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## Press & news

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### Massive increase in employment in arts and culture

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Employment in the arts and culture has increased by over 150,000 in the last 10 years.

At the end of 2000, 760,000 people were employed in cultural occupations in the UK, compared with 610,000 in 1993. Since 1993, unemployment within the pool of cultural labour has declined from 9.5 per cent to just 2.5 per cent.

The findings are revealed today in a major new research study commissioned by Arts Council England and conducted by the University of Warwick's Institute for Employment Research. The study, *Artists in figures*, paints a picture of a vibrant and economically active cultural sector in which individuals in cultural employment often sacrifice potential earnings and job security to follow their chosen career.

Peter Hewitt, Arts Council Chief Executive, said:

'The arts are a growing source of employment and an increasingly important part of our economy. Just in terms of hard economics, people working in the arts and culture contribute more to society than they take out – and that's before taking into account their positive and transforming impact on the quality of life in this country.

The growth in employment opportunities has not seen any reduction in the personal commitment or the powerful sense of vocation of individuals working in the arts.

Alongside this massive growth in employment we know there is a huge public demand for the arts and culture – an appreciation of the unique qualities of an original work of art, the power of live performance and a recognition of the value of the arts in our communities.'

#### Comparative earnings

People in cultural occupations are three times more likely to be self-employed than those in non-cultural occupations – 39 per cent compared with 12 per cent. Among the self-employed, people in cultural occupations are twice as likely to have a second job than people in non-cultural occupations – 10 per cent compared with 5 per cent.

While those in cultural employment receive above overall average earnings, their earnings are generally substantially less than similarly qualified professionals working in other fields.

The study shows the earnings of those working in arts and culture have declined relative to overall average earnings. In 1991 average earnings in cultural occupations were 22 per cent higher than the national average. This declined to 14 per cent by 2000. The decline is most marked in London. For example, in Inner London in 1991 earnings in cultural occupations were 21 per cent higher than the average, falling to just 6 per cent in 2000.

People directly employed in cultural occupations are half as likely to claim state benefits than those in other areas of employment – 4 per cent against 8 per cent. The proportion of people working beyond statutory retirement age in cultural occupations is twice that of those in non-cultural occupations.

**Notes for editors:**

The findings in the report are based on a statistical analysis of two major government surveys: the Labour Force Survey and the New Earnings Survey. Information on the career development of people working in cultural occupations was drawn from two longitudinal studies: the National Child Development Study and the British Cohort Study.

The definition of a cultural occupation is based on the Office for National Statistics' Standard Occupational Classification (SOC). The SOC encompasses a range of occupations, for example, from visual artists, actors, authors, musicians and goldsmiths to entertainment managers, architects and information officers. A full definition can be found on page 4 of the report.

Artists in figures is part of an Arts Council England programme of research into artists' employment. A *balancing act*, which presents findings from group interviews with practising artists, provides a qualitative perspective on what it involved in working in the arts.

The report, *Artists in figures: a statistical portrait of cultural occupations*, can be downloaded from Arts Council England's website, see [www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk). A hard copy of the report can be obtained from Marston Book Services on 01235 465500 or [direct.orders@marston.co.uk](mailto:direct.orders@marston.co.uk) price £10.

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