they a) represent our work and b) recognise the work of global majority individuals in the arts sector.

We also considered artist nationality breakdowns, offered in the chart below, but find that the combination of Irish, Anglo-Irish and British conflations makes the data hard to make strong analysis from.

Nationality descriptor (artist)	2022	% of answers	2023	% of answers
Anglo-Irish'/'British Irish'/'English and Irish'/'Irish and British'/'Irish and English'/'British'/'British/UK'/'Northern Irish'/'British European'/'English'/'Scottish'/'Welsh'/'Welsh/Irish'	15	46.88	10	47.62
Irish'	14	43.75	9	42.86
European	3	9.38	2	9.52
From somewhere outside Ireland, the UK or Europe	0	0.00	0	0.00
Mixed	0	0.00	0	0.00
Gave non-sensical answer/other	0	0.00	0	0.00
Total	**32**	**100**	**21**	**100**
% of answer completions	**100.00**		**65.63**	

IRISH BORN/DESCENDED/CITIZENS BENEFITTING FROM THE FESTIVAL

Multiplier/%	12.86	45.61	4.35
	Born	Descended	Citizens
2016	1133	4019	383
2017	1201	4258	406
2018	3116	11052	1054
2019	4663	16538	1577
2020	2610	9256	883
2021	4452	15791	1506
2022	5264	18669	1781
2023	6011	21318	2033
5 year total	20105	71306	6801
5-year av	4600	16314	1556

To answer the Irish Government's questions, we have developed a set of multipliers that use our total audience figure to identify the number of Irish born, Irish descended and Irish citizens benefitting from the Festival.

Since 2017 we have used a 12.86% and 45.61% multiplier to calculate number the of Irish born and Irish descent (respectively), based on city demographics. Held against annual figures, they seem to hold up and for YOY consistency, so we have kept them the same.

In 2021, based on the evidence above, we added a 4.35% multiplier to those who have Irish citizenship, using responses from those who say they reside on the island of Ireland at the time of completing a survey. This is likely to be much lower that the 'real' citizenship count, but when added to those claiming birth there and descent, it roughly tallies with our high percentage of Irish visitors.

GENDER: AUDIENCES AND ARTISTS

In an increasingly intersectional world, understanding peoples' relationship with diversity - in gender and sexuality terms - is becoming more nuanced. Asking appropriate questions, to learn about how accessible we are, is ever-more important to us. Whilst 'Prefer not to says' feature, freeform answers teach us about our audience. Despite ongoing developments in gender and sexuality language, many continue to confuse the two and -for some- neither is a topic for discussion/open reference. The politicisation of these terms has made analysis more difficult, but -positively- there is much to learn.

Our audience figures suggest heightened female engagement, probably accounted for by our *In:Visible Women* programme, but *may* indicate feedback bias. The tables below show our findings for audiences and artists.

Gender - audience	(Cis) female	(Cis) male	Trans-female	Trans-male	Prefer not to say/ Unknown	Illegible	Other (inc "both" and "no such thing")	Non-binary gender not listed	Completions	Total surveys	% response to question
2016	316	259	1	0	30	0	0	0	**606**	609	100
%	52.15	42.74	0.17	0.00	4.95	0.00	0.00	0.00	100		
2017	201	154	0	0	3	3	3	0	**364**	364	100
%	55.22	42.31	0.00	0.00	0.82	0.82	0.82	0.00	**100**		
2018	264	145	1	1	4	5	0	0	**420**	490	86
%	62.86	34.52	0.24	0.24	0.95	1.19	0.00	0.00	100		
2019	199	114	0	0	41	0	0	5	**359**	359	100
%	55.43	31.75	0.00	0.00	11.42	0.00	0.00	1.39	100		
2020	49	19	0	0	4	0	0	0	**72**	72	100
%	68.06	26.39	0.00	0.00	5.56	0.00	0.00	0.00	100		
2021 at birth	187	152	0	0	13	0	0	0	**352**	393	90
%	53.13	43.18	0.00	0.00	3.69	0.00	0.00	0.00	100		
2021 today	178	148	0	0	20	0	0	2	**348**	393	89
%	51.15	42.53	0.00	0.00	5.75	0.00	0.00	0.57	100		
2022 today	148	95	0	0	8	0	0	0	**251**	307	82
%	58.96	37.85	0.00	0.00	3.19	0.00	0.00	0.00	100		
2022	154	103	0	0	11	0	0	3	**271**	307	88
%	56.83	38.01	0.00	0.00	4.06	0.00	0.00	1.11	100		
2023 at birth	147	98	0	0	1	0	0	4	**250**	274	91
%	58.80	39.20	0.00	0.00	0.40	0.00	0.00	1.60	100		
2023 today	142	94	0	0	0	0	0	4	**240**	274	88
%	59.17	39.17	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.67	100		

	At birth		Today		At birth		Today		At birth		Today	
Gender - artists	**2021**	**%**	**2021**	**%**	**2022**	**%**	**2022**	**%**	**2023**	**%**	**2023**	**%**
(Cis) female	9	45.00	8	40.00	19	59.38	19	59.38	9	42.86	9	42.86
(Cis) male	9	45.00	10	50.00	11	34.38	10	31.25	11	52.38	11	52.38
Trans-female	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Trans-male	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Prefer not to say/Unknown	2	10.00	2	10.00	2	6.25	3	9.38	1	4.76	1	4.76
Illegible	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Other (inc "both" and "no such thing")					0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Non-binary gender not listed	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Completions	**20**	**100**	**20**	**100**	**32**	**100**	**32**	**100**	**21**	**100**	**21**	**100**
Total artists	174		174		123		123		98		98	
% that gave an answer to this question	11.49		11.49		26.02		26.02		21.43		21.43	

Our artist figures (collected since 2021) show a relatively even gender split.

We're still only seeing minimal increases in non-cisgendered/non-binary audiences, therefore the numbers difficult to learn from. Simplistically, what our figures tell us is we should be doing more to invite this audience to us and we don't provide enough programme to see significant increases. We'd be interested in diversifying our artist genders to incorporate non-cis people, add trans representation to our portfolio of work.

Linked with concerns about Irish recognition within protected characteristic frameworks, we are mindful that - to develop intersectional diversity in audiences - we should collaborate (if we don't already) with ***Black History Month***, ***Homotopia*** and ***LCR Pride***. Guided by our mission to create greater inclusion, and links between

Liverpool and Ireland using arts and culture, we will pursue work that builds on this. To be clear, this is not to generate tokenistic links to improve statistics, but to authentically ensure we provide an inclusive programme, reflective of modern society.

It was sad for us that an artist we hoped to work with, from the trans-community, had an exceptionally difficult year forcing them to withdrawn from work. The nature of this upset is not for this report, but - suffice it to say - that trauma in the trans community (teamed with the freelance nature of our sector) can make working very volatile. As commissioners, it is for us to help to stabilise this, where we can, offer creative support and care, just as we are aiming to do with all marginalised and underrepresented communities. With high suicide and complex health issues, featuring within the community, organisational consistency and relational flexibility is paramount.

Reaching non-cisgendered communities - in line with our mission to include diaspora audiences and those who are sometimes isolated from their Irish (or Britishness) by their difference - has long been a preserve of the Festival, evidenced in our White Paper work for Ireland's Diaspora Policy and our Race Equality work. That we continue to have low non-binary figures is not in itself evidence for radical change, but a potential argument for considering artistically credible work that supports these groups, as long-term advocates of *The Creative Case* and a commitment to working with diaspora.

SEXUALITY – AUDIENCE AND ARTISTS

To contextualise our monitoring, the ***Office of National Statistics*** (ONS, 2018) stated 2.2% the UK's population self-identify as LGB today, though other sources –such as ***The Kinsey Report***- believe this may be as high as 10%. Though reports of the 2021 census have been released, the Festival has not been able to process and compare datasets. We will strive to do this in 2024.

Audience sexuality	2018	%	2019	%	2020	%	2021	%	2022	%	2023	%
Bisexual	10	3.45	8	2.23	1	1.39	10	2.54	11	3.58	9	3.83
Confused	1	0.34	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	0.25	1	0.33	0	0.00
Answer shows particpant did not understand the question (e.g., answered fe/male)	15	5.17	18	5.01	3	4.17	55	13.99	52	16.94	52	22.13
Heterosexual/straight	205	70.69	170	47.35	53	73.61	180	45.80	146	47.56	138	58.72
Lesbian/Gay	5	1.72	2	0.56	0	0.00	4	1.02	6	1.95	6	2.55
Pan or Other	1	0.34	6	1.67	1	1.39	11	2.80	5	1.63	5	2.13
Prefer not to say	5	1.72	15	4.18	1	1.39	30	7.63	22	7.17	14	5.96
Illegible/?/ N/A/Joke or other comment	36	12.41	14	3.90	1	1.39	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0	0.00
Homosexual/Gay	12	4.14	6	1.67	0	0.00	4	1.02	4	1.30	11	4.68
Not known/left no reply			120	33.43	12	16.67	98	24.94	60	19.54	0	0.00
Totals	**290**	**100**	**359**	**100**	**72**	**100**	**393**	**100**	**307**	**100**	**235**	**100**
Non-binary identifier total	29	10.00	22	6.13	2	2.78	30	7.63	27	8.79	31	13.19
PNTS/marked with intent to suppress answer or incorrect response (i.e., Female) or left no reply	56	19.31	167	46.52	17	23.61	183	46.56	134	43.65	66	28.09
Heterosexual	205	70.69	170	47.35	53	73.61	180	45.80	146	47.56	138	58.72
Totals	**290**	**100**	**359**	**100**	**72**	**100**	**393**	**100**	**307**	**100**	**235**	**100**
% of people willing to provide	234	80.69	192	53.48	55	76.39	210	53.44	173	56.35	169	71.91
% of those people who identified a sexuality other than"heterosexual/straight"		12.39		11.46		3.64		14.29		15.61		18.34

In 2023 we can see a higher percent of people willing to answer this question than in previous years, but still a very high proportion of misunderstanding around what 'sexuality' means, despite being asked 'sex assigned at birth' and 'gender today' in closely located questions. It may be that this is a deliberate obfuscation of the question, but the regularity of it remains surprising, so much so, we have an input category to show the numbers. This misunderstanding is on the rise (22% of answers this year!), probably because of wider dialogue and people understanding there are multiple answer options, though misunderstanding their attribution.

Non-binary sexuality respondents rose marginally again (2023: 13.19%; 2022:8.79; 2021: 7.63), with 18.34% of respondents (2022: 15.61%) supplying a 'non-straight' answer. This means we probably track somewhere between the two rates and are much higher than the national average. Artists came in at just 9.5% in 2023(2022: 24.24%), but of a sample size of just 21. Still, being at over 18% of audiences and knowing we are representing LGB communities within our artist group feels positive.

It's clear many people don't understand why we collect this data, though we are pleased to see jokes have fallen. A cohort of people do not understand 'sexuality' as distinct from 'gender', suggesting greater context/guidance may enable more precise answers. While research shows we're better able to collect cleaner data if we supply the categories, we've learned individuals feel better if they are allowed to self-identify. We will use this to inform surveys in future.

The 5-year average percentage of those who self-identify as having a sexuality other that "heterosexual/straight" has risen (not pictured) from 11.48% (2022) to 12.67% of our total survey cohort. We see this as a positive sign our work is seen as inclusive and progressive.

Artist and contributor sexuality	2018	%	2019	%	2020	%	2021	%	2022	%	2023	%
Bisexual	0	0.00	1	0.70	0	0.00	2	10.00	6	18.75	2	9.52
Confused	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Answer shows particpant did not understand the question (e.g., answered fe/male)	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	13	65.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Heterosexual/straight/H	157	79.70	88	61.54	9	90.00	1	5.00	21	65.63	18	85.71
Lesbian	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	5.00	2	6.25	0	0.00
LGBT - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender - offered on	7	3.55			0	0.00						
Pan or 'other'	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	10.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Prefer not to say/PNTS/-	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	3	15.00	3	9.38	1	4.76
Illegible/?/ N/A/Joke or other comment	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00						
Gay	0	0.00	3	2.10	0	0.00						
Did not understand qu (e.g., answered 'male')							0	0.00	0	0.00		0.00
Not known/left no reply	33	16.75	51	35.66	0	0.00						
Totals	**197**	**100**	**143**	**100**	**10**	**100**	**20**	**100**	**32**	**100.00**	**21**	**100**
Non-binary identifier total	7	3.55	4	2.80	1	10.00	3	15.00	8	25.00	2	9.52
PNTS/marked with intent to suppress answer or incorrect response (i.e., Female) or left no reply	33	16.75	51	35.66	0	0.00	16	80.00	3	9.38	1	4.76
Heterosexual	157	79.70	88	61.54	9	90.00	1	5.00	21	65.63	18	85.71
Totals	**197**	**100**	**143**	**100**	**72**	**100**	**20**	**100**	**32**	**100**	**21**	**100**
% of people willing to provide	164	83.25	92	64.34	10	100.00	4	20.00	29	90.63	20	95.24
% of those people who identified a sexuality other that		4.27		4.35		10.00		75.00		27.59		10.00

It feels positive to see that even within a low cohort of artists we are seeing diversity in sexuality.

DISABILITY

AUDIENCES

Disabilty monitoring	2021			2022			2023		
Qu: Do you have a disability or long-term health condition expected to last more than 12-months?	**355**	% total answers	% of direct responses (321 / 355)	**307**	% total answers	% of direct responses (227 / 307)	**274**	% total answers	% of direct responses (242 / 272)
Left blank	**0**	0.00	**0.00**	**80**	26.06	**36.04**	**32**	11.68	**13.97**
Yes, I have a physical disability that others can	2	0.56	0.63	2	0.65	0.90	2	0.73	0.87
Yes, I have a physical disability no one can see	17	4.79	5.38	9	2.93	4.05	13	4.74	5.68
Yes, I am neurodiverse	1	0.28	0.32	4	1.30	1.80	5	1.82	2.18
Yes, I have a physical disablity and neurodiversity	0	0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00
Yes, I have a physical disability and neurodiversity, which is not visible	0	0.00	0.00	1	0.33	0.45	2	0.73	0.87
Yes [many simply answered this on the hard copy forms]	31	8.73	9.81	40	13.03	18.02	36	13.14	15.72
No	265	74.65	83.86	166	54.07	74.77	171	62.41	74.67
Prefer not to say	34	9.58		5	1.63		13	4.74	
	350	99	100	227	100	100	242	100	100
% of answering audience that indicate they have a disability		14.37	**16.14**		18.24	**25.23**		21.17	**25.33**

We began monitoring for disability in 2021, to assist *National Portfolio Organisation* baseline preparations. In our online form, we provided disability categories, but on the paper survey we provided a freeform box. This led to many stating 'Yes' in response to: "do you have a disability or long-term health condition expected to last more than 12-months?", without qualifying their disability. Consequently, we've added 'Yes' to our inputting categories to accept this identifier without mis-assigning disability statuses. The free form answers ranged from chronic conditions to cancer; neurodiversity to migraines.

The headline arising is that over 25% or those who do answer, identify as having a disability, ranging from neurodiversity to other invisible and visible physical disabilities (slightly lower when taken as a percent of total survey respondents). 26% left this blank in 2022, more than double in 2023.

This is higher than our artists, 19% (2022: 25%) of whom self-identify as living with a disability. Interestingly, the big difference in these two data cohorts is that artists seem to self-identify more readily as having neurodivergent needs (16% vs 1.30% in 2022). It will be interesting to watch the progress of this in future years, across artists and audiences, given arts known links with neurodivergence and better systems of diagnosis today.

Left: Louise Coyne created an exhibit of ***Liverpool Irish Centre*** archive materials, for people to look over at a *Coffee and Memories Morning, #LIF2023*

ARTISTS

Disabilty monitoring	2021			2022			2023		
Qu: Do you have a disability or long-term health condition expected to last more than 12-months?	**0**	**% total answers**	**% of direct responses**	**32**	**% total answers**	**% of direct responses (32/ 123)**	**21**	**% total answers**	**% of direct responses (21/ 98)**
Left blank				**0**	0.00	**0.00**	**0**	0.00	**0.00**
Yes, I have a physical disability that others can see				0	0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.00
Yes, I have a physical disability no one can see				1	3.13	0.84	1	4.76	1.03
Yes, I am neurodiverse				5	15.63	4.20	2	9.52	2.06
Yes, I have a physical disablity and neurodiversity				0	0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.00
Yes, I have a physical disability and neurodiversity, which is not visible				2	6.25	1.68	1	4.76	1.03
Yes [many simply answered this on the hard copy forms]				0	0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.00
No				20	62.50	16.81	16	76.19	16.49
Prefer not to say				4	12.50		1	4.76	
		0	0	123	100	24	98	100	21
% of answering artists that indicate they have a disability		0.00	0.00		25.00	6.72		19.05	4.12

PAYMENT OF ARTISTS

Artist payments	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020		2021		2022		2023	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes, by ***LivIrishFest***	10	7.6	22	17.5	92	46.7	57	39.9	10	9.3	51	29.3	36	29.3	29	29.6
Yes, but by a partner							13	9.1	9	8.4	7	4.0	28	22.8	13	13.3
Yes, via a box office split/profit arrangement							6	4.2	8	7.5	30	17.2	6	4.9	21	21.4
No; support in kind							30	21.0	80	74.8	46	26.4	28	22.8	7	7.1
No, not at all	122	92.4	104	82.5	105	53.3	37	25.9	0	0.0	40	23.0	25	20.3	28	28.6
Totals	**132**	100	**126**	100	**197**	100	**143**	100	**107**	100	**174**	100	**123**	100	**98**	100

Since 2019, we've tracked the variety of ways artists are paid or provide services. As a commissioner, we can pay artists directly, arrange for payment via partnerships (e.g., via the venue or a lead commissioner or distributes fees) or agree tickets sale earnings/splits thereof. As we work closely with artists, creatives and partners in various roles, sometimes we trade in platform exposure, promotion/audience/programme sharing people for their time, space and expertise. This might happen for an author promoting their latest book (e.g., Tony Crowley) or playwright giving their script for free to support a full production. We share experts in quid pro quo arrangements, such as with *Irish Community Care* providing a speaker for the dual-heritage day and the Festival assisting them on a university presentation. In this instance, there are no payments, but each receives mutual gains. We also work with producers, who support multiple artists beneath them, such as dancers or musicians, for whom we are not directly responsible.

Occasionally no payment is due because the Festival can trade favours. For instance, it would be improper to pay child dancers, so we provide the platform for their school to dance in public settings. Donated work/time is kept to a minimum, but people can -and do- volunteer performances (or time) in support of the Festival, such as our research volunteers. If this benefits the community, or individual, we may proceed if all parties are agreeable. What is evident is that year-on-year we are working hard to pay artists and creatives for their work, but totals waiver depending on the number of artists we work and the nature of the work. Percentage-wise we've stayed static for direct payments between 2021-2022. It is not a way of calculating average artist fees.

The table is based on whether fees were set up for the event and the number of artists we worked with for that event. Thus, if there was a Festival funded £1,000 fee for an event and we worked with 4 artists it would be coded "Yes, by LIF" for 4 artists, but they may have varying earnings within that and material costs may go out of that fee.

It should be remembered that we did not have any ***Arts Council England*** funding in 2023, which is where we usually pay artists from. To have worked with 98 artists is therefore impressive. In 2022, we (directly) paid over £23,100 direct to artists, not including our Director, but including our *History Research Group* leader as part of our *Liverpool Irish Famine Trail* work. In 2023, this is down to direct payments of £7,170 or 36-days at £200 each or 48-days at £150 each (2022: 115.5 days at £200/154 days at £150; 2021: 157 at £150), making an economic impact, in our sector and to individuals. This does not account for box office splits, etc. We calculate that there have been approximately 53.2days paid for across payment types.

AUDIENCE POSTCODE ANALYSIS

Postcode analysis indicates market penetration, audience hotspots and travel time. It can show trends in reach or dead-zones requiring targeting, though - as often as not - it creates anomalies if standardised testing cannot be completed. For instance, surveying at an L18 event strongly improves your chance of getting feedback from L18; not doing the same in L38 means you will not get data from here though L38 attendees of the *Family Day* may attend, but be missed due to the scale of the event.

In 2016 we secured feedback from 38 residential post codes in Liverpool of 40 (2022: 31; 2021: 28:40; 2018: 32:40; 2017: 30:40), which we have been chasing ever since. This was by far our biggest data cohort. Current post code data demonstrates 75-80% of total audiences are from Liverpool. Areas we aimed to address in 2023 (i.e., those with no attendances) included

- L6 - Anfield, Everton, Kirkdale, Vauxhall
- L10 – Aintree Village, Fazakerley
- L27 – Netherley
- L28 - Stockbridge Village
- L29 – Lunt and Sefton Village
- L32, L33 – Kirby
- L34 – Prescott, Knowsley Village
- L40 – Burscough, Mawdesley. Scarisbrick, Rufford. Holmeswood.

A refresh of the survey in 2019 missed 'post code', though we did ask what city people resided in. Thus, we extrapolated figures for 2019, using averages from the previous three years and local attendance figure for ***#LIF2019***. With only 36 post codes collected in 2020, we again used an extrapolation method, but flag this as a note that these are not reliable figures on which to base have findings. Table follows on next page.

Left: Children play at the *Family Day*, *#LIF2023*

A= Attendee response no/ C= Visits extrapolated against attendee response and total audience count.					*Extrapolations from 2016-18 only*								
	Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021		2022			2023	
Survey completions with Liverpool post code data		339	223	249	0	0	206		149			142	
Local audience figure, extrapolated from toal audience and local addresses		5461	6017	14032	18601	13162	6871		25428			35103	
L1	City Centre	3.8	5.83	2.41	4.02	4.02	6.31	4	2.68	683	0	0.00	0
L2	City Centre	0.3	0.00	1.20	0.50	0.50	0.49	1	0.67	171	0	0.00	0
L3	City Centre, Everton, Vauxhall	4.1	4.48	5.22	4.61	4.61	0.97	4	2.68	683	6	4.23	1483
L4	Anfield, Kirkdale, Walton	2.4	0.90	1.61	1.62	1.62	1.94	4	2.68	683	4	2.82	989
L5	Anfield, Everton, Kirkdale, Vauxhall	1.5	1.35	0.00	0.94	0.94	0.00	3	2.01	512	2	1.41	494
L6	Anfield, City Centre, Everton, Fairfield, Kensington, Tuebrook	2.4	2.24	1.61	2.07	2.07	0.97	0	0.00	0	3	2.11	742
L7	City Centre, Edge Hill, Fairfield, Kensington	5.3	1.79	2.81	3.30	3.30	1.94	3	2.01	512	1	0.70	247
L8	City Centre, Dingle, Toxteth	9.4	9.42	8.03	8.96	8.96	16.50	19	12.75	3242	16	11.27	3955
L9	Aintree, Fazakerley, Orrell Park, Walton	0.9	1.79	2.81	1.83	1.83	2.43	3	2.01	512	6	4.23	1483
L10	Aintree Village, Fazakerley	0.6	0.45	0.00	0.35	0.35	0.00	0	0.00	0	2	1.41	494
L11	Clubmoor, Croxteth, Gillmoss, Norris Green	2.1	0.90	0.40	1.12	1.12	1.46	2	1.34	341	1	0.70	247
L12	Croxteth Park, West Derby	2.9	4.04	4.82	3.94	3.94	3.40	7	4.70	1195	7	4.93	1730
L13	Clubmoor, Old Swan, Stoneycroft, Tuebrook	5.9	4.04	4.02	4.65	4.65	3.88	7	4.70	1195	5	3.52	1236
L14	Broadgreen, Dovecot, Knotty Ash, Page Moss	1.2	1.79	1.61	1.53	1.53	2.91	1	0.67	171	3	2.11	742
L15	Wavertree	5.6	7.17	6.43	6.40	6.40	4.85	9	6.04	1536	12	8.45	2966
L16	Broadgreen, Bowring Park, Childwall	2.4	1.35	4.82	2.84	2.84	2.91	3	2.01	512	6	4.23	1483
L17	Aigburth, St Michael's Hamlet, Sefton Park	13.3	21.08	14.46	16.27	16.27	13.59	25	16.78	4266	11	7.75	2719
L18	Allerton, Mossley Hill	8.8	6.73	11.65	9.07	9.07	11.17	14	9.40	2389	18	12.68	4450
L19	Garston, Grassendale, Aigburth,	2.7	4.48	2.01	3.05	3.05	2.43	8	5.37	1365	7	4.93	1730
L20	Bootle, Orrell Park and Kirkdale	0.9	0.90	1.20	1.00	1.00	2.43	6	4.03	1024	2	1.41	494
L21	Ford, Litherland, Seaforth	1.5	0.45	0.40	0.77	0.77	1.46	1	0.67	171	0	0.00	0
L22	Waterloo	1.2	2.69	2.81	2.23	2.23	2.91	1	0.67	171	1	0.70	247
L23	Blundellsands, Brighton-le-Sands, Crosby, Little Crosby, Thornton	3.2	1.79	3.61	2.88	2.88	0.97	2	1.34	341	2	1.41	494
L24	Hale, Speke	0.6	0.00	0.00	0.20	0.20	0.00	1	0.67	171	5	3.52	1236
L25	Belle Vale, Gateacre, Hunts Cross, Woolton, Halewood	2.7	4.93	2.81	3.47	3.47	5.34	4	2.68	683	7	4.93	1730
L26	Halewood	0.6	1.79	0.80	1.06	1.06	0.00	2	1.34	341	0	0.00	0
L27	Netherley	0.9	0.45	0.00	0.44	0.44	0.00	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0
L28	Stockbridge Village	0.3	0.00	0.40	0.23	0.23	0.97	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0
L29	Lunt, Sefton Village	0.0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0
L30	Bootle, Netherton	1.5	1.35	4.02	2.28	2.28	0.00	2	1.34	341	0	0.00	0
L31	Maghull, Lydiate, Melling, Waddicar	1.2	0.45	1.61	1.08	1.08	0.97	1	0.67	171	2	1.41	494
L32	Kirkby	0.0	0.00	0.80	0.27	0.27	0.00	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0
L33	Kirkby	1.2	0.00	0.40	0.53	0.53	0.49	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0
L34	Prescot, Knowsley Village	0.9	0.00	0.00	0.29	0.29	1.46	0	0.00	0	1	0.70	247
L35	Prescot, Whiston, Rainhill	0.9	2.24	1.61	1.58	1.58	1.94	2	1.34	341	0	0.00	0
L36	Huyton, Roby, Tarbock	1.2	0.00	0.80	0.66	0.66	0.00	2	1.34	341	4	2.82	989
L37	Formby, Little Altcar, Great Altcar	1.5	0.00	1.20	0.89	0.89	0.00	2	1.34	341	4	2.82	989
L38	Ince Blundell, Hightown	0.6	0.00	0.00	0.20	0.20	0.00	1	0.67	171	0	0.00	0
L39	Ormskirk, Aughton	3.2	2.24	1.61	2.36	2.36	2.91	5	3.36	853	4	2.82	989
L40	Burscough, Mawdesley, Scarisbrick, Rufford, Holmeswood	0.6	0.90	0.00	0.50	0.50	0.00	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0
	%. 2022-23: A/%/C	100	100	100	100	100	100	149	100	25428	142	100	35103
Post codes represented from 40		38	30	32			28	31	31		27	27	

Yellow highlights flag the lowest % attendance locations, whilst green highlights show the highest 5%. It is an oddity that there few visits from L6, given the amount of work we do in the ***Liverpool Irish Centre***. This is worth tracking, as it may be that the ***Irish Centre*** doesn't service the local neighbourhood, which could be an area of mutual concern.

We used this data in 2020 to locate the top sites for posting 19.7k Festival newspapers to, approaching the warmest areas to try and provide a gift to the postal area that give us the most visits. In 2021 we added an additional 8.3k to the home distribution, but tried approaching areas where we didn't have attendances. In 2023 we used a combination of print. Leaflets were used to target 55,000 homes, including our warmest and coldest post codes. Results to date are inconclusive, especially as we have no surveys from L1 or L2, where we know we had visits from, meaning we know our survey data does not fully represent our audiences!

A potential way to work in future, is to think about sending leaflets to our warmest zones and simple post cards to our coldest, with an ask or service they can claim using a code linked with their piece of print. This would enable us to track engagement and study reach. This takes print resources, data management/tracking and design amends to create segmented mailings. For a micro-organisation, this is a resource heavy approach, but one we might want to consider if we are to break the cycle of dead zones, which -based on our survey responses- are growing not shrinking.

The following table shows the national and international visitor locations and YOY changes, 2016-2022. It shows overall improvements in regional reach and ROI visits, with small improvements (in some years) in Northern Irish visits, too. To try an accommodate annual fluctuations, we've included a 5-year average column (far right), which is probably a better indicator or audience spread, as it might even out spikes in survey responses a little more than the year-on-year information can.

Below: Mel Bradley performing *For the Love of Mary*, at ***Leaf on Bold Street***

National and international visitor residency information + YOY changes

All responses	2016 %	2017 %	2018 %	2019 %	2020 %	2021 %	2022 %	2023	2023 %	5-yr %
Bath or Bristol	0.73	0.00	0.47	0.31	Not collected/analysed	0.00	0.00	2	0.83	0.32
Belfast and NI	0.91	0.58	1.88	2.77		0.65	1.14	0	0.00	1.29
Birmingham, Leamington Spa and Leicester	0.18	0.00	0.23	3.69		0.00	0.38	1	0.41	0.94
Blackburn, Bolton Burnley and Chorley	0.18	0.87	0.47	0.92		0.65	0.38	0	0.00	0.48
Blackpool	0.37	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.65	0.00	0	0.00	0.13
Bradford, Halifax, Leeds, Sheffield and York	0.37	1.45	2.11	1.23		1.96	1.52	8	3.32	2.03
Chester and Wirral (inc Wallasey, Birkenhead, Cheshire etc)	18.10	16.18	20.19	9.54		10.78	9.85	34	14.11	12.89
Coventry and Derby; Grantham	0.18	0.58	0.47	0.00		0.33	0.00	0	0.00	0.16
Crewe	0.55	0.29	0.23	0.00		0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.05
Dublin and ROI	0.37	1.45	0.00	2.46		1.31	3.03	5	2.07	1.77
Durham, Darlington and Hartlepoole	0.00	0.58	0.23	0.31		0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.11
Edinburgh, Glasgow and Scotland	0.55	0.29	0.00	1.54		0.98	0.38	1	0.41	0.66
Gloucester, Badsey, Oxford and Cambridge	0.18	0.00	0.00	0.62		0.65	0.76	2	0.83	0.57
Guildford and/or Woking	0.18	0.58	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.00
Inverness	0.37	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.00
Ipswich	0.00	0.29	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.00
Jersey	0.00	0.29	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.00
Lancaster, Kendal, Ulveston, Barrow-in-Furness, Colne, Cockermouth (Cumbria)	0.18	0.00	0.47	1.23		0.33	1.14	1	0.41	0.72
Liverpool, Merseyside + England/UK answers	61.97	64.45	58.45	58.15		59.15	64.77	146	60.58	60.22
Wales, Llandudno, Powys, Prestatyn and Cardiff	1.83	0.87	0.94	1.23		1.63	1.89	4	1.66	1.47
London (all), Kent, Bucks, Herts, Surrey commuter belt	2.56	2.89	3.29	3.69		4.58	3.79	15	6.22	4.31
Manchester and Eccles	0.91	1.45	2.11	4.00		4.90	3.41	4	1.66	3.22
Northampton and Kettering	0.18	0.58	1.17	0.31		0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.30
Norwich	0.18	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.33	0.00	0	0.00	0.07
Nottingham and Burton-on-Trent	0.37	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.33	0.38	0	0.00	0.14
Oldham, Burnley and Rochdale	0.18	0.29	0.23	0.62		0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.17
Other international/Queensland Australia	0.18	3.18	1.64	0.31		2.61	1.14	2	0.83	1.31
Paisley	0.18	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.00
Plymouth and Lindford	0.18	0.00	0.00	0.62		0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.12
Portsmouth, Southampton and Poole + Brighton	0.18	0.00	0.00	0.62		0.33	0.38	0	0.00	0.26
Preston and Skemersdale	1.65	0.87	2.35	0.31		0.33	0.00	0	0.00	0.60
Shrewsbury and Shropshire	0.18	0.00	0.00	0.31		0.33	0.00	1	0.41	0.21
Southend-on-Sea, Clacton and Essex	0.18	0.00	0.00	0.62		0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.12
Stockport	0.37	0.00	0.00	0.00		0.65	0.38	0	0.00	0.21
Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire	0.18	0.00	0.23	0.00		0.33	0.00	1	0.41	0.20
Torquay and Melbourne	0.37	0.00	0.00	0.31		0.00	0.00	0	0.00	0.06
Warrington, St Helens, Widnes, Ormskirk, Knowsley	3.11	1.73	2.58	3.38		3.59	2.65	13	5.39	3.52
Wigan, Lancashire, Southport and Runcorn	1.65	0.29	0.23	0.92		2.61	2.65	1	0.41	1.37
Totals	100	100	100	100	0	100	100	241	100	100
Illegible/no answer left				9.47		22.1	14	33	12	11.53
Completions								274		
North West region	**87.9**	**83.8**	**84.5**	**73.5**		**78.1**	**81.4**	195	**80.9**	**79.7**
R.O.Ireland and International	**0.5**	**4.6**	**1.6**	**2.8**		**3.9**	**4.2**	7	**2.9**	**3.1**

LIVES, TRAVEL AND OUT OF TOWN STAYS - INDICATORS

Partly in an to attempt to satisfy Irish Government questions about Irish born people and to get a better sense of where people travel from to come to Festival events, in 2021 we asked the questions:

- What city and country were you board in?
- What city and country do you live in now?

In 2022, percentage visits from people born in ROI or NI went up (30%; 2021: 20.55%), slightly reducing local and regional visits, whilst those residents in either place came down a little. This does not tell us that people *have* Irish heritage, solely that this cohort was born on the island.

These drop again in 2023, as a result of a smaller survey sample of our audience. As with the previous table, we have added a 5-year average column, which reiterates that we have a fairly steady audience attendance, with 75% being local, 2-5% travelling internatinoally with the remainder being made up on national visits.

Regional only breakdowns of the total audience showing Liverpool, Liverpool City Region (LCR), Manchester, Ireland (ROI) and Northern Irish (NI) visits are useful in thinking about marketing targets.

We also asked:

- Was your Festival visit the main reason for you travelling in to Liverpool on the day(s) you attended? 53.77% of audiences who responded "yes" (2022: 62.09%, 2021: 45.6%), meaning many connect their Festival visit with additional activities, as we advise in our newspaper. That said, it might mean we need to encourage people to do more with their travel, to ensure people are maximising environmental concerns
- Did you book accommodation for your Festival visit? 9.86% (2022: 8.29%; 2021: 10.61%) said "yes". This low number is expected given low international travel and high local attendance. We also believe - anecdotally – we're encouraging people to stay with friends rather than invest in carbon heavy hotel stays.

Audience birth place and residence today													
Total audience	36260		23323		34621		40933		46740				
Year	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023				
Place of birth	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	% - *	Total aud n°	5-year av
Local	160	45	32	44	134	34	106	40	116	48	42	22404	42
National	124	35	24	33	137	35	113	43	79	33	29	15258	36
International	64	18	13	18	50	13	44	17	47	19	17	9078	17
Not known	11	3	3	4	72	18	1	0	32		12	0	5
Survey count	359	100	72	100	393	100	264	100	274	100	100	46740	100
	348		69		321		263		242				
Local/interest group breakdowns													
Liverpool	114	32	24	33	114	29	93	35	86	53	31	24967	37
LCR	26	7	8	11	18	5	12	5	30	19	11	8709	9
Manchester	13	4	2	3	11	3	8	3	12	7	4	3484	4
ROI	37	10	7	10	24	6	32	12	24	15	9	6967	11
NI	12	3	9	13	13	3	17	6	9	6	3	2613	6
Totals and checks	202	56	50	69	180	46	162	61	161	100	59	46740	67
% of surveys represented	56	X	69	Cross-	46	X	61	X	59	Cross-check		100	

Total audience	36260		23323		34621		40933		46740				
Year	**2019**		**2020**		**2021**		**2022**		**2023**				
Residence at time of survey	**N°**	**%**	**N°**	**%**	**N°**	**%**	**N°**	**%**	**N°**	**%**	**% - ***	**Total aud n°**	**5-year av**
Local	252	70	52	72	218	55	198	75	181	75	66	35103	70
National	69	19	15	21	91	23	56	21	55	23	20	10667	21
International	9	3	2	3	12	3	10	4	5	2	2	970	3
Not known	29	8	3	4	72	18	0	0	33		12	0	6
Survey count	359	100	72	100	393	100	264	100	274	100	100	46740	100
	330		69		321		264		241				
Local/interest group breakdowns													
Liverpool	184	51	41	57	78	20	164	62	130	70	47	32493	52
LCR	40	11	10	14	38	10	34	13	49	26	18	12247	15
Manchester	12	3	0	0	16	4	9	3	4	2	1	1000	3
ROI	8	2	1	1	4	1	8	3	4	2	1	1000	2
NI	8	2	7	10	2	1	3	1	0	0	0	0	3
Totals and checks	252	70	59	82	138	35	218	83	187	100	68	46740	74
% of surveys represented	70	X	82	X	35	X	83	X	68	Cross-check		100	
"Total audience number" is an extrapolation from survey data across total audience size.													

2023 INDICATORS

In 2023, survey returns showed 9.86% of respondents booked accommodation for their stay (2022: 8.29% 2021: 10.61%).

With live event and exhibitions totalling 46,592 (2022: 39,038), we extrapolate 4,594 overnight stays (2022: 2,407; 2021: 2,749).

Using overnight visits, based on out-of-town stays

National: 20% (2022: 21.21%; 2021: 28.35%) +
International: 2 (2022: 3.79%, 2021: 3.74%) =
22% (2022: 25%; 2021: 32.09%).

If using this figure, we would have generated 10,250 overnight stays (2022: 9,760; 2021: 8,314). Using the city multiplier of 0.4%, we would have generated 186 overnight stays (2022: 156), which suggests substantial variance in city scores against total visits versus our targeted ask.

Splitting the difference, to find the average, means an overnight stay figure of 5,594 + 10,250 + 186 / 3 = 5,343 (2022: 4,108).

Using the ***Liverpool Hotels Update 2016*** rate of £70.03 per night, over the year, the Festival may have encouraged a hotel income of £374,170 (2022: £287,990 (2021: not calculated; 2020: £154,262 ; 2019: £220,679 and 2018: £89,190).

TRAVEL IMPRINTS AND CARBON TRACKING

A matter affecting all organisations -especially those securing ***Arts Council England*** funding- is the climate emergency and addressing its needs. It can be difficult for micro-businesses, such as ours, to demonstrate change.

The Festival's three largest carbon drains are print, audience travel and hotels. In our print we ensure we use ***Forestry Commission*** assured recycled stock and, with regards travel, we entreat people to use public transport wherever possible; providing bus, train and walking information, as well as ***These3Words*** details to find main entrances, etc.

Calculating total audience travel, across modes of transport and from local to global, does not yet have a set formula we can use, and other calculators for the different areas of our business can also be hard to find and collate in to something comparable, measurable and useful.

To make a start on this, we are using the following guides:

- the *UK Government GHG Conversion Factors for Company Reporting*, calculates an overnight hotel stay in the UK as costing 13.9kg CO_2e per night in emissions, creating a total load of 129.8kg CO_2e.
- the ***World Land Trust***'s carbon calculator for small-car use, based on 'local' being 10 miles and 'national' being 75 (all converted to KMs to calculate like-for-like). We have then used an average of a 1,000 mile/3195km journey to represent international travel and used the *Our World in Data* value of 150g per KM to calculate CO_2e tonnage.
- *a* ***Two Sides*** article, which claims the production of a new newspaper can cost 0.49lbs/0.22226026kg in carbon. However, we believe it to be roughly 2/3 of this, as we already use recycled, *Forestry Commission Assured* stock. Despite multiple attempts to locate the printer carbon data, our broker has not been able to locate this, hence the estimation. Before the recycling reduction, this formula suggests a carbon emission of 66.7 CO_2e pa
- and ***Saving Light Bulb***'s halogen light value (124.1kgs CO_2e pa) is the basis for us estimating carbon emissions for one light's annual full-time usage values
- whilst ***Energuide***'s costings one computer used full time all year (175kgs CO_2e pa) forms the basis of this calculation.

To find the offset price, we have used ***World Land Trust***'s £15 per tonne (as researched in 2021). In 2022 we have added a cost per visitor to help determine whether we are increasing/decreasing our carbon generation in line with our scale, generating the following carbon data:

Carbon												
	2021				2022				2023			
Menu (down/ across)	Total aud	x distance (KMs)	x T CO_2e	x £15p tCO_2e)	Total aud	x distance (KMs)	x T CO_2e	x £15p tCO_2e)	Total aud	x distance (KMs)	x T CO_2e	x £15p tCO_2e)
Travel												
Local	19205	309000.79	44.33	£ 665	30699	493953.54	44.33	£ 665	35103	564815.08	44.33	£ 665
National	8017	967599.69	138.81	£ 2,082	8683	1047997.30	138.81	£ 2,082	10667	1287483.36	138.81	£ 2,082
Internation	1057	3377529.62	506.63	£ 7,599	1550	4953768.77	743.07	£11,146	970	3098221.99	464.73	£ 6,971
Hotel stays	9338	0.01	129.80	£ 1,947	4108	0.01	57.10	£ 857	5343	0.01	74.27	£ 1,114
Newspape	30000	0.00	66.68	£ 1,000	30000	0.00	66.68	£ 1,000	7000	0.00	15.56	£ 233
Leaflet									55000	0.00	34.93	£ 524
Computer	1	0.18	0.18	£ 2.63	1	0.18	0.18	£ 2.63	1.2	0.18	0.21	£ 3.15
Light	1	0.12	0.12	£ 1.86	1	0.12	0.12	£ 1.86	1.2	0.12	0.15	£ 2.23
Total	67616	4654130.12	886.25	£13,294	75041	6495719.63	1049.98	£15,750	59083	4950520.45	737.70	£ 11,065
Per person engaged	28278			**£ 0.47**	40933			**£ 0.38**	46740			**£ 0.24**

What this headline report shows is that the business of the Festival generates roughly 738kgs CO_2e of carbon emissions (2022: 1049; 2021: 886), which would cost over £11k to offset, even if that were a real possibility. In short, this is roughly 10% of our annual budget, but a more costly figure to the earth. We need to reduce these imprints. In 2023 we have reduced the number and per person cost considerably, moving from the newspaper to leaflet distribution. As painful as the damage is to see, it's good to be reducing the cost of impact year-on-year, though it should not be forgotten there is still an impact made. The addition of the Festival Coordinator has been built in here as if for the entire year.

PR FACTS FIGURES AND TRENDS

All the figures presented in this section report data from the day following the close of the previous year's to the closing day of the Festival we are reporting on (e.g., start of Nov to end of Oct).

HOW ARE PEOPLE FINDING OUT ABOUT US?

	2021			2022			2023		
How do you know about the Festival?	393	% surveys	% answers	308	% surveys	% answers	274	% surveys	% answers
By chance (BC)	9	2.29	3.06	2	0.65	0.92	4	1.46	1.94
Don't know (DK)	1	0.25	0.34	1	0.32	0.46	1	0.36	0.49
Direct email (D)	23	5.85	7.82	12	3.90	5.50	15	5.47	7.28
Know to look/been coming for years (K)	17	4.33	5.78	11	3.57	5.05	14	5.11	6.80
Brochure/newspaper/other Festival print (P)	17	4.33	5.78	18	5.84	8.26	23	8.39	11.17
Partner Venue (PV) or partner direct mails	32	8.14	10.88	25	8.12	11.47	33	12.04	16.02
Social Media (SM), inc local radio	32	8.14	10.88	30	9.74	13.76	18	6.57	8.74
Word of mouth (W)	126	32.06	42.86	69	22.40	31.65	59	21.53	28.64
Organisational website or Eventbrite posts (X)	37	9.41	12.59	50	16.23	22.94	39	14.23	18.93
	294			218			206		
Total completions as a %	75	75	100	71	71	100	75	75	100

2023's top three methods of hearing about the Festival are highlighted in green.

Since 2020, we've determined in-door print (e.g., delivered to the home) as a key driver for our marketing activity. This was based on people being locked down, venue closures and a reticence to create physical touch moments. Monitoring shows print is being more heavily favoured again now, doubling in the last year from 5.84% to 11.17%. We believe the rise in partner venue referral is to do with our in0house print being available in participating and Festival-friendly venues.

Print mailings assures us of direct provision and community contact, but it creates a carbon impact. We amended this in 2023 to post 55k leaflets (much lighter weight and less pages), increasing reach but lowering carbon outputs.

What we do know -anecdotally- is the newspaper is well thought of. Print mailing is a more expensive approach to our usual 'print and share via venue collections' approach, but the leaflet is much less costly than the newspaper. In 2023 we spent almost the same amount of money on 60k leaflets and 7k newspapers as we did on 30k newspapers in 2022. It is worth noting that dropping the number of newspapers/advertising spaces may affects ability to leverage funds.

Being on view in partner venues is a significant lead for visitors and our presence on ***Eventbrite*** and 'the internet' drives considerable interest (second highest referral method). Differentiating between our website and 'online/internet' might help us understand our own traffic better, but this would require providing a multiple choice on the survey.

It's not possible -with so little data analysis on exact drop zones and how distribution correlates with post code data for attendees- to know the event conversion. This would be a complicated piece of work that would require considerable statistical skill.

When asked how people knew about the Festival, the majority claim 'word-of-mouth'. We *hope* this means the friend or family member knew *because* of the print, but we cannot assume this correlation.

As one of the highest outgoing costs for the Festival it's vital we demonstrate benefits; whilst event conversion is a benefit, the newspapers also serves as a gift; a platform for artists; a slim income line and it provides funder recognition and contributes to annual reach figures. Compared to a programme, the newspaper has a much longer shelf-life, containing as it does stories, games and children's' activities, lasting beyond the dates of the Festival. This year we provided 7k 56pp (2022: 48pp, 2021: 36pp) newspapers and 60k A2 fold-outleaflets, 55k of which were delivered to homes (using Royal Mail's 'Door-to-door' service), with the remaining 5k being shared across venues.

DISTRIBUTION

Leaflets began landing around 25 Sept (2022: 26 Sept; 2021:10 Oct), three weeks ahead of the Festival, with newspapers being available a week later. In addition to print, we increased social media posts (see *Social Media Growth Summary*), including event links, animated posters, printed posters and short animated trailers.

Ideally, to support design flow, print and delivery work, lead programme must be complete as early in the calendar year as possible. Online sales will go live in mid/late-summer and all other ticketed shows before the August bank holiday to give people several pay packets to stagger ticket buying over.

There are definite advantages to brochures, newspapers, leaflets and posters as they reach non-digital audiences and we must be sure we're doing all we can to meet accessibility issues, as well as finding new audiences. In 2022 we received one very angry return, which deemed the newspaper to be in too small a font. As we print in the same or larger font than national agencies, we have not amended this, but keep on bearing it in mind for alternative formats, which we don't offer as a matter of course. It remains the only written complaint received on this – physically or virtually. Understanding the new newspaper's value and distribution, in the climate of the time, will be important, so addressing costs and best opportunities early is advisable.

Every year ***Royal Mail*** changes the way in which its door-to-door service works and how they present the bookings we have made, making it difficult to present year-on-year comparisons, e.g., in 2020 bookings produced a map; 2021 and 2022's bookings did not. Consequently, we are simply presenting the post code choices made this year as a reference for the future. In 2022 we mailed 26 specific residential post codes, which we increased to 50 in 2003.

1. L10 0
2. L10 7
3. L10 9
4. L15 5
5. L17 0
6. L16 8
7. L15 6
8. L15 9
9. L17 7
10. L17 6
11. L17 4
12. L17 3
13. L17 2
14. L18 2
15. L18 1
16. L18 0
17. L17 9
18. L17 8
19. L27 1
20. L18 6
21. L18 5
22. L18 3
23. L27 5
24. L28 4
25. L28 1
26. L27 8
27. L27 6
28. L3 9
29. L3 6
30. L29 7
31. L28 5
32. L32 0
33. L32 8
34. L32 5
35. L32 4
36. L32 3
37. L32 9
38. L34 4
39. L34 0
40. L33 8
41. L33 0
42. L34 6
43. L40 5
44. L40 4
45. L40 0
46. L34 8
47. L40 7
48. L8 3
49. L6 5
50. L40 8

SOCIAL MEDIA GROWTH SUMMARY

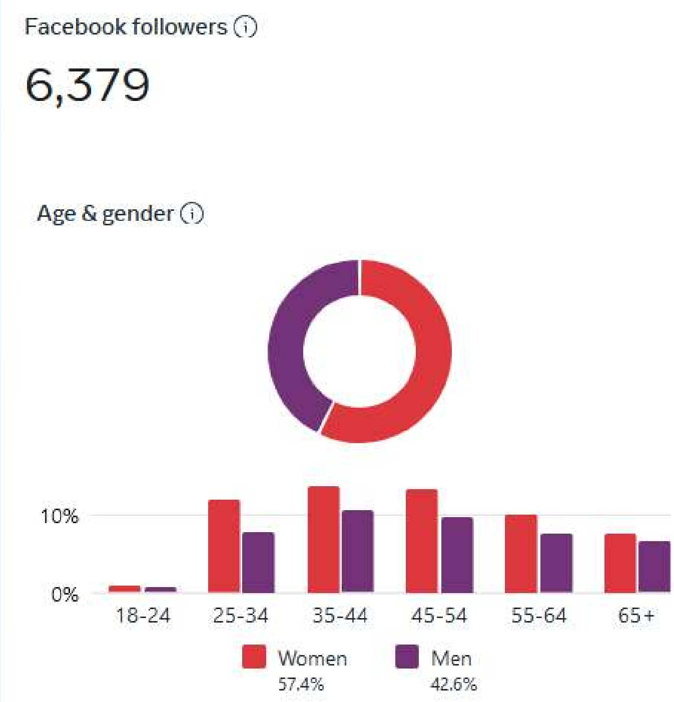
Social media growth summary Channels/Time	Aug 2016	Dec 2016	YOY >	Dec 2017	YOY >	Dec 2018	YOY >	Nov-19	YOY >	Nov-20	YOY >	Dec-21	YOY >	Dec-22	YOY >	Dec-23	YOY >	Growth since records began %	Av growth PA (sign ups)
Facebook	3777	4007	6.09	4332	8.11	4598	6.14	4899	6.55	5120	4.51	5375	4.98	6157	14.55	6379	3.61	**42.31**	6.04
Twitter/X	3470	3656	5.36	3871	5.88	4035	4.24	4280	6.07	4526	5.75	4893	8.11	5049	3.19	5080	0.61	**41.01**	5.86
Instagram	132	185	40.15	266	43.78	397	49.25	605	52.39	763	26.12	1053	38.01	1245	18.23	1416	13.73	**697.73**	99.68
Website (not monitored until Dec)	7000	7642	9.17	12114	58.52	17440	43.97	16513	-5.32	17449	5.67	19628	12.49	19440	-0.96	11313	-41.81	**180.40**	25.77
Mailchimp	1727	1650	-4.46	1681	1.88	1588	-5.53	1952	22.92	2119	8.56	2367	11.70	2375	0.34	2287	-3.71	**37.06**	5.29
Total reach	**16106**	**17140**	**14.08**	**22264**	29.89	**28058**	26.02	**28249**	0.68	**29977**	6.12	**33316**	11.14	**34266**	2.85	**26475**	-22.74	**142.64**	**142.64**

NB This table accounts for followers and subscribers.

Analysis for individual channels is given below.

FACEBOOK

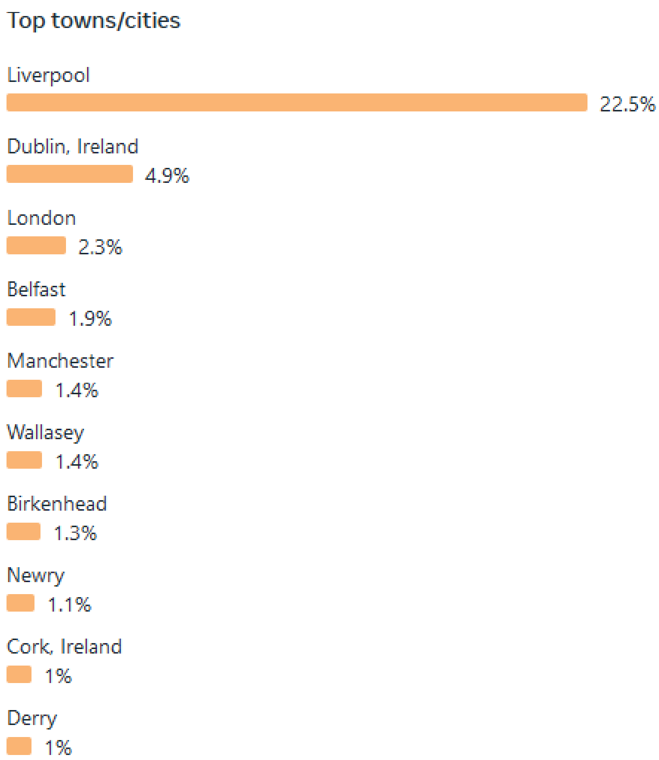
Facebook	2016	Reported in 2017	2017 (Using 2018 metrics)	2018	YOY variance %	2019	YOY variance %	2020	YOY variance %	2021	YOY variance %	2022	YOY variance %	2023	YOY variance %
Likes	4018		4331	4598	106.2	4899	106.55	5190	4871.1	5375	103.56	5700	106.05	5886	103.26
Followers	NR		265	4549	1716.6	5139	112.97	5543	4906.6	5850	105.54	6154	105.20	6380	103.67
Minutes of video views	NR		1200	7742	645.2	5942	76.75	14932	19455.3	9417	63.07	1257	13.35	1400	111.38
Facebook page reach												117726	NR	112435	95.51
Engagements														2804	NC
Promoted posts (paid reach)	NR		1	2	200.0	4	200.00	70277	35138.5	2835	4.03	2284	80.56	40272	1763.22



NR/MC = Not recorded or reported/Not calculated.

Facebook is our best channel for filtering events, stories and news to audiences, rather than contacting professionals or press. It's a sociable space. We continued to build more rich content over the year, but had fewer ***Facebook*** premiers this year as we returned to live work, but have maintained using partner handles and hashtags.

Having counted the reach for every post we made in 2023, we can see a slight drop in our 2023 figures from 2022, achieving just 95.5% of the reach this year. We were later bringing ***Anna Franks Marketing*** on to the campaign, due to funding decisions, which may have affected this.



Our ***Facebook*** audience has remained largely static in terms of gender (2021: Women: 57.6%/Men: 42.4%) and age, with the top four cities visiting our posts remaining the same though figures have shifted slightly (2022: Liverpool, 23.5%; Dublin, Ireland, 4.9%, London, 2.3%; Belfast, 1.9%; 2021: Liverpool, 25.80%; Dublin, Ireland, 5.20%, London, 2.80%; Belfast, 2.20%).

Facebook's ***Meta*** *Business Suite* remains unintuitive and extremely labour-intensive. Ensuring the inclusion of live handles and hashtags improves level of reach, but comes with significant time costs. Our Digital Boost course in 2023 helped us with understanding these needs and has benefitted our growth, though not substantially.

Ideally, a content coordinator would programme this workload to create and deliver creative campaigns that story tell across the year, with a cohesive voice, using thorough monitoring to test, evaluate, plan and strategise our work. Doing so would allow us to understand event conversions and could provide monetised opportunities, in future, if we were able to prove our connection with audiences in such a way that allowed for affinity advertising, etc. It would also allow for more robust monitoring, as changes in configuration could be looked at more frequently meaning large data gaps/errors would be spotted and rectified earlier. An annual deep-dive is not enough for genuine improvement, responsiveness and delivery.

It should be noted that whilst Facebook used to be our chief channel, we have diversified our offer across additional platforms, so losses here could be gains elsewhere.

TWITTER/X

Twitter/X is a positive space for engaging with press and artists (a professional network), but less positive for audience interactions (compared with ***Facebook***), such as event notifications. It is our professional space. ***Twitter*** content must be fast, digestible and eye-catching, making itself useful for headlines and weblinks. Opinion formers add to this feed, if not attendees.

Changes to ***Twitter/X*** mean that mention and profile visit data is no longer reportable.

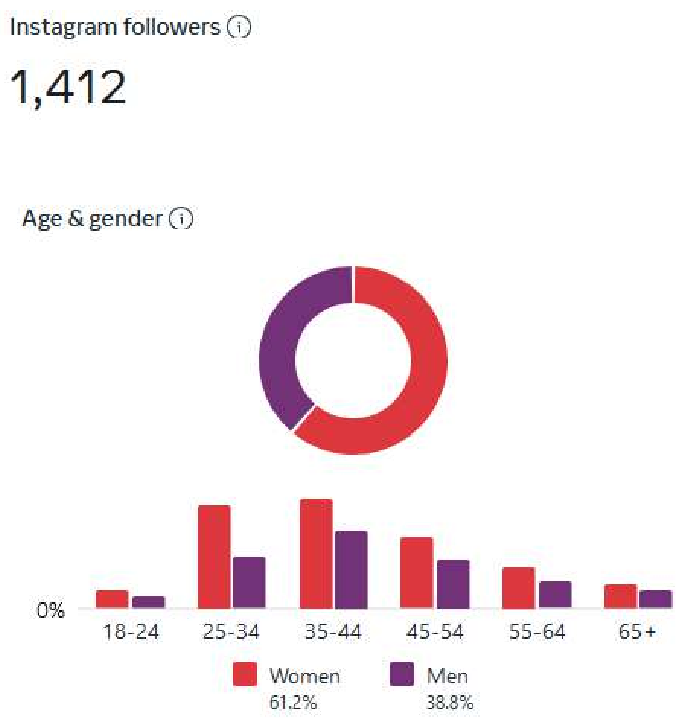
Elon Musk's ***Twitter/X*** takeover has impacted who uses this, pushing more people to other channels. This may be worth noting for future benchmarking and for splitting risk across channels (e.g., ***LinkedIn***, ***Instagram***, ***TikTok***, ***Twitch*** etc), but this needs dedicated personnel, strategic planning and resource investment.

Our impression rate (a count of impressions from each post in the period) seems healthy, though lower than in 2022, but we believe this is to do wo with working with fewer artists. Given the difficulties Twitter/X has been experiencing in terms of popularity, we are pleased to have sustained our audience there, even though growth is lower than in previous years.

Twitter/X	2016	2017 (Using 2018 metrics)	2018	YOY variance %	2019	YOY variance %	2020	YOY variance %	2021	YOY variance %	2022	YOY variance %	2023	YOY variance %
Followers	3,660	3,871	4,035	104	4,280	106	4,526	106	4,893	108	5,047	103	5,079	101
Mentions (Nov-Oct inc.)	68	404	660	163	569	86	671	118	856	128	602	70		0
Profile visits	1,396	4,133	5,023	122	5,367	107	3,805	71	16,693	439	19,051	114		0
Following		1,423	1,483	104	1,644	111	1,840	112	1,951	106	2,064	106	2,102	102
Total tweets made (cumulative)		2,925	3,060	105	3,378	110	3,727	110	3,999	107	4,194	105	4,394	105
Likes awarded/ engagement		911	959	105	1,551	162	992	64	955	96		0	638	NC
Tweet impressions	63,800	1,467,758	170,500	12	302,364	177	288,007	95	279,098	97	149,152	53	117,012	78

NR = Not recorded or reported/not calculated.

INSTAGRAM



Instagram is a channel engaging a younger audience and developing at speed. People are increasingly using it as an alternative to ***Facebook*** and ***Twitter/X***. The Festival's ability to use this channel appropriately is somewhat limited by the capacity and knowledge of its leadership. As stated above, reaping the benefits of our channels requires more expertise that we have in-house., requiring a content/campaign coordinator.

That said, we've significantly grown our audience (2022:1,242; 2021: 1,052; 2020: 763).

Instagram requires strategic thinking with regards artist takeovers, picture stories, multi-panel posts, etc. The ability for people to 'like images quickly, leads to roughly 18 likes per post, but what the overall value of this is remains to be understood.

Instagram	2022	YOY variance %	2023	YOY variance %
Followers	1242	NR	1414	113.85
Profile visits	1086	NR	1057	97.33
Following	617	NR	627	101.62
Likes awarded	328	NR	1155	352.13
Instagram impressions	5335	NR	2531	47.44

WEBSITE

Google amended their analytics resources in 2021 without our knowledge. Sadly, the new analytics package was not configured correctly until July 2023, meaning we lost ¾ of the year's worth of data collection. Even so, we have worked extremely hard to improve the website's search engine functions, improve accessibility and keep the home page up to date with new news and opportunities, to inspire and engage. Our *Digital Boost*, taken in the firt half of the year, course prompted much of this.

Website	Reported in 2017	2017 (Using 2018 metrics)	2018	YOY variance %	2019	YOY variance %	2020	YOY variance %	2021	YOY variance %	2022	YOY variance %	Jul-Oct 2023	25% of Jul-Oct	Best guess	YOY variance %
Users	7642	12114	17449	144.0	16513	94.64	17449	18438.1	19628	112.49	19440	99.04	11313	2828	**14141**	72.74
New users	NR	12027	17293	143.8	16530	95.59	17293	18091.2	19459	112.53	19445	99.93	16615	4154	**20769**	106.81
Sessions	11753	17667	23000	130.2	21579	93.82	23000	24514.6	23948	104.12	23145	96.65	22418	5605	**28023**	121.07
No of sessions per user	NR	1.46	1.32	90.4	1.31	99.24	1.32	1.3	1.22	92.42	1.19	97.54	0.99	1	**0.995**	83.61
Page views	40426	53524	55401	103.5	52010	93.88	55401	59013.1	37652	67.96	36240	96.25	27486	6872	**34358**	94.81
Pages per session	3.44	3.03	2.41	79.5	2.41	100.00	2.41	2.4	1.57	65.15	1.57	100.00	2.43	2.43	**2.43**	154.78
Bounce rate	51	56.1	62.97	112.2	62.31	98.95	62.97	63.6	78.29	124.33	81.23	103.76				
Returning visitor rate	NR	16.3	13.6	83.4	12.7	93.38	13.6	14.6	10.9	80.15	10	91.74				

NR = Not recorded or reported/NC not calculated.

The change in the analytics software means bounce rate and returning visitor rate are no longer reportable.

Because of the loss of data, we have taken an educated guess that the remainder of thee year would account for 25% of the July-Oct reporting period, being that this would be the busiest time for the website to be functioning in. We have then provided a best guess for 2023, based on these figures.

For consistency, (usually) web activity is monitored from the day after the preceding year's festival, to the last day of this year's, capturing a full annual cycle. Fully refreshed in 2021 (from the original site constructed in 2016 involving a move to a new template with improved security and features) 2022's developments saw the addition of a shop and a new homepage. In 2023, we have improved all search engine functions, added in new accessibility features and run Flesh-Kincaid checks on all prose to increase access. Whilst the site doesn't look considerably different (it retains the brand aesthetics and navigation we're accustomed to) it continues to provide seamless integration for users.

There are numerous direct routes in to the site. Multiple social media channels, enewsletters, ***Eventbrite***, partner sites linking directly to specific event pages, etc, so it is *possible* our site is 'hyper-directional'. Increasing dwell time on the site would be preferential. A dedicated content coordinator would analyse and deliver responses to better understand bounce rates and create a strategy to improve it if required.

Increased use of social media does reduce some need for (and the frequency of) website use; but the site requires populating, which takes time, effort and consideration to ensure that pages link, navigation is clear and stories cross-sell to one another. This needs more resource than we currently have.

MAILCHIMP

Our *Mailchimp* data appears clean, with a relatively warm audience. 24.49% (2022: 31%; 2021: 29%) of users are deemed 'high-engagers'. Though this is down on previous years, it is still above industry standard to have such a high proportion of high engagers, even after the influx of new inputs brought about by the 2023 data collection which added 220 email addresses to the cohort. Given the continued growth in social media, we are surprised to see relatively consistent take-up and use of the enewsletter, but the comparatively slow growth is indicative of the market.

We sent 11 mailings in the review period, four less than the previous year, but with a much more targeted campaign plan, especially across the Festival build and delivery period.

We normally see a spike in subscriptions following large data inputting sessions (i.e., after *River Festival* and our annual festival), then a sharp drop-off of 'unsubscribers'. At the time of writing, the import has only just happened, but new email addresses have not yet been mailed. Industry statistics, as supplied by *Mailchimp* (**https://mailchimp.com/resources/email-marketing-benchmarks/** accessed 18 Jan 2022) show that we are running higher than the industry standard and better than last year.

Our two most opened posts were *Explore Events - Liverpool Irish Festival (19 -29 Oct 2023)*, and *Explore Events - LivIrishFest (19 -29 Oct 2023)* (sent on different dates) . . .compared with "Liverpool Irish Festival - what's on this week at #LIF2022", and "Irish Famine Memorial, Oglet and updates", the previous year.

Despite a drop-off in the overall number of subscribers (following some data cleaning and market shifts), we've noticed an increase of opens, thought to be attributable to the use of emoticons in the titles and a revised template layout. Based on the readership patterns we hazard a guess that subscribers like insider news and exclusives.

In 2024, our communications campaign plan should consider focussing content on high engagers and generating custom content for them, understanding the event conversions and how to cross-sell programme. This would correspond with web-work, dwell-time improvement and storytelling. Event announcements are popular and certain story lines seem to have traction (e.g., Liverpool Irish Famine Trail), but this knowledge needs leveraging by someone with skill and capacity to do so.

If this was a well-serviced, well understood channel, it's believed this could be a platform for affinity space sales (advertising). The channel needs to work 'smarter' with regards ticketing pre-sales and, ideally, we would refresh the template to ensure it's as responsive as possible.

	2016		2018	2019	2020	2021		2022		2023
Mailchimp	2016	2017 (Using 2018 metrics)	YOY variance %	YOY variance %	YOY variance %	YOY variance %	2022	YOY variance %	2023	YOY variance %
Followers	1727	1681	94.47	122.92	108.56	111.70	2378	100.46	2287	96.17
Opens	Not				No YOY	111.40	9225	112.61	5683	61.60
Open rate (%)					No YOY	78.24	32.42	134.00	36.20	111.66
Industry standard					No YOY	0.00	26.27	0.00	26.27	0.00
More or less than standard					No YOY	0.00	6.15	0.00	9.93	0.00
Clicks					No YOY	84.83	1276	145.33	833	65.28
Click rate (%)					No YOY	78.24	6.49	190.43	4.62	71.19
Industry standard					No YOY	0.00	2.95	100.00	2.95	100.00
More or less than standard					No YOY	0.00	3.54	0.00	1.67	0.00
eNewsletters sent	13	13	84.62	127.27	92.86	123.08	15	93.75	11	73.33
High engagers					No YOY	Unknown	737	107.39	560	75.97

PRESS ACHIEVED

In 2022, Laura Brown stepped down as PR and Marketing consultant and we recruited ***Anna Franks Marketing.*** As a result, year-on-year comparisons are slightly problematic as the two do not use the same data counting/membership systems.

Below, using previous evidence and some rounding figures (e.g., 500, used and highlighted in yellow below) we are looking to provide an approximation of what press was gained in 2023 versus previous years.

Poster counts use the same model as before (based on city population and calculations for *#GlobalGreening* street engagement) and print is always valued at 3x the known readership, as we have used in previous years. Press reach is always somewhat indicative and we would stress that point here, too.

£ value	Total reach
282,121	6,002,580

Pub'd	Media Title	Headline	Media Type	Value	Estimated reader/ listener no.	URL
13-Feb	*The Irish Post*	In His Own Words - theatre director John Maguire	Online	3760	80000	Link
19-Jun	*LCVS* newsletter		Online	23.5	500	Link
19-Jun	*Uncover Liverpool*	Jobs listing - Finance Lead	Mailing	23.5	500	Link
26-Jun	*Uncover Liverpool*	Jobs listing - Finance Lead	Mailing	23.5	500	Link
10-Aug	*The Journal of Music*	Culture Ireland funding awards	Online	42.49315068	904.109589	Link
14-Aug	*Uncover Liverpool*	Job listing - Festival Cooridnator	Mailing	23.5	500	Link
21-Aug	*Uncover Liverpool*	Job listing - Festival Cooridnator	Mailing	23.5	500	
28-Aug	*Culture Briefs*	Job listing	Mailing	23.5	500	
28-Aug	*Uncover Liverpool*	Job listing - Festival Cooridnator	Mailing	23.5	500	
14-Sep	*LCVS* website	Liverpool Irish Festival Programme | 40 Events over 10 Days | (lcvs.org.uk)		23.5	500	Link
15-Sep	*The Guide Liverpool*	Liverpool Irish Festival to celebrate its 21st anniversary	Online	7050	150000	Link
17-Sep	*Sunday World* (secured by David Gilna)	Dubliner David Gilna's acclaimed play A Bolt From The Blue set for electrifying new run		899.6896667	19142.33333	Link
18-Sep	*University of Liverpool - Tung Auditorium*	The Tung Auditorium opens Autumn 2023 season Lisa Lambe reference	Online	23.5	500	Link

20-Sep	*Liverpool Echo*	Liverpool Irish Festival dates as 40 events planned	Online	41010.132	872556	Link
23-Sep	*BBc Radio Merseyside* - Breakfast show	Paul Beesley - announcement of programme	Radio	70.7797619	1505.952381	
30-Sep	*The Journal of Music*	The London Lasses - 25th Anniversary Concert at Liverpool Irish Festival	Online	42.49315068	904.109589	Link
02-Oct	*Uncover Liverpool*	Programme listings	Mailing	23.5	500	
04-Oct	*Baltic Creative*	Launch preview	Mailing	23.5	500	Link
09-Oct	*Uncover Liverpool*	Programme listings	Mailing	23.5	500	Link
10-Oct	*Liverpool Express*	Launch preview	Online	0		Link
10-Oct	*Liverpool World*	Irish Festival announcement	Online	3991.780822	84931.50685	Link
13-Oct	Consul General of North mailing	E-shot - first news item	Online	23.5	500	
13-Oct	*Culture Liverpool*	E-shot - highlighted news item	Online	23.5	500	
15-Oct	*Art in Liverpool* listing			23.5	500	Link
16-Oct	*Uncover Liverpool*	E-shot - highlighted event	Online	23.5	500	
17-Oct	Irish Government website	Irish Government £6.23m funding announcement		0		Link
17-Oct	*The Irish World*	Liverpool Irish Festival returns for 21st year	Online	2021	43000	Link
18-Oct	*BBC Radio Merseyside* - Breakfast show		Radio	70.7797619	1505.952381	
18-Oct	*The Irish World*	The Hearth of the Matter	Print	6580	140000	
18-Oct	*The Irish World*	The Hearth of the Matter	Online	2021	43000	Link
19-Oct	*Baltic Creative*	LIF announces 2023 programme	Online	23.5	500	Link
24-Oct	Mersey News Live	LJMU: Celebration of Irish culture and heritage takes centre stage	Online	23.5	500	Link
28-Oct	*Theatre North West End UK*	Mark Davoren - Theatres North West doing review of Brendan Son of Dublin (Fat Dan Productions)		23.5	500	
08-Nov	*Belfast Live*	Why Northern Irish students love Liverpool	Online	195720.455	4164265	Link
16-Nov	Launch of *Liverpool Irish Festival* on I*rish in the UK* (TV)	Irish in the UK TV	TV	6909	147000	Link

Jun	*The Bookseller*	Race Equality Manifesto launch coverage	Online	591.9486466	12594.65205	Link
Oct	*Art In Liverpool*	1,000 word article		1269	27000	
Oct	*The Swoop*			23.5	500	
Sept/Oct	Festival posters	4 styles of poster, printed and online	Print	153.7018088	3270.25125	MFA
Sept/Oct	*Liverpool Irish Festival* leaflets	Programme announcement leaflet	Print	8460	180000	MFA
Sept/Oct	*Liverpool Irish Festival* newspaper	56pg newspaper	Print	987	21000	MFA

MFA: Media File Available.

Anna Franks has prepared a deep dive in to the work they undertook, **which can be viewed here**.

Chief takeaways are that the community newspapers that supported us so well in 2022 are struggling to resource editorials in the way they did previously. Setting up deals/contradeals early, might be the way to get their support and thinking about offering them previews ahead of the Festival might be another way to advertise our programme, rather than thinking about reflections back on it.

Anna Franks has served us well and -as a connection made via the Irish community and the Irish Embassy- we are very glad to have found such a fitting advocate for our work.

NOTES ON PRESS ACHIEVED

Pre-2021 our previous media lists used ***Kantar*** – a data and marketing insights agency- to generate reach and value information. *Kantar* calculates the press reach based on known circulation and digital platforms, using figures for each media organisation and the title as defined by the ***Audit Bureau of Circulations*** *or* 'ABC' press circulation data, the industry standard for print and digital platforms. It also uses, ***RAJAR (Radio Joint Audience Research)*** for broadcast and ***BARB (Broadcast Audiences' Research Board)*** for TV. We don't have access to this in 2022/23 so have used figures from previous rounds where we had them; located as much reach information online as possible and, where we understand reach is likely to be relatively small have simply used '500' as a guiding stick figure. At worst this adds an additional 10,000 to our figure and it is likely to be higher than this. Having done so, we can see improved reach figures, based on slightly higher press and print pieces. A quick overview shows

Year	Reach	Value
2023	6,002,580	£282,121
2022	4,500,638	£21,153
2021	2,969,022	£44,110
2020	6,274,942	£95,891

Kantar collates specific prices values based on the difference between print, online, broadcast and other values – we have not been able to do that this year and have instead used a social media calculation of £0.0047 per reader/listener. This brings the value down a lot in year-on-year calculations, so will need to be reviewed in 2023. However, it does still present a value-added amount, which is beneficial for funders and advertisers to keep in mind.

Our learning from 2022 and 2023 is we should engage ***Anna Franks Marketing*** as early as possible in Festival year (e.g., April). We have a diary meetign set for April 2024, to establish long-lead campaign strategies. We also need to pick up our press and reciprocity deals-such as those with ***The Irish Post*** and ***The Irish World –*** befor we get in to the Festival delivery cycle, to alleviate pressure and ensure there are as many cross-sells as possible.

TESTIMONIALS

DESCRIPTORS

Since 2016 we have asked what three words best describe the Festival. We process these as 'descriptors'. In 2023 and 2022 the top three words used to describe the Festival were: "**fun**", "**interesting**" and "**inspiring**".

Below: Participants in John Joe Kelly's bodhrán session, *#LIF2023*.

The table below shows the last 8 years:

2016		2017		2018		2019		2020		2021		2022		2023		
Total	1690	Total	934	Total	1023	Total	724	Total	216	Total	708	Total	547	Total descriptors		536
Top entries	% total	Top entries	% total	Top entries	% total	Top entries	% total	Top entries	% total	Top entries	% total	Top entries	% total	Top entries	X used	% total
Fun	15.68	Fun	7.49	Fun	8.70	Fun	9.81	Interesting	6.02	Fun	11.02	Fun	10.79	Fun	63	###
Interesting	9.41	Interesting	4.18	Interesting	3.91	Entertaining	3.18	Informative	5.09	Entertaining	5.79	Interesting	9.51	Interesting	49	9.14
Informative	7.99	Informative	3.00	Good	3.23	*joy*	3.18	*joy*	3.24	Interesting	5.23	inspiring	5.48	Inspiring	29	5.41
Entertaining	7.10	Entertainin g	2.89	Informative	2.74	Great	3.04	Fun	2.78	Educat…	3.67	Friendly	4.94	Educational	24	4.48
Good	6.57	Excellent	2.68	Cult...	2.64	Irish	2.90	Friendly	2.31	Stimul	3.39	Enjoyable	4.02	Entertaining	22	4.10
Lively	6.04	Lively	1.82	Enjoy	2.54	Good	3.04	Inclusive	1.85	Friendly	3.11	Stimulating	3.84	Stimulating	21	3.92
Educat…	5.92	Inspir…	1.71	Entertaining	2.54	Cultural	2.76	Cultural	1.39	*joy* (inc. enjoy)	2.97	Informative	3.47	Great	17	3.17
Excellent	5.44	Great	1.71	Great	2.54	Inclusive	2.49	Inspir…	1.39	Inspir…	2.68	Amazing	2.38	Informative	15	2.80
Friendly	5.09	Music	1.61	Very…	2.25	Interesting	2.35	Variety	1.39	Great	2.12	Entertaining	2.38	Important	12	2.24
Music	4.20	Friendly	1.50	Inclusive	2.15	Music	2.35	Excellent	1.39	Irish	2.12	Excellent	2.19	Welcoming	12	2.24
Inspir…	4.08	Good	1.39	Diverse	1.76	Friendly	2.21	Educat…	1.39	Informative	1.98	Lively	2.01	Cultural	11	2.05
Cultural	3.61	Cultur…	1.39	Friendly	1.66	Inspir…	2.21	Vari…	1.39	Inclusive	1.69	Great	1.83	Inclusive	9	1.68
Brilliant	3.55	Very good	1.28	Irish	1.66	Informative	1.93	Great	0.93	Cultural	1.69	Brilliant	1.65	Innovative	9	1.68
Fab	2.66	Inclusive	1.18	Lively	1.37	Divers…	1.52	Entertaining	0.93	Livel…	1.69	Diverse	1.65	Irish	9	1.68
Inclusive	1.95	Educat…	1.07	Inspir...	1.37	Variety	1.38	Fascinating	1.39	Engaging	1.55	Exciting	1.65	Good	8	1.49
Thought provoking	0.89	Thought provoking	0.96	Fab…	1.37	Brilliant	1.24	Music	0.93	Fab	1.41	Fab	1.65	Enlightening	6	1.12
Lovely	0.71	Diverse	0.96	Music	1.27	Engaging	1.24	Divers…	0.93	Variety	1.13	Good	1.65	Friendly	6	1.12
Very good	0.47	Lovely	0.75	Amazing	1.17	Excellent	1.10	Brilliant	0.93	Excellent	1.13	Inclusive	1.65	Happy	6	1.12
		Engag…	0.11	Brill…	0.11	Educat…	0.15	Engaging	0.47	Vari	1.13	Wonderful	1.65	informative	6	1.12
		Amazing	0.07	Vari…(variety, varied)	0.16	Thought provoking	0.07	Thought provoking	0.09	Music	0.11	Creative	0.11	Lively	6	0.11
		Stimul…	0.75	Excellent	1.08			Irish	0.05	Thought	0.11	Educational	0.11	Memories	6	0.11
										Communit...	0.11	Emotional	0.11	Reflective	6	0.11
Totals	91	Totals	39	Totals	46	Totals	48	Totals	36	Totals	56	Totals	65	Totals	352	63
	2016's top 3		2016's top 3		2017's top 3		2018's top 3		2019's top 3		2020's top 3		2021's top 3		2022's top 3	

Year	Word Most awarded word	% used	2nd most awarded word	% used	3rd most awarded word	% used	Top 3 descriptors hare % total
2016	Fun	15.68	Interesting	9.41	Informative	7.99	33.08
2017	**Fun**	**7.49**	**Interesting**	**4.18**	**Informative**	**3.00**	**14.67**
2018	Fun	8.70	Interesting	3.91	Good	3.23	15.84
2019	Fun	9.81	Entertaining	3.18	*joy*	3.18	16.16
2020	Interesting	6.02	Informative	5.09	*joy*	3.24	14.35
2021	Fun	11.02	Entertaining	5.79	Interesting	5.23	22.03
2022	Fun	10.79	Interesting	9.51	inspiring	5.48	25.78
2023	Fun	11.75	Interesting	9.14	Inspiring	5.41	26.31

NB – where words seem incomplete, they have been used as a search term to amalgamate all instances of similar variants, i.e., “inspir” will cover all instances of ‘inspirational’, ‘inspired’ or ‘inspiring’ and “brill” will cover ‘brill’, ‘brilliant’, ‘brilliance’.

For quick reference, the above left shows our descriptors since records began.

Readers will see a slight fluctuation in our top descriptors, but it's fair to say they're positive and address engaging atmospheres and rich content. We are - as a rule of thumb - fun, enjoyable and informative. No negative descriptors appear as none ranked. Higher share percentages show a more unified answer range from survey respondents, but in general we top out favourably. Maintaining such descriptions despite local and global politics and a cost-of-living crisis is a very positive, given the trying circumstances and damage to public confidence.

For the first time ever, we have also analysed the artist's top words. In 2023 they are "**inspir**…" (e.g., inspirational, inspiring) at 8%, "**cultur**…" (as in cultural, culture) at 6% and "**education**" (as in educating, educational) also a 6%. This is compared to 2022's answers of "**interesting**" (9% of total answers), "**community**", "**creative**", "**inclusive**" and "**varied**" all tied at 6% each for the total answer count.

ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK

As in previous years, we have asked people 'Do you have anything you would like to tell us?', and 'Do you have suggestions to make or work you'd like to see?'.

141/274 (2022: 156/306) said they would like to 'tell us something' and 87(2022: 107) left 'suggestions for work'. We have included every comment –except "no" and "n/a"- left in each section. They are unexpurgated post data inputting.

AUDIENCE FEEDBACK

- Very welcome event
- 2 events I've been to have been excellent and impactful. Indiecork film - Oh Bheal - and this (Green & Blue)
- A lovely mix of events - love the more family friendly activities to celebrate Irish heritage with my children
- Absolutely fantastic
- Always a great experience
- Always enjoy. Just keep going.
- Always enjoyable
- An important part of Liverpool Life and culture
- As always a fantastically diverse, inclusive and quality festival.
- As someone who grew up when 'The Arts' was hocus locus and I always felt I wasn't understood and I actually had a feeling of belonging
- Attended the Famine Walk. Excellent, knowledgeable, engaging, well-prepared
- Behan play - fabulous. Great directing & acting, loved the music.
- Brilliant singing
- Came as a guest to the talk on T Crowley's book
- Enjoy it and look forward to it every year!
- Enjoyable
- Excellent
- Excellent & inclusive family fun. Well organised.
- Excellent final session
- Excellent performance
- Excellent programme
- Excellent selection of events
- Excellent so far
- Excellent, interactive and very fun.
- Fabulous session at the music room
- Fantastic and important celebration
- First night was brilliant, great atmosphere
- First time attended. Very good.

- First time attendee
- First time attending. 'For the Love of Mary' was excellent.
- First time been involved. Warm, stimulating, essential for the city
- First visit & just this show.
- Found [e]vents programme difficult to follow
- Good opportunity for socializing
- Good to see it so established in the city
- Great
- Great Bodhran Session
- Great concent / Possibly more plays / Irish writers taking part?
- Great festival
- Great initiative for families
- Great organisers and events
- Great organisers made the event very comfortable and felt like a very safe place to talk to people. Great mix of activities to learn about Joyce and experimental writing
- Great Work!
- Great workshop on Sunday 22nd Oct
- Great!
- Great, informal, interesting experimental writing event.
- Green & Blue was a brilliant play
- Happy 21st Birthday
- Have more Irish music pub events
- Hope to attend more events
- How pleasant it was for everyone who was there.
- I am Irish. Presentation was fantastic
- I didn't realise it was part of the festival
- I enjoy live music + plays from previous years. The historic events are very good but felt there was less this year
- I enjoyed it, well organised.
- I have enjoyed all the events I have attended. Found them informative and enjoyable, and looking forward to the Behan play on Saturday night.
- I know very little, only work at Uni of Liverpool and saw an email yesterday
- I liked Brave Mave
- I liked Brave Maeve
- I look forward each year to what the festival brings to Liverpool & enjoyed many good talks. Such a diverse programme of events!
- I loved having access to the film screening. I have learned a lot but gained a lot I want to find out more about, too
- I only heard about it from Institute of Irish studies
- I really enjoyed the film screening. It was great to see a film that I wouldn't get the opportunity to see
- I really enjoyed the screening of O'Bheal today, and have learned so much more about Irish music, culture and history.
- I respect the festival greatly
- I think it is a very important celebration and is one that I wish more people knew about
- I welcome it each year for the cultural events
- I would like to mention re. the talk 'Cultural Memory After the Good Friday Agreement' - no Irish festival banner or mention of Irish Festival at the beginning of the talk. No second generation Irish representation on the panel. Other artforms not represented or working class groups or mention that Belfast has more walls up after the Troubles (and are locked 12 out of 24 hours a day).
- Interesting, friendly, insightful, moving

- Interesting, will look it up in future
- It was an incredible array of events this year with many talented performers.
- It was fantastic. Little Globy was amazing
- It was very very good
- It was well organised interesting inclusive
- It's a great idea to celebrate the great impact of the Irish on this country
- It's an excellent festival
- Its been lovely. Very welcoming, great music.
- It's great to see a range of art & performance forms, venues & hosts/supporters
- It's great!
- Just been to the hip hop film so far - was great! Booked in for more events coming up next week.
- Keep doing it!
- Keep up the good work
- Like variety
- Looking forward to some music and craic
- Looking forward to the rest of the events
- Lot of organization involved
- Lots of fun and nice to meet up with friends
- Love it!
- Love it. Each year it gets better, more inclusive and accessible.
- Love the Liverpool Irish Festival. More!
- Loved it! It was epic. Loved the dancers.
- Loved the film screening! Great event.
- Me and my family have enjoyed being together and reminis[c]ing and enjoying the old songs.
- Melody makers and Armagh rhymers very good. Great to get free books. Good chairs out this year.
- More music
- Most enjoyable
- Much improved
- Often attend - good selection
- Only that I enjoy it more every year. First class. Well planned
- Really enjoyed it
- Really fun and interactive put massive smiles on our faces.
- Really inspiring. Great little festival.
- Really valuable for forging cultural unity
- Rich and varied
- Saw 1 event. Yeats brought to life by Kris & Brandies.
- so far so good
- terrific mix of film, music, talks, walks
- Thanks. How to (re)watch in the future?
- The CCEN practice day was excellent
- The film was good. I think the magazine you put out is good too
- The movie was great, venue was great too
- The people who organise and take part in the [f]estival do a fantastic job
- The performance from Lisa Lambe was so poignant and it was deeply moving to hear traditional Irish tales told in a way that felt truly authentic.
- This is my first event. But I think it is important cultural event.
- This is my first Festival event but its been thoroughly enjoyable
- Thought Brave Maeve was great
- Thought Brave Maeve was great!
- V. good - love the Behan play!

- Very good idea and organisation. Needs to continue, expand and grow.
- Very informative and enjoyable
- Very informative tour of Liverpool/Irish history artefacts. Good overview but also invites desire to know more.
- Very informative walking tour
- Very insightful, learning new facts, different viewpoints and inspiring
- Very interesting and unexpected film
- Very much part of Liverpool. Very well researched and thoughtful.
- Very thought provoking and relevant programme
- Very welcoming. Varied programme. Engaging.
- We love the family day. It is great for children and feels like brings Irish culture to life in a vibrant
- We love the music and folk art of Ireland so we came along tonight
- We really enjoy Luke McManus film Northern Circular & parallels to Liverpool of the stillness
- We really enjoyed the Lisa Lambe event at the Tung auditorium and Niamh Grimes at the Bluecoat gallery
- We really liked the Brandies band
- Well done on 21 years
- We've enjoyed coming to the festival 4 years. Very entertaining.
- While a new most of what the tour museum . I knew much of what we were being told. That said I feel strongly that tours like this are a good idea. The three leaders were great!
- Wonderful annual event
- You could charge more for events.

Email, received 14 Dec 2023:

> Just to say I found The Irish festival exceptionally good this year. Authentic tasteful and moving, Like festival of old.
>
> Sincerely well done. Thanks for all the hard work involved. Very much appreciated.
>
> Yours sincerely, Mairead McCormack

ARTIST FEEDBACK

- Another well programmed and inclusive festival.
- Audience numbers were low but appreciative
- Diverse and wide ranging programme
- Excellent, high quality programme, something for everyone
- Found it very welcoming and supportive. A great community.
- I caught a couple of bits of livestreams of the Festival and they were very enjoyable. I also like the YouTube recordings (the Conflict, Diaspora and Empire was very interesting.)
- I was only able to get to a few things but I enjoyed them all.
- It was amazing to see different generations coming together and the variery of events put onx
- It was an absolute joy to be part of the festival.
- LIF is the most powerful and inspirational cultural event in Liverpool. Irish traditions and culture are wonderful, and they spread joy and happiness in all the city. Congratulations!
- Review if the best time for festival is during half term
- Thank you for inviting us to play at the Festival. Big thank you to Emma for making this possible and arranging such a great venue (Leaf) for us to play our gig. Emma is very good at organising and communicating and adapting flexibly to artists' whims and wishes.
- The events I attended I loved and expanded my frame of reference dramatically
- The Festival was a great platform for us to promote our show "Brendan Son of Dublin". We found every to be very welcoming, professional and support. A great festival with diversity, culture and quality.

- This is my first year as a volunteer, it was a really enjoyable experience.
- Very wide spectrum of events. Great quality. A
- We always look forward to the festival. It is a focal point of our dancing year.
- We had the pleasure of hosting an event
- Well presented and managed

AUDIENCE WORK SUGGESTIONS

- :)
- A Ceilidh for adults
- A non-family ceilidh :)
- Always keen to see events associated with NI
- An adult ceilidh
- An Irish dancing event where people can take part
- Bodhran lessons/workshop
- Bodhran lessons/workshops
- Book of Kells ; calligraphy ; storytelling
- Ceilidh for adults. More theatre
- Ceilidh in the day would be good, events in half term days for children would be good
- Childrens activities needed more signposting
- Collaborating with local cinemas to put on and celebratory and historic Irish films
- Collaborations with more local artists
- Even more films
- Films re. how our Irishness connects us to nature.
- Full day sessions
- I hope that the plaque at Clarence Dock is not demolished in the 'Central Docks' pla[n]s & that a more lasting memorial to Irish immigrants is erected there etc.
- I like plays and talks about famous characters
- I saw lots of publicity because I knew about it but not sure how widely known
- I would love to see the festival at Liverpool dock as before Covid. Used to look forward to it, brilliant day out.
- I'd like some support for my memoir in the form of a grant. I have an MA in Creative Writing (with Distinction)
- Irish & Liverpool comedy feels like a good marriage
- Irish films
- Irish poetry and new works inspired by your research.
- It is great as it is.
- James Joyce - Ulysses adaptation / story about Molly Malone / Leprechauns - the musical
- Joyce
- Just the festival more widely publicised
- Keep featuring Irish & Liverpool Irish personalities in the worlds of art, performance[,] writing, & political/philosophical thought & their links [to other?] particular landscapes & cultures
- Keep up the good work
- List of trad sessions with times and venues for not only festival but through year
- Make programme clearer
- Maybe more acknowledgement & information regarding the Irish Famine victims who died of Typhoid & were buried in a mass grave off Vauxhall Road - there has been a plaque put up but no information I know of for people to read.

- Maybe more drama/walking tours/recitals etc
- Molly Malone
- More advertisement
- More advertisement - didn't know it was on
- More at the events. The Brandies Band and factor 7 was a powerful set. No one owns Yeates or Irishness. It can be celebrated by all. I was also educated about Yeats.
- More broad advertising. Hadn't seen the rest of the programme advertised.
- More chairs/seating
- More concerts and seisuns, Irish dancing shows and classes would be amazing!
- more Cork shorts, more Irish films
- More documentaries
- More events for teenage children
- More family events
- More invited historians around topics
- More Kabosh!
- More music + history events. Irish mythology + storytelling
- More music. More music venues! Pubs are very suitable.
- More musical/dance events. More walking tours.
- More of the same
- More performance.
- More theatre - Friel, Barry
- More trad music. More Chris and Pascal!
- Needs more publicity if poss.
- Needs to be publicised more especially in Liverpool with the connection to Ireland
- No, keep doing what you do!! Thank you...
- Perhaps a closing night to mirror opening night
- Push promotion more. I think as I closely follow the company I remain more aware of events other than non-followers.
- Regular bodhrain course
- Reopen the original Irish Centre, please
- See parts of the trail physically
- Show more of this (Joyce) - O'Casey
- To work collaboratively with Irish student bodies in the city to see if joint events would be something audience would be interested in
- Traditional music instrument workshops (Bodhran does not count!)
- where is it advertised
- Workshops surrounding trad Irish herbal remedies and domestic recipes.
- WOULD BRENDAN BEHAN WANT TO KNOW YOUR SEXUALITY [scrawled on top of form] SHOULD NOT BE ASKED. IRRELEVANT. [written in answer to sexuality question]
- Would like to see more contemporary theatre + music
- Would love to see some Flann O'Brien related events.

ARTIST WORK SUGGESTIONS

- A performance of Despite the wind and the rain by Rachel Walker and Aaron Jones. Although not Irish they have Scots Gallic songs and Aaron's parents are Irish.

- As above and is it possible to connect to a big Irish Artist so it can be the headline act which will then promote the other events
- I feel the format for the Festival was brilliant, and I look forward to seeing how next year shapes up before I make any suggestions
- I think the festival has a solid support and balance of gender in its programming. There are some artists from Northern Ireland and in particular, Derry that I'd love to see there. Gemma Walker-Farren's work is stunning and I'd love to see it being given the space.
- I'd like to collaborate together with more time for a future reading of my 1916 play in development with The Arts Council. Build towards an audience in Liverpool with my work as an Irish Playwright.
- Irish Poetry and story night
- Little Globy would like to continue to contribute to this wonderful event. All it's already amazing, and of course could be always developed in the future. I would like to see public involved in the Irish dance, and I have the idea of an Irish Flash Mob.
- Maybe make the ticketed free events a small charge to stop people booking tickets and not attending.
- More concerts, CD launches (traditional music)
- More marketing support.
- More widely publicised as most people I know didn't know there was such a thing in Liverpool
- No
- Nothing that I can think of
- Perhaps a special joint performance with Melody Makers accommodated in a suitable venue.
- Photos!
- Shadow puppetry workshops
- We are up for more collaborative events
- We were very disappointed - and amazed- with the poor turnout. We wonder whether enough targeted promotion (among academics, students of English and Irish literature, literary associations...) for our Yeats to Music was made. We had the feeling that Anna prompted us to yry and sell tickets, but as Belgians that was very hard for us to do. I was asked to make a video (which I did) to promote the gig but only 3 days before the gig which I think was far too late. So I would suggest that the PR for our type of event should be reconsidered and optimized.

RESPONDING TO FEEDBACK

Amidst the array of feedback, we believe the overwhelming response is positive. Primarily people want more of the same, though there are some specific suggestions, such as more theatre, teenage events and others, etc.

As with every year the oft used call for "more marketing"/"more advertising" is repeated here. This is a frequent 'go to' and difficult to understand fully. 'More' suggests they know of some, but do they know the extent to which we have advertised and the barriers to generating 'more' (e.g., money, related venues, space, green credentials)? Is it that these individuals want more of a particular form of advertising and if so, which one? With 60,000 leaflets, 7,000 newspapers, over 6m in press reach, strong social media impressions, a dedicated website, ***BBC Radio Merseyside*** coverage and a rolling programme of enewsletters, poster campaigns, etc, the only additional marketing we can employ is television or increases to all the above, which is limited by a finite resource. Obvious responses to this include trying longer press leads to assist with deeper, longer ranging coverage, but in terms of marketing channels we do a lot with very little resource.

As an arts and culture led Festival, programming more music than we do is difficult, but -to reduce the friction- consultations were held in 2023, whilst we also explained to groups out need to honour public funding body needs and maintain a multi-disciplinary incorporation of music. 2022's calls for music were handled in a consultation with groups in 2023, the result being that people didn't want very much different to our usual offering, but wanted existing provisions to be flagged, recognised and shared. We created a new article on this, which went in the newspaper and online, and have worked hard to deepened the connection with ***Comhaltas*** to flag their widening participation programme, which is reviving post-COVID.

Suggestions will be incorporated -one-by-one (according to our capability)- in to our planning; and consideration about size of print will be made in line with updated marketing priorities and specific event feedback, which will be given to the producers where the work is ongoing.

The point about the event planned being hard to use is importna.t In the leaflet, the Gantt we used was lifted from the newspaper. This meant the events didn't have their locations available, because in the newspaper there was full event listing, which there was not on the leaflet. This was an oversight that can be corrected next year and is a great observation from the public.

MOTIVATIONS FOR ATTENDING – AUDIENCES AND ARTISTS

Prompted by ***Arts Council England*** we have asked, since 2021, what motivated people's attendance, using a multiple-choice question of pre-defined answers. We ask "Which of the following describes your motivation for visiting *Liverpool Irish Festival* today? (Tick all that apply)" and "which of these was your main motivation? (Circle one only)". Very few people complete both parts of the question. Where only one answer was selected, the data inputter input the same answer in both sections.

AUDIENCES

Motivation to attend a Festival event - audience	2021 (393 total surveys)				2022 (307 total surveys)				2023 (274 total surveys)			
Replies to survey question (RTSQ)	363	RTSQ	112	RTSQ	179	RTSQ	98	RTSQ	160	RTSQ	43	RTSQ
Category provided	Motivations	%	Primary motivator	%	Motivations	%	Primary motivator	%	Motivations	%	Primary motivator	%
To spend time with family/friends	169	46.56	20	17.86	85	47.49	19	19.39	73	45.63	8	18.60
For reflection	40	11.02	4	3.57	40	22.35	6	6.12	49	30.63	3	6.98
For special occasion	43	11.85	2	1.79	23	12.85	2	2.04	16	10.00	1	2.33
The Festival/Irishness is a part of who I am	72	19.83	17	15.18	72	40.22	10	10.20	59	36.88	5	11.63
For peace and quiet	12	3.31	0	0.00	11	6.15	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
To escape from everyday life	45	12.40	1	0.89	28	15.64	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
To be intellectually stimulated	100	27.55	9	8.04	89	49.72	4	4.08	83	51.88	7	16.28
For academic reasons	17	4.68	3	2.68	12	6.70	0	0.00	16	10.00	1	2.33
To be entertained	204	56.20	26	23.21	98	54.75	12	12.24	98	61.25	6	13.95
For professional reasons	31	8.54	4	3.57	18	10.06	3	3.06	19	11.88	1	2.33
To be inspired	83	22.87	2	1.79	97	54.19	5	5.10	98	61.25	2	4.65
To entertain my children	33	9.09	0	0.00	14	7.82	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
To do something new/out of the ordinary	66	18.18	4	3.57	64	35.75	2	2.04	42	26.25	2	4.65
To educate/stimulate my children	23	6.34	0	0.00	16	8.94	0	0.00	13	8.13	1	2.33
To learn something	97	26.72	12	10.71	93	51.96	16	16.33	92	57.50	1	2.33
To enjoy the atmosphere	139	38.29	7	6.25	89	49.72	3	3.06	88	55.00	2	4.65
Other	10	2.75	1	0.89	14	7.82	16	16.33	10	6.25	3	6.98
Av no. answers provided | **% total**	1184	**3.26**	112	**100.00**	863	**4.82**	98	**100.00**	756	**4.73**	43	**100.00**

Below: ***Kabosh Theatre***'s *Green and Blue*, performed at The Hope Street Theatre, *#LIF2023*.

ARTISTS

Motivation to attend a Festival event - artists	2021 (20 total surveys)				2022 (32 total surveys)				2023(21 total surveys)			
Replies to survey question (RTSQ)	20	RTSQ	20	RTSQ	32	RTSQ	32	RTSQ	21	RTSQ	21	RTSQ
Category provided	Motivations	%	Primary motivator	%	Motivations	%	Primary motivator	%	Motivations	%	Primary motivator	%
To spend time with family/friends	0	0.00	0	0.00	3	9.38	0	0.00	6	28.57	1	4.76
For reflection	0	0.00	2	10.00	3	9.38	0	0.00	4	19.05	1	4.76
For special occasion	1	5.00	1	5.00	1	3.13	0	0.00	2	9.52	0	0.00
The Festival/Irishness is a part of who I am	3	15.00	5	25.00	8	25.00	7	21.88	12	57.14	5	23.81
For peace and quiet	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
To escape from everyday life	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
To be intellectually stimulated	1	5.00	1	5.00	10	31.25	3	9.38	11	52.38	1	4.76
For academic reasons	0	0.00	0	0.00	4	12.50	0	0.00	2	9.52	0	0.00
To be entertained	0	0.00	1	5.00	7	21.88	0	0.00	9	42.86	2	9.52
For professional reasons	10	50.00	5	25.00	10	31.25	13	40.63	11	52.38	8	38.10
To be inspired	0	0.00	0	0.00	10	31.25	3	9.38	9	42.86	0	0.00
To entertain my children	1	5.00	1	5.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	4	19.05	0	0.00
To do something new/out of the ordinary	0	0.00	0	0.00	4	12.50	1	3.13	4	19.05	0	0.00
To educate/stimulate my children	3	15.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
To learn something	0	0.00	0	0.00	10	31.25	1	3.13	12	57.14	1	4.76
To enjoy the atmosphere	2	10.00	2	10.00	7	21.88	3	9.38	12	57.14	2	9.52
Other	6	30.00	2	10.00	0	0.00	1	3.13	1	4.76	0	0.00
Av no. answers provided | **% total**	27	**1.35**	20	**100.00**	77	**2.41**	32	**100.00**	99	**4.71**	21	**100.00**

We have added yellow highlights to show the areas of strongest interest on the table below. The stronger the yellow, the higher the % interest in that category.

It is interesting to see the shift in pattern from 2021 to 2023in the number of

a) Categories people have selected, though 'professional reasons' and 'Irishness is part of who I am' are consistently present
b) that 'to learn something' has risen so highly across the data set
c) correlations there may be to our artists top three descriptors "inspir", "cultur" and "education".

It's interesting to note that the artists breakdown their motivations. The Festival would have expected to see 'professional reasons', topping out in the high 80%, but instead a handful of factors play a part, including identity markers and enjoyability factors. As with the audience, artists have more than one motivation for coming, though with such a low response rate, its difficult to make conclusive statements.

SOCIAL MOBILITY – AUDIENCES AND ARTISTS

In 2021 we used ***Arts Council***'s statutory questions to try to begin to access audience and artist social mobility. The questions asked are:

- "What was the occupation of your main household earner when you were about aged 14?", and
- "What is the occupation of your main household earner today?".

Though we have compiled the data -and can draw some basic analysis from this- we are not adequately resourced/trained to identify correlation between childhood recollections of guardian occupations and that of the lead occupier's professional level today. Thus, the information below is simply the response level to those two questions:

Social mobility - audience	2021 (393 total surveys)				2022 (307 total surveys)				2023(274 total surveys)			
Replies to survey question (RTSQ)	321	RTSQ	316	RTSQ	236	RTSQ	231	RTSQ	210	RTSQ	212	RTSQ
Category provided	At age 14	%	Today	%	At age 14	%	Today	%	At age 14	%	Today	%
Modern professional & traditional professional occupations such as: teacher, nurse, physiotherapist, social worker, musician, police officer (sergeant or above), software designer, accountant, solicitor, medical practitioner, scientist, civil / mechanical engineer	93	28.97	129	40.82	75	31.78	115	49.78	60	28.57	99	46.70
Senior, middle or junior managers or administrators such as: finance manager, chief executive, large business owner, office manager, retail manager, bank manager, restaurant manager, warehouse manager	43	13.40	49	15.51	22	9.32	21	9.09	25	11.90	15	7.08
Clerical and intermediate occupations such as: secretary, personal assistant, call centre agent, clerical worker, nursery nurse	29	9.03	23	7.28	13	5.51	14	6.06	12	5.71	11	5.19
Technical and craft occupations such as: motor mechanic, plumber, printer, electrician, gardener, train driver	43	13.40	15	4.75	31	13.14	8	3.46	52	24.76	6	2.83
Routine, semi-routine manual and service occupations such as: postal worker, machine operative, security guard, caretaker, farm worker, catering assistant, sales assistant, HGV driver, cleaner, porter, packer, labourer, waiter/waitress, bar staff	72	22.43	14	4.43	68	28.81	12	5.19	43	20.48	7	3.30
Long-term unemployed (claimed Jobseeker's Allowance or earlier unemployment benefit for more than a year)	12	3.74	8	2.53	6	2.54	3	1.30	1	0.48	1	0.47
Small business owners who employed less than 25 people such as: corner shop owners, small plumbing companies, retail shop owner, single restaurant or cafe owner, taxi owner, garage owner	11	3.43	5	1.58	7	2.97	0	0.00	6	2.86	8	3.77
Other such as: retired, this question does not apply to me, I don't know	8	2.49	62	19.62	4	1.69	43	18.61	7	3.33	58	27.36
I prefer not to say/not applicable	10	3.12	11	3.48	10	4.24	15	6.49	4	1.90	7	3.30
Av no answers provided | % total	321	**100**	316	**100**	236	**100**	231	**100**	210	**100**	212	**100**

The only reading we seem to be able to take from this -and indeed the artists monitoring below- (year-on-year) is that the two main groups that we work with and that attend are 'modern professionals' and 'routine workers'. This is in line with what we might expect to see, as an arts and culture Festival, operating in a known-to-be deprived community. Liverpool is now an education and culture capital, meaning many of the prevalent trades of the past are less likely to show today, today. It's perhaps worth noting that the 'other' group, includes the retired, disabled and unemployed, which is tracking fairly high, in line with our disability monitoring, age monitoring and known disadvantages in Liverpool. As our next largest attending group, this is a target group we could look at servicing more specifically, both in audiences and artist cohorts.

Social mobility - artists	2021 (20 total surveys)				2022 (32 total surveys)				2022 (32 total surveys)			
Replies to survey question (RTSQ)	20	RTSQ	20	RTSQ	32	RTSQ	32	RTSQ	32	RTSQ	21	RTSQ
Category provided	At age 14	%	Today	%	At age 14	%	Today	%	At age 14	%	Today	%
Modern professional & traditional professional occupations such as: teacher, nurse, physiotherapist, social worker, musician, police officer (sergeant or above), software designer, accountant, solicitor, medical practitioner, scientist, civil / mechanical engineer	3	15.00	11	55.00	10	31.25	16	50.00	4	12.50	8	38.10
Senior, middle or junior managers or administrators such as: finance manager, chief executive, large business owner, office manager, retail manager, bank manager, restaurant manager, warehouse manager	4	20.00	4	20.00	2	6.25	2	6.25	4	12.50	5	23.81
Clerical and intermediate occupations such as: secretary, personal assistant, call centre agent, clerical worker, nursery nurse	2	10.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	3.13	0	0.00
Technical and craft occupations such as: motor mechanic, plumber, printer, electrician, gardener, train driver	2	10.00	0	0.00	2	6.25	1	3.13	3	9.38	0	0.00
Routine, semi-routine manual and service occupations such as: postal worker, machine operative, security guard, caretaker, farm worker, catering assistant, sales assistant, HGV driver, cleaner, porter, packer, labourer, waiter/waitress, bar staff	4	20.00	1	5.00	7	21.88	1	3.13	3	9.38	0	0.00
Long-term unemployed (claimed Jobseeker's Allowance or earlier unemployment benefit for more than a year)	2	10.00	1	5.00	4	12.50	0	0.00	2	6.25	0	0.00
Small business owners who employed less than 25 people such as: corner shop owners, small plumbing companies, retail shop owner, single restaurant or cafe owner, taxi owner, garage owner	0	0.00	0	0.00	4	12.50	3	9.38	3	9.38	3	14.29
Other such as: retired, this question does not apply to me, I don't know	0	0.00	0	0.00	2	6.25	7	21.88	0	0.00	4	19.05
I prefer not to say	3	15.00	3	15.00	1	3.13	2	6.25	1	3.13	1	4.76
Av no answers provided | % total	20	**100**	20	**100**	32	**100**	32	**100**	21	**66**	21	**100**

IRISH GOVERNMENT QUESTION ADDITIONS – AUDIENCES

To start to set down some specifics on people's relationship with the island of Ireland is we asked: "Do you have a connection with the island of Ireland? Is so, would you like to tell us about it?". Some simply write 'Yes' or - predominantly- give 'muddy answers', such as 'family' or ancestry. We have coded each of the answers to fall in to one of the following categories:

- No connection
- First Generation (1 or more parents)
- Second generation (1 or more grandparents)
- Third generation or beyond (great grandparents and 'ancestors'/'family')
- Partner/wife/husband, etc
- 'I used to live…'
- 'I was born in…'
- 'Live there…'
- 'Yes'.

We have coded as 'First generation' when someone term-checks a parent, 'Second generation' when term-checking a grandparent and Third generation or more' when someone says they have "family" or "ancestry". these when people have mentioned those words but offered no further qualifier. The other terms are fairly easy to identify, but can be muddy. 'Irish citizen' as an answer could mean that someone is a resident or that they have claim to citizenship via a parent, among other meanings.

Where someone states they 'are' an Irish citizen with no qualifier, we have added 'First generation', as we think they would otherwise have said they were from Ireland or Northern Ireland. If they have provided detail, we have used that to code the answer. What it shows us is 16% of our survey completers identify as first generation Irish, whilst double that are 3rd generation or above, which we would expect. What is interesting is our 'from' % which is almost as high as our first-generation visitors and only slightly shy of our second-generation visitors. You can see these figures presented below. We have not presented the artist figures for this question here, as this is not requested by Irish Government or other funders.

Relationship with Ireland		2021				2022				2023			
Coded	Meaning	Answers	% total answers	% of answers with +	% of all surveys	Answers	% total answers	% of answers with +	% of all surveys	Answers	% total answers	% of answers with +	% of all surveys
No connection	No connection	86	27.48			28	12.50			37	16.02		
1st	First Generation (1 or more parents)	36	11.50	**15.86**	**11.50**	33	14.73	**17.01**	**14.73**	43	18.61	**116.22**	**18.61**
2nd	Second generation (1 or more grandparents)	42	13.42	**18.50**	**13.42**	35	15.63	**18.04**	**15.63**	38	16.45	**102.70**	**16.45**
3rd or more	Third generation or beyond (great grandparents and 'ancestors'/'family')	71	22.68	**31.28**	**22.68**	37	16.52	**19.07**	**16.52**	19	8.23	**51.35**	**8.23**
Connected by partnership	Partner/wife/ husband, etc	24	7.67	**10.57**	**7.67**	45	20.09	**23.20**	**20.09**	14	6.06	**37.84**	**6.06**
Ex-resident	'I used to live…'	11	3.51	**4.85**	**3.51**		0.00	**0.00**	**0.00**	4	1.73	**10.81**	**1.73**
From	'I was born in…'	33	10.54	**14.54**	**10.54**	38	16.96	**19.59**	**16.96**	21	9.09	**56.76**	**9.09**
Resident	'Live there…'	6	1.92	**2.64**	**1.92**	5	2.23	**2.58**	**2.23**	3	1.30	**8.11**	**1.30**
Y	'Yes'.	4	1.28	**1.76**	**1.28**	1	0.45	**0.52**	**0.45**	52	22.51	**140.54**	**22.51**
Total answers given of completed surveys		313	100	**100**	**72.52**	224	100	**100**	**86.61**	231	100	**524.3**	**83.98**
Minus 'No' answers		227				194				37			

Below: ***Liverpool Irish Festival*** were proud to march as part of a shared Irish services group for ***LCR Pride*** 2023.

FOCUS FOR THE FUTURE

At the time of writing, we looking forward to delivering some significant pieces of work, including a new book and asset development for the Liverpool Irish Famine Trail. In 2024 we will need to write a new communications plan and rethink multi-year funding, in lieu of being able to join the ***Arts Council England***'s national portfolio in 2022. In 2025 a new business plan will be due and so thinking towards this will need to begin in 2024. This is more likely to be able to start in earnest, given the additional team member we onboarded in 223, a Festival Coordinator. This role is held by Pascal O'Loughlin and we hope, in time, to expand the role thus freeing up a little of our Artistic Director and CEO's time for deep strategy development.

Having city council/***Culture Liverpool f***unding already in place is a stabilising factor and heading in to 2024 there are already accounting and Board development plans underway.

Consequently, the overview vision, as we begin 2024, remains much as it has for a few years, being that we are still working to our previous ***Business Plan*** and having to grant fund the Festival annually. Based on feedback and findings - in line with much of the ***Business Plan*** - we will execute the following five points:

1. PRESS AND PR

For a tiny workforce we hit big in terms of our reach and reputation, but we need to move earlier and strategise long-lead times and campaign delivery. In 2024, our theme is 'departures'. Knowing this now means we can look at how we strategise, locate calendar events to link into and identify the story we want to tell as well as locating specific audiences for parts of our programme, making targeted invites and building relations. In 2024, a key document we'll work on is a long-term communications campaign plan. This will go on to inform the 2025 Business Plan and will be useful to use with funders, advertisers and potential sponsors.

2. ADVOCACY

As a representational voice for Irishness in Britain and for tolerance, humanity and care we must sustain our labours on creating equitable spaces. That no Irish organisation made it in to the ***Arts Council England***'s national portfolio is a case in point for this.

Our work on the *Liverpool Irish Famine Trail*, with dual-heritage communities, ***Baobab*** and the Race Equality action group are unique to us and a part of growing our EDI capability and reputation. We must embed this position -and associated learning – in to our programme, storytelling and interactions.

We need to improve our work with, by and for global majority people and be better at encouraging monitoring from these groups, particularly with our artists so we can advocate for better funding, representation and connectedness.

3. CONTENT IS KING

We're increasingly well regarded for our programme, but need to build capacity, comprehension and direction in this area, to make customised content and deeper community impact. Tied to the new communications campaign plan, our PR and Comms consult should be able to work with material earlier int eh year so we can benefit from longer-lead times, deeper editorial commitments and richer cross-selling.

Liverpool Irish Famine Trail - and work on its development - must dovetail with the Festival's work. How we serve as custodians will be important, but integrating Trail content in to our year-round programme will be critical to ensure the Festival does not become a function of the Trail. Again, ensuring this is embedded in the communications campaign plan is critical.

4. MORE PUBLIC REALM

All our public realm work contributes to cohesive programme and greatly increases visitor numbers. The development of the *Liverpool Irish Famine Trail* will add new public realm possibilities and cross-sells in coming years, but a focus on developing art for public spaces should be a priority of the Festival for future iterations. A key desire is to locate work in the north of the city.

5. CAPACITY, CAPACITY, CAPACITY

Despite expanding the team by .2 FTE in 2023, capacity remains a core issue. Even with this support, the Festival is overstretched, overperforming and overburdened. The scale and needs of the Festival do not decrease. The skill the team requires is growing and pressure from outside to be part of other things increasing rapidly (e.g., *ESAC*, *Festival Forum*, *#CCEN*, ***Culture Network CIC***, etc). To reflect the wants of the audience and keep pace with a changing world it is vital to engage new team members. As outlined in the existing *Business Plan*, ideally, we would engage additional development and content coordinators, simultaneously expanding the Board to improve diversity, capability and delivery functions.

Below: Audiences play with the ***Armagh Rhymers*** at the *#LIF2023 Family Day.*

THANKS

In hardened political and social times, we have managed to sustain ourselves, with peers, friends and partners at our sides; championed in unexpected places and kept afloat on choppy seas.

We extend our thanks to all our partners and their staff; our venues, hosts and their teams; our volunteers and Board members; artists and collaborators. We thank our networks and supporters, sponsors and friends. In addition, those who came before today's team and the many that we have met during and since this year's Festival.

Further praise and thanks go to this year's funders, who continue to see us through post-COVID-recovery, political sea changes, a cost-of-living crisis and an ever-changing society. Thank you.

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