



NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND MEDIA RELEASE

7 February 2020

Scotland's forthcoming Culture Strategy: overcoming barriers and unlocking benefits

Ahead of the Scottish Government's first Culture Strategy for 20 years, the National Trust for Scotland has published new public opinion research on current cultural activity in Scotland, and the barriers to its development.

The research – *Scotland's Culture Strategy: overcoming barriers and unlocking benefits* – sets out how different cultural activities are currently enjoyed in Scotland, and by who, but also the barriers people are experiencing to greater involvement.

The research finds that:

- Scots take a very broad view of what constitutes "culture", with favourite forms of culture including music, food and cuisine, history, and sports, with substantial interest also in natural heritage, gardening, theatre and drama. This confirms previous National Trust for Scotland research from 2018 which found the public takes a broad view of what constitutes "culture."
- Men are much more likely than women to take an interest in sports and games, and history while women had greater interest in arts, making and crafting, food and cuisine, theatre and drama and growing/gardening.
- A future culture strategy will therefore need to recognise this breadth of cultural activity.
- Only 25% of respondents considered there were no barriers to enjoying culture. Compared to the population as a whole, barriers to participation were more commonly experienced by young people (29% higher incidence than average), those on lower incomes (17% higher), ethnic minorities (23.5% higher), those identifying as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender (38.6% higher), and people with disabilities (40% higher).
- The greatest barrier to participation is cost (43%), followed by lack of time, confidence, transport, and lack of information (the latter was particularly an issue for females at 50%).
- Local cultural provision was rated as 'good' by 48% of the population (48% good, 15% average, 30% poor), but was lower for women (43%), and for members of the ethnic minorities (40%), and those in the lowest income bracket (41%).
- Respondents with lower incomes (<£19,999) were less likely to rate the provision of cultural activity in their area as good (41%), compared to middle (49%) and high-income groups (60%).

- Reported benefits of cultural participation include socialising and making friends, making localities better places to live and visit, increased health and wellbeing, education and learning, and building stronger local communities.

The National Trust for Scotland champions Scotland's heritage, including our tangible and intangible cultures. The forthcoming Culture Strategy is a way for Scotland as a whole – whether in the public, private or third sectors – to increase opportunities to enjoy Scotland's culture.

The Trust's Head of Public Policy, Diarmid Hearn, said:

"In its new strategy, the Scottish Government has a real opportunity to show leadership on this, tackling the barriers we have identified and enabling participation from all in the community, across the country.

"Our research found Scots see many additional benefits from their cultural activities, including learning, making friends, or creating a better place to live. But they also experienced barriers – and these were worse for those on lower incomes, and for those from ethnic minority groups.

"We need to better understand what the opportunities are at a local level, and what the role of national and local government is in supporting culture. We also need to work together to tackling the inequalities in access to culture our research has identified.

"This means looking at national and local cultural budgets, and whether these are adequate for our ambitions. We also need to see the value of Scotland's culture recognised in other public policies, for example in planning, economic development or regenerating our towns and villages."

- ENDS -

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Editor's Notes:

A briefing paper giving more detail on the survey results is attached and available online at:
<https://go.aws/39bojcw>

The National Trust for Scotland is the charity that celebrates and protects Scotland's heritage. It relies on the support of its members and donors to carry out its important work of caring for the natural and built heritage of Scotland for everyone to enjoy.

From coastlines to castles, art to architecture, wildlife to wildernesses, the National Trust for Scotland exists to protect the national and natural treasures we all love. To plan your visit today, enter your postcode at www.nts.org.uk.

