

# Chapter 6: Archives

Simon Matty, Museums, Libraries and Archives Council

## 6.1 Introduction

This chapter examines attendance at archives. Unless otherwise stated, attendance is defined as at least one physical visit to an archive centre or record office during the past twelve months.<sup>15</sup>

### Chapter structure

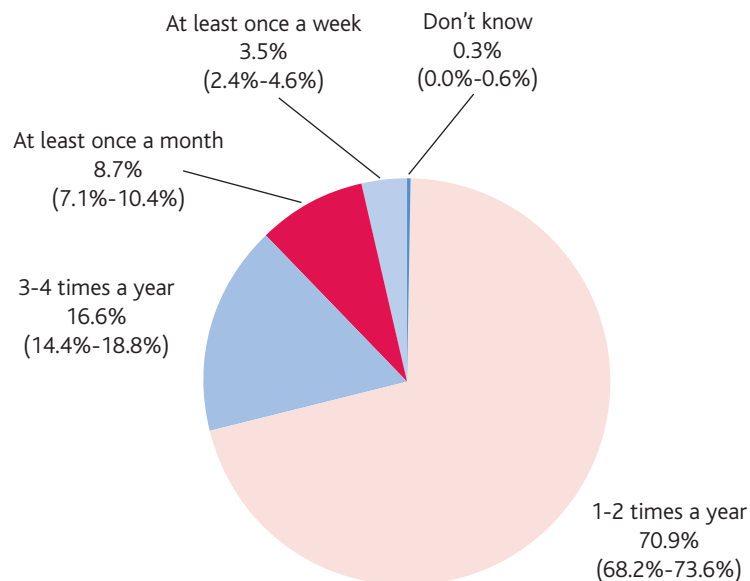
- Levels of engagement and frequency (section 6.2) examines the prevalence and frequency of attendance, and reports on variations within population sub-groups.
- Levers and Barriers (section 6.3) presents the main reason for attendance (levers) and non-attendance (barriers), as well as the factors that would encourage more frequent attendance.
- Other engagement (section 6.4) covers volunteering and online access.

## 6.2 Levels of engagement and frequency

The data show that 6 per cent of all adults had attended an archive; equivalent to approximately 2.4 million adults.

The highest proportion of visitors had attended once or twice during the past twelve months (71%) (Figure 6.2.1).

**Figure 6.2.1: Frequency of attendance**



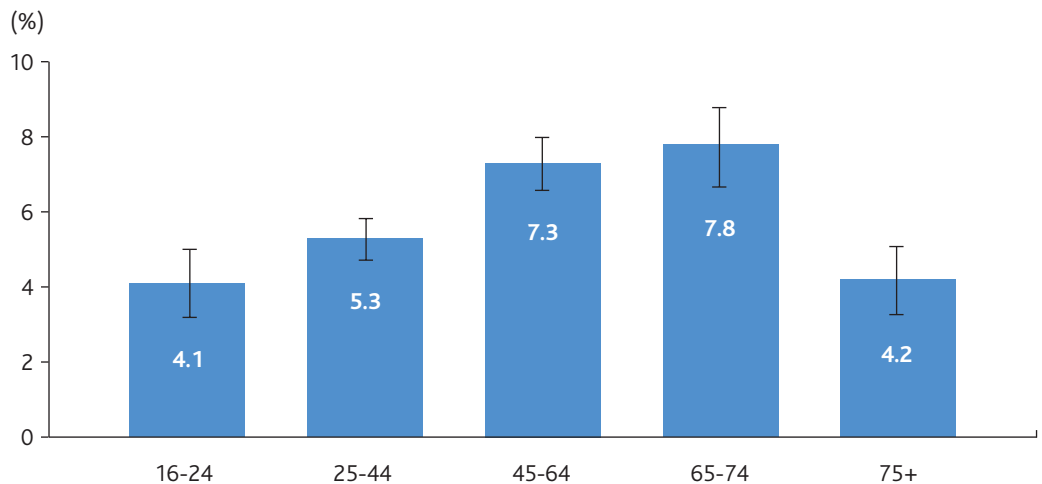
<sup>15</sup> See Glossary for definition.

## Demographic variations

AGE (Figure 6.2.2):

- Adults in the oldest age group had significantly lower rates of attendance than all other age groups, except those aged 16-24.
- Adults aged 16-24 and 25-44 had significantly lower rates of attendance than those aged 45-64 and 65-74.
- Adults aged 16-24 had significantly lower rates of attendance than those aged 25-44.

**Figure 6.2.2: Attendance by age group**



GENDER (Table 6.2.3):

- Males had significantly higher rates of attendance than females.

**Table 6.2.3: Attendance by gender**

	Percentage	Range (%)
Male	6.6	6.1-7.2
Female	5.3	4.8-5.7

DISABILITY/ILLNESS (Table 6.2.4):

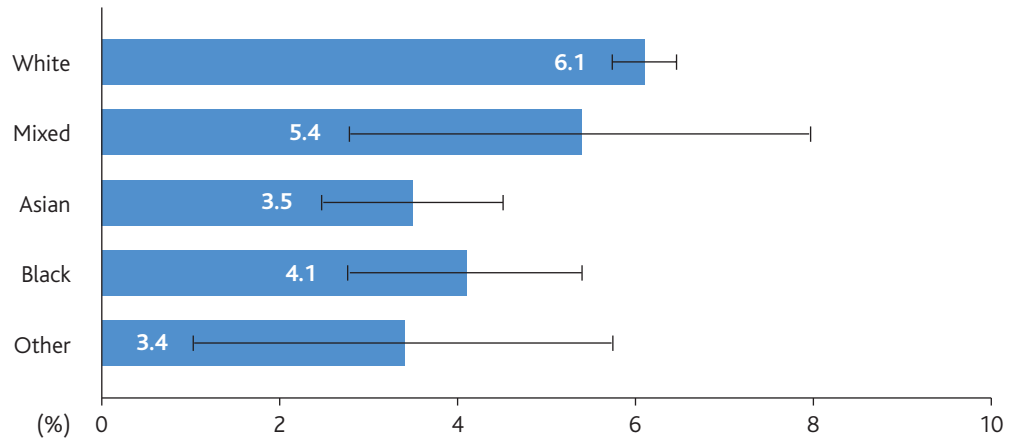
- Adults with a non-limiting disability/illness had significantly higher rates of attendance than both those with a limiting and no disability/illness.

**Table 6.2.4: Attendance by disability/illness**

	Percentage	Range (%)
Limiting disability/illness	5.3	4.6-5.9
Non-limiting disability/illness	7.2	5.9-8.6
No disability/illness	6.0	5.6-6.4

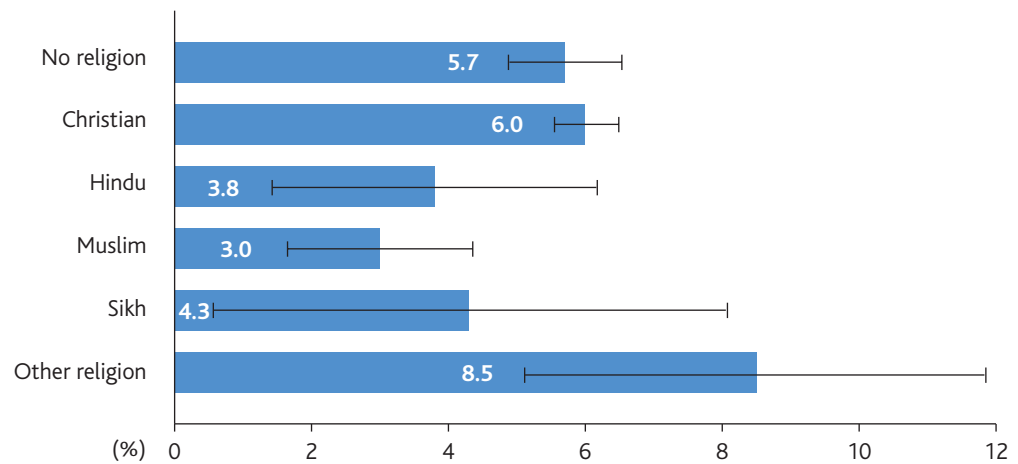
ETHNICITY (Figure 6.2.5):

- Adults from White ethnic backgrounds had significantly higher rates of attendance than all of the remaining ethnic groups, except for those from Mixed ethnic backgrounds.

**Figure 6.2.5: Attendance by ethnicity**

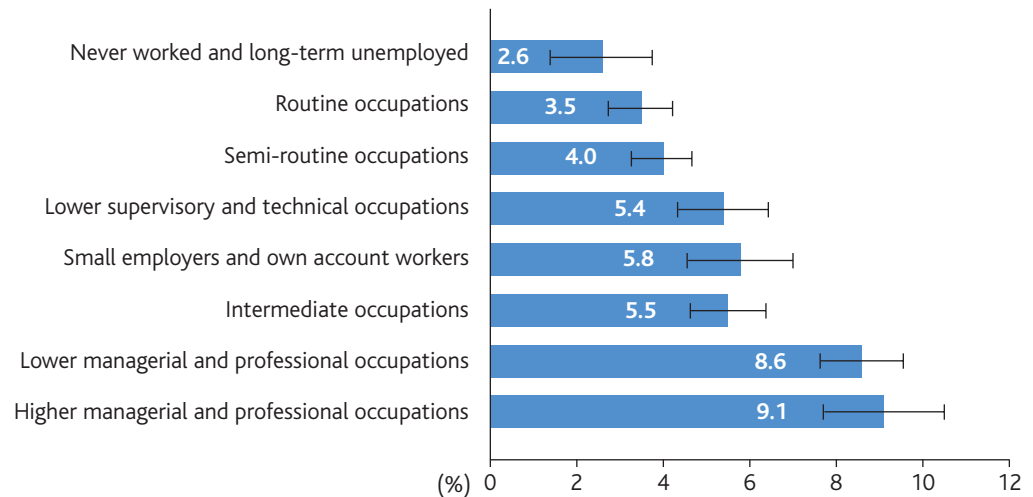
RELIGION (Figure 6.2.6):

- Adults who reported their religion as Other had significantly higher rates of attendance than all of the remaining groups.
- Adults who reported their religion as Muslim had significantly lower rates of attendance than both those who reported their religion as Christian or reported to have no religion.

**Figure 6.2.6: Attendance by religion**

SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUP (Figure 6.2.7):

- Adults from higher and lower managerial and professional occupations had significantly higher rates of attendance than all other groups.
- Adults who have never worked or are long-term unemployed had significantly lower rates of attendance than all other groups, except for those from routine occupations.
- Adults from semi-routine and routine occupations had significantly lower rates of attendance than those from intermediate and lower supervisory and technical occupations and those from small employers.

**Figure 6.2.7: Attendance by socio-economic group**

PERSONAL INCOME (Figure 6.2.8):

- Adults earning under £10,000 and those who earn nothing had significantly lower rates of attendance than all other groups.
- Adults earning between £20,000 and £29,999 had significantly higher rates of attendance than those in all lower income groups.

**Figure 6.2.8: Attendance by personal income**

TENURE (Table 6.2.9):

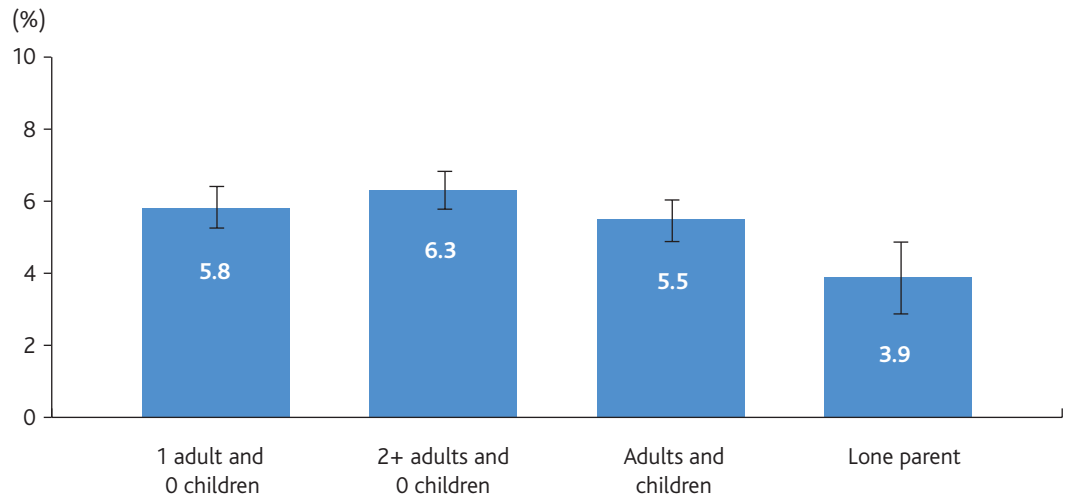
- Adults who are owner occupiers had significantly higher rates of attendance than both those who rent from the social and private sectors.
- Adults who rent from the private sector had significantly higher rates of attendance than those who rent from the social sector.

**Table 6.2.9: Attendance by tenure**

	Percentage	Range (%)
Owners	6.5	6.0-6.9
Social rented sector	4.0	3.3-4.6
Private rented sector	5.4	4.4-6.3

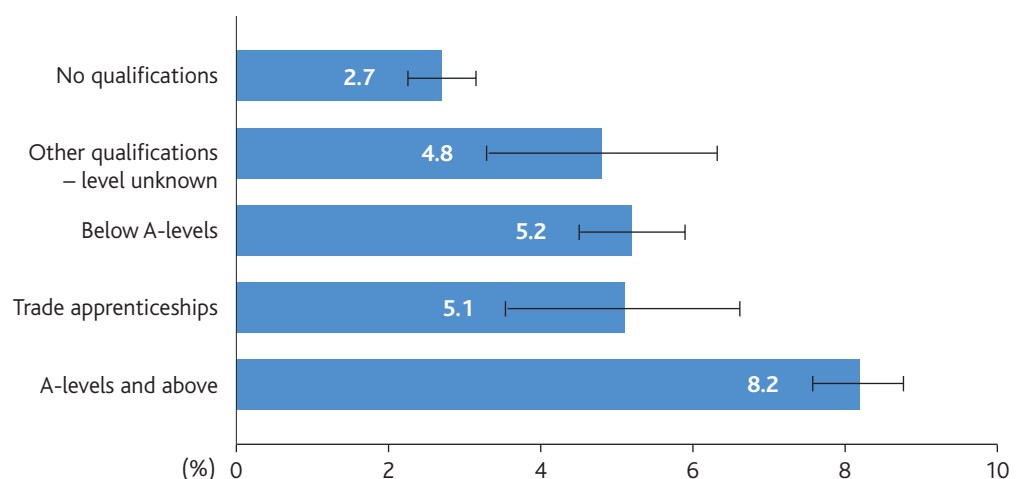
## HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE (Figure 6.2.10):

- Adults living in lone parent households had significantly lower rates of attendance than all other groups.
- Adults living in households with 2+ adults and 0 children had significantly higher rates of attendance than those living in households with children (lone parent; adults and children).

**Figure 6.2.10: Attendance by household structure**

## QUALIFICATIONS (Figure 6.2.11):

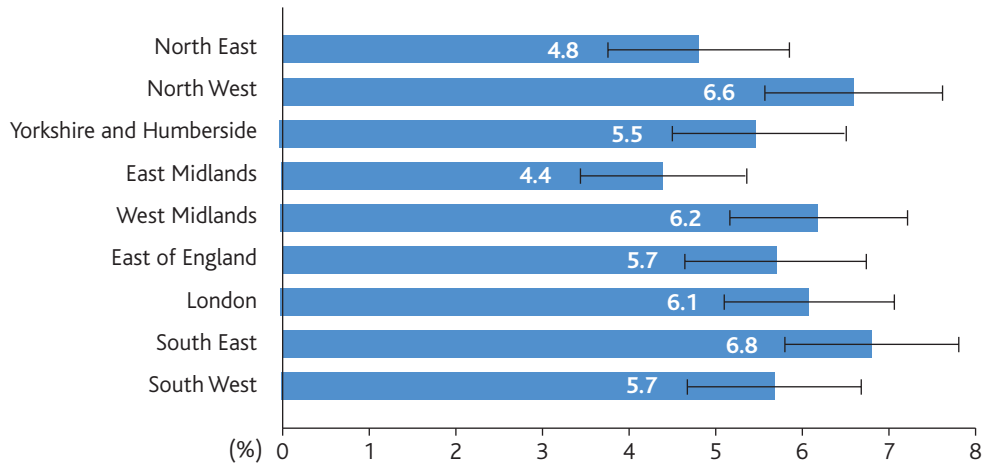
- Adults with no formal qualifications had significantly lower rates of attendance than those with some form of qualification.
- Adults with A-levels or above had significantly higher rates of attendance than all other groups.

**Figure 6.2.11: Attendance by qualifications**

## GOVERNMENT OFFICE REGION (Figure 6.2.12):

- Adults living in the East Midlands had significantly lower rates of attendance than those living in London, the South East, the West Midlands and the North West.
- Adults living in the North East had significantly lower rates of attendance than those living in the South East and the North West.

**Figure 6.2.12: Attendance by Government Office region**



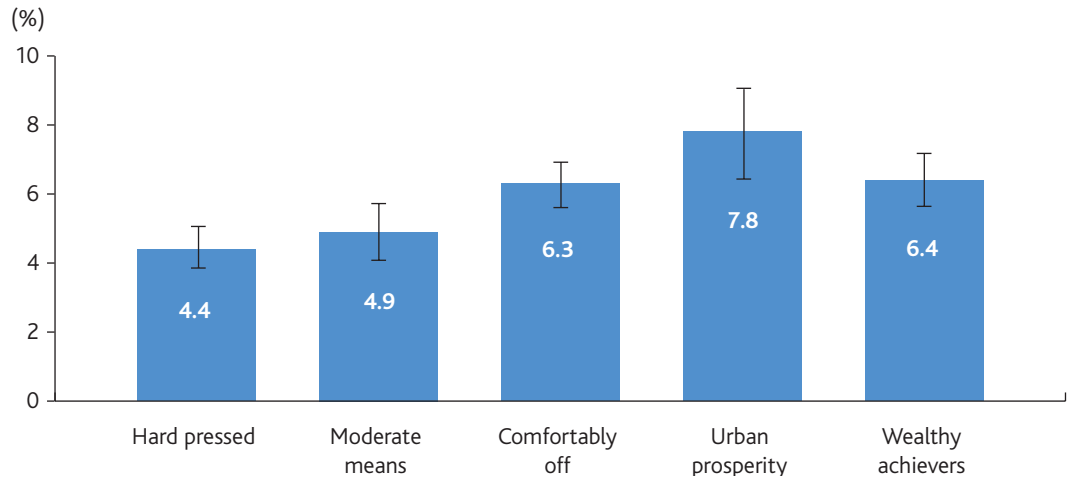
**AREA TYPE:**

- There was no significant difference in the rates of attendance between adults living in urban and rural areas (6% and 6% respectively).

**ACORN CATEGORY (Figure 6.2.13):**

- Adults living in 'moderate means' and 'hard pressed' neighbourhoods had significantly lower rates of attendance than those living in all other neighbourhood types.
- Adults living in 'urban prosperity' neighbourhoods had significantly higher rates of attendance than those living in 'comfortably off'.

**Figure 6.2.13: Attendance by ACORN category**



**6.3 Levers and Barriers**

This section looks at the main reasons given for non-attendance and attendance at archives during the past twelve months, and presents the factors that would encourage more frequent attendance in the future.

**Reasons for non-attendance**

Of those who had not attended an archive during the past twelve months, 'no need to go' was the main reason for non-attendance followed by 'not really interested' (50% and 19% respectively) (Table 6.3.1).

**Table 6.3.1: Main reason for non-attendance**

	Percentage	Range (%)
No need to go	49.8	49.1-50.6
Not really interested	19.2	18.6-19.8
Never occurred to me	14.4	13.9-15.0

In addition to the reasons presented above, 7 per cent of non-attendees stated that the main barrier to attending an archive was 'difficulty in finding the time', whilst 2 per cent suggested that it was 'poor health'.

### Reasons for attendance

Of those who attended an archive at least once during the past twelve months, 'to find out about my family history' was the main reason for attendance followed by 'to find out about the history of my local area' (37% and 15% respectively) (Table 6.3.2).

**Table 6.3.2: Main reason for attendance**

	Percentage	Range (%)
To find out about my family history	37.5	34.5-40.5
To find out about the history of my local area	15.1	12.9-17.3
To find out about history for personal interest/hobby	10.4	8.5-12.3

Other reasons for attendance included 'to find out about my house' (5%) and 'to help someone with their research' (1%).

### Factors that would encourage more frequent attendance

Having 'more free time' was the main factor that would encourage more frequent attendance by those who already attend once or twice a year and said that they would like to go more often, followed by 'better information on how to find material' (30% and 16% respectively) (Table 6.3.3).

**Table 6.3.3: Main factor that would encourage those who already attend 1-2 times a year to go more often**

	Percentage	Range (%)
If I had more free time	30.0	24.1-35.9
Better information on how to find material	15.7	11.0-20.4
Longer opening hours	9.2	5.5-12.9

Other factors that would encourage more frequent attendance included 'special lectures/talks/events' and 'better public transport links/access to transport' (8%).

## 6.4 Other engagement

This section examines volunteering within the archives sector and contact with archives through the internet.

During the past twelve months 3 per cent of all adults volunteered in the cultural sector, of which 6 per cent volunteered in the archives sector; equivalent to less than 1 per cent of all adults.

A tenth (10%) of all adults visited an archive website during the past twelve months.

In total, 13 per cent of all adults had either visited an archive in person or accessed an archive website. Of which, just over one-quarter (26%) visited in person only, just under one-fifth (19%) visited in person and accessed online services, and over half (55%) used web-based sites only (Figure 6.4.1).

**Figure 6.4.1: Physical and internet visits**

