Intentions & effects: the rhetoric of current cultural policy in England.

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the rhetorics of current cultural policy in England

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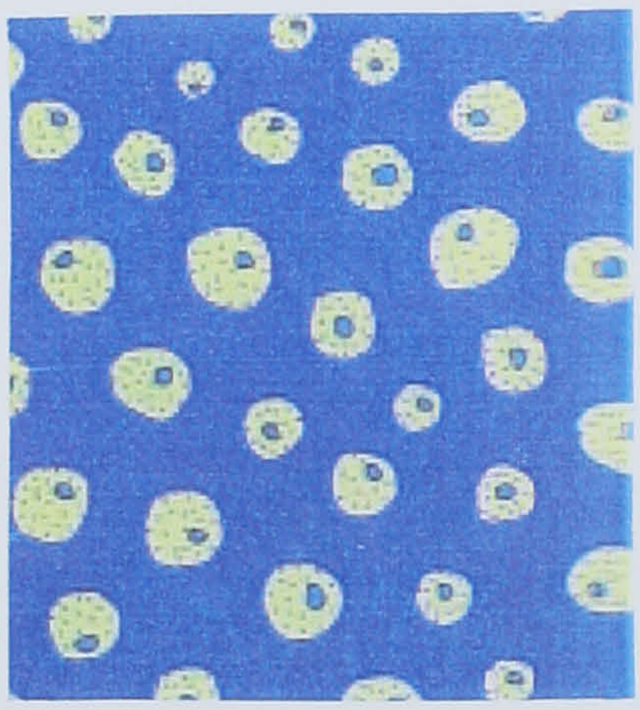

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'When asked: "If DCMS were a colour/animal/shape, what would it be?" a striking number of replies made the colour pale yellow and either the animal or the shape an amoeba.' (DCMS, 2000a: 5.2)

The image of yellow amoebas is taken from a fabric design, http://images.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://www.quiltscapes.com/Images/bbrites/bb00040.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.quiltscapes.com/Fabric/brites/britedots03.htm&h=151&w=137&sz=15&tbnid=eXXuCFedouQJ:&tbnh=89&tbnw=80&start=12&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dyellow%2Bamoeba%26hl%3Den%26lr%3D%26ie%3DUTF-8%26sa%3DG (accessed 13.08.04)

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Acronyms

ACE	Arts Council of England (1994-2002); Arts Council England (2002–present)
ACGB	Arts Council of Great Britain
AHRB	Arts and Humanities Research Board
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
HoC	House of Commons
ippr	Institute for Public Policy Research
QUEST	Quality, Efficiency and Standards Team
MLA	Museums Archives and Libraries Council (which prior to February 2004 was Resource: the Council for Museums Libraries and Archives)
NDPB	non-departmental public body
OST	Office of Science and Technology
PSI	Policy Studies Institute
RMTF	Regional Museums Task Force
TGI	Target Group Index

Abstract

As its title suggests, this thesis – the critical commentary together with a body of published works – questions the effectiveness of cultural policy with respect to museums and galleries in England.

Its focus is on cultural policy under New Labour, and its implementation through the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in particular. The department was established within months of the 1997 election and was intended to ensure the effective delivery of government objectives from the outset. This entailed the department's 'comprehensive reform' of the 'cultural framework', its pursuit of an instrumentalist agenda and its desire to determine and direct the effectiveness of its sponsored bodies. This effort was predicated on the assumption that there is an implicit and highly determined relationship between policy, funding, implementation and outcomes.

Nevertheless, however strategic DCMS's actions might have been, there is little hard evidence of its effectiveness. The process of converting intention into effect appears to have proved more problematic than the rhetoric suggests.

In setting out and supporting that proposition, this thesis describes those policies which have determined support for the cultural sector since 1997, particularly in respect of museums and galleries. It considers their background and implementation, summarises the financial value of the support provided and interrogates the evidence as to their outcomes. It argues that, as yet, many of the objectives shared by DCMS and its so-called 'family' of sponsored bodies have not yet been delivered, and that many of the claims made for the subsidised cultural sector more generally remain unsubstantiated. It also points to recent signs that suggest that the department is now wavering on its original ambitions.

Declaration and Acknowledgements

This thesis is all my own work. I acknowledge the contributions of those who provided me with information and advice both with respect to the Part 1 and each of the publications submitted in Part 2.

In writing the Commentary that comprises Part 1, I have relied on the goodwill and cooperation of a number of individuals. Those, in particular, who have answered enquiries and sent me material (sometimes without my even having to ask) include: Tracey Dalby and Richard Hartman, DCMS; Tim Schadla-Hall, UCL; Oliver Bennett, University of Warwick; Michael Jubb, AHRB; Adrian Ellis, AeA; and Andrew Kruszewski, OST.

I especially want to thank Dr Peter Goodwin for taking on the sensitive task of being Director of Studies to a friend and colleague. I'm enormously appreciative of his support and grateful for the considerable patience and tact that he has shown in undertaking this challenge. I'm also grateful to Dr Bob Jarvis and Dr Stuart Davies for their advice and encouragement. As ever, I'm indebted to Russell Southwood.

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Part 1

PART 1: INTRODUCTION AND COMMENTARY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Since the 1997 general election, when New Labour came to power, the ways in which cultural policy has been articulated, disseminated and assessed have been transformed. Prior to this, cultural policy was, to all intents and purposes, implied by the actions of such organisations as the former Museums & Galleries Commission and the Arts Council of Great Britain. Despite being directly funded by government, these organisations tangibly operated at 'arms' length' from it. Indeed, it has been suggested that they functioned in what was, effectively, a 'policy vacuum'[1]. At best, the government departments responsible for funding the cultural sector (such as the Office of Arts and Libraries and, subsequently, the Department of National Heritage) reviewed current provision, sought to improve the management of its advisory and funding bodies and promoted examples of best practice. Performance measurement was generally considered inappropriate for cultural provision and was effectively steered clear of.

With the establishment of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in July 1997, however, responsibility for cultural policy was strategically 'reclaimed' by central government. From the second half of 1998, it became clear that substantial increases in funding (some of which was earmarked for specific initiatives) would be linked to meeting the department's expectations, and that these would directly influence the sector's development (DCMS, 1998a; 1998b). Predicated on the assumption that cultural provision is instrumental and can deliver on government objectives, DCMS's 'sponsored' (or subsidised) bodies have been required to commit to agreed targets. These are specified through a series of linked agreements which cascade down from the Treasury via DCMS. Given the department's interest in monitoring 'outputs' and 'outcomes' against its 'investment', the performance of subsidised organisations has become subject to greater scrutiny than ever.

My hypothesis is that while no previous manifestation of UK cultural policy has been based on so highly determined a relationship between cultural policy, funding, implementation and outcomes, the process of converting intention into effect has

proved more problematic than the rhetoric suggests. Despite this emphasis on accountability, I suggest that, when interrogated, DCMS's paradigm – such as it is – appears flawed; that some of the department's objectives may be mutually exclusive; and that many of the claims made on behalf of the subsidised cultural sector remain unsubstantiated. In short, the assumptions, methodologies and 'procedures' set in train to achieve New Labour's cultural policies have proved inadequate to the task.

While it could be argued that similar criticisms might apply to other areas of government policy, any consideration of that falls outside the remit of this thesis and has not been attempted.

In setting out my hypothesis, this thesis considers the development, dissemination, delivery and evaluation of the government's cultural policy. It refers primarily to museums and galleries in England and, to a lesser extent, to the visual arts. It considers:

- How cultural policy has been shaped since 1997;
- What lacunae exist between cultural policy and its implementation; and
- Whether the intentions of cultural policy have been effective, what kind of difference they have made, and what evidence exists to support such judgements.

This thesis constitutes an independent and original contribution to knowledge in so far as it:

- Presents an overview of current cultural policy as it affects the subsidised cultural sector;
- Identifies the development of cultural policy as informed by the broader context of central government's objectives;
- Challenges the assumption of the instrumentality of cultural provision;
- Interrogates the value of the existing data, collected by way of monitoring spending and evidencing impact; and
- Questions whether those data are sufficient to demonstrate the effective delivery of policy, and whether such data are used effectively in the development of 'evidence-based policy'.

I have made no attempt to consider what influence my work may have exerted over policy development.

1.1.1. The structure of this thesis

This thesis is submitted in two parts: Part 1 comprises the Introduction and Commentary, which have been specifically written for this submission; Part 2 comprises those publications which are being tendered in part-fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of PhD.

Part 1 has several functions, most of which would normally be expected by examiners of PhD theses. The Introduction considers the methodological issues that have informed my writing – the approach taken, the difficulties of writing without the benefit of hindsight and the definitions and terminology used. The Commentary comprises four sections:

1. The first section sets out my hypothesis.
2. The second section presents the background to my thesis through overviews of current cultural policy and current cultural policy research.
3. The third section describes the origins and interests of those publications, and considers how they relate to other literature on the subject, given that one of the difficulties of submitting a PhD by publication is the fragmented nature of the publications themselves.
4. The fourth and final section makes some observations about ministers' own criticisms of DCMS's *modus operandi* to date, charts the growing recognition of such critical issues in my own writings and proposes possibilities for future research based on the disjuncture between the intentions and effects of current cultural policy.

Part 2 contains the various works being submitted. All were commissioned – some by organisations which are part of the 'cultural framework', others for academic publication. Each complies with the requirements of submission for a PhD by publication in that they were sole-authored; published within the last five years; and appeared in books with an ISBN (Selwood, 1999a; 2000; 2001a; 2002a), or in refereed journal articles (Selwood, 1999b; 2002b; 2004a), or other public forms of

output. (Selwood, 2001b). They represent an original contribution to knowledge and constitute a coherent body of work. Other published, unpublished and co-authored writings by me are referred to in this submission, but are not included as part of it[2].

1.1.2 Methodological issues

The publications included in Part 2 were all written separately and according to their own terms of reference – it not being my original intention to submit them as part of a PhD. Nevertheless, they share certain qualities which contribute to their coherence: they are characterised by the same kind of approach, draw on similar sources and confront the same difficulties in writing about current policy.

1.1.2.1 Approach

My approach to interrogating the 'rhetorics' of cultural policy has been highly pragmatic. While accepting the intentions of government policy, I have sought to question their effectiveness. A particular focus has been the paradigm that underlies DCMS's approach in general. This assumes that there is a linear relationship between intentions, implementation and outcomes, and that:

> *... the accountability of those spending public money necessarily depends on the demonstration of direct and tangible cause–effect at the granular level of funding.*
>
> (Steve Morgan cited in Selwood, 2004a: 70)

In general, my starting points have been those pronouncements made by DCMS and its non-departmental public bodies – in particular, the Museums Archives and Libraries Council (MLA – formerly Resource) and Arts Council England (ACE) – as to their intentions. My interrogation of their effectiveness is characterised by wanting to know whether they have, in fact, delivered on those intentions, and what difference they have made[3].

1.1.2.2 Sources

The evidence that I have drawn on in attempting to explore those issues includes that collected by, or on behalf of, DCMS and its agencies, as well as that which exists independently within the public domain. This thesis draws on two types of source

material: one of which could be described as 'grey literature' and the other 'informed opinion'.

By 'grey literature' I'm referring to that 'produced on all levels of government, academics, business and industry in print and electronic formats, but which is not controlled by commercial publishers'[4]. I take this to embrace policy documents produced by DCMS, its non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) and other government departments that articulate their intentions and the processes set in train to realise them, as well as published and unpublished research findings – including academic and other studies commissioned, or directly undertaken by the DCMS 'family' (DCMS, 2003a)[5]. Prompted by issues of accountability, these are often investigatory, raise issues which their commissioning bodies need to come to terms with, but which may not comply with the requirements of 'spin'.

Informed opinion embraces independent academic studies (scholarly publications), attitudes expressed in the broadsheets and the specialist press and in accounts by people active in the field – these may include civil servants, who are cited in an attempt to clarify the relationship between different initiatives, or to explain processes of the development of government policy (which can be impenetrable to an outsider). (See, for example, Selwood, 1999b; 2001a; 2004a.) Such sources are not used to describe policy *per se*, and the potential for bias in their accounts is acknowledged.

1.1.2.3 Writing without the benefit of hindsight

Writing about current policy means that issues and broad principles can only be identified on the basis of what is deemed important now, and what is known (or acknowledged) to have informed DCMS and its agencies' preoccupations. Despite the fact that the department recognises that it must embrace 'evidence-based' policy making (DCMS, 2003a), it is impossible to predict the eventual formulation of cultural policy, the precise form of its implementation or its outcomes. Sometimes, changes are neither transparent nor predictable. The unexpected announcement of the amalgamation of the former regional arts boards into the Arts Council of England is a case in point (ACE, 2001).

The shape that initiatives ultimately assume is determined by various factors. Original intentions may be diluted or deviated from as a result of DCMS's own vacillations and its responses to the specifications of the Treasury's financial settlements. An obvious example is how the 'new vision' for England's regional museums has come to be realised. Table 1 shows how this was originally set out in the Regional Museums Task Force report, *Renaissance in the Regions* (2001), compared to its present state[6].

Table 1: Breakdown of current allocations for the *Renaissance in the Regions* initiative compared with the original allocations

Original *Renaissance* bid, 2001	**Share of funding (%)**	**Actual *Renaissance* allocation, 2002/03–2005/06**	**Share of funding (%)**
		Regional Agencies	
Investment in education and learning	29	Regional Agencies	19.3
Access and social inclusion	34	Museum Development Fund[a]	2.9
Economic regeneration	11	***Sub total***	***22.1***
Inspiration and creativity	5	*Regional Hubs*	
Excellence and high quality (standards)	2	Phase 1 Hubs	26.6
Modernisation	4	Phase 2 Hubs	11.4
Cultural change	2	Specialisms Fund[b]	3.7
ITC investment	10	***Sub total***	***41.7***
Rationalisation	*	*National programmes*	
Cross-cutting across all outcomes (ie evaluation)	3	Museums Education Strategy	14.3
		Designation Challenge Fund[c]	14.3
		Local Tourism Initiatives	0.0
		National Development Fund[d]	4.4
		Baseline Assessment etc	3.1
		Sub total	***36.1***
Total: £267.2m	**100**	**Total: £70m**	**100**

Sources: RMTF, 2001: Table 17 and MLA (correspondence with Jo-Ann Lloyd, 07.04.04)

Notes: * = less than 1 per cent; [a]intended to enable the regional agencies to contribute to support for small- and medium-sized local and community museums and galleries; [b]to allow the hubs to develop their existing expertise and specialise in one of eight priority areas identified by MLA; [c]a scheme designed to support outstanding collections of national and international importance and to set standards; [d]covers central initiatives, such as Positive Action Traineeships.

1.1.2.4 Definitions and terminology

Given the subject matter of this thesis and the sources that it draws upon, the jargon of cultural politics has been unavoidable. While much is deliberately retained as fundamental to the content of this thesis, it is flagged up wherever possible by the use of quotation marks; however, while this is consistent in Part 1 of this thesis, it is less so in Part 2.

Despite, or perhaps because of, their political significance and indiscriminate use, the meaning of certain terms is often ambiguous. Different senses may be attributed to certain terms – indeed even individual organisations may use particular terms inconsistently. Resource, for example, acknowledged the need to use 'consistent descriptors' (Resource, undated: Appendix 1).

The meaning and nuance that I have attached to a number of terms such as: 'investment', 'sponsorship', 'social exclusion', 'modernisation', 'impact', 'outcomes', the 'cultural sector', 'data collection', 'evidence' and 'evidence-based policy' are considered in Selwood, 2004a (pp 16–18). My working definitions of 'subsidy' and the 'subsidised cultural sector' are set out in Selwood, 2001a (pp xlvii–xlviii)[7]. Since the majority of museums and galleries receive subsidies directly or indirectly from local and central government (even the so-called 'independents'[8]), I take the museums sector to be subject to the implications of government policy[9].

Terms less adequately defined in the writings that make up Part 2 of this thesis include: 'sector', 'cultural policy', 'agency', 'data', 'evidence', 'learning' and 'excellence'. These are considered below.

- 'Sector' is principally used to refer to the museums and galleries' 'domain'. In that sense it generally complies with the Museum Association's definition of museums (agreed at the 1998 Annual General Meeting):

  > *Museums enable people to explore collections for inspiration, learning and enjoyment. They are institutions that collect, safeguard and make accessible artefacts which they hold in trust for society.*

  The term is, however, also occasionally used to refer to combined domains or to the whole of DCMS's cultural remit (as in Selwood, 2001a).

- 'Cultural policy' is understood to refer to a set of principles applied to the cultural sector and sometimes to the programmes of actions adopted by government and government agencies which have to implement them. Its concerns embrace:

> *... the ways in which, through a variety of means (legal, administrative, and economic), governments seek (through a range of specially constructed entities: ministries of culture or communications, departments of heritage, arts councils) to provide, regulate and manage cultural resources and the uses to which they are put, in pursuit of a diversity of ends (economic development, social justice, quality of life, civic development).*
>
> (Bennett O, 2002: 49–50)

- 'Agency' is used in two, closely related, senses. In one sense it refers to DCMS's NDPBs, which represent the interests of particular constituencies. For example, Arts Council England describes itself as 'the national development agency for the arts in England, distributing public money from Government and the National Lottery'[10] and MLA, which describes itself as the 'national development agency working for and on behalf of museums, libraries and archives and advising government on policy and priorities for the sector'[11]. 'Agency' is also used in a more politically-nuanced sense as the mechanism through which anonymous agents (usually civil servants) create and effect policy[12].

- The terms 'data' and 'statistics' are often used interchangeably, but I tend to differentiate. 'Statistics' is used to refer to measures

> *... calculated from raw data by people who are wishing to detect patterns in those data. We calculate means, modes, standard deviations ... and so on; we aggregate in a wide variety of ways...we truncate time series. In short, we generate mathematical summaries that we think are appropriate to the questions with which we are grappling at a particular moment in time. And we have debates about which statistic will capture better the particular element of human behaviour in which we are interested.*
>
> (Schuster, 2003: 42)

This thesis generally refers to 'data', rather than 'statistics', since it could be argued (with some exceptions) that the quality of available data on the cultural sector is insufficiently robust to withstand rigorous statistical interrogation.

- According to DCMS's Research Strategy (2003a), the department regards 'evidence' as 'the end result of a complex analytical process beginning with the collection of raw data', as mapped out in Figure 1.

  While it is assumed that 'data' are politically neutral, this does not necessarily apply to 'evidence', which can be collected specifically to prove hypotheses or to support a particular case:

  > *Evidence provides the proof of our 'case' – whatever that case may be. It should, for example, prove beyond contradiction that investment in museums, libraries and archives will deliver social, educational, economic or political benefits on a scale that clearly makes investment highly attractive to government, a lottery distributor or some other funding body.*
  >
  > (Davies, 2003)[13]

Figure 1: DCMS's understanding of the relationship between raw data and evidence

Getting to the evidence:

Raw data	whether counted or measured once codified, checked and systematically set out/tabulated >
Information	which in turn when focussed on a particular set of hypotheses/policies yields >
Analysis	which when weighed, reviewed assessed and subject to professional judgement and scrutiny becomes >
Evidence	on the impact of a particular hypothesis, policy/programme/or projects

Source: DCMS (2003a:2)

PART 1.2: COMMENTARY

1.2.1 Hypothesis

When Estelle Morris became Minister for the Arts, it only took a few months on the job to identify and articulate a fundamental dilemma facing DCMS – how to make the case for arts and culture both in government and elsewhere.

> *We live in a political and economic climate where we all want a return for public investment. Money spent, time used, priorities awarded, all have to have a return. That is not a problem. It's how it should be.*
>
> *The problem, of course comes in measuring the return. Target performance indicators, value added, evidence bases are all part of the language we've developed to prove our ability to deliver, to make progress and to show a return and justify the public money that is used. I have no problem with that but much of this sector does not fit in to this way of doing things. I know that Arts and Culture make a contribution to health, to education, to crime reduction, to strong communities, to the economy and to the nation's well-being, but I don't always know how to evaluate or describe it. We have to find a language and a way of describing its worth. It's the only way we'll secure the greater support we need.*
>
> (Morris, 2003: 3–4)

Since it was established, just months after the 1997 election, DCMS has been dedicated to bringing its sectors closer to the heart of British public policy. This ambition has gone hand in hand with its securing increased funding for them. In what remains its most detailed statement of its plans to 'reform' the sector (*A New Cultural Framework* –DCMS, 1998a), the department announced that it would be promoting 'access for the many not just the few'; pursuing 'excellence and innovation'; nurturing 'educational opportunity'; and fostering the creative industries (*ibid*: para 8).

These concerns have remained largely consistent, even if their emphases have shifted and the ways in which they are articulated have changed. The present Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport has stressed that: 'Investment in the arts is … a means of achieving our promises, our policies and our values.' (Jowell, in speech to 2002 Labour Party conference, cited by Cowling, 2004: 1.) The department's most recent articulation of its priorities commits it to 'enhancing access for children and

young people and giving them the opportunity to develop their talents to the full'; 'opening up … institutions to the wider community to promote lifelong learning and social cohesion'; 'maximising the contribution which tourism and the creative industries make to the economy'; and 'modernising delivery by ensuring our sponsored bodies are set, and meet, targets which put the customer first' (DCMS, 2003a: 18–19).

DCMS's ambitions and its concern with the targets related to them is of central importance to this thesis. My interest lies in what there is to demonstrate that the department's intentions are, indeed, being met, and what difference current cultural policy is making. My focus is on its social agenda – enhanced access, in particular.

In her speech at the 2003 Cheltenham Festival of Literature, Estelle Morris acknowledged the difference in believing in the 'transformative' powers of culture and producing the 'evidence' to show that 'transformation' had actually occurred. While DCMS and its NDPBs have undoubtedly been guided by the former, they set themselves the task of delivering on the latter. The requirement to do so is explicit in the Treasury guidelines for departmental bids to the 2004 Spending Review of October 2003:

> *In principle, all spending decisions should be supported by evidence, demonstrating that the money being spent will achieve the desired effects as efficiently as possible*[14].

The way in which DCMS is expected to present 'evidence' not only has to satisfy the criteria by which the department itself theoretically judges the 'robustness' of data (DCMS, 2003a), but also has to comply with the specifications laid down in the Treasury's *Green Book* [15]. The department is also expected to have to satisfy the recommendations made in the recent Office of Science and Technology (OST) review of the department's management and use of 'science' (OST, 2004)[16].

Despite its highly determined notion of the relationship between policies, funding, cultural activities and outcomes and its concern to show what Morris (2003) described as its 'ability to deliver, to make progress and to show a return', both Secretaries of State have struggled to get away from the dead hand of the auditor. In a 2001 White Paper, the department, under Chris Smith, proposed adopting a 'lighter

touch' (DCMS, 2001b: para 2.13). His successor professes to 'doing more' than delivering on the 'utilitarian agenda and the measures on instrumentality' implies, and which the department has come to be associated with.

> *Too often politicians have been forced to debate culture in terms only of its instrumental benefits to other agendas – education, the reduction in crime, improvements in wellbeing – explaining – or in some instances almost apologising for – our investment in culture only in terms of something else. In political and public discourse in this country we have avoided the more difficult approach of investigating, questioning and celebrating what culture actually does in and of itself.*
>
> (Jowell, 2004: 8)

While appearing to align herself with 'arts for art sake' arguments and perhaps find greater favour with her constituencies [17], Tessa Jowell claims to be seeking a more coherent justification for subsidy. She articulates her ultimate ambition as being to facilitate 'personal value added which comes from engagement with complex art – or "culture" in my defined sense' (Jowell, 2004: 5). This, she says, is 'a key to real transformation in society' (*ibid*: 9). But, even if the arguments for the government's support of culture shift from 'utilitarianism' to 'what it does in itself', Jowell's ambition to reduce the 'poverty of aspiration' is ultimately still 'transformatory' and accounting for it will continue to be an issue. As the Secretary of State herself asks, 'How, in going beyond targets, can we best capture the value of culture?' (*ibid*: 18).

My hypothesis is that, to date, DCMS has failed to show that current cultural policy is producing the desired effects, and that, despite the recent shift of emphasis, its achievements continue to be open to question – hence, my focus on the 'rhetorics' of DCMS policy. By 'rhetorics' I refer to what the Oxford English Dictionary defines as 'the art of effective or persuasive speaking or writing', more particularly as 'language designed to persuade or impress (often with an implication of insincerity or exaggeration etc)' (Allen, 1990). It may be significant that Estelle Morris not only expressed frustration with the language used by her department to describe the value of arts and culture (Morris, 2003: 3–4), but with that used by the government in general[18].

The aims of my thesis are to consider the extent to which the government is delivering on its promises: whether these have been, or can be, realised within the pragmatic constraints within which the cultural infrastructure operates; whether it is possible to see if cultural subsidies are, indeed, making a difference; whether current cultural policy constitutes any more than a form of political gesturing; how it might be possible to tell; and whether past experience is being used constructively to improve policy making.

1.2.2 Background

In establishing the context for my thesis, this section provides an overview of current English cultural policy based on key DCMS publications. Given that the writings submitted in Part 2 comprise tightly focussed pieces specifically written for funding and policy bodies as well as those written for scholarly publications, it also provides an overview of current cultural policy research and the nature of different kinds of contributions to the field [19].

1.2.2.1 Overview of current English cultural policy

Given that changes in the legislation affecting the national museums and galleries are comparatively unusual [20], and that local authorities' provision of museums and the arts is non-statutory[21], developments in policy are best tracked across the government's own publications (both in the sense of conventional and online publications). As already suggested, DCMS's 'strategic' approach relies on the publication and dissemination of a considerable number, and variety, of cultural policy documents. These include reviews, consultative proposals, directives, recommendations, guidelines, annual and other reports, responses to select committee reports, plans, ministerial statements agreements and strategies.

As suggested in the 'implementation' section (below), the so-called 'grey literature' is indicative of the department's intention to give direction to and to establish a 'new relationship' with its sectors. It sets out the department's intentions, priorities and preoccupations, reveals the persistence with which DCMS pursued certain interests, the ways in which it sought to implement its objectives and the framework established to enable outcomes to be accounted for. The following paragraphs

consider those objectives, processes of implementation and accountability, by reference to three documents in particular: *Create the Future* (the Labour Party, 1997); *A New Cultural Framework* (DCMS, 1998a); and DCMS's 'Strategic Framework 2003–2006', published as part of its Strategic Plan (DCMS, 2003b).

... policy objectives

As my thesis suggests, cultural policy under New Labour has been nothing if not consistent. Whereas Selwood (2004c: footnotes 5 and 10) considers New Labour's continuation of some of the Conservatives' priorities, the following paragraphs concentrate on the relatively unswerving nature of its own cultural policy iterations.

Even before coming to power, New Labour had developed a 'strategy for cultural policy, the arts and the creative economy', which set out many of the principles which would subsequently inform DCMS's operations. *Create the Future* (Labour Party, 1997) proposed that creativity[22] should be encouraged; that value for money would be achieved; and that a strategy would be established for the distribution of funds. Even at this stage, the Party's priorities included: the cultural economy; the widening of opportunities for children and young people (not least by promoting education); and the 'building and nurturing [of] new audiences'. It promised to review admission charges to the nationals, with a mind to making them 'more accessible' ('for the many not the few') and to encourage local authorities to develop leisure and cultural strategies – also intended to encourage wider access.

Labour described the cultural sector as being of fundamental importance to the operations of the incoming government. The cultural industries were said to be 'integral' to the country's future economic success and regeneration, and the arts valued because they 'open up our minds and our imaginations, make us wonder and question, delight us, disturb us, challenge us and sometimes change us'. They were also credited with the capacity 'to promote our sense of community and common purpose' and were conceived as being 'central to the task of re-establishing a sense of community, of identity and of civic pride, the undermining of which has so damaged our society' (Labour Party, 1997: 9)[23].

Create the Future simultaneously committed the Party to a principle that has sat uncomfortably, if not incompatibly, alongside DCMS's utilitarian agenda ever since – that 'the arts should be supported by government for their intrinsic merit' (*ibid*: 7). This explored in the final section of the Commentary.

In seeking to raise the profile of the sector, Labour consciously dissented from the view – which it attributed to previous Conservative administrations – that cultural life was of minimal social and economic importance: 'something which we do in the margins of our lives, to relax, or at the weekend' (*ibid*: 9). The hallmark of New Labour would be an 'age of achievement', exemplified by the quality of the arts, cultural industries and creative talent. Indeed, cultural practice was anticipated as being of such central importance that: 'In a Labour government, every ministry will be expected to make a contribution to achieving the goals of our cultural policy' (*ibid:* 9).

However rhetorical, many of the sentiments expressed in *Create the Future* seemed like manna from heaven to a sector which perceived itself as having been under siege throughout most of the previous 18 years of Tory rule. Conceivably seduced by the notion that artists and 'creatives' would 'only be able to fulfil their potential when they have the wholehearted support of a government which has an effective strategy for cultural policies' (*ibid*: 7), and by the incoming government's high-profile association with them [24], New Labour attracted enormous support from the sector. As DCMS rolled out its cultural policy, however, the initial optimism of those constituencies (ie the arts sector, museums and the creative industries) dispersed (see 'the issue of assessing impact' below). They had, conceivably, overlooked some of the other proposals also set out in *Create the Future*, including the suggestion that 'the single most important job for the department was how to manage the interface with its public bodies' (*ibid*: 23); that it intended to maximise value for money, review the structure of its public bodies, encourage the Arts Council and local authorities to become more strategic; and that it would pursue certain priorities – particularly those associated with the government's social agenda.

... implementation

Much of what *Create the Future* proposed constituted the basis upon which DCMS proceeded. Its directive, *A New Cultural Framework* (DCMS, 1998a) – itself the result of an earlier consultation (DCMS, 1998b) – is important to this thesis, because it formally established the principles and practices which informed the new government's cultural policy.

A New Cultural Framework constituted the DCMS's response to the 1998 Comprehensive Spending Review[25]. It committed the department and its sponsored bodies to the delivery of government objectives, to playing a full part in 'joined-up government' and developing stronger links with local government. It also expressed its preparedness 'to bang heads together to solve problems'.

Such transparency marked a radical departure from the rhetoric of the arm's length agreement and the policy vacuum which had previously characterised the subsidised cultural sector. Even now (towards the end of the government's second term), DCMS's pledge to uphold government objectives still holds. As the current Permanent Secretary describes it, her mission is to:

> *... lead a department which continues to make an important contribution to the Government's agenda. Not only in culture, media and sport, but in the broader areas of the economy, education, health, crime prevention and regeneration.*
>
> (Sue Street, in DCMS, 2003b: 4)

In the context of this thesis, *A New Cultural Framework* touched on four particularly salient issues:

1. It specified DCMS's intention to be more proactive and to occupy 'a more strategic place in the complicated structures of cultural policy and funding'. It promised (if not threatened) not just to 'sit back and hope', but to give direction, set targets, chase progress and take 'direct action' where appropriate. (DCMS, 1998a: unpaginated).

2. It established the principle that all the department's domains would be subject to a 'common conceptual framework'[26], based on its various themes. Given DCMS's reliance on its sponsored bodies to deliver on its objectives, *A New Cultural Framework* set out the terms of the department's proposed 'new relationship' with them. This pertained to those that directly deliver services to the public (for example, its sponsored museums and galleries) and intermediary organisations (such as MLA and the Arts Council). Moreover *A New Cultural Framework* was to be predicated on the delivery of 'appropriate outputs and benefits to the public'. This would constitute the basis of new funding agreements, which were to come into force in 1999/00.

3. It set out DCMS's plans to streamline the cultural infrastructure by merging existing bodies and reallocating responsibilities, and to raise standards of efficiency and financial management. It indicated the seriousness with which it was approaching this by announcing the establishment of a new watchdog – the Quality, Efficiency and Standards Team (QUEST) – charged with reporting direct to the Secretary of State on issues relating to the performance and quality of publicly-funded bodies[27].

4. It laid out the department's spending plans. These were particularly favourable to museums, galleries and the arts, despite variations in the reporting of estimates and actuals (shown in Table 2). *A New Cultural Framework* stipulated that, in the future, DCMS funding would come with 'new responsibilities' which would be tied to outcomes related to its central themes and linked to increased outputs, improved access and delivery.

While these principles were introduced in *A New Cultural Framework*, subsequent publications – including the Secretary of State's collected writings (Smith, 1998) – indicate how they evolved. They also signify how the department has responded to a multitude of central government agendas[28] including participating in 'joined-up' government[29], and they suggest something of the persistence with which DCMS has

pursued its specific 'themes': economic development and impact[30], 'modernisation'[31], 'access', community[32] and education[33].

Table 2: DCMS's funding allocations to museums, galleries and the arts, 1997/98–2005/06

Source		Allocation (£m)									
		1997/98	**1998/99**	**1999/00**	**2000/01**	**2001/02**	**2002/03**	**2003/04**	**2004/05**	**2005/06**	**Change 1997/98–2005/06 (%)[e]**
		Out-turn	**Provisional**	**Plans**	**Plans**	**Plans**					
A New Cultural Framework, 1998	Museums and galleries[a]	212	204	220	226	247					
	New Museums, Libraries and Archives Council[b]	10	10	14	18	17					
	Arts[c]	196	199	228	238	253					
		Out-turn									
DCMS Annual Report, 1999	Museums and galleries[a]	212									
	New Museums, Libraries and Archives Council[b]	12									
	Arts[c]	196									
			Out-turn	**Out-turn**	**Out-turn**	**Estimated out-turn**	**Plans**	**Plans**	**Plans**	**Plans**	
DCMS Annual Report, 2003: Resource budget[d]	Museums and galleries[a]		241	270	294	323	353	378	383	389	
	New Museums, Libraries and Archives Council[b]		12	16	17	23	24	25	35	45	
	Arts[c]		193	230	239	254	297	337	367	412	
			Out-turn	**Out-turn**	**Out-turn**	**Out-turn**	**Out-turn**	**Estimated out-turn**	**Plans**	**Plans**	
DCMS Annual Report 2004: resource budget[d]	Museums and galleries[a]		241	270	294	173	269	404	384	396	87
	New Museums, Libraries and Archives Council[b]		12	16	17	24	25	28	36	46	287
	Arts[c]		192	230	239	254	286	334	367	412	112

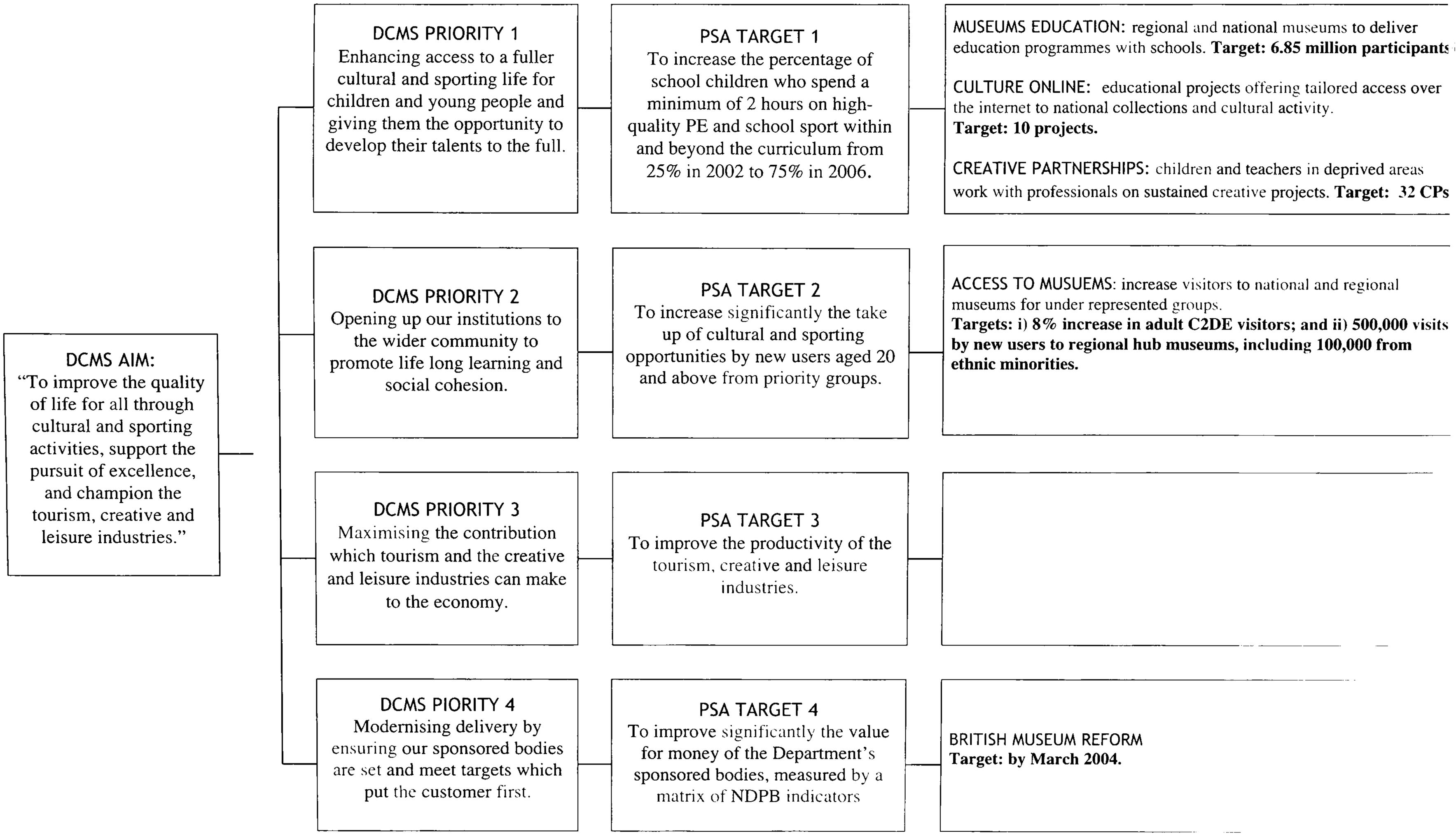
Notes: This table focuses on revenue funding, it does not include allocations to lottery distributors; [a]Includes all directly funded museums, other museums support, museums reserve, Government Indemnity Scheme and Acceptance in Lieu; [b]Resource was launched in 2000. Its allocation was based on a combination of the grant in aid previously made to the Library and Information Commission and the Museums & Galleries Commission. The amounts listed here also include funds earmarked for the Designated Museums Challenge Fund (from 1999/00; [c]Includes the Arts Council of England, the new Arts Council, the Crafts Council, Arts Pairing Scheme, Dance and Drama Awards, ADAPT, other support and the Government Art Collection (net); [d]No detailed breakdown is provided. It is assumed that 'Museums, Archives and Libraries' includes Resource/MLA and the Regional Agencies. The funds allocated for Culture Online are not shown here; [e]Calculations based on the figures from DCMS Annual Reports for 1999 and 2004.

... accountability

DCMS's expectations are most clearly spelt out in its 'Strategic Framework 2003–2006', published as part of its *Strategic Plan* (DCMS, 2003b). This describes the department's obligations to deliver on the targets set out in its Public Service Agreement (which constitutes the basis of its funding from the Treasury); and how, in turn, responsibility for the fulfilment of these is passed on to its sponsored bodies. Figure 2 sets out the chain linking DCMS's overarching aims, its priorities and its Public Service Agreement targets to its funding bodies' targets[34].

This model of accountability suggests that the relationship between policy, implementation and the delivery of outcomes is relatively simple. It illustrates the department's presumption that it is possible to identify and quantify the impact of the public's engagement with various forms of cultural provision.

Figure 2: DCMS Strategic Framework and selected funding agreement targets (2003–2006)



1.2.2.2 Overview of current cultural policy research

The amount of cultural policy-related research undertaken is said to have

> *... increased dramatically over the last quarter of a century – for a variety of reasons: the increased economic importance of these industries; a closer inter-penetration of questions of cultural policy with social policy; and the increasing significance of questions of culture in the humanities and social sciences, and in public intellectual debates more generally (around issues of cultural diversity, multiculturalism, culture and identity).*
>
> (Bennett T, 2001: 51)

But, as Oliver Bennett suggests (2004)[35], the field of cultural policy research comprises two very different worlds; one exemplified by Lewis and Miller's *Critical Cultural Policy Studies* (2003) and the other by Schuster's *Informing Cultural Policy* (2002). These could be distinguished by their respectively highly theorised and untheorised positions and their relationships to the scholarly and the 'grey literature'. Moreover, as Bennett observes, both lay claims to the ownership of cultural policy research while appearing to be largely oblivious (if not indifferent) to the others' preoccupations. Lewis and Miller (2003), for example, regard cultural policy as a way of instilling 'fealty in the public' and view cultural policy studies as an essentially 'reformist project', concerned with 'progressive politics' (*ibid*: 1–8). By contrast, Schuster (2002) effectively reduces cultural policy to the operations of agency – what McGuigan (2003: 24) describes (in Lewis and Miller's compendium) as: 'An ostensibly apolitical set of practical operations that are merely administered and policed by government officials.' Schuster takes cultural policy research to be about 'the development of a statistical base for data'; and, for his own part, studies those institutions which regard 'the development [and the 'mediation'] of basic statistics on the cultural sector as their highest priority'.

The writings submitted in Part 2 of this thesis conform to neither position. Indeed, according to Schuster (2002: 149), the journal that I edit, *Cultural Trends*, is:

> *An exception in the field of cultural policy research ... [Its]... mission is to provide, summarise and interpret the statistical information that is available on the arts and culture. It quite consciously occupies a middle ground between the world of pure statistical information and the world of commentary and debate.*

I take it that this applies equally well to my submitted writings. The following paragraphs, consequently, concentrate on that particular niche of cultural policy research to which I contribute.

... the landscape of research into cultural policy in England

Recent international overviews of the research and information infrastructure that informs cultural policy identify a number of generic organisational models which gather and share relevant information (Schuster, 2002; Bennett T, 2001: 53). These include the research divisions of government funding agencies; national and international statistics agencies; independent non-profit research institutes; government–designated university-based research centres; private consultancy firms (often commissioned by the public sector); cultural observatories; networks; programme models; journals and periodicals. One could also add so-called 'think tanks' to the list[36].

Inevitably, the kind of data that these types of organisations gather varies. Even single organisations, such as DCMS, collect different types of data on the basis of having several research interests. According to its Research Strategy (2003a), the department pursues: a baseline understanding of its sponsored sectors[37]; forecasts and projections of future trends[38]; policy/programme/project monitoring and evaluation; and 'evidence-based' policy. For its part, Resource regarded its research agenda as 'multi-faceted' and intended to help it 'become an evidence-based organisation informing and underpinning our main policy objectives'[39].

> *It encompasses a range of activities including the commissioning of statistical material... the mapping of current trends; the identification of future priorities; the assessment of needs; and the identification of best practice. Our research strategy is simple. Research is a strategic tool to enable the objectives and the deliverables in our annual workplan to happen.*
> (Resource, 2001: 3)

Arts Council England prefers to describe its research interests thematically, as encompassing: evaluation and impact; audiences and participants; cultural production; guidance, toolkits and support[40]. However they individually choose to describe their specific interests, DCMS regards its 'family's' research as ultimately intended to:

> *... increase relevant socio-economic policy research and embed evidence in [their] work and thinking at all levels and stages in the policy process as to ensure that the policies developed have maximum impact on key priorities and delivery targets.*
>
> (DCMS, 2003a: 6)

Despite an emphasis on investigating the 'transformatory' nature of cultural provision, however, there has been little in the way of longitudinal research exploring the effect that engaging with culture has on individuals or communities in the sense of moving people, changing them and bringing new meaning to their lives[41].

Whatever their aspirations, researchers in DCMS and its agencies are inevitably subject to particular pressures, not least the regular auditing requirements of their organisations (determined by the three-year funding cycles and biennial Spending Reviews) and the need to respond to demands for short-term information.

Such requirements may subject those agencies to charges of bias, not least in terms of blurring the distinction between impartial research and advocacy – particularly in relation to their 'news management'. One of the functions of Arts Council England's Research and Development Directorate (part of the External Relations Directorate) is to provide information for advocacy purposes. Arts Council England's researchers insist that they:

> *... try to ensure our research follows rigorous principles based in the social sciences, uses sufficiently large sample sizes, weighs the evidence, takes full account of counter-evidence and reaches well-founded conclusions. This approach demands research reports which are transparent about methodology and the limitations of the data and are honest about 'uncomfortable' findings.*
>
> (Hutton *et al*, in preparation)[42]

It has, however, been suggested that whatever the internal value of impartial research it may not be the interests of such researchers to publish it. Senior management might reasonably wonder; '... why are we spending money so that someone in our agency can criticise us? Why should we be spending money in research at all?'

(Schuster, 2003: 59.) So, despite the robustness of their research procedures, it is inevitable that the public reporting of that research occasionally lends itself to the enhancement of corporate achievements[43].

If DCMS and its agencies are understandably reluctant to publish critical evaluations of their own work, however, where is the effectiveness of cultural policy most thoroughly (if not explicitly) being interrogated within the public sphere? Totally disinterested evaluations are unlikely to come from politically-driven 'think tanks', such as the Institute for Public Policy Research (ippr)[44]. DCMS and its NDPBs are officially scrutinised by the National Audit Office (NAO); the House of Commons (HoC) Culture, Media and Sport Committee and (for a brief period only) by QUEST. But, such bodies' reports tend to focus on single management issues (see, for instance, HoC, 2002; QUEST, 2002). Cultural statistics fall outside the remit of the Office for National Statistics, and there is no independent (yet accountable) national cultural intelligence facility (Selwood, 2001a; Babbidge, 2004: 96)[45]. So, it might logically fall to academia to contribute to the development of 'intelligent public policy' in the cultural sector.

> *The best policy-making is that informed by evidence, explored for alternatives and assessed for impact. One of the best resources for evidence-gathering, analysis and assessment is higher education. There are two ways by which we need to make the most of this resource and tie it to decision making – creating and supporting the capacity of the research sector and improving and expanding its dialogue with policy makers.*
>
> (Universities Scotland, 2002: 11)

Given DCMS's acknowledgement that it should be working in partnership with the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the Arts and Humanities Research Board (AHRB) to extend the department's capacity to develop 'evidence-based policy', and that it should draw 'on the resources of the wider research community' (DCMS, 2003a: 4, 6), it is particularly apposite to consider the role that academics play in relation to the development of current cultural policy.

… academic research

Academic research has a relatively ambiguous relationship with the general framework for current cultural policy research described above. Even in terms of the

academic bureaucracy, cultural policy research falls between the remits of AHRB and ESRC, and contributes to several units of assessment used in the Research Assessment Exercise[46].

The ESRC funds cultural policy research as part of its multi-disciplinary research programmes and is biased towards investigations into the social and economic significance of cultural manifestations[47]. The AHRB's focus is on the immanent qualities of the arts and humanities. One of its primary purposes is to 'improve the breadth and depth of our knowledge and understanding of human culture, both past and present, and thereby to enhance the quality of life and creative output of the nation' (AHRB, 2004: 4)[48]. It distinguishes between research carried out 'for its own sake', with no regard to any 'particular application', and applied research which is purposefully 'directed towards specific practical aims or objectives' (Jubb, 2002). One of the themes of its current Strategic Plan is to encourage researchers to engage

> *... constructively with stakeholders in the creative, cultural, heritage and other sectors, so that our research capacity is more fully and effectively exploited to the benefit of society and the economy.*
> (AHRB, 2004: 5)

This might equally well cover support for what OST describes as 'research relevant to any aspect of government service provision'; research to 'inform policy and for monitoring developments of significance for the welfare of the population'; and 'strategic as well as applied research' that 'advances technology underpinning the UK economy' (OST, 2003b)[49]. In practice, however, relatively few of its awards to date have supported research into the state of the government's cultural service provision, or have been concerned with critiquing policy[50]. But, as it moves forward to Research Council status (proposed for 2005), the Board intends to be more supportive of scholarship in this area[51]. Like the ESRC, the AHRB is concerned to strengthen 'user engagement' and look for ways in which it can act as a broker between the academic community and institutional stakeholders.

In considering how academic research might inform cultural policy, Nielson (1999) distinguished between researchers acting as 'critical public agents', and as 'hired hands' – functions crudely associated with relative degrees of autonomy and 'selling

out'. In their capacity as 'critical public agents', a number of academics have made contributions to the scholarly literature which address issues pertaining to British cultural policy and which are of some relevance to the interests of this thesis. They cover, for example, such issues as: public purpose (Arthurs and Hodsall, 1998: Jensen, 2002); the arms' length principle (Quinn, 1997); and the value of public expenditure (Evans, 1995). Another strand considers the outcomes of various policy initiatives, such as the workings of what has become a mixed economy (Schuster, 1998); the effects of accountability (Evans P, 1997; Stevens, 1998; Hodsall, 1998; Nielsen, 2003); the scale of employment in the cultural sector (Pratt, 1997; Baines and Wheelock, 2002); and the effects of cultural planning (Evans, 2001). The literature also covers the appropriateness of particular methodological approaches to the gathering of 'evidence', including economic impact studies (Hughes, 1989; van Puffelen, 1996; Johnson and Thomas, 2001) and contingent valuation (Thompson, 1998).

By contrast with much of the academic literature on cultural policy, which tends to be generalist, however, publications that interrogate the effects of specific English policy initiatives are rather less common. Examples include detailed examinations of the UK lottery (Martin-Doyle, 1995; Evans G, 1997); types of programming (Kawashima, 1998; O'Hagan and Neligan, 2001); the effectiveness of education programmes (Kolb, 2002); and funding initiatives such as Year of the Visual Arts (Bailey, 2000); Year of the Artist (Stevens, 2002); and Arts Council England's New Audiences scheme (Taylor *et al*, 2000).

As this implies, the main English language journals and periodicals most overtly concerned with cultural policy tend to carry relatively few detailed critiques of current English government policy initiatives. The two UK-based journals, *Cultural Trends* and *The International Journal of Cultural Policy,* and *The International Journal of Arts Management* (Canada) and *The Journal of Arts Management, Law and Society* (USA) all occasionally carry articles on issues closely associated with New Labour projects. Examples include pieces on the 'creative industries' (Hughson and Inglis, 2001; Bilton, 1999); the Millennium Dome (McGuigan and Gilmore, 2001; 2002); and social inclusion (Belfiore, 2002; Merli, 2002).

While the relative scarcity of such material within the scholarly literature might imply that academics are distanced from the development of current cultural policy, this is not necessarily the case. Although relatively few of their findings may filter through to the academic literature, a number of academics work as 'hired hands' – producing research for cultural policy makers and funding bodies, and encouraged by the desire for universities to be seen as more entrepreneurial, to attract new sources of revenue and engage in 'knowledge transfer' (Lambert, 2003). In short, academics are in the market to undertake work for DCMS, its agencies and other cultural sector organisations. In that capacity they may be commissioned to carry out 'ground-clearing' research (in the form of literature reviews [52]); to establish the empirical context for prospective policy initiatives (for instance, Gore *et al*, 1999); and to assess the impact of particular projects and recommend developments (which may require them to analyse existing data[53] or collect and interpret primary 'evidence'[54]).

That such research involves academics not only implies certain guarantees as to its quality, but – on the basis of universities' reputation for academic integrity – can serve to endorse government policy. This is most obviously exploited in those cases where academics produce advocacy documents (for example, Coalter, 2001a). While such work tends to be readily available, this is not necessarily true of more investigative research, which agencies may be unwilling to go public with. There may be different reasons for this: they may regard findings as confidential; these might detract from their main purpose; their publication might infringe copyright. Despite its statements to the contrary, DCMS has a reputation for being wary of working with university researchers precisely because of:

> *... the problems of determining appropriate publication policies, which is particularly problematic given the penchant of DCMS for keeping this work internal and the desire of universities to develop a knowledge base ...*
>
> *Unlike the research products of the cultural policy research units in other countries, these offices of DCMS publish very little material externally. Their work has been primarily internal, and they have paid very little attention to dissemination.*
>
> (Schuster, 2002:131–132)[55].

Other factors may also militate against the publication of academic consultations. The internationalism of cultural journals encourages content which appeals to a broad readership because of its comparability, if not its comparative potential[56]. This may inhibit the publication of detailed scrutinies of what could largely be perceived as parochial concerns. The amount of time which conventionally lapses between the completion of articles and books and their publication may discourage topical content, which might be the most likely to impact on policy developments[57]. Such factors combine to encourage university researchers to self-publish, including posting research reports on university websites[58], and journals are understandably reluctant to then publish research findings that have already appeared on the web for fear of diminishing their 'added-value'. Last, but not least, despite the current recognition of the importance of disseminating research findings extensively (see, for instance, AHRB's pilot Research Dissemination Scheme), academics rarely write for the non-academic press – conceivably because of cultural workers constituencies' perceived lack of correspondence between academia and themselves.

> *Clearly, everybody, particularly the visiting public, has much to gain from improved collaboration between practitioners and researchers. But, in my experience too much practice is uninformed by a proper awareness of research, and too much research is uninformed by a proper awareness of practice* [59].

These issues, which inform current cultural policy research – not least the tensions between research produced by, or on behalf of, DCMS and its agencies and by independent academics – is reflected in my own work. This is introduced in the following section.

1.2.3 The publications

Of those publications being submitted for this thesis, half were commissioned by organisations within what DCMS refers to as the 'cultural framework' and half constitute more conventional academic output. This characteristic reflects a personal history of working in and for the subsidised cultural sector in various capacities[60], as well as time spent reflecting on it (at some greater distance) as an academic.

The eight publications included in Part 2 cover a number of my research interests. These include the construction of a baseline understanding of the sector, including

levels of funding received; the development of public policy and its implementation; the principles and processes of public accountability; and the impact of cultural policy. This section of the Commentary points to where those interests are explored in my writings, as well as explaining the provenance and rationale of each publication submitted (in more or less chronological order). It also considers how the issues raised in my writings sit in relationship to other literature on the effectiveness of current cultural policy.

1.2.3.1 Provenance and rationale

The earliest writings submitted represent the tail end of a previous preoccupation with gallery education (Selwood, 1999b; 2000)[61]. Throughout the 1980s, I ran small, subsidised galleries showing contemporary art, which required me continuously to raise funds for education programmes which accompanied each changing exhibition. This coincided with a period when gallery education was seeking to become 'professionalised'; its political and strategic potential was coming to be recognised by the funding system (Selwood *et al*, 1994) [62]; and much was being made of the possibilities of social education through art (Selwood, 1991a; 1997; Selwood and Irving, 1993). However, I became increasingly sceptical about the efficacy of art gallery education projects (which usually featured one-off visits by schools). When I stopped working in galleries and started carrying out research (primarily within the arts funding system), I undertook evaluations which critically exposed the disparities between the intentions and effects of art gallery education programmes and the different interests of stakeholders (Selwood *et al*, 1995; Selwood and Clive, 1992).

Museums, Galleries and Learning (Selwood, 1999a) is based on a paper initially written for an internal DCMS seminar. It considers the nature of museum visiting, and DCMS's recent identification of museums as educational institutions. Written before free admission, sponsored by the department, was introduced to the museums, it contrasts visitors and non-visitors' attitudes to learning as well as the different approaches manifest in science and art museums.

Museums, Galleries and the Business of Consulting with Young People (Selwood, 2000) was commissioned by Tate Liverpool for inclusion in a book (co-published

with Liverpool University Press) about Young Tate – the programme that Tate Liverpool had initiated for young people outside schools[63]. But, rather then celebrating museums' work with them, it described the sometimes difficult relationship that young people develop with art galleries as a result of their involvement in education projects.

One way of establishing a reliable understanding of the cultural sector is to collect data about the extent, funding and use of cultural provision – a mode of research that I came to through working for PSI. Much of the research that it carried out in the cultural sector relied on the collation and analysis of exiting data (see Selwood, 2004a: 15). A certain amount of my subsequent work uses that approach, particularly that work focused on museum statistics (including Selwood, 1999b)[64].

Markets and Users (Selwood, 2001b) is one such piece. It was commissioned as a background paper for the report of the DCMS-appointed Regional Museums Task Force, *Renaissance in the Regions: a new vision for England's museums* (RMTF, 2001). This was intended to address a number of problems inherent in regional museums in order that they might 'make a full contribution to meeting local, regional and national policy goals' (*ibid*: 6).

Written against a background of the overall number of visits to museums in England having plateaued, if not actually declining (and drawing on the approach used in Davies, 1994), this paper examined the state of the market for regional museums both with respect to the supply side (the number of museums and their market share) and the demand side (articulated in terms of the number of visits and the profile of visitors and potential visitors). It contextualised this in relation to central and local governments' expectations of regional museums and the likely impact of policy and funding initiatives, as well as that of other factors – such as demographic change – on them. The paper closes by considering what regional museums might have to do to secure their place in the market.

The UK Cultural Sector: policy issues and profile (Selwood, 2001a) also draws on banks of existing data. It was funded by the Monument Trust (one of the Sainsbury

Family Trusts) to present a snapshot of the subsidised cultural sector – something that had been essentially neglected by the funding system itself. Its focus was on 1998/99, the most recent year for which data were available at the time of research.

Chapters 28 and 31 of *The UK Cultural Sector* profile museums and galleries and the visual arts, and describe (as far as possible): the number of organisations funded; the value and distribution of subsidies to them; the number of people they employ; the size and types of audiences they attract; and trends in attendance. The data available on museums and galleries was more comprehensive than that for the visual arts. Chapter 32, 'Survey Findings' presents a picture of the sector in general through the findings of a survey of 2,500 subsidised organisations, which was carried out specifically for the book. Of those, 127 had provided data for an earlier survey (Casey *et al*, 1996), and comparisons were drawn between their 1993/94 and 1998/99 returns.

Chapter 16, 'The National Lottery' adds to the notion of a 'baseline understanding' by describing the evolution of that funding stream. Other publications being submitted (Selwood, 1999b; 2004a) also describe the history of particular cultural policy initiatives.

In terms of the evolution of my own work, *The UK Cultural Sector,* marks the beginning of my more critical interest in the relationship between policy, funding and outcomes. Putting together what remains the most comprehensive and reliable overview available of DCMS's sectors, it became apparent that there was no discernable transparency in the relationship between 'policy, funding and the achievement of policy'. Moreover, I realised that 'no evaluations of the extent to which grant funding is delivering policy objectives [had] been published in the UK beyond the quantitative measurement of certain aspects of cultural organisations' performances' (Selwood, 2001a: xlix). This encouraged me to look into accountability within the sector – something that was also prompted by a ground-clearing exercise commissioned by Birmingham City Council.

Access, Efficiency and Excellence: measuring non-economic performance in the English subsidised cultural sector (Selwood, 1999b) was based on that work for Birmingham City Council. It was intended to brief the council's European and International Team on the then current state of play on non-economic performance indicators. Their interest in this had been prompted by two things: one was the fact that local authorities' non-statutory cultural services – which had previously escaped the scrutiny of the Audit Commission – were becoming subject to performance measurement under Best Value; the other was that, in reaction to its previous preoccupation with the economic impact of cultural provision (illustrated by Selwood and Dunlop, 1998), Birmingham wanted to turn its attention to 'social impact'. This issue was moving up DCMS's agenda, but although the Secretary of State had championed the work of the Comedia consultancy, *Use or Ornament?* (Matarasso, 1997) in particular, its quality was already being criticised[65].

What Difference do Museums Make? Producing evidence on the impact of museums (Selwood, 2002b) is also concerned with accountability. Written in response to an invitation to contribute to a special issue of *Critical Quarterly* on 'management discourse', it describes how DCMS-sponsored museums, and museums in the regions, were being affected by the department's 'interventions'. It tracks ways in which DCMS's guidance and funding agreements encouraged museums to deliver on its policy objectives, and how the department's performance indicators evolved.

Other pieces are more specifically concerned with whether, and how, the existing forms of accountability have contributed to the effectiveness of cultural policy.

The Politics of Data Collection: gathering, analysing and using data in the subsidised cultural sector in England (Selwood, 2004a), considers the use to which data are put in the development of cultural policy (also investigated in Selwood and Davies, forthcoming). This piece originated with an invitation from the new UNESCO Institute of Statistics to present a paper at an international colloquium on cultural statistics and cultural politics, intended to inform its own agenda (Selwood, 2003a).

The starting point of *The Politics of Data Collection* is the apparent centrality of data collection to DCMS's operations. It considers how this came about and asks how valuable the pursuit of data collection has actually been. In posing these questions, the article reflects on the origins of current preoccupations with the economic and social impact of the cultural sector and its accountability; it tracks DCMS's predecessor departments' attempts to encourage data collection and suggests how the 'evidence' gathered has influenced certain policy and funding initiatives. Having considered DCMS's priorities, the article moves on to examine how the department has sought to extend its influence strategically. It also provides an overview of those systems of accountability that govern its performance, as well as those of its sponsored bodies and other players in the subsidised cultural sector.

Finally, a long-standing interest of mine is the experience of the public – the ultimate target of cultural policy. Working in galleries prompted my curiosity about how the educational effectiveness of exhibitions and education programmes could be objectively assessed and evaluated, and how the findings could be put to constructive use (Selwood, 1991b). Drawing on a combination of methodologies used by visitor studies' and social science researchers, I carried out a major study which looked into whether claims made for public art were substantiated (Selwood, 1995) and went on to carry out visitor studies and consultations for various national institutions (Selwood with Traynor, 1998; Selwood *et al*, 1996; Selwood, 1998a and 1998b. See also Selwood, 1998c).

Audiences for Contemporary Art: assertions vs the evidence (Selwood, 2002a) focuses on the visitor. It was commissioned for a book about people's relationship with contemporary art in domestic settings[66]. My chapter contextualises that relationship by considering what was known about attitudes to contemporary art in general.

The piece was written shortly after the opening of Tate Modern, when it was being suggested that Britain was an 'art crazy nation' (Collings, 2001); when historic cultural flagships (such as the V&A) were attempting to re-brand themselves through

association with it, and the British Council was proposing that 'Cool Britannia' would 'sex-up' the image of the country (Leonard, 1997).

Audiences for Contemporary Art considers what was known about people's 'consumption' of contemporary, if not modern, art at the time. It asks whether, as a nation, we were actually 'mad' for it, and whether contemporary art was really more popular than football (as was claimed). It questions whether people were benefiting intellectually from their increased exposure to contemporary art – not least, in the absence of what one Turner Prize speaker referred to as a 'comprehensible public discussion about what art does for us, what is being learned from it, and what it might enable us to think or feel that we couldn't before' (Eno, 1996: 258–9).

1.2.3.2 The issues raised in my writings in relation to the critical literature

How do the approaches used and the issues raised in my writings sit within the landscape of the research into cultural policy in England? Given that this thesis is implicitly about identifying the effectiveness of cultural policy, this section focuses on the place of baseline understandings of the sector within the literature, as well as critical perceptions of its 'impact'. Since much of the literature is already referred to in the publications in Part 2 of this thesis, my focus here is on the most recent research and those issues not referred to elsewhere in my writings.

... the need for baseline studies

A major strand of my work has been to establish what DCMS refers to as a 'baseline understanding' of the sector (DCMS, 2003a: 8). From DCMS's perspective, such studies underpin the development, monitoring and assessment of Public Service Agreement targets[67]. More generally, they provide the basis for measuring change through comparable, if not longitudinal, perspectives.

Neither the construction nor the detailed exploration of baseline data feature much in cultural policy research[68], however, particularly within the scholarly literature. This may be indicative of a lack of interest in the quantifiable aspects of the sector, or it may reflect the limited extent to which the available data are considered fit for the purposes of academic work. Data potentially of use in constructing baselines may be

considered to be too poor, too limited[69], or too general[70]. They may also be unavailable for publication.

These complaints apply to certain sets of publicly-funded data which relate to museums and the arts. Detailed statistics from Target Group Index (TGI), for example, are rarely made available because of the copyright agreements to which its subscribers, Arts Council England and MLA, are bound. However, MLA recently published 10 years' worth of TGI data on museum attendances (Selwood , 2004a). Much of the information collected by DCMS from its sponsored museums is subject to confidentiality. It, therefore,

> *... never reaches the public domain, other than through piecemeal release to answer parliamentary questions, for inclusion in quinquennial reviews, or other* ad hoc *publication.*
>
> (Babbidge, 2004: 93)

Lack of transparency in those data that are available may also be a problem. As Babbidge notes (2004: 93), even the format of DCMS's annual resource accounts, which are laid before parliament, cost all DCMS activities against the programmes defined by its Public Service Agreement objectives. As the audit certificate from the Comptroller and Auditor-General of DCMS's resource accounts 2000/01 indicated, the results of this are neither helpful nor reliable:

> *The analysis of most of the expenditure is derived from returns from grant-receiving bodies who are required to attribute their grant expenditure across the Department's objectives. For many of these bodies, the relationship of the Department's objectives to the bodies' own objectives demands judgmental interpretation such as to defy any meaningful precision in that attribution ... The level of interpretive latitude unavoidable in the overall exercise ... means that significantly different, yet still defensible, attributions could have been reported. Interpretation of comparisons between years requires corresponding caution.*
>
> (DCMS, 2002a: 4, cited by Babbidge, 2004: 93)

The same holds true of the most recent accounts available[71].

Finally, some data are only available in aggregated form, which renders them relatively useless for reinterpretation. As Babbidge (2004: 95) puts it, much of the information landscape has been lost. *Sightseeing in the UK*, for example, provided

data on museums in England from 1977 to 1999. However, the format of this annual publication was changed in 2001 (Moffat Centre, 2001) and, while it continued to include statistics on the UK museums domain, it no longer included data disaggregated on a country by country basis[72]. It no longer exists.

It is not just the perceived inadequacies of the data on the sector – acknowledged by DCMS itself (DCMS/ERCCs, 2002a: ii) – that are noted in this thesis, so much as their apparent lack of corporate use. I have suggested that that the ways in which the arts funding system distributes its funds has been guided by a combination of history and strategic priorities (Selwood, 1999b) and that the OST's recent review observes that DCMS could make better use of 'scientific' information (OST, 2004: 25–26).

Criticisms about the use of data tend to come from academics and those outside the funding system. Schuster, for instance, makes the generalisation that data may not be sufficiently robust to be applied to policy making.

> *I take it for granted that the data to be collected will provide an imperfect, incomplete picture of the situation under consideration, and I want to make sure that we worry about the implications of those imperfections for policy making and decision making. It is one thing to collect data to say that one has collected data, it is quite another to collect data with the aim of affecting policy. I do not mean to suggest, of course, that we should lose sight of the question of how to generate data of the highest possible quality ... but I do mean to suggest that any definition of 'quality' with respect to data ought to pay attention to how those data are to be used and whether or not they fit that use.*
>
> (Schuster, 2003: 42)

More specifically, Peacock has observed that the data produced by those organisations supported by the Scottish Arts Council are not analysed for the public benefit. In his opinion, the Scottish Executive and its ministers 'have no wish to be confused by the facts' (Peacock, 2001: 15). The trade journal, the *ArtsProfessional,* has implied this was always assumed to have been the case within the sector (2001: 2). Such observations inevitably raise the question of the nature of the relationship between data and power (at best – touched upon in Selwood, 2004a).

Babbidge notes that for many of those working in museums, the requirement to collect data 'represents an extension of state power and/or unnecessary bureaucracy' (2004: 93). Thus, the deliberate refusal to collect data can be perceived as a political gesture. Reflecting on the behaviour of one particular agency – albeit in another place, at another time, and in different political circumstances – Urice recounts that:

> *One hallmark of the highly successful [Nancy] Hanks' administration [she was chairwoman of the US National Endowment for the Arts, 1969–71] was her ability to collect anecdotal information instead of facts. She prided herself on not having data or statistical information available, and when pressured by some to improve data management… she intentionally ordered inadequate or unworkable … hardware or software. She knew information was power… Only under powerful pressure from her allies in Congress did she even establish the small, almost ineffectual, Research Division*[73].
>
> Urice (2003: unpaginated[74])

Babbidge notes that the collection of data is regarded as potentially threatening to cultural sector organisations (2004: 93). A disinclination to make known just how much public funding goes into the sector is a good example of that.

'The ideological potency of the notion of artistic poverty', remarked on by Garnham and Epstein (1985: 145), still holds sway. Despite successive increases in DCMS's spending since 1999 (Table 2), it remains standard for constituencies within the cultural sector to complain about the paucity of their funding, despite the fact that many would claim to 'punch above their weight'. Such grievances periodically surface in newspaper coverage of the sector (for instance, Higgins, 2002; Alberge, 2004).

Despite increased funding from DCMS (Table 2) and an emphasis on the 'creative economy', there have been relatively few detailed and robust interrogations of the cultural sector's finances. Certainly, the detailed analysis of the combined inputs into the UK cultural sector (Selwood, 2001a) [75] was not considered to be in the sector's interests (Bailey, 2001). Moreover, three analyses (Anon, 1997b; Hutchison, 1982; Wilson and Hart, 2003) of the distribution of support to the regions have proved uncomfortable reading for funders [76].

... the issue of assessing impact

Attitudes towards measuring the effectiveness of cultural policy change. However useful quantifying inputs might be in indicating particular types of 'investment', such information has its limitations and is not considered pertinent to current thinking:

> *In 1998 we began the task of measuring output directly, rather than from the amount of money spent on producing it, that is from inputs...*
>
> *Since 1998 the amount of resources allocated to public services has increased. Delivery and management mechanisms have developed and are more complex. There is an increasing emphasis on the quality of service for the customer, and as a result there are greater demands on, and expectations of, measures of government output.*
>
> (Len Cook; cited in National Statistics, 2004)

The DCMS 'family' is currently preoccupied with measuring impact. Despite the critical debate about impact methodology (summarised in Selwood, 2004a), the department's NDPBs persist in commissioning studies which demonstrate impact – especially in anticipation of the biennial Spending Reviews and the renewal of lottery distributors' licences[77]. They are driven by DCMS's continuing commitment to the notion that culture contributes 'to health, to education, to crime reduction, to strong communities, to the economy and to the nation's well-being' (Morris, 2003).

At the time of writing, MLA, for instance, had consultants gathering the 'best possible evidence on effective activity' in its sectors in relation to: cultural diversity; health; community cohesion and related community agendas; social inclusion; and neighbourhood renewal (MLA, 2004a). Two recent studies published by Arts Council England and DCMS (ACE, 2004a; Evans *et al*, 2003[78]) focus on what 'evidence' exists on the arts and culture's contribution to regeneration. Both arrange their findings under a number of generic (but not mutually exclusive) headings which follow, hardly by co-incidence, the expectations of policy: Arts Council England's 'evidence' of the arts' impact on social inclusion (generated since the publication of *Arts & Sport: A report to the social exclusion unit* – Policy Action Team, 1999) is organised under such headings as 'the arts and employment'; 'the arts and education'; 'the arts and health'; and 'the arts and criminal justice'. Like the research carried out for DCMS (Evans *et al*, 2003), it classifies regeneration impacts as 'culture-led regeneration'; 'cultural regeneration'; and 'culture and regeneration'. It

also considers 'social capital and sustainable development', 'leverage' and 'public support for the arts'.

ippr, which is closely associated with New Labour, is similarly unquestioning in its acceptance of the arts' contribution to education, mental health and offender rehabilitation outcomes.

> *These three areas are key to achieving the Government's overall goals of a safe, just and tolerant society and providing the opportunity for everyone to realise their true potential and can also serve as an indicator and analytical framework to understanding the far wider value of the arts to our society.*
>
> (Cowling, 2004: 6–7)

ippr argues that the case for the arts simply needs to be better made though a more robust 'evidence' base (Cowling, 2004: 129–142). MLA's *Inspiring Learning for All* assumes much the same. Indeed, its framework which is intended to facilitate the measurement of 'learning'[79] has already been used to present DCMS with a national picture of the impact of school childrens' 'learning' in museums (Hooper–Greenhill *et al*, 2004)[80].

Existing alongside such conformity, however, is a body of criticism that rejects the use of instrumentalist arguments to justify support for cultural provision. The publication of Myerscough's *The Economic Importance of the Arts in Britain* in 1988, inadvertently prompted a debate in the UK about the arts being valued for their own intrinsic merits. Perhaps paradoxically, it has often fallen to economists to make the case that the primary function of the arts is not to create economic impact (Seaman, 1986; Hughes, 1989; Van Puffelen, 1996). The sociologist, Joli Jensen, is similarly disparaging about the expectation that culture will solve social problems:

> *An imagined category of 'good culture' becomes the way to challenge, subvert, uplift, refine, ennoble, enliven and do other good things. We look to certain forms of culture to make the world a place we want to live in ...*
>
> (Jensen, 2002: 8)

She regards this as tantamount to a form of political displacement activity:

> *If we want to improve our children, our schools, our inner cities, and the lives of the marginal, the elderly, the impoverished, then we should do so directly, rather than argue for a an injection of 'more arts'.*
>
> (*Ibid*: 2)

She also highlights the irrationality of advocates' belief in what happens to us when we are 'exposed' to high culture:

> *We assume, ludicrously, that the effect is embedded in the cultural form itself, released when it is 'consumed'. If this were true, then it would be relatively easy to give each of us doses of good culture, making us into model citizens. Few carry faith in cultural effect that far. Yet the popular accounts of the Mozart effect implied just that – a dose of a sonata would improve brain wiring and math ability.*
>
> (*Ibid*: 4)

Another who dissents from instrumentalist arguments is the consultant Adrian Ellis (AeA Consulting). From a historical perspective, he regards DCMS's expectation that the arts will improve attainment and behaviour, encourage lifelong learning, help to combat crime, create safe cohesive communities and make a substantial contribution to the economy as 'novel, even perverse'.

> *It eschews value judgements that imply a hierarchy of cultural value; emphasises the quantitative in the field where qualitative assessments have been regarded as central; aspires to judge cultural organisations by their efficacy in addressing social and economic agendas that could in some cases to addressed more efficiently elsewhere.*
>
> (Ellis, 2003: 8)

Many of the same points are raised by practitioners, the performing arts lobby in particular. John Tusa, Managing Director of the Barbican, for instance, has described the measurement of the arts and culture in relation to the political ambitions imposed upon them as 'extraneous', 'distant from their true nature', and potentially 'antithetical to their basic functions and purposes' (Tusa, 2002)[81]. Nicholas Hytner (2003), Director of the National Theatre, trenchantly dismissed DCMS's and Arts Council England's social interventions as naive[82]. At the nub of all their arguments is a belief in the 'inherent value' of the arts, which the Canadian museum educator and audience researcher, Douglas Worts, sceptically suggests is at odds with cultural institutions' (art museums in particular) 'knowledge of, or interest in, the cultural needs of communities' (Worts, 2003: 217) [83].

Given the strength of feeling amongst DCMS's cultural constituents and the apparent consistency of DCMS's position on the instrumentality of cultural provision, Tessa Jowell's recent personal essay on *Culture and the Value of Culture* (2004) gives the impression of DCMS having lost its way, if not trying to 'square the circle'.

The Secretary of State's desire to shift the debate back to 'cultural value'[84] is currently of the moment within the DCMS 'family'[85]. Peter Hewitt, Chief Executive of the Arts Council, recently called for '… a fresh evaluation of the inherent value of culture, what I would describe as its "transformative power"' (Hewitt, 2004: 16).

Hewitt describes himself as motivated by the desire to make a case for the 'continued and increased support' of the arts and to relate 'the value of culture to our priorities and choices' (*ibid*: 16). His notion of 'transformative power' is presumably much the same as Jowell's, insofar as it stems from the legacy of English Romanticism in claiming creativity, imagination and humanity for the world of art (Bennett O, 2002).

Hewitt and Jowell believe that the 'inherent value of culture' is synonymous with its 'transformative power' (Jowell, 2004: 14). In order better to exploit this, Hewitt argues that we need to understand how emotional and psychological impacts are fired by different cultural experiences, and what factors might bring these about. This calls for:

> *… comparisons between the active (participant) or passive (spectator) experience, short-term as opposed to sustained experience, questions about contextualisation (drawing out meaning) or letting the art speak entirely for itself. Equally relevant will be issues such as surprise, risk, newness, enjoyment, escapism and the extent to which the experience or encounter engenders a greater sense of well being, connectedness, confidence and aspiration, or simply gives a greater sense of personal meaning.*
>
> (Hewitt, 2004: 15)

Both Hewitt and Jowell take the quality of culture which they promote as a given, but neither considers the investment of time likely to be required to produce the desired effects – even though, according to Tusa:

> *There are no cheap thrills in art, but there are real thrills. They come slowly, gradually, over years and as a result of effort. How do you market such an*

> *unappealing message, which happens to be the real message of the arts, the core – to use the market-speak – of their 'Unique Selling Proposition'?*
>
> (Tusa, 1999a: 117)

This implies that agencies' habit of collecting short-term 'evidence' on 'new audiences' (as determined by the funding cycle) is likely to be relatively meaningless[86].

While the Secretary of State instinctively believes that culture should be 'faced on its own terms and with recognition of what it does' (Jowell, 2004: 18), in her capacity as a politician, she feels incapable of expressing 'this unique power' with the eloquence of a 'cultural theorist or practitioner'[87]. Unfortunately, Hewitt can't express it either, which may be why he has called for an 'investigation into the value of culture itself in terms of its inherent power to move people, change people, and give people new meaning in their lives' (Hewitt, 2004: 14).

> *So, the issue is for researchers to try and understand better how that transformative value might be captured. This raises some challenging questions: First, how can we begin to describe transformative experience? … Second, can we find out what conditions need to be in place for transformative experience to happen?'…'What research techniques would be most applicable to an investigation of this nature?*
>
> (*Ibid*: 21–22)

These lacunae suggest that there is a profound absence at the heart of cultural policy and, perversely, potentially even greater pressure to measure the unmeasurable.

1.2.4 Observations and possibilities for future research

That current cultural policy might be on the cusp of changing is suggested by three political statements – two made in 2003 by Estelle Morris and Chris Smith, and one made by Tessa Jowell in 2004. Not only does Jowell's essay, *Government and the Value of Culture*, invite a debate on the issues raised, but a growing body of literature on 'cultural value', predominantly generated by Demos, suggests that it is already taking place[88].

The ministerial statements referred to above reflect how government policy for culture has been articulated to date, the degree to which it has adequately served both its sector and the public, and how it might be better formulated in the future. They

acknowledge, for example: how the rhetoric that has come to be associated with the department has been used to caricature politicians' interest in 'mass access'[89]; that in emphasising the instrumental benefits of culture, 'the more difficult approach of investigating, questioning and celebrating what culture actually does in and of itself' was avoided (Jowell, 2004: 8); that they used the wrong language to express the value of culture (*ibid*: 18; Morris, 2003: 3–4), but did so knowingly in order to attract increased funding from the Treasury (Smith, 2003); that the targets and the system of accountability rolled out across the sector were inappropriate (Smith, 2003; Morris, 2003, 3–4; Jowell, 2004: 18); that their approach was over-determined (Jowell, 2004: 18); and that they have been left wondering how to 'best capture the value of culture' (*ibid*).

The subject of my thesis is the gap between DCMS's intentions and its effects. While Smith, Morris and Jowell's statements don't explicitly refer to this, in their extraordinarily frank writings they nevertheless admit to their use of rhetoric and acknowledge some conceptual flaws in the department's thinking. To my mind, these contribute very precisely to the disjuncture between the department's aims and its impacts.

In this – the closing section to Part 1 of my thesis – I reflect on how this subject developed in my writing; I identify two particular flaws which I believe to have contributed to DCMS not being able to demonstrate that it is achieving its ambitions; and consider what kind of future research might contribute to a better understanding of the impacts of policy.

My thesis charts New Labour's apparently steadfast commitment to encouraging 'access' from before the establishment of DCMS in 1997. In the period covered by the writings submitted in Part 2, however – and certainly before Smith, Morris and Jowell's statements of the past 18 months – it had become increasingly evident to me that DCMS's position was characterised by certain inconsistent and possibly contradictory principles.

Those of which I was first aware were 'excellence' and 'access' (Selwood, 1999b), which both Secretaries of State came to resolutely deny as being incompatible (Jowell, 2004: 10; Smith in DCMS, 2001b: 7). I subsequently came to recognise that the evidence base was too poor to use for the construction of evidence-based policy (Selwood, 2001a: xliii–xlv); that there was actually little indication of evidence being used to adjust policy (Selwood, 2004a: 66–72); and that certain policy initiatives were not necessarily leading to the desired outcomes. (The removal of admission charges to the nationals, discussed below, is a case in point.) The DCMS family's public statements – increasingly subject to 'news management' – understandably exposed little of this (see 'The landscape of research into cultural policy in England' above) and gave the impression of linear and logical progress between intention and effect.

1.2.4.1 Intentions and effects

The supposition of a secure relationship between aims and outcomes is, of course, neither unique to DCMS nor to cultural policy. In establishing the difficulties of this proposition, Bechhofer *et al*'s (2001) work has been particularly useful to me. I can identify very close parallels between the dynamics of social science research exploitation, as set out by them, and the impact of cultural sector provision.

> *In the linear model, research is presumed to generate new knowledge that is diffused to potential users and will then give rise directly to changes in user behaviour. Such linear 'impacts' might readily be attributed to particular projects and could thus be captured by audits and research evaluation procedures. In practice, both researchers and users agree that this model is inappropriate in most cases. Despite this sharp divergence from reality, the rhetoric of the linear model has proved remarkably resilient. Though research bodies do occasionally acknowledge the criticisms that have been made of linear expectations of research impacts, organisational thinking seems to revert to this set of presumptions, which are evident in their pronouncements and practices.*
>
> (Bechhofer *et al*, 2001: 136)[90]

The authors note that in social science policy making, as in cultural policy making,

> *The main reason for looking for such causal links would be to make a case to the paymasters. But, none of the research done so far shows such a link. We have to make a leap of faith and say that 'we believe that doing so and so is*

> *worthwhile'. This is what we are effectively doing at the moment. We have to dress it up in terms of the number of interviews that have been carried out to address the value for money aspect, but there is little likelihood of being able to categorically determine the benefits ... One constructs an answer to fit in with existing structures, which expects to see causality: 'we are putting this money in, what are we getting out?*
>
> (*Ibid*: 136)

Bechhofer *et al* all also observe how 'such rhetorics by repetition come to be accepted as accurately reflecting reality' (*ibid*: 137). This is equally true in the context of cultural policy. The Chancellor of the Exchequer's commitment to roll out free admission to university museums on the basis of the nationals having generated a '70 per cent rise in attendance' since 2001 (HM Treasury, 2004: unpaginated)[91], is a good example. My own research suggests that increases in attendance at the nationals are neither uniform nor just the result of free admission (Selwood and Davies, forthcoming), and it is very unlikely that the initiative will produce the same boost in attendances at university museums.

If such rhetorics have militated against DCMS achieving its ambitions, are there others? As highlighted elsewhere in my writings, public debate has already focused on the relative incompatibility of the department's utilitarian and 'arts for art's sake' agendas, and between its aspirations for excellence and access. The following paragraphs focus on two other non-sequiturs, both of which have their origins in the rhetoric – neither of which are explored in the literature, but both of which might constitute the basis for future research and might contribute to a greater understanding of the potential effectiveness of policy initiatives. These are the relationships between the creation of greater access and instrumental effectiveness and between 'personal value added' and the public good.

1.2.4.2 Access and instrumentality

The very considerable literature on the profile and nature of museum and gallery attenders presents the typical visitor as possessing high educational attainment and social status (see, for example, MORI, 2004). These determinants were identified by the French sociologist, Pierre Bordieu, in *L'Amour de l'Art: Les musées d'art européens et leur public* (Bordieu *et al*, 1969). Although Bordieu and other theorists

of 'cultural capital' (see Bennett and Savage, 2004: 7) are fundamental to DCMS's thinking, they are never acknowledged as such (Allin and Selwood, 2004: 2–3).

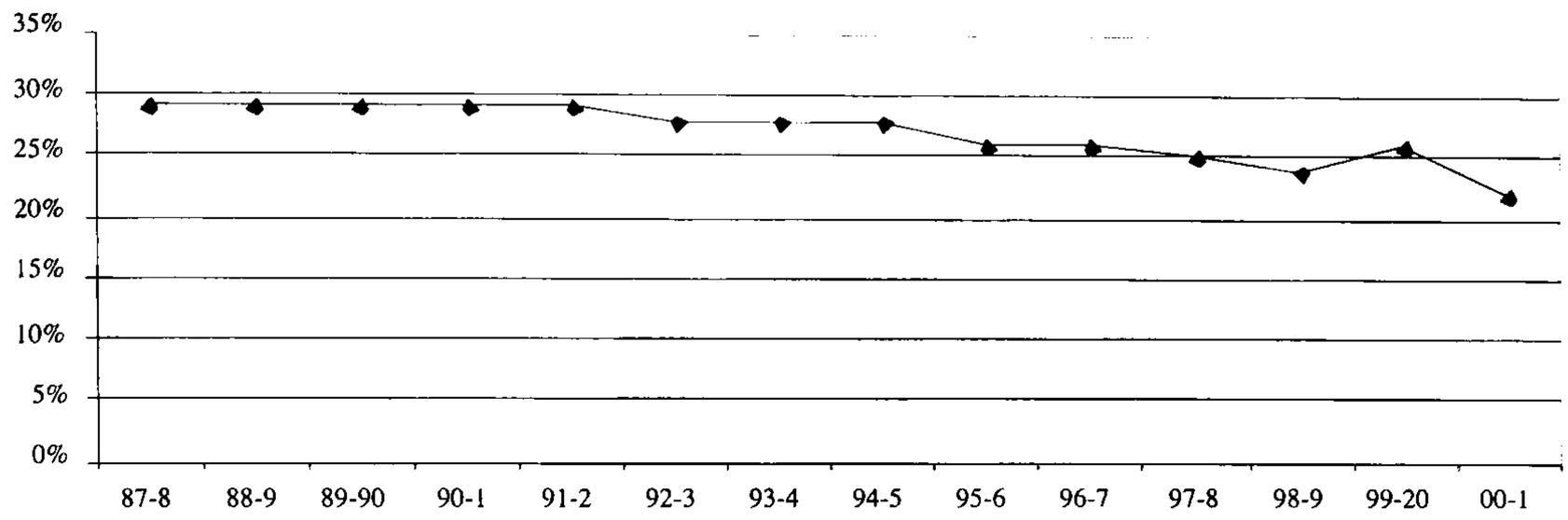
Bordieu's work, however, throws an interesting light on DCMS's policy. He was less interested in the social effects of museum visiting than in the democratisation of museums' visitors, and devoted some attention to considering what it would take to increase

> *... regular visiting [which] expresses and presupposes a more or less complete congruence between the works on offer and the degree of pictorial competence of the visitors, understood as the ability to apprehend the information offered, to decipher it and to perceive meanings – or, rather meaningful forms.*
>
> (Beattie and Merriman, 1991: 71 after Bordieu *et al*, 1969)

In DCMS's policy documents, the concepts of the social effects of museum visiting and the democratisation of museums' visitors are indistinguishable.

Bordieu considered investment in cultural organisations to be 'hardly worthwhile' in terms of achieving this ambition[92]. Expanding the 'educated public' *per se* was more likely to impact on museum visiting, and he estimated that raising the educational levels of those without a *baccalauréat* by three years, would increase the rate at which the French population visited museums by 150 per cent within three generations (*ibid*: 106)[93]. But although a higher proportion of the British population than ever before is now opting for higher education[94], this hasn't, as yet, reversed the decline in museum visiting (Figure 3)[95].

Figure 3: Percentage of the GB population visiting museums, 1988/89 – 2002/03



Source: TGI

In terms of Bordieu's thinking, the government (perhaps perversely) has come to regard museums as centres of education[96]. It assumes that removing specific 'barriers' will increase access to cultural provision, and thus activate its instrumental effectiveness. It supposes that people fundamentally want to participate in cultural activities, and that those sections of society currently underrepresented within the profile of cultural consumers will (more or less, automatically) start to attend[97]. But, this notion may be flawed and the removal of barriers per se may not radically change the profile of museum visitors. The creation of free admission to the previously charging national museums and galleries is a case in point[98].

Since December 2001, when universal free admission was introduced at DCMS-sponsored museums, 730,000 extra visits have been made by C2DEs[99]. As Table 3 shows, these visits account for almost 40 per cent of the additional visits being made. But, not only have the vast majority visits made since 2001 continued to be made by ABC1s, this group accounts for as many as 83 per cent of all visits to the nationals. Between 2000/01 (before universal free admission was rolled out) and 2003/04, the percentage of C2DE visits overall increased by less than 1 per cent. Even assuming that each of these visits were made by different individuals, C2DEs – who represent about 50 per cent of the population[100] – only account for 17 per cent of the nationals' audiences.

Table 3 Number of visits to DCMS sponsored museums (excluding Tyne & Wear Museums Service) by C2DE socio-economic groups, 1998/99–2002/03

	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04[a]
No of visits by C2s, Ds and Es	3.52m	3.33m	4.55m	4.52m	4.77m	5.28m
Year on year change (%)		–5.40	36.64	–0.66	5.53	10.69
Total no of visits to DCMS museums	22.8m	24.18m	27.89m	28.85m	29.52m	30.67m
Proportion of visits by C2s,Ds and Es (%)	15.44	13.77	16.31	15.67	16.16	17.21

Sources: Selwood (2004e). The details for 2003/04 have been calculated from data from correspondence with Richard Hartman, DCMS and DCMS (2004a).

Note: [a]In this column, the C2DE figures for the Museum of London, the Royal Armouries and the Sir John Soane and V&A museums are estimates only, and the total visit figures are estimated out-turns.

1.2.4.3 'Personal value added' and the public good

Bordieu's derogatory judgements about popular culture, and his attachment to high culture (Stevenson, 2003: Jenkins, 1992) find echoes in the Secretary of State's concept of 'complex culture' (Jowell, 2004). My interest is in what constitutes affective culture, and how the nature of the relationship between the affected individual and society as a whole is assumed to operate in the terms of DCMS policy.

Jowell's premise is that 'culture' shows us 'things which we could not see for ourselves', creating 'personal value added' and enriching what she refers to as our 'sixth sense'. It is implied that these qualities are particular to manifestations of subsidised historic and contemporary culture, which are assumed to be of the 'highest standard' (*ibid*).

It could, of course, be argued that what passes as 'complex culture' might not necessarily satisfy these expectations of 'excellence', but that some examples of ostensibly 'simple', popular culture might. The Secretary of State's insistence on the affective nature of complex 'cultural engagement' inevitably begs certain questions about DCMS and its agencies' portfolio of support. Far from just supporting 'great art', the department's own remit covers an increasing amount of participatory arts as well as what Jowell dismisses as 'entertainment'. Both involve the promotion of less 'enriching' forms of provision. DCMS's guidance on Local Cultural Strategies, for example, requires local authorities to provide for 'the needs and aspirations of the

local community' (DCMS, 2000b)[101]; and the department's promotion of the 'creative industries' associates it with manifestations of commercial culture which have historically been considered to encourage any number of undesirable social behaviours – violence, playground shootings, smoking (Press Association, 2003) etc.

While such responses are, of course, also regarded as 'transformative' (Selwood and Irving, 1993: 21–26), negative effects are rarely considered in the literature on current cultural policy. It is unusual to encounter any discussion about the 'aversive' effects of participation in 'high cultural activities'[102].

Although Hewitt (2004: 22) has called for researchers to interrogate the conditions that need to be in place for 'transformative' experiences to occur, it might be more apposite to consider what kind of content would be most effective in delivering the hoped for changes. There are, of course, accounts by advocates which testify to their own experiences (Serota, 2000), and anecdotally report others' 'epiphanies' (Cuno, 2004: 191; Hewitt, 2004: 20). But, there appear to be no comparative examinations of the effectiveness with which specific art works, for example, operate as a catalyst for change, or how that might square with the range of what DCMS and the Arts Council support. The breadth of activities supported, and the acknowledgement that only some (and not others) have the capacity to create 'personal value added', suggest that different values apply and that the department is operating a two-tier system.

The Secretary of State's vision is (by definition) driven by the requirement for 'culture' to contribute to the political mission at the core of government – 'to transform our society into a place of justice, talent and ambition where individuals can fulfil their true potential' (Jowell, 2004: 18). New Labour's 1997 strategy, *Create the Future*, similarly envisaged 'transformation' as being centred on the individual:

> *A person who everyday looks upon a beautiful picture, reads a page from some good book, and hears a beautiful piece of music will soon become a transformed person – one born again.*
>
> (Ruskin; cited in Labour Party, 1997: flyleaf)[103]

The varied nature of the arts and 'culture', and the fact that individual responses are 'just that, individual', however, prompts Hewitt (2004) to acknowledge that the prospect of finding 'common circumstances, factors and characteristics' is 'very difficult'[104]. If the notion of 'transformative' culture continues to be pursued, research questions which might be explored in the future could include how the qualities which are characteristic of the 'born again' individual transfer to local, regional or national communities, and how the private experience of such 'transformation' might transfer to the public good.

To close, in Part 1 of this thesis, I have drawn together a number of the strands that have informed my published writings over the past five years. It explains my interests; sets out the logic which informed the approach taken in my work and explains how I have responded to the challenges of writing about contemporary cultural policy. It presents my hypothesis; the nature of my investigations which explore it; and the conclusions reached, as well as considering further possibilities for research based on the overarching theme of this thesis – the disjuncture between intention and effect. Part 2, which follows, contains the publications themselves.

NOTES TO PART 1

[1] Before New Labour came to power in May 1997, cultural policy tended to be implied, if not articulated, by the activities of government agencies. A previous Labour administration produced the white paper, *A Policy for the Arts: The First Steps* in 1965. This appeared to break with the government's previous reluctance to determine cultural policy, and it contributed to the establishment of a sponsoring department other than the Treasury as well as the appointment of the first Minister for the Arts (HM Government, 1965: para 76). Cultural policy nevertheless remained something of an anathema.

[2] Parts of the Commentary are drawn from ideas explored in three recent unpublished papers (Selwood, 2004b; 2004c; 2004d) in particular.

[3] This Commentary does not consider the distributors of the National Lottery in any detail.

[4] The Fourth International Conference on Grey Literature, Washington, DC, 1999, cited on http://www.nyam.org/library/greywhat.shtml (accessed 19.10.04).

[5] The main 'family' members are ACE, Visit Britain, English Heritage, UK Film Council, Heritage Lottery Fund, Millennium Commission, MLA, Sport England, and UK Sport Council – all of which belong to the DCMS Analytical Services Division's Research Network (DCMS, 2003a: 10).

[6] Although DCMS accepted the Task Force's report in principle (DCMS, 2001a), to date only a quarter of what was called for has been forthcoming (Resource, 2002a). A further £2.2 million was earmarked for education by the Department of Education and Skills (DfES). At the time of writing MLA was anticipating increased funding for the scheme from the 2004 Spending Review.

The amount currently available means that the rate and extent of change is necessarily constrained. In the first instance, funding has predominantly gone to groups of museums in three regions (the 'phase 1 hubs') rather than in each of the nine Government Office Regions (Resource, 2002b). Moreover, as Table A shows, the conceptual basis on which funding has been allocated has shifted from those strands identified in the report to 'ministerial priorities for education and social cohesion' (Babbidge, 2004: 94–95). DCMS indicated that £10 million of the Renaissance settlement would be top-sliced for the delivery of a comprehensive service to schools over the period 2003/04–2005/06, and that this would be supplemented by a further £2.2 million from DfES (Resource, 2003). This is in addition to the DCMS/DfES funding for national and regional partnerships. This is demonstrated in Table A in a later footnote.

[7] My definition, which treats all cultural organisations in receipt of public funding as part of the subsidised sector, is pragmatic if oversimplified. Schuster (1998) suggested that the 'hybridisation' of the sector invalidates the theoretical difference between the public and private sectors. Former Secretary of State, Chris Smith, who was keen to 'foster' the creative industries and maximise the economic profile of DCMS's various sectors, maintained that the distinction between the subsidised and commercial sectors was 'false' (DCMS, 2001b: 6). His principal reasons for state subsidy of the arts (cited in Selwood, 2001b; xxxix and xlvi) are synonymous with DCMS's social and economic objectives.

[8] Represented by the Association of Independent Museums, 'independents' accounted for as many as 40 per cent of all those museums registered with the Museums Registration Scheme as at 17.07.03 (Selwood, 2004a).

[9] By comparison, the libraries and archives domains – with which museums are administratively associated – are at a further remove from DCMS funding. The department is only directly responsible for the British Library (although under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, the Secretary of State has a duty to 'superintend and promote' the public library service). Archives in local government, higher education, business etc, generally fall outside the direct responsibility of the department.

For administrative purposes, all three domains were brought together under the auspices of Resource: the Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries. This was established in April 2000 as part of DCMS's streamlining of the cultural infrastructure (DCMS, 1998a) and is now superceded by the MLA. The rationale for bringing the domains together was that they share many 'functions' in common, that synergies might be encouraged between them and that a more 'holistic' strategic approach could be taken to their development. This approach was rolled out with the establishment of the new Single Regional Agencies and the Council for Museum, Archives and Libraries in Wales (CyMAL) by April 2004.

[10] http://www.artscouncil.org.uk (accessed 03.02.04).

[11] http://www.resource.gov.uk (accessed 04.04.04).

[12] I am grateful to Tim Schadla-Hall, UCL, for sight of his forthcoming paper (Handley and Schadla-Hall, 2004).

[13]I am grateful to Stuart Davies, University of Greenwich, for sight of his unpublished paper (Davies, 2003).

[14] I am grateful to Moira Goatley and Delis Aston, Analytical Services, DCMS for giving me sight of this internal document.

[15] This provides guidance to public sector bodies on how proposals should be appraised before significant funds are committed and how past and present activities should be evaluated (http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/economic_data_and_tools/greenbook/data_greenbook_index.cfm, accessed 27.02.04).

[16] The OST, part of the Department for Trade and Industry, is reviewing the ways in which government departments use and manage scientific research – an exercise intended to 'bring about the same sort of rigour and improvement as has been brought about in the university sector by the Research Assessment Exercise' (OST, 2003a). The first department to be scrutinised was DCMS (OST, 2004).

Reporting to the Chief Scientific Advisor, the remit of OST's Science Review Directorate is to 'focus on the quality and use of science, not value for money' and to 'use a broad definition of "science" to include "hard" and social sciences'. (Science is taken to include research and development as well as monitoring, surveillance and technical inspection (correspondence with Andrew Kruszewski, OST; 02.04.04). This work exists alongside that of the Statistics Commission, an NDPB set up in June 2000, 'to help ensure that official statistics are trustworthy and responsive to public needs' (http://www.statscom.org.uk/index.asp, accessed 21.07.04).

The ten criteria regarded as underpinning 'good practice' in the use of science by government departments were identified in the government's *Cross-Cutting Review of Science and Research*, (accessible from http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk./

Spending_Review/spend_ccr/spend_ccr_science.cfm, retrieved 11.11.04) and informed OST's DCMS review (OST, 2004: Introduction to the Annexes). This is available at http://www.ost.gov.uk/policy/sciencereview/reviews.htm.

[17] See, for instance, Fenton (2004); Lister (2004); Edgar (2004).

[18] When the Minister explained her intention to stand down at the next election, she specifically blamed the language of the 'new style of politics' and the 'terrible consensus' according to which the major parties had 'coalesced around a series of statements that they think define themselves with the public'. In her opinion, New Labour had failed 'to find a language that the public understands' (Parris, 2004).

[19] The literature that informed this review was identified in several ways: through examining web sites, bibliographies, library and computer-based searches – including the contents pages and the cumulative indexes of scholarly journals and research listings (such as *Arts Research Digest)*. I have also drawn on a number of trade e-newsletters, including: *ACORNS*, (the online newsletter of the International Federation of Arts Council and Culture Agencies); *APe-mail* (published by *ArtsProfessional*); *Heritage Link Update*; Research Research Ltd bulletins; *Google Alerts* and the *NMDC newsletter* (published by the National Museums Directors' Conference). I have also been referred to material by colleagues. Although the majority of citations made are to UK publications from 1997, references are also made to unpublished research, to European and North American research and to studies going back over the past 20 years.

In terms of DCMS and its agencies, bibliographic references consulted included DCMS, 2002b and DCMS's online publications' archive which superseded it (see http://www.culture.gov.uk/global/publications/archive_2004/default.htm?properties=archive%5F2004%2C%2C). ACE's research publications are listed at http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/information/publications_for_subject.php?sid=8; MLA's at http://www.mla.gov.uk/information/research/00resrch.asp, and its evidence research at http://www.mla.gov.uk/information/evidence/00ev.asp (all accessed 21.07.04).

[20] There is no single legislative authority for the 'nationals'. As Davies (undated: 13) noted, some were established by acts of parliament (for example, the Imperial War Museum Act, 1920); others by much later legislation (such as the National Gallery and Tate Gallery Act, 1954). In more recent times, legislation has sometimes been explicitly linked to the interests of government policy. The National Heritage Act, 1983, for instance, removed the Science Museum, the Victoria and Albert (V&A) museum and the Royal Armouries from government control, creating Boards of Trustees. I'm grateful to Stuart Davies for sight of this paper.

[21] For a consideration of DCMS's ability to effect non-statutory local authority cultural services see Gilmore (in preparation) and Stratton-Smith (in preparation).

[22] Definitions of 'creativity' and 'the 'creative economy' are subject to intense debate. Howkins (2001: ix) defines creativity as 'the ability to generate something new', and the 'creative economy' as consisting of the transactions in creative products – the value of the intangible, intellectual property and the value of the physical carrier or platform (*ibid*: xiv). DCMS's definition of the 'creative industries' includes advertising, architecture, art and antiques market, crafts, design, designer fashion, film and video, interactive leisure software, music, performing arts, publishing, software and computer services, television and radio. It excludes science (DCMS, 2001c).

[23] This theme was subsequently explored by Smith (1998) and informed the work of Policy Action Team 10 (1999; DCMS, 2001d) and DCMS more generally (as, for example, in DCMS, 2001e).

[24] The government's relationship with the Labour 'luvvies' was marked through a series of high-profile events during DCMS's first six months .These include the Prime Minister hosting drinks for 'creatives' at Downing Street in July 1997 (Blair, 1997; Tusa, 1999 [is this 1999a: chapter 6); the government's crusade to re-brand Britain ('Cool Britannia'), including the design transformation of a floor of Canary Wharf in November 1997 for the Anglo-French summit; and the Chancellor committing £1 billion from the National Lottery proceeds to foster creative talents under the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA). It was also manifest in DCMS's recruitment for particular committees. Richard Branson (Virgin Group), Alan McGee (Creation Records), Paul Smith (designer), Gail Rebuck (Random House), Washeed Ali (Planet 24) and David Puttman (Imagination) were recruited to the Creative Industries Taskforce (DCMS, 1998c: 4). Dawn French, Lenny Henry, Jude Kelly, Sir Simon Rattle and Helen Storey were brought together for the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (whose report was published in 1999). Labour also created a number of peers – Lords Bragg, Puttnam and Ali.

[25] References to the biennial spending reviews *per se* tend not to appear in DCMS's annual reports. In addition to DCMS (1998a), the only document available which describes the department's response to a spending review is DCMS (2002e), which sets out how the capital allocated in the 2002 Spending Review (covering 2003/04–2005/06) will be spent.

[26] I take this to be synonymous with the strategic framework illustrated in Figure 2.

[27] QUEST was, however, wound up within three years of its establishment (see Selwood, 2004a: 69).

[28] Examples of DCMS explicitly following central government policies are evident in a number of areas. These include the Policy Action Team 10's work on social exclusion (1999) and its participation in the Social Exclusion Unit's attempts to create a 'joined up solution' to a 'joined up problem'(Cabinet Office Performance and Innovation Unit, 1998). DCMS's motivation to explore evidence-based policy (DCMS, 2003a) was prompted by Cabinet Office initiatives (Cabinet Office Strategic Policy Making Team, 1999; Cabinet Office Performance and Innovation Unit 2001; Bullock *et al*, 2001). It also followed the lead of the White Paper, *Strong Local Leadership: Quality Public Services* (ODPM, 2001). More recently, it has been working towards ensuring that cultural services are represented in the cross-sectoral inspections (Creative Cultures, 2004; Angela Watson & Associates, 2004).

[29] See comments on the Policy Action Team 10 in the previous note. The establishment of the Creative Industries Taskforce was reported to have brought together for the first time all the departments with something to contribute (Smith, 1998: 11).

[30] DCMS was initially regarded as being virtually synonymous with the promotion of the cultural economy: indeed, the Creative Industries Taskforce was launched on the same day that the department's new name was announced (DCMS, 1997).As its publications reveal, the Taskforce was not only concerned to map those industries (DCMS, 1998c; 2001c), but also to maximise their contributions to the economy, a role subsequently assumed by the DCMS Creative Industries Division.

The status attributed to the economic contribution of museums and the visual arts, however, remains more uncertain. The visual arts (as opposed to the arts and antiquities market) were not included in DCMS's definition of the creative industries, and museums were only considered to be 'related' to them (DCMS, 1998c: 5).

While the National Audit Office has considered the more limited field of income generated by the nationals (2004), the conference *Building Tomorrow: Culture in Regeneration*

acknowledged DCMS and the lottery distributors' need to assess the regenerative impact of large scale cultural capital projects (DCMS, 2003c).The department's move towards a policy position is manifest in the consultation paper, DCMS (2004b) and the summary of evidence to date (Evans *et al*, 2003).

[31] In its paper, *Modernising Government*, the Cabinet Office defined 'modernisation' as a 'long-term programme', which is central to the government's programme of 'renewal and reform', and whose purpose is to 'make life better for people and businesses' (Cabinet Office, 1999). Amongst DCMS publications concerned with the reform of museums are those concerned with: the establishment of a Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (DCMS, 1999a); the efficiency and effectiveness of government-sponsored museums and galleries (DCMS, 1999b); and investment in regional museums (RMTF, 2001).

Other publications concerned with 'public sector reform', touch on museums more generally. These include those concerned with the more equitable distribution of lottery funding (DCMS, 2001f: Gore *et al*, 1999; 2000) and the maximizing of opportunities for such funding (DCMS, 2001g). Other guidance relates to the modernising of local government, in particular the development of Local Cultural Strategies (DCMS, 2000b); the integration of cultural and community planning (Creative Cultures, 2004); and performance assessment (DCMS, 2002c).

Reviews of DCMS's 'modernising' delivery include: the various QUEST reports to the Secretary of State; the National Audit Office (NAO) and Select Committee reports on the work of DCMS and its NDPBs; the department's own reviews of the National Lottery (DCMS, 2003d; 2003e); as well as reviews of its own operations (DCMS, 2000a; 2004c) and OST's recent review of the department's quality and use of science (OST, 2004).

The standard monitoring and reporting of the department's operations include its annual reports; business plans; performance reviews; public sector agreements; funding agreements; resource accounts; spending reviews; and strategies, as well as the quinquennial reviews of its sponsored bodies. The most recent include DCMS, 2003b, 2003a and 2004a.

[32] The mantra, 'for the many not the few', effectively characterised DCMS's approach during the early years (DCMS, 1998a; DCMS, 1999c; Smith, 1998: 142). The department's major initiative of free admission to the nationals is best tracked through press releases rather than formal publications (DCMS, 2000c; DCMS, 2002d; DCMS, 2003f; DCMS 2004d) and the Select Committee's enquiry into free admission (HoC, 2002; DCMS, 2003g). The development of other access initiatives tends to be reported by the agencies concerned; the New Audiences Programme, for instance (Johnson *et al*, 2004; ACE, 2004a; 2004b)

Tracking the evolution of DCMS's 'community' theme is relatively complex, not least because it encompasses 'social inclusion', 'regeneration' and cultural planning.

Although DCMS has traditionally had very little influence over local authorities, its guidance on Local Cultural Strategies (DCMS, 2000b) promoted cultural planning at the local level, based on a shared sense of direction for the local community.

[33] The department's interest in enhancing access for children and young people in particular, has been a constant theme. Its emphasis on museums' education not least in respect of its fostering 'creativity', is manifest through a number of documents (Anderson, 1999; DCMS, 2001b), and the £112 million initiative, *Creative Partnerships* (based on the report of the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education, 1999).

Over the past five years, the strategic importance of museum and gallery education has increased considerably. DCMS and DfES have collaborated on a number of shared initiatives including the forthcoming museums and galleries education policy; *Renaissance in the*

Regions – where hubs have drawn up and are working to Education Programme Development Plans; and MLA's *Inspiring Learning for All* (http://www.inspiringlearningforall.gov.uk/default.aspx, (accessed 12.07.04), which sets out ways to improve and measure museum learning.

Since 1999, DCMS and DfES have provided somewhere in the region of £30 million specifically earmarked for museums education, (Table A). However, museums education is also funded from a number of pockets of other government funding, including those provided by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the New Opportunities Fund, the AHRB, MLA, the Regional Development Agencies and DfES.

Table A: DCMS and DfES funding for museum education programmes

Source	Programme	£m	Dates
DCMS	Education Challenge Fund	0.5	1999–2001
DfES	Museums and Galleries Education Programme	4.0	1999–2004
DfES/DCMS	*Renaissance in the Regions*	12.2	2003–2006
DfES	*Museums and Galleries Lifelong Learning Initiative* (Campaign for Learning through Museums and Galleries)	0.3	1999–2002
DCMS/DfES	National/regional museums education programme	7.0	2005/06
DCMS/DfES	National/regional museums education programme	2.6	2003/04

Sources: DCMS/DfES (2004) and correspondence with Annabel Jones, DCMS (23.04.04) and Richard Hartman, DCMS (05.08.03).

[34] However, as Selwood (2004a: 34) points out, there is some variance between the target for Public Service Agreement Target 2 as expressed in DCMS (2003b: 25) as '500,000 visits by new users to regional hub museums, including 100,000 from ethnic minorities' and that expressed in MLA's funding agreement,'to attract additional 500,000 visits to Regional Hub Museums by new users predominantly from social classes C2 D E and ethnic minorities by the end of 2005/6' (DCMS, 2003h: 1.1.6).

[35] I'm grateful to Professor Oliver Bennett, Centre for Cultural Policy Studies, University of Warwick, for sight of his review (Bennett O, 2004) ahead of publication.

[36] My working definition of 'think tank' is an organisation that carries out research and makes policy recommendations concerning current social and public issues, and may be non-profit making. They may, however, not necessarily be independent, and many are also associated with performing a public relations role by serving political parties and generating results that serve the advocacy goals of their sponsors. See, for instance, http://www.disinfopedia.org/wiki.phtml?title=Think_tanks (accessed 19.10.04). Examples of think tanks referred to in this thesis include the independent Policy Studies Institute (PSI), as well as Demos and the Institute of Public Policy Research (ippr), both of which are associated with New Labour. I am grateful to Shirley Dent, PSI, for discussing how to define think tanks with me.

Schuster (2002: 119–151) regards the most visible and highly evolved research agencies in Britain as DCMS's former Statistics and Social Policy Unit and Economics Branch (now Analytical Services, part of the Corporate Services Division); the Research and Development Directorate of the then Arts Council of England (now part of the External Relations Directorate, Arts Council England); the journal, *Cultural Trends*; and the two consultancies, International Intelligence on Culture and EUCLID. This thesis considers the output of first two, because they represent the interests of active public policy and funding bodies. The last

two are concerned with overseas and European funding and other opportunities, and their work falls outside the remit of this thesis.

[37] This category covers such baseline statistics (as provided by Selwood, 2001a, cited in DCMS, 2003a), as well as 'ground clearing' research, which is intended to describe the situation being addressed by strategic developments or funding schemes. For the sake of comprehensiveness, these often take the form of meta-analyses (for example, Jermyn, 2001; Reeves, 2002; Wavell *et al*, 2002).

[38] These are rarely made public beyond three-year plans. Exceptions include Hewison (2000) and Henley Centre (1995; 2000).

[39] MLA has, rather confusingly, distinguished between research and evidence. Its 'evidence activities' are divided between its statistics and its impact evaluation programmes (http://www.mla.gov.uk/information/evidence/00ev.asp, accessed 20.07.04). MLA (2004c) describes the future proposed for its research. I am grateful to Sue Howley, MLA, for alerting me to this.

[40] ACE's description of its research can be found at http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/aboutus/research.php (accessed 20.07.04); see also Hutton *et al* (in preparation). Its guidance, toolkits and support are designed to assist artists (for example, Moriarty, 2003) and other 'cultural workers', particularly those in local authorities. This function is common to DCMS (2000b; 2000d; DCMS/ERCC, 2002a; 2002b) and MLA (2004b) and such local authority bodies as the Local Government Association (Coalter, 2001a; 2001b; Allison, 2001); Health Education Authority (1999); and the Institute of Amenity and Leisure Management (ILAM,1999).

[41] For information on the general absence of long-term research, see Arts Research Digest (2004) and Lidstone, (2004: 49). In an exception to the rule, ACE has commissioned two ten-year studies – one an impact study of the Gateshead Quays development (Bailey *et al*, 2004) and the other a study tracking the lottery-funded Space for Sport and the Arts (a £130 million joint government and lottery funded programme, which distributes capital grants to around 300 primary schools to improve their sport and arts facilities.) These studies are distinct from the evaluation of major, multi-million pound initiatives, such as the National Policy for Theatre in England and *Creative Partnerships* (Hutton *et al*, in preparation) for ACE, or MLA's monitoring of *Renaissance in the Regions*.

[42] See also Hutton and Fenn (2003).

[43] For example, reporting on the English population's 'engagement with the arts', Skelton *et al* (2002) associate the Arts Council with attendances at and participation in activities not remotely funded by the Council itself.

[44] ippr was formed in 1986, in the wake of Labour's third successive election defeat, to act as 'a dynamic, independent catalyst for progressive thinking on the centre-left'. It claims to have contributed to a considerable range of New Labour policies (http://www.ippr.org.uk/about/, accessed 10.08.04).

[45] DCMS has, however, recommended the establishment of a DCMS research centre (DCMS, 2003a: 15).

[46] The Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) has been carried out periodically to assess the quality of UK research and to inform the selective distribution of public funds for research by

the four UK higher education funding bodies (see http://www.rae.ac.uk/default.htm, accessed 17.10.04).

[47] ESRC's research database contains summary details of all ESRC-funded research since 1985 and their associated publications and products (see http://www.esrc.ac.uk/esrccontent/ourresearch/regard_intro.asp, accessed 25.10.04). An example of a funded cultural policy project is *Cultural Capital and Social Exclusion: a critical investigation* (see Bennett and Savage, 2004).

[48] An example of an AHRB-funded piece of cultural policy research is *The Meanings of the New Millennium Experience* (the outputs of which include McGuigan and Gilmore, 2001; 2002).

[49] I'm grateful to Michael Jubb, AHRB, for guidance on these points. See Jubb (in preparation).

[50] See http://www.ahrb.ac.uk/awards (accessed 20.07.04). Exceptions include the AHRB/ACE Fellowships in Impact Assessment launched in 2003. These are intended to develop and promote better methodologies for the evaluation of socio-economic impacts; improve the expertise and capacity to undertake impact evaluations; and to enable the concept of impact evaluation to be embedded within the core work of their respective sectors (http://www.ahrb.ac.uk/news/news_pr/2003/ahrb_unveils_new_fellowship_scheme.asp, accessed 12.07.04).

[51] Correspondence with Faye Auty, AHRB, 04.05.04.

[52] Examples include the Unit for Arts and Offenders, University of Manchester (Hughes, in preparation) for ACE; the Research Centre for Museums and Galleries, University of Leicester (Hooper–Greenhill and Moussouri, 2002) for MLA; and the Centre for Leisure and Tourism Studies, University of North London (Evans and White, 1996; White and Evans, 1998) and London Metropolitan University (Evans *et al*, 2003) for DCMS.

[53] Examples include the collation of data on the creative industries by the Department of Arts Policy and Management, City University (DCMS, 2001c); assessing the robustness of evaluations of social inclusion projects (Centre for Leisure & Sport Research, Leeds Metropolitan University, 2002) for DCMS; the reanalysis of existing data sets by the Loughborough, Westminster (Wright *et al*, 2001) and Surrey (Sturgis and Jackson, 2003) universities for Resource.

[54] Examples include examinations of the distribution of lottery funding by Sheffield Hallam University (Gore *et al*, 1999; 2000) and the collection of data on schools participating in education programmes (Hooper–Greenhill *et al*, 2004). Consortiums established to work on new data collection systems may also include academics (for example, DCMS, 2002d).

[55] OST (2004: ix) notes that DCMS 'tends not to look beyond its NDPB family for scientific input as much as it should'.

[56] Indeed, despite all the methodological problems implicit in attempting cross-national comparisons – not least around definitions, classifications, data collection and the desire for methodological consistency (Trimarchi, 1994; IFACCA, 2002; Kelland and Selwood, 2002) – there is a vast literature on comparisons, which constitute a staple of much academic literature on cultural policy (including, for example, Quinn, 1998; O'Hagan, 1998; Bianchini and Parkinson, 1993) and may be inspired by the notion of harmonisation of various facets of European cultural administration.

[57] There were, for example, four years between the end of the period covered by Quinn and the publication of her book (1998).

[58] Self-published research reports include, for example: Pratt (1997) by LSE; Ackrill and Ackrill (2000) and Kawashima (2000), both by the Centre for the Study of Cultural Policy, University of Warwick; and those of by the Research Centre for Museums & Galleries, University of Leicester (http://www.le.ac.uk/museumstudies/bookshop/rcmg_publications.htm, accessed 21.07.04).

[59] Communication with Dr Maurice Davies, Museums Association (21.07.04).

[60]... as an artist, art historian, freelance writer and reviewer, fund raiser, curator and gallery director and trainer. I still undertake consultancy for various NDPBs and sit on various advisory and governing bodies.

[61] This particular strand of my work closed with Ashworth *et al* (1999) and Pitts *et al* (1999).

[62] This came about through the convergence of several initiatives in the arts in particular, including those concerned with the arts in schools (Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1982); the Arts Council's development of an education policy and provision of seed funding to support it (ACGB, 1984: 19); its prompting the formation of the National Association of Gallery Education (NAGE) in 1988 (subsequently renamed, engage).

[63] School visits, then as now, tended to constitute the largest component of museum and galleries' education departments work loads and consume a substantial proportion of their resources.

[64] See, for example, Anon (1997a). Constructing a baseline picture of the museum and gallery domain has been central to a series of research that I undertook on behalf of Resource, including Wright *et al* (2001); Cultural Heritage Consortium (2002) and Selwood (2003b; 2004e).

[65] In the event, it took several years for the criticisms to surface, see Belfiore (2002), Merli (2002) and Matarasso (2004).

[66] The book itself developed out of the 'At Home with Art' project, based on the commissioning of nine contemporary artists to make mass-produced objects intended for sale to the general public and distributed through Homebase (Painter, 1999). The artists were Angela Bulloch, Tony Cragg, Richard Deacon, Antony Gormley, Anish Kapoor, Permindar Kaur, David Mach, Richard Wentworth and Alison Wilding.

[67] DCMS highlights the need for a baseline understanding of its sector by reference to the government's experiences during the BSE and FMD episodes, when effective and timely policy responses were handicapped by lack of understanding of operational procedures (2003a: 7).

[68] Exceptions include national baselines for museums (Prince, 1985; Coles *at al*, 1998) and for the arts (ACE, 2000).

[69] Inevitably, there are, of course, also shortcomings in the data available for baseline studies. The former Museum & Galleries Commission's database, DOMUS, for instance, was plagued by poor data capture, variable response rates and lack of verification and the facts that it was dated by the time of publication, was never used strategically and was difficult to access (Wright *et al*, 2001). Other studies, which are geographically and subject-limited, include the 'mapping' documents produced by the regional museum services from the mid-1990s, which

tend to focus on collections and typically use a scoring system to demonstrate improvements across a range of core museum activities (see, for instance, South West Museums, 2002)

[70] This criticism can be applied to British Market Research Bureau's Target Group Index (TGI) data, which draws on a portfolio of continuous omnibus surveys and is used to track attendance at cultural events. Despite being based on an overall annual sample of about 25,000, representative of the GB population and weighted up to the population as a whole, the data it produces are considered open to interpretation because of the nature of the questions asked (Selwood, 2002a: 20).

[71] *DCMS Resource Accounts 2003–04*, available at http://www.culture.gov.uk/cgi-bin/MsmGo.exe?grab_id=127&page_id=5637632&query=resourceaccounts&hiword=resource+RESOURCED+RESOURCES+ACCOUNT+ACCOUNTABLE+ACCOUNTANT+ACCOUNTED+ACCOUNTING+accounts+ (accessed 25.10.04).

[72] While the most recent data is undoubtedly much improved, continuity with the previous data has – to some degree – been fractured. On the basis of the annual survey form, it is likely that the database could be interrogated to produce disaggregated data for museums in England. However, I had no response to my requests for such data from the Moffat Centre for Travel and Tourism Development, Glasgow Caledonian University, which currently holds the database.

[73] I'm grateful to Adrian Ellis, AeA, for bringing my attention to this.

[74] This reference comes from the reprint available at http://www.highbeam.com/library/doc3.asp?docid=1P1:88404087 (accessed 26.10.04)

[75] Far from exclusively depending on DCMS's funding stream and generating income through tickets, retail and catering (NAO, 2004), the cultural sector depends on a wide variety of subsidies from public and private sector sources. Selwood (2001a) estimated the total value of subsidies from a wide range of sources – including the European Commission; tax concessions; urban regeneration programmes; other central government departments; local authority funding; the national lottery; institutions of higher education; and private sector sources (*ibid*: Appendix 1).

[76] The three studies: Anon (1997b) on cultural activities; and Hutchison (1982) and Wilson and Hart (2003) on the arts have created particular antagonism because they reveal the high percentage of funding that continues to be allocated to London (48 per cent in 1999/2000 and 47 per cent in 1980/01), despite the Arts Council having supposedly adopted strategies to address such inequalities. This follows the standard pattern of social divisions within the UK highlighted by Dorling and Thomas (2004).

[77] The Heritage Lottery Fund, for example, recently commissioned a major overview of its impact (Hewison *et al*, 2004). A number of other supportive collections of evidence and impact studies were prompted by the 2004 Spending Review. These included a batch published by the National Museum Directors' Conference (including: Travers and Glaister, 2004; AEA, 2004; Burdett *et al*, 2004; and NMDC, 2004) and also MLA (Hooper-Greenhill *et al*, 2004).

Such studies are, of course, not exceptional. In recent years, Resource commissioned a plethora of reports 'to demonstrate the impact of our sector on society and the economy' and 'to determine the strategic needs and priorities of our sector' (Resource, 2002b). These include: Wright *et al* (2001); McCann Matthews Millman (2002); Cookman and Haynes (2002); Skelton *et al* (2002); Wavell *et al* (2002); and the Cultural Heritage Consortium (2002).

[78] Evans *et al*, the more critical of the two studies cited, speculate on the reasons for the inadequacy of the data (2003: 63ff). These criticisms include: culture not being recognised in social policy and quality of life indicators, nor in regeneration measurement criteria; the fact that regeneration is fragmented and long term; that measuring impacts is beyond projects' immediate objectives and the interests of projects' funders; the disparities between community and economic regeneration, between a range of indicators, and between the paradigms of 'production and semiotics'; and the time and cost of evaluation.

[79] In preparation for over three years, this was launched in March 2004 to help institutions 'engage their users in learning'; find out what they learn; assess how well they are 'supporting learning'; and improve what they do (MLA, 2004b).

[80] The fact that a number of visitor studies have pointed to the considerable speed with which casual visitors go around exhibitions or look at individual items in displays, inevitably raises questions about the extent of learning likely to occur. Serrell (1997), for instance, pointed to the fact that visitors tend to spend less than 20 minutes in exhibitions.

[81] See also Tusa's book, *Art Matters* (1999a, in particular chapters 6 and 7) and his subsequent spat with Melvyn Bragg in the pages of the *New Statesman* (Bragg, 1999; Tusa, 1999b). Another high profile dissenter was Sir Peter Hall who, in a fit of pique over funding decisions, threatened to establish what turned out to be a stillborn 'Shadow Arts Council' (Kennedy, 1999).

[82] Commenting on ACE's £1.5 million Splash Extra programme, intended to address youth offending (ACE, 2003), he noted:

> *There's a sentimental notion that it's worth spending money on theatre because it might inspire some disadvantaged teenager to watch Romeo and Juliet rather than mug old ladies. Well, it might; but it has to be said that you can watch Romeo and Juliet and still mug an old lady on the way home. There's no direct link between love of the arts and good behaviour. Hitler loved Beethoven.*
>
> (Hytner, 2003)

[83] I am grateful to Douglas Worts for sending me a copy of this.

[84] Jowell's concept of 'cultural value' may owe much to that of 'public value' – put crudely, things that the public value; it is a way of understanding the importance of the shared aspect of public services. This was pioneered by Moore (1997) as well as by Kelly and Muer in their paper on *Creating Public Value* (2002) for the UK Cabinet Office. The notion of 'cultural value' was mooted at the 2003 conference, *Valuing Culture*, and was subsequently explored by Demos (Hewison and Holden, 2004; Hewison *et al*, 2004; Holden, 2004).

[85] See, for instance, English Heritage's response to Jowell's essay (2004); and Hewison *et al* (2004) for the Heritage Lottery Fund.

[86] The £20 million, five-year New Audiences Programme, administered by ACE, for instance, focused on tackling barriers such as transport and price; taking the arts to potential audiences through touring and outreach; promoting the arts in non-traditional venues; and allowing people to 'sample' the arts (ACE, 2004a). While the scheme encouraged over 4 million attendances, it's not clear how it has changed the profile of arts attenders: there appears to have been no baseline data ; no analysis of how many of these 'new audiences' were 'new' to the arts or how many of those first time attenders became repeat or frequent attenders (*ibid*: 221).

In conventional terms, a 'new visitor' might be understood to be one who has never visited a particular museum before or who has never visited any museum before. However, DCMS's definition (DCMS, 2000d) is rather less exacting. It defines 'new' visitors as those who have not visited the same institution within the previous 12 months. They may, however, have visited the same institution at an earlier date or may be habitual visitors to other museums.

[87] Tusa (1999a: 98–99) suggests that Chris Smith would not address the real distinctiveness of 'art' either.

[88] Demos's work in this area has undoubtedly contributed to the evolution of Jowell's thinking. Its latest proposals (Holden, 2004) are for a new 'language capable of reflecting, recognising and capturing the full range of values expressed through culture'. This would recognise the 'affective', or subjective experience of participants and citizens; would contribute to 'broad public value'; would commit to long-term public good, such as equity and fairness; would promote a strong culture, confident of its own worth ('not a weak culture dedicated to the production of ancillary benefits'); would recognise the value of professional judgement over 'evidence-based' policy; and would focus on the public.

[89] As Jowell says of Giles Waterfield's (2003) parody of the department changing its name to ACCESS!: 'How we got here is well charted: how we get away from it is not so easy' (Jowell, 2004: 10).

[90] I am very grateful to Robin Williams, Research Centre for the Social Sciences, Edinburgh University, for sending me a copy of this article.

[91] I take this to refer to DCMS, 2004d.

[92] Bordieu considered various other options for democratising museums, including 'varying the type and quality of works exhibited', thus enabling visitors to be 'attracted by works closer to their own experience and interests' (Bordieu *et al*, 1991: 93), and providing 'verbal or written explanation whose code has already been partially or totally mastered by the receiver, or which continually provided the key to its own decipherment' (*ibid*: 93). But such concessions were likely to contradict the 'values and principles' with which curators act as 'taste makers' to 'an elite of art lovers', and Bordieu observed the *schadenfreude* with which curators, 'generally from privileged backgrounds, who have been reduced to the role of teachers by regulations, note with grim pleasure the limited effectiveness of an activity they are reluctant to carry out' (*ibid*: 98).

[93] Davies (1994: 86) proposed that the mechanics of demographic growth alone would deliver an extra 1 million visitors over the next decade. I'm grateful to him for directing me to this reference.

[94] There are considerable difficulties in mapping the number of higher education qualifications awarded to correspond with the period covered by Figure 3. The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) has published figures going back to 1994/95, a date which marks the reorganisation of higher education in the UK. These data are, however, not directly comparable with earlier data, which are available from the Data Archive, University of Essex at http://www.data-archive.ac.uk.

The figures for England, Scotland and Wales suggest that the number of full-time degrees awarded (including first and higher degrees) increased by 33 per cent between 1994/95 and 2001/02, and that the number of part-time degrees awarded increased by 40 per cent. (HESA, 1995–2003).

[95] My current research into long-term attendance at a select number of national museums and galleries since 1851, suggests that attendance peaked between 1971 and 1987 (Selwood, in preparation).

[96] In 2003 the Secretary of State for Education and Skills suggested that museums might move into the secondary education market and run schools (Kelly, 2003).

[97] Despite DCMS's emphasis on encouraging more people to participate in cultural activities, the percentage of visits to museums by those with a terminal education age of 19+ increased by 11 percentage points between 1992/93 and 2002/03, whereas numbers of those with a lower terminal education age are falling (Selwood, 2004e: 28).

[98] See Martin, 2004.

[99] **Table B: Social grades**

Grade	Social class	Occupation of chief income earner	Proportion of population (%)
A	Upper middle class	Higher managerial, administrative or professional	2.9
B	Middle class	Intermediate managerial, administrative or professional	18.9
C1	Lower middle class	Supervisor or clerical and junior managerial, administrative or professional	27.0
C2	Skilled working class	Skilled manual workers	22.6
D	Working class	Semi and unskilled manual workers	16.9
E	Those at the lowest levels of subsistence	State pensioners etc, with no other earnings	11.7

A,B,C1,C2,D,E - the grades used by the advertising industry and employed throughout marketing and marketing research are the common currency for social classifications. However, these social grades are incompatible with government social classifications. An algorithm to census output data has been used in respect of the data produced by the 2001 Census, but while the results are similar to other sources of information for people aged 16–64, they show differences from other sources for those aged 65 and above (see http://www.mrs.org.uk/networking/cgg/cggsocialgrade.htm , accessed16.11.04.)

Time series on the number of C2DEs in the English population are unavailable. MORI, for instance, only holds weighted data pertaining to the GB population from omnibus surveys (email from Andy Martin, MORI: 11.11.04). However, MORI proposes that, by and large, in the period 1998–2003 the proportion of people within each social class will not have varied much, if at all. At the most, it is likely to have changed by 1–2 per cent. However, the Market Research Society (1991: unpaginated; 2003: unpaginated) summarises occupational groups in GB as comprising 57% and 49% of the population respectively.

[100] http:// www.statistics.gov.uk: Table UV50 (accessed 19.01.04)

[101] This is particularly evidenced in entertainment provided by local authorities at seaside resorts. See Hayler (in preparation) for a discussion of local authorities' provision of 'low' culture, ABBA tribute bands in particular.

[102] An exception to this is research reported to have been undertaken some twenty years ago by David Hargreaves, then at the Inner London Education Authority, which surveyed adults' early experiences of art (Robertson, 2004). I'm grateful to Sue Robertson, City University, for alerting me to this.

[103] A number of DCMS publications conspicuously refer to Victorian notions about the 'transformative' powers of culture, presumably as a way of pointing to the pedigree of its thinking. Both Ruskin and John Stuart Mill are referred to by Jowell (2004: 9) in support of her theory about cultural provision providing 'what matters to people', and Smith (1998: 2) quotes from Matthew Arnold in support of the government's interest in increasing access and 'bringing democracy to culture'.

To all intents and purposes, New Labour appears not to question 19th century notions about the efficacy of the museum as an instrument of social reform, although it is unclear to what extent it is motivated by what Robertson (2004) cites as Arnold's aspiration of 'a national glow … when the whole of society is in its fullest measure permeated by thought, sensible to beauty, intelligent and alive'.

[104] This is, of course, is not only what marketers and audience development specialists have to grapple with on a daily basis (see Maitland, 2004 and Aplin *et al*, 2003 for a review of the current audience development literature). It is also core to the conception of MLA's *Inspiring Learning* framework. This understands 'learning' in broad terms, and marks a conceptual shift away from what was formerly referred to as 'museum education' to 'learning in museums' signalling a philosophical change within museum culture towards a visitor focus. For MLA, 'learning in museums' is:

> *… a process of active engagement with experience. It is what people do when they want to make sense of the world. It may involve increase in or deepening of skills, knowledge, understanding, values, feelings, attitudes and the capacity to reflect. Effective learning leads to change, development and the desire to learn more.*
>
> (MLA, 2004b)

The authors of *Inspiring Learning* describe theirs as

> *… a new approach in museums … informed by contemporary learning theory, Learning outcomes are the results of learning. Each individual learns in their own way, using their own preferred learning styles, and according to what they want to know. Each person experiences their own outcome from learning. But, individual learning outcomes can be grouped into generic categories, and these can be used to analyse what people say about learning in museums.*
>
> (Hooper-Greenhill *et al*, 2004: 3)

The 'generic learning outcomes' include: increase in knowledge and understanding; increase in skills; change in attitudes or value; enjoyment, inspiration, creativity; activity, behaviour, progression.

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the rhetorics of current cultural policy in England

Part 2

PART 2: SUBMITTED PUBLICATIONS

2.1 'MUSEUMS, GALLERIES AND LEARNING' (1999)

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Museums, Galleries and Learning

Sara Selwood

One of the main functions of art museums and galleries is to educate, although such institutions are primarily promoted as visitors' attractions. While education and entertainment are not mutually exclusive, recent government publications have emphasised the importance of the former - stating a desire for our cultural institutions to 'transform' the population and 'enrich the quality of our lives'. Responsibility for education is explicitly vested in museums and galleries' education services, and implicitly conferred in their exhibitions and displays. Some museums, in particular science museums, have deliberately used evaluation and other research techniques to develop audiences. They do so by focusing on what independent visitors know and what they might learn as a consequence of visiting. Such processes are not used in art museums. Moreover, some visitor research carried out in art museums highlights discrepancies between visitors' attitudes towards learning and enjoyment. This chapter explores these issues.

In July 1998, following its comprehensive spending review, the government announced a £300 million increase in cultural funding. Its intention is 'to give hundreds and thousands more people the chance to enjoy the best of artistic activity, to learn about our culture and to visit the great collections of our nation'. [1]

The Secretary of State acknowledges that various factors might inhibit access - inflexible opening hours, unimaginative presentation, and the sheer cost of travel. [2] But, his department's main strategy for increasing visitor numbers is to promote free access to all eleven national museums and galleries, for which it has earmarked £100 million. [3]

The government's concern with what it calls 'access' is characterised by wanting more people of all ages and backgrounds to learn from the country's museum collections. [4] And, in ensuring the delivery of these, and other, goals for the

cultural sector, it intends entering into 'a new contract' with the institutions concerned:

This is not 'something for nothing'. We want to see measurable outcomes for the investment which is being made. From now on, there will be real partnership with obligations and responsibilities. [5]

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) is not only set to reassess the 'arms' length principle', but to establish a 'tough new watchdog' to monitor and improve standards of efficiency and financial management, to promote quality, and to develop tangible indicators of performance linked to key policy aims'. [6]

Such moves were predictable in a climate of increasing accountability. Since 1997 both the Department of National Heritage, as was, and the Arts Council of England [7] have taken to developing and publishing quantitative performance indicators relating to the work of the organisations they regularly subsidize. The Arts Council has also published data on funded organisations' education programmes. [8] Elsewhere, the concept of Best Value is being applied across local authority services [9], and the Heritage Lottery Fund is requiring successful applicants to evaluate the effectiveness of their access projects. [10]

This chapter considers the government's proposals for developing access to museums and their collections. It is presented in three parts: the first two look at the government's starting point:, the evidence currently available about access to museums and who goes; and,the recent history of charging and its impact on attendances. The third part considers the nature of education promoted by art museums, and the difficulties of assessing it; and starts to speculate on the outlook for the future.

My primary focus is the national museums, those showing art in particular. The chapter largely draws on three sets of data: the BTA/ETB Research Services annual Survey of Visitors to Tourist Attractions (published in *Sightseeing in the UK*); the Museum & Galleries Commission's Digest of Museum & Gallery Statistics (DOMUS); and the data published in the DCMS's annual reports. The BTA/ETB data draws on a broadly defined sample of around 1,420 museums and 230 art galleries across the UK, including a constant sample. The MGC's focus is rather narrower, and only refers to registered museums - at most, about 60 per cent of

the UK's museum population. Although covering the same number of museums, it does not contain a constant sample, and has - over the years - suffered from diminishing numbers of returns.

Data on access to museums

One might expect the development of government policies on access to have been informed by a substantial existing body of data. But, relatively little information is available either about individual museums or the national picture. So, although MORI, for example, has been carrying out surveys for several of the nationals over the past ten years, its findings tend to be treated as confidential. Furthermore, the data sets which are available do not necessarily concur. Finding out how many visits are made to UK museums, let alone how many people visit is difficult. Constructing a more detailed picture about who goes, how many people are first-time, 'committed' or even potential visitors is even worse.

Despite a 1994 calculation that 110 million visits were made to museums across the UK, [11] the number of visits actually reported is rather lower. BTA/ETB refers to 79.9 million visits being made to museums and art galleries in 1996. The MGC data for 1997 shows 64.2 million. In making up for its own short comings, the Commission's best estimate for attendances in 1997 is 81 million. [12] This suggests that estimates as to the number of museums visits varies by as much as 59 million. Moreover, a sizeable proportion of all visits - around 22 million - were to the nationals. [13]

The evidence on trends in visiting is no more robust. BTA/ETB's constant sample shows that between 1986 and 1996, museums across the UK experienced a 17 per cent increase in attendances. [14] DCMS data for the nationals shows a 2.9 per cent increase between 1987 and 1997. The MGC suggests a 7 per cent fall in the number of visits made between 1993 (the year that the MGC started collecting data) and 1997 - with BTA/ETB recording an increase of 2 per cent between 1993 and 1996.

However, these figures might be reconciled, it remains that case that even as 'recorded' figures, the number of visits are likely to be overestimates. Allin [15] found that while the charging museums largely used ticketing procedures to derive fairly accurate numbers, as many as six out of the seven non-charging nationals

used hand-held mechanical devices. Edwards' [16] review of the operations of the British Museum illustrated the drawbacks of such techniques. He found that the museum overstated visitor numbers by between 35 and 40 per cent. This reduces its published figure of 6 million visits for 1996 to more like 3.9 million.

While individual museum surveys usually cover visitor demographics, there is little in the way of a UK-wide museum visitor profile. What evidence exists, shows that museum attenders are more likely to be drawn from social groups AB (36 per cent) and C1 (24 per cent), than from C2 (14 per cent), D (11 per cent), and E (12 per cent). [17] Indeed, the standard orthodoxy, based on Bourdieu's research of European art museums and their publics in the mid-60s, represents museum visiting as rooted in social position, formal education, and knowledge of what he refers to as the 'code' - the ability to classify and decipher works of art.

Seen in the context of who it is that currently visits museums, the government's aim of ensuring that 'access to our cultural treasures [is] made available to the many not just the few' [18] implies that it perceives considerable scope for recruiting new audiences amongst non-attenders.

In practice, museums tend to divide non-attenders into two groups: those who are potentially likely to visit, and those who aren't. The Target Group Index, a market research survey, recently identified 2.8 per cent of the population as potential art gallery attenders. [19] These are people who do not currently go to art galleries/ exhibitions, but watch coverage of them on TV. The Tate's current audience development strategy, similarly focuses on people who are 'culturally active' - visit other museums and galleries , but don't happen to visit the Tate. The Gallery refers to them as 'cuspers' - people on the verge of visiting. [20] In many cases, it is galleries' education departments, as distinct from their marketing departments, which purse those unlikely to make independent visits. [21] There are no long term studies of their success in recruiting new gallery-goers from those constituencies.

Various studies have speculated about what visitors' want from museum visiting. Hood, [22] whose work is often cited in the literature, identified this as being in line with life-style preferences and conforming to the criteria demanded of other leisure pursuits: the opportunity to socially interact and participate; the challenge of new

experiences; feeling comfortable in particular surroundings; learning, and doing something worthwhile. Kelly [23] further distinguished between 'those who visit museums because they love being there' and 'those who visit in order to attain a state of having been'. One might question whether the government's strategies are targeted at this latter group. Research suggests that they only visit once.

The 'classic', if not stereotypical, non-visitor referred to in the visitor studies literature represents a stark contrast to the visitor. He or she is likely to be classified as having a low educational attainment, and may come from an ethnic minority group. [24] They tend to regard museums as 'not for the likes of us', [25] as boring and unwelcoming. [26] They assume that museum displays never change, and are uninteresting; that museums are out of the way and expensive. Women with children anticipate difficulties in getting around museum buildings, and doubt that they serve adequate refreshments. They anticipate feeling ill at ease in museums, and doubt that such institutions would offer them opportunities to participate, or socialise in comfortable surroundings. Some even regard museums as unsuitable places to take children. [27]

If this represents the state of museum going in the UK, what of charging? This question is relevant since it seems to have been charging which precipitated the government's recent 'top ups' to the museum sector. [28]

Charging

It is conventionally assumed that charging admission to museums inhibits visiting - and conversely, that not charging encourages it.

The reason why museums charge is financial. Since the mid-90s, revenue funding for the museums' sector from central and local government has been falling. Between 1995/6 and 1999/2000, for example, DCMS's support for the sector, will be down £22 million (10 per cent) from £228 to £206 million. [29] Between 1994/5 and 1997/8 English local authority's funding of museums and galleries fell by £23 million (18 per cent) from £127 to £104 million. [30] (These amounts are given in current values without inflation added in.)

Public sector museums are, thus, under increasing pressure to generate income from other sources. [31] Their need to do so is exacerbated by pressure to

improve visitor services (thereby attracting more visitors) [32] and to sustain the capital development building programmes funded by the lottery. [33]

According to their accounts for the year ending March 1997, the nationals which charge generated nearly £15 million in admissions. [34] On an individual basis, this source of income represented between 1.5 per cent of a museums' income (National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside) to more like 15 per cent (Imperial War Museum). The British Museum and the Tate - neither of which charge for their core collections - respectively generated 0.2 and 1.7 per cent of their total incomes from admissions to special exhibitions.

The furore in the press fuelled by the nationals' deciding to charge and the government's pronouncements on charging has made charging a high-profile issue. This implies that more museums are charging than before. But, it appears not to be the case. The MGC's recent report only identified such a trend amongst the nationals. [35] However, its findings were based on a small sample [36] one third of which comprised independent and National Trust museums - museums which were already likely to charge, and unlikely to change their admissions policy.

The MGC's own time-series data suggests a 5 per cent increase in the number of museums charging for admission between 1993 and 1997. It suggests that 48 per cent of registered museums currently charge for access to their main collections (including 32 per cent of the local authority museums surveyed). The Museum Association's figure is 58 per cent. BTA/ETB data suggests that the number charging has fallen, albeit minimally. It records 50 per cent of museums charging in 1996, against 52 per cent in 1993.

Nor is there much hard data as to whether charging affects the number of visits to museums other than the nationals. BTA/ETB data suggests that between 1993 and 1996 visits increased by 1 per cent, against a 2 per cent decline in museums charging.

Certainly, the number of visits to non-charging nationals between 1987-1997 rose substantially: the British Museum by 52 per cent; the Tate, 32 per cent; the National Gallery, 25 per cent; the National Portrait Gallery, 21 per cent. Visitor numbers at the Wallace Collection rose rather more modestly (7 per cent).

Conversely, visits to the nationals which charge tend to have fallen. The Natural History Museum and the Science Museum, for example, both introduced charging in 1988, and experienced downfalls of 22 per cent and 45 per cent respectively, between 1987 and 1989. Some change in the number of visits reported before and after charging can be attributed to museums' ticketing procedures. The Director of the Natural History Museum, for one, has described his museum's pre-charging statistics as 'almost certainly widely exaggerated'. [37] But charging is not a necessary condition of declining visitor numbers. The Imperial War Museum, which introduced charges in 1989 - after considerable investment in refurbishment and visitor services - experienced an upturn in visitors numbers.

It is unclear whether charging discourages the take up of organised educational opportunities. All the charging nationals offer free or reduced entries to children, schools and other educational groups, as well as to people visiting at particular times, etc., and the unpublished data from two charging nationals suggests that between 38 and 45 per cent of visits are free. One has recorded an increase in the number of group bookings since the advent of charging.

Museums' education and the outlook for the future

The government's interests in learning and measuring outcomes raise a number of questions - not least, what kind of education is it that museums provide, and how might the government assess it?

In so far as they exist, quantitative data about education in museums and galleries just refer to education services. The most comprehensive survey of UK museums [38] thus revealed that just half (51 per cent) offer any kind education services whatsoever; and, that around a third (37 per cent) have some limited provision for education. The most frequent forms of provision are for children and schools.

For their part, visitors are unlikely to associate learning with the operations of museums' education services. They may not even regard their going to museums as educationally determined. But, many non-visitors are deterred from visiting museums precisely because they perceive them as educational institutions. [39] Research suggests they are inhibited from visiting by what they perceive as their lack of knowledge and ability to appreciate art forms, repertoires , or 'codes'. [40] They may describe this in terms of personal deficit, as in 'I can't appreciate

painting because I don't know enough' [41] or, by construing museum visiting itself as deficient ('boring, etc'). Tellingly, they regard the people who do visit museums as 'boffin types', 'intellectuals'; 'yuppies' and are disparaging about those mothers who go 'determined to educate their children'. [42] Ultimately, many suppose that if they visit they will feel put down by the experience. Fine art museums are considered particularly reprehensible in this respect. [43] As things stand, non-visitors' instincts may well be right. As various commentators suggest, unless they possess

the prerequisite knowledge directed to special learning [sic] outcomes or ... special learning interests of his or her own, it is likely little learning will result from the casual perusal of exhibits. [44]

From the potential visitor's perspective, this is only likely to change if the culture of museums themselves changes:

The art world tends to be élitist which puts off adults, as well as children. It's a business - art - and you have to go out there and invite people in and give them a good time. It's not just a place to go and stand and stare, or go into a kind of reverie with a piece of art. You should be approaching it as a business (as a place to entertain people) with the children being provided with interactive things. [45]

Various writers attribute the public's exclusion as a response to museums' failure of communication:

They [non-visitors] *would not resent exhibits if some intelligible explanation was given as to why an object was selected for exhibition* [and] *why it was seen as being art.* [46]

So long as museum professionals produce exhibition programmes intellectually accessible to a small proportion of the population, that 20-25 per cent of potential audience is all that will visit museums. This is true, not because curators and designers are indifferent, but because they are unwilling to modify the manner of presentation and the interpretation of their collections so those without 'the code' can made sense of them. [47]

So, what's the story? It's rare for museums' mission statements or core objectives to refer directly to education. Looking at how they articulate these in their formal documents, it is apparent that most of the nationals list their objectives as collecting, caring for the artifacts in their collections, studying them, improving the state of knowledge about them, and making them accessible to the public. This partly explains why not all curators are motivated by the prospect of educating the public. Only two museums' statements of intent stand out because of their commitment to education. One is the Science Museum whose single and singular mission is 'to promote the public's understanding of the history and contemporary practice of science, medicine, technology and industry'; the other is the Natural History Museum which describes itself as 'dedicated to making natural history as accessible as possible to a wide range of people'.

Since the 1970s, exhibitions in the Natural History Museum in particular, have been conceived to describe a given body of objective knowledge through a set of critical design standards. They offer visitors opportunities to learn about scientific principles, based on the presentation of empirical facts and logical reasoning, and are based on the premise that exhibitions should have explicitly stated objectives, which specify what learning outcomes are intended. [48]

The culture of art museums is radically different - not least because they are so much more ambivalent about their relationship with their publics. [49] Their objectives are more concerned with collecting and presenting authentic objects, than promoting specific ideas. Exhibition curation tends not to be predicated on objective learning outcomes. The approach employed is likely to be 'constructivist' rather than based on logical empiricism, being based on the belief that knowledge is relative rather than absolute, and that the learner constructs his or her personal meanings. So much so, that the Director of the National Portrait Gallery can only accept the Natural History Museum as providing experiential learning opportunities:

The truth is that much of what museums and galleries do is not in any straightforward way educational. If children want to learn about dinosaurs, then they are more inclined to do so from books and CD-ROMs, to which a large proportion of the population now has access. They will visit the Natural History Museum not in order to learn about dinosaurs, although they may do this in

passing, but in order to authenticate the reality of the existence of dinosaurs, to see and experience (so far as it is possible) what dinosaurs looked like. [50]

These different approaches to curating and interpreting displays, directly impact on the issue of monitoring and evaluation. Whereas the exhibitions at the Natural History Museum are subject to formative and summative evaluations which determine, if not ensure, their effectiveness, [51] such procedures do not apply to the vast majority of art exhibitions. It is understood by galleries that the meaning of art can be 'private' or elusive, and that visitors will construct their own meaning from exhibitions. This not only implies that the intentions of the curator are likely to be treated as incidental, but that the effectiveness of exhibitions can never be objectively assessed - certainly not in terms of the usual quantitative performance indicators.

However, it looks like things are changing and that moves are afoot towards evaluating learning in art museums - in particular the Art Gallery of Ontario and the Art Institute of Chicago. Closer to home, the V&A is creating displays with determined educational outcomes. In developing the new British Galleries, it is not only attempting to tell particular stories, but to do so in ways which will be effective precisely because they are being designed for different categories of audiences and different learning styles. The groups being targeted include independent learners (individual adult visitors); specialists; local community, foreign visitors, ethnic minority groups; families school groups and further and higher education groups. The learning styles embrace analytical learners; imaginative learners; common-sense learners and experiential learners. [52]

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Free access for children will be phased in from next year; for pensioners the following year, and for everyone else in 2001. Moreover, all the national museums will be required to produce access plans based on a Code of Good Access Practice [DCMS, 155/97].

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2.2 Museums, Galleries and the Business of Consulting Young People' (2000)

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ESSAY

Museums, Galleries and the Business of Consulting with Young People

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Sara Selwood

Almost all museum mission statements written in the 1990s pay lip-service to widening access and improving opportunities for life-long learning, and many museums aspire to a visitor profile representative of the general population.[1] While visitor profiles vary considerably from museum to museum, overall people aged between sixteen and twenty-four are amongst the least likely to go.[2] Museums and galleries have recognised them as more poorly represented amongst their visitors than any other group.[3] Moreover, visual arts organisations are less likely to target the youth service than most other types of arts organisation.[4] In an attempt to remedy this, over the past decade museums and galleries appear to have become increasingly concerned to attract more independent young visitors – those visiting without education or other organised groups.[5]

Although art museums and galleries tend not to keep detailed records of their education work, various aspects of their relationship with young people have been examined. Published reports include case studies of individual projects[6] and examinations of young people's attitudes towards the institutions themselves.[7] But to date little is known about how such institutions either seek or act on the advice of young people in the setting up of their programmes. This paper considers both issues. It examines why art museums and galleries target young independent visitors, how art museums and galleries set about attracting young people, and the results of those efforts.

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WHY YOUNG PEOPLE ARE A MAJOR TARGET FOR ART MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

There are any number of reasons why galleries might want to attract young people outside formal education – a group whom they may have previously neglected.

Museums and galleries are, by definition, educational institutions. Many were established in the nineteenth century with education at the heart of their brief, and were regarded as contributing to the social and economic well-being of the nation. It is generally assumed that education is fundamental to the visitor experience, and that by definition visitors learn as a result of going to cultural institutions. Increasing access is thus taken to be synonymous with education in the broadest sense.

Several other factors contribute to museums' current concern to improve access. These include financial necessity, social responsibility, increased accountability and the drawing up of performance indicators. A trend towards professionalism since the late 1980s has also encouraged museums to find out who their visitors are, as well as encouraging them to enquire into 'non-users'.

Art museums and galleries are, however, not always explicit about their intentions in working with young people. Yet studies of individual projects suggest that their motives involve audience development, as well as the delivery of specific art educational goals, such as 'de-mystifying' particular twentieth-century and contemporary artworks.

Museums and galleries' concern with young people implicitly also refers to more general educational objectives: instilling in them the habit of life-long learning; securing their right to a sound education; creating good citizens; and, to a lesser extent, fostering the country's future workforce.[8] Institutions often describe projects as intended to 'empower' participants, and increase their confidence. It could be argued that this is essential since young people are considered to have borne a disproportionate burden in the economic restructuring of Britain over the past twenty years, with significant numbers being beached by the transformation of the labour market.[9] It may be indicative of such concerns that many, if not the majority of art gallery projects for young people are targeted at those who might not otherwise have access to the art, who are from minority groups, are unemployed or homeless.[10]

Such concerns also reflect the impact of recent cultural policies at the local, regional, national and supranational levels. The present government, like its predecessor, credits cultural policy and cultural institutions with an extensive capacity to nurture this particular group.[11] Even the United Nations' Convention of the Rights of the Child, ratified by the UK government in 1991, champions the right of young people to participate fully in cultural life and to express themselves through the arts.[12]

PREVIOUS PAGE

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10 Selwood et al., *Enquiry*, p. 78.

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HOW ART MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES SET ABOUT ATTRACTING YOUNG PEOPLE

There is no comprehensive account of the various types of projects that art museums and galleries provide for young people. In fact, it appears that galleries rarely target young independent visitors. Several assume a *laissez-faire* attitude toward young people; some initiate schemes for young people, but confine them to outreach, and others provide one-off activities.[13]

The nature of art museums' enterprises for young people is largely determined by institutional priorities, by the individuals within the institutions who assume responsibility for young people, and by the enthusiasm of individual members of staff. In practice, such initiatives are usually driven by education, community or outreach staff. Yet, much of the effort devoted to attracting young people is better defined as marketing. The two are closely related.

The vast majority of projects for young people focus on their participation, and involve discussions and workshops – often led by artists – in which they can develop practical skills. These practices are driven by a combination of education and youth service approaches that favour direct involvement, with interaction as a key premise of learning, and peer-led activities. These may or may not be intended to equip participants to make choices about gallery going.

A smaller number of projects appear intended to attract more independent young visitors to art museums and galleries. Few, if any, exhibitions are specifically targeted at a youth market, but galleries will involve young people in curating exhibitions, in leading related activities intended to attract their peers, and in helping to develop the quality of young visitors' experiences to the extent that they should encourage return visits.[14]

In their attempts to attract young people, art museums and galleries increasingly appear to be consulting youth workers, as well as young people and children themselves.[15] Their objective is to seek information, advice, opinions, permission or approval from these target constituencies.

In the context of general concerns about democracy, accountability and openness, this practice reflects the wider tendency of public service bodies to refer to their users and potential users.[16] Consultation is in many respects regarded as a tool to improve decision making and, by association, improve services. It can enable service providers to find out about the needs and preferences of users or potential users; reveal dissatisfactions and other problems with services; raise the profile and status of the institution involved and the issues about which they are consulting; provide the public with a means of voicing their feelings; and lend authority to decision making in a wide variety of contexts. It may even improve the internal workings and culture of the consulting organisation.[17]

Museums and galleries' practice of consulting youth workers or young people themselves is understandable, given the

13 Selwood et al., *Enquiry*, p. 11.

14 Selwood et al., *Enquiry*; Rider and Illingworth, *Museums & Young People*; A. Tilley, *Between the Eyes* (Oldham: Oldham Art Gallery) 1997 (mimeo).

15 B. Verge, 'Through the Eyes of a Child', *Museums Journal*, October 1994; S. Marwick, 'Out of the Mouths of Babes' *Museums Journal*, October 1994.

16 See, for example, J. Gordon and V. Griffith, 'A National Poll for Children', in *The Library Association Record*, 99 (7) July 1997.

17 J. Seargeant and J. Steele, *Consulting the Public. Guidelines and Good Practice* (London: Policy Studies Institute) 1998.

constraints under which they work. Projects which galleries organise for young people are unlike their schools' provision in that they typically involve small numbers, and consume a disproportionate amount of time and resources on the part on the institution. In the case of Young Tate, the expenditure was seen as an investment in the long-term development of youth programming at the Gallery.

Art museums and galleries are disinclined to invest in projects without guaranteed attendances, and so they often exploit contacts that already exist between gallery staff and youth workers, who can be relied upon to provide participants for projects. Indeed, some projects are strategically designed to develop such relationships, and are often tailored according to youth workers' representations of the 'needs' of their young people.

Recent examples of museums, galleries and related bodies directly consulting young people – attenders and non-attenders – include projects based at Oldham Art Gallery,[18] across a consortium of museums in Sussex,[19] as well as at Tate Gallery Liverpool. These were concerned to discover: what would bring young people into museums; how the quality of their experience might be improved, with a view to encouraging return visits; what kind of promotional material would attract them, and how it should be distributed. The Museums & Galleries Commission and the Arts Council of England have also commissioned research into what provision children aged seven to eleven, and their parents/carers, felt would encourage attendances to museums and galleries, and how such provision should be marketed.[20]

Young people who are not attenders were found not to have felt themselves alienated from art museums and galleries, but merely thought that they would hold nothing of interest for them. Although first-time visitors expected art museums to be dull, in the event they found that the art museums were 'not as boring as you might think'. However, they wanted to be made to feel welcome, they wanted the cafés to be cheaper, and they wanted betters signs and orientation: 'the art museum is like a maze'. They also wanted better quality displays: 'as you go upstairs it's all brown – yuk', and less text-based information, better presented. Labels were criticised as being 'old and falling apart – it looks as though the museum doesn't care much', and as being poorly placed: 'too high'. Like other visitors, they wanted a greater degree of comfort: 'it's a shame there's nowhere to sit down and talk about exhibits'. Other requirements included music in the galleries, more information in the form of 'statements from artists' and 'audio-guides made by young people'. They also wanted access to the people involved: 'to meet artists' and 'other people working in the museum'.[21]

WHAT RESULTS DO THESE EFFORTS PRODUCE?

If there is a dearth of studies about art museums and galleries consulting young people, there is an even greater paucity of information about

[18] Tilley, *Between the Eyes*.

[19] K Fowle, 'SCRATCH. Free your mind and your art will follow', a project conducted by young people for young people to raise awareness of museums and art galleries in Sussex. Report for work conducted in the project September 1976-June 1997 (mimeo) 1997.

[20] Harris, *Children*.

[21] Fowle, 'SCRATCH'; Tilley, *Between the Eyes*.

how those institutions use the information they gather, and to what effect. Some accounts exist as to how young people involved in curating exhibitions influenced the selection of artworks and their presentation.[22] But there are no descriptions of how any of these consultations have contributed to art museums and galleries' longer-term attempts to change their visitor profiles, or to increase the 'user-friendliness' of the culture of the institutions themselves.

22 J. Hughes, *Ethnographic Study on Aspects of the Young Tate, Liverpool* (University of Liverpool, Institute of Irish Studies) (mimeo) 1996; Rider and Illingworth, *Museums & Young People*.

The following section raises some of the questions that arise from art museums and galleries' involvement with young people, as it appears in the published literature on the subject. It touches on:

- whether the category 'young people' is as useful as it is assumed to be;
- whether by investing in small core groups of young people over a sustained period, institutions are better able to increase attendances by young people in general and to excite their interest in art;
- whether youth workers share museums' and galleries' ambitions of increasing attendances by young people;
- whether the procedures employed before or after consultation are sufficiently rigorous for the consultation to make a difference.

Records of art museums and galleries' consultations with young people suggest that their requirements largely concur with those of adult attenders and non-attenders.[23] Indeed, Willis, who has written extensively on the cultural activities of young people, regards them as merely supplying 'many of the most graphic examples of cultural activity' and believes that his 'basic argument is relevant to cultural activity and cultural provision in general'.[24] From a young person's perspective, Fowle suggests, the category 'young people' may be patronising to those who 'simply see themselves as people and believe that their opinions and awareness of larger issues are as relevant as any adult:[25]

> Even within the 16–25 age range there are people who have been married, divorced, had children, lived independently, governed their own finances, experienced emotional and physical discrimination through unemployment and the work place, made decisions over their education and their future. They have a keen awareness of professionalism and informed views on local politics etc. Young people don't want to get involved in groups where they feel they are being treated as less than adults. They don't want to have their time filled.

24 P. Willis, *Moving Culture: an Enquiry into the Cultural Activities of Young People* (London: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation) 1990.

25 Fowle, 'SCRATCH', unpaginated.

There is, of course, always the issue of the young people possibly being older than the curator involved in their projects.

The general orthodoxy suggests that 'a key factor in [young people's] successful involvement is sustained and on-going support and encouragement'.[26] But, by definition, this

23 V. Trevelyan (ed.), *'Dingy Places with Different Kinds of Bits'. Attitudes Survey of London Museums amongst Non-Visitors* (London: London Museums Consultative Committee) 1991.

26 Harland et al., *Arts in their View*, p. 279.

only pertains to the activities of long-term, small and selected advisory groups.

A characteristic of such core groups tends to be that their interests develop and multiply. Whilst diversifying their activities to satisfy that core group may enable institutions to find different ways to increase the number of young people who attend art galleries, it may also mean that they lose sight of their original goal. To date, Young Tate has embraced workshops, drop-in sessions, three-day projects, a display, and a catalogue. A similar mass of activities is associated with SCRATCH. This project started in 1996 with the production of a magazine and a poster campaign. By 1997 it had planned writing workshops, a second magazine, two exhibitions, as well as other collaborative projects.[27] However, no published evaluations of either project have confronted the issue of whether particular types of activity have actually contributed to changing institutions' visitor profiles in the short-term, let alone the long-term.[28]

This raises two questions: first, what do galleries get out of investing in core groups of individuals beyond the point of consultations; and, secondly, does the institutional will exist for them to act on the information gleaned as a result of the consultation, whatever its implications?

At one level, museums and galleries need to share their objectives with their consultees. There is some evidence, albeit anecdotal, to suggest that young people are often unfamiliar with institutions' motivations in involving them in projects.[29] Galleries also need to breach introspection among youth workers and young people. Whilst both groups were accepting of projects which they perceived as benefiting them, they were less positive about contributing to institutions' own agendas for audience development.

If art museums and galleries are seriously concerned to encourage young people, it is important that they strictly adhere to certain procedures. They need to identify the concerns which inform the consultation, consider how the advice received might be practically applied, and evaluate the impact of the resulting activities not least in relation to their stated goals. In short, they need to invest in objective evaluation and visitor studies.

Ultimately, remodelling the visitor profiles of art museums and galleries, attracting young independent visitors, and improving their visitor experience calls for changes in the culture of those cultural institutions themselves – particularly in terms of programming. It suggests a relationship of mutual respect and, to some extent, mutual dependency between the young people being consulted and those responsible for making curatorial decisions and decisions about visitor services within the art museum. Perhaps they should take heed of the warning that came out of one such project:

> If their perception is that young people can be considered solely through education and outreach projects, the long term effects will be minimal in terms of attendance.[30]

27 Fowle, 'SCRATCH'.

28 Seargeant and Steele, *Consulting the Public*, p. 257.

29 Selwood et al., *Enquiry*, p. 79.

30 Fowle, 'SCRATCH'.

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J. Harland and K. Kinder (eds.), *Crossing the Line: Extending Young Peoples Access to Cultural Venues* (London: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation) 1999.

F. Matarasso, *Use of Ornament? The Social Impact of Participation in the Arts* (Stroud: Comedia) 1997.

National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education, *All Our Futures: Creativity, Culture & Education*, report to the Secretaries of State for Education and Employment and Culture, Media and Sport (London: DfEE) 1999.

W. Whitfield, *Working with the Arts: Case Studies of Six Youth Art Projects* (Leicester: Youth Work Press) 1991.

2.3 'Access, Efficiency and Excellence: measuring non-economic performance in the English subsidised cultural sector' (1999)

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Access, Efficiency and Excellence: measuring non-economic performance in the English subsidised cultural sector

Sara Selwood, University of Westminster

Abstract

The requirement to evaluate policies and measure performance in the publicly funded cultural sector in the UK has become increasingly pressing since the early 1980s. This chapter reviews the various attempts to do that. It demonstrates how economic and other quantifiable measures have tended to be emphasised whereas the qualitative aspects of cultural provision, which are more difficult to measure, have tended to be neglected.

The chapter presents the first overview of the subject. It covers developments within what is referred to as the 'cultural framework' – the infrastructure associated with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, which includes the 'arts funding framework'. It also looks at developments affecting local authorities' provision of cultural services.

The chapter draws on various published and unpublished policy documents, and accounts, as well as interviews with individuals involved in the development of performance management in the cultural sector. Their views are presented throughout the chapter to illustrate the points raised.

The chapter opens by examining the history of performance indicators in the sector, and maps the current requirements to measure performance. The second section considers the resistance to measuring the performance of arts organisations and museums. In doing so, it examines critical inheritance of former attempts to measure performance, and the issues raised in relation to current aspirations to do so. The third section presents attitudes to future developments, and is based on speculations by those currently involved in museums, galleries, the arts funding system and the introduction of Best Value as to the kinds of impact that the introduction of performance measurements might have. The fourth and final section draws together a series of observations about the introduction of non-economic performance in the English subsidised cultural sector.

3. Access, Efficiency and Excellence: measuring non-economic performance in the English subsidised cultural sector

Sara Selwood, University of Westminster

What are performance indicators for? I suppose, performance indicators are there to make you reflect on what you're trying to achieve, to see the impact that you're having, to encourage you to review what you actually do, and to make you articulate that in a way that you can share with other people.

Introduction

The requirement to evaluate policies and performance in the publicly funded cultural sector in the UK has become increasingly pressing since the Conservative government's Financial Management Initiative of 1982, which called for greater efficiency, effectiveness and 'value for money' at central and local government levels (Butt and Palmer, 1985; Clarke, 1991). These demands were largely implemented through the Audit Commission and the National Audit Office (NAO). From 1983, the former was responsible for auditing and examining the management of local authority auditing in England and Wales, and the latter for reporting on public spending programmes in England, Scotland and Wales. While neither body was, nor is, specifically responsible for cultural services, museums, galleries and the arts nevertheless fall within their remits and are subject to the philosophy which they represent.

Like other public sector bodies, the Arts Council of Great Britain was expected to encourage better management amongst the organisations it supported. Rather than depending exclusively on public subsidy, these were expected to generate a proportion of their own income. As the titles of some of its publications suggest – *Making Arts Money Work Harder* (1986) and *Better Business in the Arts* (1988a) – from the mid-1980s, the Arts Council promoted its funding of the cultural sector in financial terms, describing the arts as a major employer and economic catalyst (ACGB, 1988). These ideas were also promoted by Myerscough's highly influential report on the economic importance of the arts (Myerscough, 1988). In the politically correct jargon of the day, the arts funding system ceased referring to its grants as 'subsidy', and adopted more business-like references to 'investment', 'sponsorship' and 'support', and began alluding to funded organisations as 'clients' and arts audiences as 'consumers'.

Since the May 1997 UK government election, the drive towards greater efficiency and accountability in the public sector has been manifest in such government initiatives as *Modernising Local Government* (DETR, 1998a) and the introduction by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) of what it referred to as 'the new cultural framework' and its related systems of funding agreements and monitoring (DCMS, 1998b). These have both encouraged the development of performance indicators in the cultural sector.

In many respects, that emphasis on financial and economic issues served to override the importance of less tangible benefits of arts funding, often described in terms of 'personal' or 'community development', and it has been argued that although the economic value of arts initiatives has been addressed there have been no major studies of their social benefits. In terms of the UK, this point has been stressed in various publications by the consultancy Comedia, in particular, which has itself undertaken a series of investigations into the social impact of the arts (Landry et al, 1993; Matarasso, 1996, 1997, undated; Matarasso and Pilling, 1999). Of late, however, more attention has been paid to issues of access and participation (Moore, 1997, 1999) and social inclusion – themes which

the government itself is pursuing (Smith, 1998; Policy Action Team 10, 1999). Considerations of the non-economic benefits of the cultural sector have also been attempted in both Australia and the US (Williams, 1997; *Journal of Arts Management, Law and Society*, 1998).

Comedia's criticism of the scale of coverage of the economic benefits of the arts conceivably neglects the difficulties that funding bodies faced in their attempts to find a coherent methodology according to which the qualitative aspects of the subsidised sector could be assessed alongside the quantitative. The first section of this chapter considers that particular history – and looks at the introduction and the current requirements for performance measurement in the cultural sector.

Attempts to measure the performance of arts organisations and museums have typically met with resistance. The sector's reasons for not wholeheartedly embracing such initiatives are presented in the second section. This not only considers the critical inheritance of former attempts to measure performance, but the issues raised in relation to current aspirations to do so.

The third section of this chapter considers attitudes to future developments. It is based on speculations by those currently involved in museums, galleries, the arts funding system and the introduction of Best Value as to what impact the introduction of performance measurements might have.

Section four draws together a series of observations about the introduction of non-economic performance in the English subsidised cultural sector.

Definition

The definition of the cultural sector used in this chapter is necessarily a general one and embraces the subsidised arts, museums and galleries. It considers developments within what is referred to as the 'cultural framework' – the scheme of funding stemming from the DCMS (DCMS, 1998b), and the 'arts funding framework' – funding channelled through the Arts Council of England (ACE), as well as local authorities' provision of cultural services. It does not cover libraries or the built heritage, or refer to assessments of tourism projects (see Department of the Environment, 1990; Lutz and Ryan, 1997).

Approach

The research for this chapter is largely based on interviews with individuals involved in the development of performance management in the cultural sector. Interviewees included representatives of the DCMS; the Arts Council of England, its Lottery and Financial and Business Services Department; the Museums Association; the Heritage Lottery Fund; and, West Midlands Arts; as well as those involved in the development of Best Value. Quotes from interviews have been cited anonymously. The chapter also draws on various published and unpublished policy documents, and accounts pertaining to the introduction of performance indicators in the sector. Enquiries were also made of the English regional arts boards, and the arts councils for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Carrying out the research was tantamount to aiming at moving goalposts. Interviews were carried out during the second half of 1999 while the DCMS and its sponsored bodies were negotiating the details of new funding agreements underpinned by mutually agreed performance indicators. The text for the chapter was updated in February 2000.

Background

This section of the chapter examines current and previous attempts to introduce performance measurements to the arts, museums and galleries. It is divided into five sub-sections which consider performance measurement in the contexts of the DCMS, the arts funding system, national museums and galleries, lottery distributors and local authorities.

Department for Culture, Media and Sport

> *What the Department for Culture, Media and Sport is doing is taking that new government agenda forward. It's extremely well intentioned. There is a genuine desire to change things. As part of 'joined-up' government thinking, the focus is much more on objectives and policies than on delivery mechanisms and inputs.*

The White Paper, *Modern Public Services for Britain: Investing in Reform*, set out the results of the government's Comprehensive Spending Review (HM Treasury, 1998). Like other government departments, the DCMS is now obliged to publish a Public Service Agreement containing its objectives and measurable efficiency and effectiveness targets (DCMS, 1999a). It also has to produce an analysis of its outputs and performance from 1999 to 2000. The Department's objectives and targets are shown in Table 3.1.

The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport is not only concerned that the DCMS furthers government objectives, but that these should also be promoted through various cultural agencies, creative industries, local authorities, and grassroots beneficiaries of cultural activity. Since most of the Department's outputs are delivered by the bodies it sponsors, those bodies are also having to become more accountable. In order to ensure that they deliver outcomes related to policy, the Department has introduced three-year funding agreements based on its expectations:

> *This is not 'something for nothing'. We want to see measurable outcomes for the investment which is being made. From now on, there will be real partnership with obligations and responsibilities*
>
> (DCMS, 1998b)

As a Departmental representative observed:

> *Everything has to be tied back to objectives. There's now a need to say what has been achieved across the public sector. Although the 'arm's length principle' is still there, the funding agreements between the Department and its sponsored bodies will be stronger; targets will be identified; and, there'll certainly be more from the organisations' point of view in terms of developments which they're expected to meet.*

As part of its strategy to raise standards of efficiency and financial management throughout the sector (DCMS, 1998a, 1998c, 1998d, 1999c), the DCMS has also established a 'tough new watchdog to monitor and improve standards of efficiency and financial management, to promote quality, and to develop tangible indicators of performance linked to key policy aims' (DCMS,1998a). QUEST (the Quality, Efficiency and Standards Team) was set up in April 1999 (see the commentary to this chapter). The desire to improve management across the sector is closely related to the government's concern to enhance the integrity of official statistics (HM Government, 1998).

Table 3.1 Department for Culture, Media and Sport: objectives and performance targets, 1999

Objectives	
1.	Create an efficient and competitive market by removing obstacles to growth and unnecessary regulation so as to promote Britain's success in the fields of culture, media, sport and tourism at home and abroad.
2.	Broaden access for this and future generations to a rich and varied cultural and sporting life and to our distinctive built environment.
3.	Raise standards of cultural education and training.
4.	Ensure that everyone has the opportunity to achieve excellence in the areas of culture, media and sport and to develop talent, innovation and good design.
5.	Maintain public support for the National Lottery and ensure that the objective of the Lottery Fund supports DCMS' and other national priorities.
6.	Promote the role of the Department's sectors in urban and rural regeneration, in pursuing sustainability and in combating social exclusion.
Performance Targets	
Objective 1: to increase national productivity	
1.	Facilitate and promote the competitiveness, both at home and abroad, of the creative industries.
2.	Promotion of quality tourism development which is economically, environmentally and socially sustainable and supports the Government's employment objectives (plans to be detailed in the new Tourism Strategy to be published later in 1998-99).
3.	Develop proposals for a future regulatory system for broadcasting which recognises market and technological developments.
4.	Facilitate and generally promote the competitiveness of UK broadcast-related industries and in particular the early take-up of digital broadcast services.
5.	Ensure public service broadcasters sustain quality and range of output. In particular review the BBC licence fee and publish review conclusions for consultation by July 1999.
6.	Work with the British film industry to implement a new joint-funded strategy for the development of the industry by April 2000, as envisaged by the Film Policy Review.
Objectives 2 and 3: to widen access	
7.	Visitor numbers in major national museums to increase substantially, in line with the removal of entry charges for children from 1999-00, for pensioners from 2000-01 and for others in 2001, if Trustees decide to remove entry charges, while maintaining the quality of exhibitions.
8.	Access to the performing arts will increase by attracting new audiences over the next three years, with 300,000 new opportunities to experience the arts. New companies, new work and new venues will be funded and the New Audiences programme will continue to widen access to the arts.
9.	Raise standards of collections care and public access by establishing a £15m Challenge Fund by 1999 to fund new investment in the 43 designated museums.

10.	Extend social inclusiveness by increasing the involvement of identified priority groups in each of the sectors the Department has responsibility for.
11.	Maintain standards and diversity of broadcasting output, and ensure that content is socially inclusive; to secure wide access to broadcast material.
Objectives 2 and 3: to harness the educational potential of DCMS-funded institutions	
12.	200,000 new educational sessions undertaken by arts organisations.
13.	Make the most of the potential of libraries by doubling the number with Internet connections by the year 2000; and by ensuring that at least 75% of public libraries have Internet connections by 2002
All objectives: to agree new standards of effectiveness with the Department's funded bodies	
14.	Funding of NDPBs [non-Departmental Public Bodies] will be conditional on quantified improvements in outputs – efficiency, access, quality, and income generation/private sector funding – monitored by a new independent watchdog. Targets for each NDPB will be announced in funding agreements by March 1999.
15.	Improve efficiency by completing efficiency review of national museums and galleries by end October 1999 (subject to confirmation when consultants are appointed).
All objectives: to streamline policy delivery mechanisms	
16.	Subject to the outcome of a consultation exercise, establish new funding councils for the Performing and Visual Arts, and for Film and create a new national strategic body for Museums, Libraries and archives in place of existing structures and exchange existing frameworks of support for Heritage, Sport and Tourism to achieve a long-term saving of £23m.
17.	Establish the new Film Council by April 2000 with clear objectives aimed at helping to develop film culture and a sustainable domestic film industry.
18.	In streamlining support for the built heritage sector transfer the Department's responsibilities for operating the Heritage Grant Fund to English Heritage by 1 April 2000 and responsibility for underwater archaeology by the same date subject to legislation being passed in the 1999-2000 Parliamentary session.
19.	Establish a new National Lottery Commission and transfer functions from the Director General of the Office of the National Lottery to the Commission (effective from 1 April 1999).
20.	Distributing bodies to develop new strategic plans for Lottery funding as required by the 1998 Act by 1 April 1999 designed to achieve a proper balance between capital and revenue schemes and between different regions of the country.
21.	Devolution of decision making where possible, eg decisions on Lottery grants up to a certain level, and strengthened regional bodies.

Source: DCMS, Public Service Agreement, 1999

The museums sector

In 1990 it was proposed that the museums sector, unlike many other non-profit fields, had almost no measures to assess its success or progress except for attendances, budget size, staff size etc (Ames, 1990). In 1988 the Museums & Galleries Commission established a Registration Scheme, based on minimum standards for museums, which was intended to provide an assurance of quality and professionalism. At about the same time, the Office of Arts and Libraries (OAL) set out to improve the organisation and management in the national museums (OAL,1991).

The activities of the Museums Association

suggest that performance management was a major issue in the wider museums' sector in the early 1990s. In 1991 it published guidelines on performance management (Museums Association, 1991) and two years later commissioned research into which aspects of performance management were in regular use amongst its members and which were proving the most useful (Museums Association/ University of Leeds, 1994). Those findings informed a subsequent Museums Briefing on performance management (Museums Association, 1994). According to an Association spokesperson, its interest in performance management was largely strategic:

> *...in response to the sense that there were going to be performance measures for museums. All the rhetoric was about how they could bring a positive approach to management. I remember... people becoming quite positive about them as they were doing more forward planning with objectives and mission driven approaches to running their organisations... it must have risen up in response to a perceived outside threat.*

The attention of the DCMS – like that of its predecessors, the OAL and the Department of National Heritage (DNH) – is primarily focused on the museums and galleries that it sponsors. It has a general interest in the contribution of other museums and galleries, but has no funding responsibility towards them. The following section considers the OAL and the DNH's introduction of performance measurement to the national museums and galleries. Attempts to introduce measures into the management of local authority museum services are discussed below. While there have been recent discussions about a system by which museums throughout the UK, including the independents, might communicate high-quality standards to their target visitors (similar to the British Tourist Board's system of grading hotels), this is not considered here (Middleton, 1998: 77).

Office of Arts and Libraries and Department of National Heritage initiatives

From 1988, OAL introduced various initiatives to improve the organisation and management which affected the nationals' services to the public. These included the introduction of Corporate Plans, which were intended to provide a planning mechanism for institutions and identify their priorities and budgets for the following five years. In late 1992 the Department also introduced procedures whereby institutions were required, as part of the corporate planning process, to report their achievements against their previous years' objectives and key indicators. The ground work for this was carried out by the consultants, Coopers and Lybrand, who were commissioned by the OAL to devise performance indicators, for and with the institutions concerned (OAL, 1991). Some were intended for Departmental and institutional use and were to be included in the Corporate Plans (Table 3.2); others were intended for institutional use, and were not to be disclosed to the Department.

However, given that there were no consistent formulae for calculating these indicators, when in 1993 the National Audit Office came to assess the nationals' quality of service to the public, it was unable to compare measures used by individual institutions – even though it acknowledged that such comparisons were 'not always appropriate'. It reported that the Department had doubts about capturing museums' performance by quantitative

Table 3.2 Office of Arts and Libraries: performance indicators for departmental and institutional use, and for use in corporate annual plans, 1991

	Performance component	Indicator area
1.	Access and use	Movement in user numbers by category
2.	Access and use	Expenditure per user
3.	Access and use	New loans made
4.	Visitor care/display	Visitors' satisfaction
5.	Visitor care/display	Gallery days: availability vs plan
6.	Display	Achievement of display programme objective (institution specifics)
7.	Access/ display/ visitor care	Visitors' flow
8.	Collection management	Achievement of specified collection management objectives for corporate planning period
9.	Collection management/ scholarship	View of assessors
10.	Scholarship	Scholarly outputs vs plan
11.	Scholarship	Citations/ critical review/other impact assessment
12.	Building management	Major projects: variance in actual time and cost vs plan
13.	Building management	Ratio of planned to unplanned maintenance
14.	Building management	Compliance with fire standards
15.	Building management	Accident levels
16.	Income generation and financial management	Increase in self-generated income by type
17.	Income generation and financial management	Ration of self-generated income to grant-in-aid
18.	Income generation and financial management	Salaries as percentage of running costs, grant-in-aid
19.	Human resource management	Achievement of training programme objectives

Note: Proposed changes
At the time of writing, it was being discussed how the national museums and galleries and the wider museums sector could contribute to the development of the DCMS's Output and Performance Analysis report from 1999–2000. In May 1999 the draft performance indicators which the consultants Deloitte and Touche had recommended to the government were being discussed.
Source: OAL (1991) reproduced in NAO (1993)

indicators alone, and observed that, as yet, the OAL '... had not assessed in depth such performance indicator data as had been submitted by the institutions and were still considering the use to which the data would be put in future' (National Audit Office, 1993).

Although the OAL intended making comprehensive information based on the indicators available, it was not until 1997 that the DNH's annual reports included four to five key performance indicators for

Table 3.3 Key performance indicators for the national museums and galleries from 1997

	BM	IWM	NG[a]	NMM	NMGM	NPG	NHM	NMSI	TG	V&A	WC
Access and use											
Visits (millions)	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Use of the collections: visits and enquiries to reference departments (000s)		✔									
Education											
No of education events											✔
No of schoolchildren/ students in pre-booked groups/parties (000s)	✔			✔	✔	✔					
Nos of schoolchildren and teachers in pre-booked school parties (000s)		✔									
No of school children in organised school parties (000s)							✔				
No of educational visitors								✔			
Attendances at educational programmes (000s)									✔		
Displays											
No of new exhibitions	✔										
No of exhibitions held		✔									
% of rooms refurbished since 1987 (when the Gallery took over care of the building)		✔									
No of galleries supplied with comprehensive visitors' information sheets											✔
Collection											
% of collection accessible to public										✔	
% of collection storage areas which are satisfactory	✔										
% of collections area regarded as environmentally adequate					✔						
% of collection held in environmentally appropriate conditions									✔		
% of collection stored in environmentally suitable conditions											✔

	BM	IWM	NG[a]	NMM	NMGM	NPG	NHM	NMSI	TG	V&A	WC
% of objects stored to MGC's standards								✔			
No of objects loaned	✔										
No of loan arrangements and items loaned				✔							
Total person hours spent conserving objects (000s)					✔						
No of additional specimens captured as digital images (000s)							✔				
Visitor satisfaction											
% of visitors satisfied with their visit								✔		✔	
% of visitors very satisfied with their visit		✔									
% of visitors who would recommend a visit to others				✔							
Financial											
Admissions income (£million)	✔										
Admissions and trading income (£million)				✔							
Profit from income-generating activities (£million)							✔				
Self-generated income as a % of total income										✔	
Self-generated income as a % of grant-in-aid											✔
Cost of generation of sponsorship income as % of income generated								✔			
Grant-in-aid per visit		✔									
Grant-in-aid per visitor						✔					
Pay bill as % of grant-in-aid					✔						
Staff costs as a % of total income									✔		
% of operating costs funded from operating income						✔					
% of scientific research funded through research grants, contracts and commissions							✔				

Note: a) visitor numbers and grant-in-aid per visit are presented in DCMS annual reports as an index
Abbreviations: BM, British Museum; IWM, Imperial War Museum; NG, National Gallery; NMM, National Maritime Museum; NMGM, National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside; NPG, National Portrait Gallery; NHM, Natural History Museum; NMSI, National Museum of Science and Industry; TG, Tate Gallery; V&A, Victoria and Albert Museum; WC, Wallace Collection
Source: DCMS, 1998e

the individual museums and galleries it sponsors. Whilst adhering to Coopers and Lybrand's framework, museums adapted the recommended indicators to fit their own needs and to reflect those aspects of their performances which they chose to emphasise. As Table 3.3 shows, the sheer range of indicators used effectively serves to prohibit comparisons being made between museums. Moreover, some doubts have been raised as to the accuracy of the indicators used for visitor attendance (Allin, cited in Creigh-Tyte and Selwood, 1998).

Department for Culture, Media and Sport initiatives

The DCMS's 1999 annual report announced plans for a review of the efficiency and effectiveness of government-sponsored museums and galleries. In September 1999 the Department published nine associated reports on measures and improvement (DCMS, 1999c). The Consolidated Report contains a business model to help analysis of performance management and, for the first time, an agreed set of standard performance indicators against which the government can measure the progress of sponsored museums and galleries towards the achievement of its objectives. The report also provides a further set of over 300 indicators from which museums and galleries can select measures to assess their individual performance.

The eight 'studies of excellence', published as part of the package, are intended to raise standards in the delivery of education, human resources management, the application of information technology, the collection of visitor information, the storage of collections, facilities management, resource planning management, and the application of the Private Finance Initiative.

In February 2000 the DCMS issued guidance on 22 key performance indicators (Table 3.4) and formally requested information from all its sponsored museums and galleries. The guidance was developed on the basis of a pilot carried out by a sample of government-sponsored museums and galleries in England, Scotland and Wales. The information gathered as a result of the museums and galleries submissions will be used to compare their performance and to construct targets for their funding agreements with the Department. These will specify what each institution is expected to deliver in return for grant support in 2000–01. As is the case with the indicators listed in the Department's funding agreement with the ACE, for 1999–02 the museums' performance indicators will be reviewed after the first year's experience.

The arts funding system

It has been suggested that since it was established, the Arts Council of Great Britain was torn between two objectives articulated in its Charter – developing and improving the knowledge, understanding and practice of the arts, and increasing the accessibility of the arts to the public (Everitt, 1992: 6). Its first Chair regarded the main task of the Council as being to 'give courage, confidence and opportunity to the artist', and worried lest support for what he referred to as the 'welfare side' might be developed at the expense of the artistic side, and standards generally. The prevalence of these attitudes largely mitigated against a sense of accountancy.

Some 40 years after the establishment of the Arts Council of Great Britain, the OAL commissioned a review of the structures by which central government money was used to support the arts in England. The Wilding Report (1989) strongly criticised the lack of clarity, cohesion and common purpose among regional and national arts funding

Table 3.4 Department for Culture, Media and Sport: draft performance indicators for sponsored museums, 2000

1.	User numbers
	1.i total visitor numbers
	1.ii participants on off-site programmes
	1.iii web site usage
	1.iv user numbers - queries
2.	Loan venues
3.	Quality of environment
	3.i quality of environment for collections
	3.ii condition of collections
4.	Public management of national museum and gallery
5.	Quality of collection documentation
6.	Electronic access
7.	Rate of exhibition renewal
8.	Percentage of time open
9.	Publication output
10.	Display and accessibility
11.	Evaluation of user satisfaction
12.	Uptake of educational programmes
13.	Collaborative educational projects
14.	Social incluusion – impact and strategy
15.	Grant in aid per visitor and per user
16.	Proportion of spend on administration and corporate support
17.	Proportion of spend on security and facilities management/ buildings maintenance
	17.i security
	17.ii facilities management/ buildings maintenance
18.	Self-sufficiency indicators
19.	Annual savings achieved
20.	Grant-in-aid as a proportion of total operating spend
21.	Average number of days lost through sickness
22.	Energy consumption

Source: Deloitte and Touche and LORD Cultural Resources and Planning, 2000

bodies and called for an urgent review of the rationale and workings of grant-giving throughout England. Wilding also recommended that full and proper accountability be applied to the spending of public monies in the arts. The then Minister for the Arts responded by announcing structural changes to the arts funding system and proposing that 'to enable the Council and the Boards to carry out their respective monitoring roles, an early priority will be the development of a common database and an agreed set of performance measurements' (Luce, 1990, cited in Bone, 1991).

The Working Party on Planning and Accountability and the National Arts and Media Strategy

At a post-Wilding seminar convened by OAL in 1991, four objectives were agreed as the basis of 'a framework of assessment of the performance of the integrated arts, crafts and media funding and development system'. These were: 'excellence' (subsequently reclassified as 'quality'); 'access'; 'economy'; and, 'efficiency'(Swell, 1994). A Working Party on Planning and Accountability was brought together, which included representatives of the OAL, the Arts Council of Great Britain, the regional arts associations, Council for Regional Arts Associations, the British Film Institute, and the Crafts Council. By 1993, the year when the Working Party last met, arts officers had been trained in relation to the proposed new system of planning and accountability, and the performance indicators considered central to these processes were piloted by those regularly funded organisations that were subject to new funding agreements. These agreements were intended to clarify the Arts Council's expectations of its clients and, conversely, what its clients should expect from the Council.

As a result of the changes introduced after the Wilding Report, the arts and media funding bodies were required to prepare a national strategy which considered a basic framework for their work and to examine 'whether the public money spent has been to best effect, and how those responsible can do better in the future'. Indeed, one of the 1991 discussion documents written during the development of that strategy was concerned with performance assessment (Boviard, 1991). The priorities for the new national strategy were the same as those for the Working Party – 'quality', 'access', 'economy' and 'efficiency'. But the final strategy document, produced after extensive consultation, suggested some degree of ambivalence about the prospect of measuring performance in the arts. It advocated the right of arts organisations to receive funding to fulfil their own aims. And, despite acknowledging that funding decisions should be bound up with issues of quality, the strategy proposed that 'the use of measures and indicators of performance must be clearly circumscribed'. It also acknowledged that the assessment of quality would require an enhanced and enlarged bureaucracy – 'a broader range of experience from both advisors and staff' (ACGB, 1993).

The Working Party's first draft report was published in 1991 (ACGB, 1991). It recommended that the national funding bodies and the new regional arts boards' four-year plans should include a clear statement of their main cultural and other objectives for the period in question; state associated targets; and that the performance of funded organisations should be measured through quantitative and qualitative performance indicators. This would allow agreed comparisons to be made across art form sectors and in terms of the geographic spread of provision.

In setting up a new system of accountability across the arts funding system, the Working Party's starting point was to consider what performance indicators would be appropriate to set against the objectives of the Arts Council itself:

> *We did that on the grounds that we all knew that performance indicators should relate to policy objectives. These were about quality, access and the economy. So, we developed a set of proposed performance indicators related to each of these areas.*

The economic indicators selected by the Working Party included data on the overall turnover, sponsorship, earned income, etc of organisations. But the construction of other quantitative indicators proved rather more difficult. While numbers for attendances at arts events and museums were available, there were few data on the range of people attending and, thereby, directly benefiting from subsidy. One of the Working Party's first initiatives was to commission research into access, in particular the profile of arts attenders. But, in the event, this was never published.

The Working Party's development of a quality assurance system proved even more perplexing, not least because of the subjectivity involved. The Working Party proposed that assessments of the quality of individual organisations took into account organisations' own self-assessments (drawing on the perceptions of their 'customers') as well as the views of the arts funding system, advisors and peers. It, thus, effectively '... triangulated through discussions and debate in an annual review meeting and arrived at an assessment of the organisations' quality'.

The current system of performance indicators

> *What's extraordinary is that it's taken that long – from 1991 to 1997 – to get anything out. Even now, there are substantial data problems with the whole thing.*

In 1994, with the cessation of the Working Party and the establishment of the ACE, the focus of the performance indicators appears to have shifted. The DNH renewed its requirement for the arts funding system to quantify its activities and, according to one interviewee, the Arts Council basically 'just picked something that you could measure – like education and new work'. The DNH also invited the ACE to give further consideration to methods of reporting artistic quality, and although absolute measures could not be provided, the funding system had, at least, agreed the core attributes of quality. These are shown in Table 3.5.

Since 1994/95 arts organisations which receive regular funding and fixed-term funding from ACE and the English regional arts boards have been asked to provide a range of information including details of performance indicators. These are based on the 1993/94 pilot referred to above. That information is collected centrally by ACE's Data Services, Financial and Business Services Department (formerly the Statistics Unit) which has published annual reviews of these data since 1997 (Hacon et al, 1997, 1998, 2000).

The published data cover 1995/96–1998/99. They refer to: income; expenditure; attendance; attendance ratios (attendance in relation to earned income and subsidy per attendance); performances, exhibition days, workshops; deficits; demographic composition of organisations and boards; national companies; art form differences, including touring; new work; education for the 14–19 age group;

Table 3.5 The core attributes of quality agreed by the arts funding system, 1995

Quality	Core attribute
Artistic	• vision and imagination
	• quality of execution
	• power to communicate to target audience
Managerial	• creativity of approach in securing and using resources
	• efficiency of operation
	• efficient use of human resources
Strategic	• capacity to attract and broaden public involvement in the arts
	• fulfilment of local/regional/national role
	• commitment to equality of opportunity

Source: Hoyle, 1995

cultural diversity; arts and disability; equal opportunities.

These data effectively serve as the basis for the collection and publication of other information about the funding system. ACE's Touring Department, for example, collects information about projects undertaken by organisations not regularly funded by the Arts Council. These are in the same format as those collected by Data Services (letter from Touring Officer, 20 November 1999). Moreover, more detailed information than that which is published is now presented to the regularly funded organisations as part of their annual review. These enable comparisons to be made between similar groups of organisations (Whelton, 1999).

Research carried out for this chapter suggests that the majority of arts boards do not supplement the data collected by ACE. The West Midlands Arts Board, however, adds to the standard data collection in order to monitor specific developments in relation to its strategy. For example, the Board reports annually on the proportion of its grant which goes to Asian, Caribbean, African arts-led work. It also uses performance indicators to guide its spending priorities; stimulate officers to plan their work on the basis of results; encourage organisations to think in terms of their strategic significance and performance; and report on the extent to which its key targets have been achieved in the region:

> *We introduced fixed term funding for all of our regularly funded organisations a year ago... on the back of knowing that we couldn't sustain the current portfolio at its current level indefinitely – so, some would have to go. We needed some clear criteria for doing that.*
>
> *We produce an annual report... which shows where these organisations are in terms of their own assessment and our assessment – so you can see the disparity. We report on the areas for resolution. In some cases an action plan would be agreed to address that area and we'll report on it next year.*

We recently published the second of our mini-versions of the Corporate Plan. It describes what we've achieved, promises kept, plans made, and key targets.

The collection of data by the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland arts councils appears somewhat different. For example, the Arts Council of Wales (established in 1994) had 'no previous experience of working to quantified targets' (Arts Council of Wales, 1997). It originally adopted three core measures over a three-year period: the gross income of its revenue-funded bodies; the number of attendances at arts events; and the percentage of the adult population attending a defined range of arts events. When it reset its measures in 1977, the Council was concerned that these should reflect its strategic activity more precisely than had previously been the case; that distinctions should be drawn between hard and soft data (counted attendances as opposed to estimated attendances); that targets should be capable of being adjusted yearly; that they should accommodate lottery schemes, in particular Arts for All; and that the data set should be smaller than was previously the case. Its performance indicators, shown in Table 3.6, are gathered from a variety of sources. These include, but are not exclusively based on, data collected from regularly funded bodies.

The Scottish Arts Council has published sources of income of revenue funded organisations by source, and attendance at revenue funded organisations in its annual reports (see, Scottish Arts Council, 1998). Performance data from the Scottish Arts Council, and the Arts Councils of Wales and Northern Ireland, is available in the digest of arts statistics and trends, *Artstat* (ACE, 2000).

Changes

The Arts Council was always very keen to retain as much autonomy as humanly possible... What we used to do in the past was to create policies that justified what we were trying to achieve.

Now it seems, on the grant-aid side, DCMS is looking at us much more from the point of view of our being an instrument of government. We are taking our lead from the funding agreement... It's turned round... There's a political element to that which is that we have become much more instrumentalist under this government.

Although the performance indicators collected by ACE contribute to organisations' annual reviews and the monitoring of the management of the funding system, it is unclear how – or even whether – they have been used in respect of planning at a national level. As one Arts Council officer put it: 'I can't say with any confidence that the performance indicators we collect at the moment are used for planning purposes.'

It is proposed that under central government monitoring, the collection of basic information will be rationalised across the system. A coherent system of national and regional performance indicators for the arts will be established, and regularly funded organisations will be encouraged to carry out self-assessments (Donagh, 1999).

Although completing performance indicator forms is a condition of regular funding by ACE and the regional arts boards, a 100 per cent response rate is rarely achieved (Feist, 1999). There is also some ambiguity as to the validity of the figures (Selwood et al, 1999). It may be that some organisations saw little benefit in filling in forms in the past. The Arts Council anticipates managing the process better in the future:

Table 3.6 Arts Council of Wales: objectives and core measures, 1997

Objectives	Core measures
1. Develop arts economy	• turnover of revenue funded bodies
2. Increase arts attendances and arts purchases	• arts purchase index: number of paid attendances, publisher sales, video and audio sales; collector plan sales • attendances at visual arts and craft exhibitions • attendances at community touring events and at performances in schools
3. Increase participation in arts activity	• attendance at workshops, residences, classes, rehearsals • numbers of participants in voluntary arts organisations
4. Develop the practice of the arts and creation of new work	• returns from new work originated • statistics from new work project schemes • quality assessment from sector review and ACW monitoring
5 Ensure diversity of opportunity to experience the arts	• number of arts organisations with effective equal opportunities plans • analysis of grant distribution to under represented groups, geographically, across arts forms, across languages

Source: Arts Council of Wales, 1997

> *In the future...they'll get it in a context which demonstrates more clearly how the material is going to be used.*
>
> *This new approach from the DCMS, as part of the better government initiative, is very much more output and performance driven, rather than Treasury led. It's about using performance indicators for what they were intended.*
>
> *...there are the performance indicators that we collect from arts organisations which we fund; then there are the performance indicators that we might have internally, to check that our own policies are being achieved; and then there are the performance indicators that we collect in order to endorse our relationship with the DCMS, which underpin the funding agreement.*

This means that ACE will

> *...genuinely look at assessing the impact that our spending has... [and] devise new, more appropriate indicators and measures of performance.*

The system of related performance indicators throughout the new cultural framework suggests that there will be a degree of integration, never previously achieved:

The period of research for this chapter coincided with ACE negotiating performance measures with DCMS for 1999/2002. These were required to fulfil both the Arts Council's own objectives – 'access, excellence and education' – and those of DCMS. As an ACE spokesperson put it:

> *We have to find some means of creating performance indicators which are both meaningful for the DCMS, meaningful for us and relevant to our sphere of influence. That's the current*

problem. The way we're doing that is to try and link them as closely as possible to specific policy-led projects.

In the longer term, for example, our intention would be to use the arts to address social exclusion. We are developing, over a period of time, more sophisticated ways of measuring this which we will discuss with the DCMS as and when the results of that research are available.

ACE's funding agreement refers to DCMS's ten goals for the arts, all of which are supported by the Arts Council. It also lists the performance indicators which will inform the Department's assessment of ACE's achievements and the maximisation of 'the return on the taxpayer's investment in the arts' (Table 3.7). These indicators, which also inform the Council's most recent Corporate and Business Plans, fall into three categories: those which give a robust indication of ACE's performance now; those which require some development over the three-year period of the agreement; and those for which there is not yet a satisfactory indicator, but for which there is a clear requirement for measurement and a concomitant need to develop new indicators over the coming period (ACE, 1999a).

Neither the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, the Scottish Arts Council nor the Arts Council of Wales have funding agreements with their respective sponsoring bodies.

Lottery distributors

As already suggested, in addition to its concerns about grant-in-aid, DCMS is also seeking to monitor the performance of the lottery distributors themselves. In terms of funding to the arts, museums and galleries, this affects the arts councils of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and the Heritage Lottery Fund in particular. The Department's Guidance Notes (DCMS, 1998c) require lottery distributors to produce quarterly indicators for their 'key processes' and describe the performance measures to be agreed by the distributors with their sponsor department. The minimum requirements are set out in Table 3.8.

The Secretary of State also requires the distributors to produce strategic plans showing how their use of resources contributes to the delivery of their objectives. Or, as an ACE officer put it, 'how effectively you, as a distributor, use your funds'.

The Heritage Lottery Fund employs performance indicators for its administration and operations. Its corporate plan sets detailed performance targets for staff and each section. In its response to the Secretary of State's policy directions, it was anticipated that the Fund would

... probably have to do things like indicate what percentage of our budget each year we're going to spend on capital projects rather than revenue projects; how we contribute to our key priorities; what kind of 'milestones' we've produced, and so on.

In ACE's lottery division, government policy directions were stimulating major changes in the distribution of funding:

The over-arching policy at the moment is that the new Capital Programme is going to have to embrace cultural diversity, full access, touring. We're going to have to ensure that there is equal distribution, because there have been complaints that certain areas of the country have not received as much as others... [including] the coal-fields.

Table 3.7 Arts Council of England/Department for Culture, Media and Sport: performance indicators, 1999–2002

GOAL 1: Encourage excellence at every level	
1.i	a statement on the introduction during the first year of this agreement of mechanisms for the assessment of artistic quality of subsidised arts organisations, including assurance that regular and development funding are all informed by such quality assessment
1.ii	a statement of ACE's assessment of how national and other leading English companies compared during the first year of this agreement to similar organisations in the same field in other parts of the world, by peer review body
GOAL 2: Encourage innovation at every level	
2.i	the number of commissions of new work by funded organisations[a]
2.ii	a statement providing evidence that regular and development funding is informed by assessment of innovation
GOAL 3. Thriving arts sector and creative economy	
3.i	a statement of progress made in promoting the health of the arts economy (including small businesses and craftspeople) over the first year of this agreement, drawing as far as is possible on quantitative indicators with proposals for indicators against which progress could be assessed in subsequent years[b]
3.ii	the amount of commercial sponsorship secured by the arts and crafts sectors, as measured by Arts & Business[a,b]
GOAL 4. More consumption of the arts by more of the people	
4.i	the proportion of the population attending arts events[a,b]
4.ii	the proportion of the population attending arts events regularly (at least twice a year)[a,b]
4.iii	attendance at funded organisations by art form[a,b]
4.iv	a statement of progress in developing new indices to improve and/or replace 4.i to 4.iii above
4.v	a statement of achievements in creating new audiences under the auspices of the New Audiences Fund over the first year of the agreement, drawing wherever possible on quantitative indicators
4.vi	a statement of progress in promoting attendance at funded organisations' events by people from ethnic minorities, drawing wherever possible on quantitative indicators
4.vii	a statement of progress in promoting attendance at funded organisations' events by people with disabilities, drawing wherever possible on quantitative indicators
4.viii	a statement of progress made in the first year of this agreement on promotion of the use of the internet and other modern communication technologies by funded organisations in support of broadening access to the arts
GOAL 5. More participation in the arts by more of the people	
5.i	a statement of progress in developing one or more performance indicators for participation, with the aim of introducing the indicator(s) from the second year of this agreement[b]

GOAL 6. More relevant training for the arts sector	
6.i	an ACE/DCMS joint strategy for supporting a National Training Organisation for the arts and entertainment industry
6.ii	a statement of progress on ACE"s research into the training needs of the arts and crafts sectors in the first year of this agreement
GOAL 7. Better use of arts in education in schools and in lifelong learning	
7.i	ACE, in consultation with DCMS and others, to develop quality assurance scheme for arts organisations education policies which will, in subsequent years, lead to the introduction of numerical targets for the proportion of funded organisations achieving particular levels of quality in education
7.ii	the number of subsidised arts organisations with written strategies for education provision
7.iii	the number of education sessions by funded organisation[a]
GOAL 8. To develop and enhance the contribution the arts make to combatting social exclusion and promoting regeneration	
8.i	a statement of the impact over the first year of this agreement of the New Audiences Fund and other initiatives on barriers to consumption of the arts by specific target groups, drawing on quantitative indicators wherever possible
8.ii	a statement of ACE's contribution over the first year of this agreement to broader social inclusion and regeneration initiatives, including its response to the recommendations of the Social Exclusion Unit Policy Action Team's Report[c] on the contribution the arts and sport can make to combatting social exclusion
GOAL 9. To improve public perceptions of the arts	
9.i	those agreeing with the statement 'that the arts play a valuable role in my life'[b]
9.ii	those agreeing with the statement 'that the arts play a valuable role in the life of the country'[b]
GOAL 10. To promote British culture overseas	
10.i	a statement of progress made in the first year of this agreement in promoting ACE's international role, including the creation of a framework agreement with the British Council covering future co-operation
OTHER GOALS	
Strategic review	to ensure that support of particular art form in directed towards the goals set out in this agreement
Regional dimension	ACE will encourage the RABs to work, as appropriate, with Government Regional Offices and other regional bodies, and expect them to participate in the development of Regional Cultural Consortia and the development and delivery of regional cultural strategies in so far as they relate to the arts and crafts sector
Efficiency target	proportion of ACE's grant-in-aid accounted for by total of ACE non-Lottery administration costs[a]

Notes
a) targets given
b) indicators which reflect the overall health of the arts, but which go beyond those outputs for which ACE is directly responsible
c) Policy Action Team 10, 1999
Source: ACE ,1999a

Table 3.8 National Lottery distributors: key process indicators, 1998

1.	Number of applications outstanding expressed as a percentage of applications received[a]
2.	Average time taken to process each application[b]
3.	Administration costs per each completed application[c]

Notes

a) applications outstanding as % of received: $\frac{\text{number outstanding at end of period}}{\text{number received in period}}$

b) average time: $\frac{\text{sum of working days for all cases completed in period}}{\text{number of cases completed in period}}$

c) admin costs per completed application: $\frac{\text{cost of administration in period}}{\text{number of completed applications in period}}$

Source: DCMS, 1998c

To date, however, there has been little in the way of evaluations of the performance of lottery projects to date. As one lottery officer put it:

> *I don't think any of us have actually had performance indicators in place, ever, except of course on the smaller schemes.*

Those smaller schemes include revenue-funded projects, such as the Heritage Lottery Fund's Museums and Galleries Access Fund (HLF, 1998) and the ACE's Arts for Everyone and its New Audiences Programme – all of which call for recipients' self-evaluations. Arts for Everyone required award winners to complete a project activity report before the release of final payments (ACE, 1997). Similarly, applications to the non-lottery ACE New Audiences Programme called for the inclusion of plans for the monitoring and evaluation of projects. These are intended to provide information about the number of people attending events, including the types of people attending by age, culturally specific groups, disabled people and geographical location.[1]

Local authorities

> *Time was when we would have referred to other things in the way the arts are spoken about now – like 'oh, its intangible', 'you can't grasp it', 'there are too many factors to consider'. This was particularly true when it was something that people would instinctively say was 'a good thing' – spending on education, spending on special services, spending on the arts – and no one could measure or capture it. But, these things are being pulled into the net now. The culture of local government is evolving. The notion of accountability will get to the arts eventually.*

The introduction of business managerialism to local authorities from the 1980s was manifest in various forms. It included the introduction of Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) in 1980 and the application of performance indicators by the Audit

1. Although a requirement for details of the audience's experience of the event was mentioned in the *New Audiences Project Plan* (ACE, 1998a), this is not highlighted in the *New Audiences Evaluation Booklet* (ACE, 1998b)

Commission. As part of the Citizens' Charter Initiative, the Local Government Act 1992 established, as standard, performance indicators for local authority services. Under this legislation, authorities were obliged to collect and publish these in the form of performance 'league tables'. Council performance indicators have had to be published locally and nationally since 1994.

Cultural services, in principle, were never exempt from the league tables or other forms of managerialism. Indeed, the Audit Commission proposed performance measures for museums and the arts and entertainment in 1991 (Audit Commission, 1991a, 1991b); and in 1994 the Secretary of State for National Heritage announced that his officials would be working with local authorities to pursue a range of voluntary measures for improving the management of local authority arts facilities, and in so doing to encourage the use of performance indicators (Positive Solutions, undated; DNH, 1995). And, at a local level, individual local authority museums have to comply with a range of internal performance indicators, and authorities themselves refer to the measurable outcomes of their cultural strategies (Moriarty, 1998). But, while it appeared relatively easy to agree indicators for public libraries (see for example DCMS, 1997, 1999b), arriving at national indicators for the museums and the arts sectors proved more problematic.

The Audit Commission first published draft indicators for museums in 1998. The Best Value and Audit Commissions Performance Indicators for 2000/01 don't specify the 'arts' as such, merely 'cultural and recreational facilities and activities'. Nevertheless, in the immediate future – under Best Value – local authorities will have to assess all their cultural services including their arts and museums services (Glaister, 1998). Best Value will also directly affect arts organisations which receive funding from local authorities, and may affect others indirectly.

A recent survey by the Association of Local Government Arts Officers (ALGAO, 1999) of its membership suggested that 56 per cent currently use performance indicators. Table 3.9 provides a breakdown of the indicators used.

Other administrative changes are also likely to affect local authorities' museums and arts services. Local authorities have been asked to draw up pilot local cultural strategies, under guidance from DCMS (1999a). These are intended to advocate the benefits of cultural activities; set strategic contents; identify key cultural issues; establish broad cultural policies; and describe action plans.

These strategies are intended to tie in with Regional Cultural Strategies, which are being drawn up by the new Regional Cultural Consortia. These consortia, comprising representatives of RABs, regional sports councils, tourist boards and English Heritage (DCMS, 1998b), are intended to provide the main focus for developing the spectrum of cultural activities in individual regions (DCMS, 1998b).

For its part, the Museums Association has advocated museum services' inclusion in the local authority listings for some time. Their motivation is essentially strategic:

> *We wanted museums to be in the mainstream of local authorities' policies. Because museums are a non-statutory service the recognition that authorities fund them would be valuable. You can imagine the scenario: key policy makers in an authority must ask, 'Why do we bother spending this money on museums if they're not even in our annual returns? We're under-performing on road*

Table 3.9 Current use of performance indicators by local government arts officers, 1998

Indicator	%
Financial indicators	
• £ cost per user	44
• earned income per year	44
• £ subsidy per user	37
Output indicators	
• total attendances/ users per year and/ or total number of events/ activities per year	74
Efficiency indicators	
• percentage of total capacity achieved	44
• subsidy per user	37
Quality and innovation indicators	
• consumer satisfaction	58
• total number of educational visits	55
• no of new activities/ events and exhibitions per year	45
• press and media coverage, and critical responses	43
Equality indicators	
• visits by target groups: age	25
• visits by target groups: ethnicity	15
• visits by target groups: disability	17
• visits by target groups: gender	15
Outcome indicators	
• community benefit	47
• social impact (including relevance to local arts plan or corporate strategy and economic benefit)	32

Base number: 127
Source: ALGAO, 1999; ACE, 1999b

maintenance, so let's stop spending money on museums which aren't even measured, and spend it on road maintenance instead.'

And, if performance indicators were going to be imposed on museums, we wanted to play a part in getting them right and not having them imposed from outside.

According to the Association, not only have museums been keen to 'sign up', but

One of the things that we were particularly pleased about is that these indicators look at users, rather than just visitors, and actually specify things like... outreach sessions and talks... The other thing they do... [is to introduce] a formula for counting museums that are not run by the authority, but funded by them.

Best Value

With Best Value... local authorities will have to review all their activities. So, at some stage they're going to have to grasp the nettle and look at their expenditure on arts activities and try to find ways of assessing whether they are obtaining Best Value. They won't be able to avoid it because Best Value pertains to all their expenditure.

Best Value, introduced from 1 April 2000, is part of Labour's strategy for the reform and modernisation of local government. It is a management framework which focuses on the performance of local authority services.

A best value authority must make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness (The Local Government Bill, 1999)

The introduction of Best Value was marked in various stages: a 1997 consultation paper, *Improving Local Services through Best Value* (DETR, 1997a) and pilot scheme. In July 1998, a chapter on 'Improving local services through Best Value' was included in the White Paper, *Modern Local Government: In Touch with the People* (DETR, 1998a). This not only included proposals for the abolition of CCT and the securing of Best Value in the provision of services, but set out the government's expectations for the review of local authorities' fundamental performance over a five-year period on the basis of national performance indicators for efficiency, cost and quality. The Local Government Act was passed in 1999.

Unlike CCT, Best Value emphasises public consultation, while maintaining the importance of efficiency – hence 'Best Value' in the delivery of local government services (Davies and Selwood, 1999). Under Best Value, the efficiency of local authorities will be tested by the extent to which they deliver services which meet the needs of local people. Local authorities will have to make pragmatic choices about deciding who is best placed to offer local services and how those services should be provided. They are expected to report back to local communities on how well services are delivered; the extent to which they meet the targets set by the authority; and how well that performance compares with those of other organisations.

Pilot schemes for Best Value have been run in 37 authorities. These pilots were either based on the whole authority or specific activities, and largely pertain to what residents and service users have raised as major issues of concern – in most cases benefits and social services, 'where there's a big conflict between massive demands and limited resources'. Cultural provision did not feature prominently in the development of Best Value. This was largely due to local priorities; the fact that the government is concerned with pursuing concrete plans to turn around poor performance; and the fact that traditional service satisfaction surveys always reflect well on arts, museums and libraries. As a local authority representative put it: 'Since there aren't

Table 3.10 Best Value pilot authorities covering cultural services, 1997

From the 37 Best Value pilot authorities (CCT-exempt)	
Braintree DC	all services
Brighton/Hove Unitary Authority, Tandridge DC and Welldon DC	all services
Exeter CC	leisure management
Great Yarmouth BC	leisure
Ipswich BC	theatre and museums
Lewisham LB	leisure centres
Newham LB	all services
Portsmouuth CC	leisure
Reading CC	all services in which there are opportunities to enhance partnerships
South Norfolk DC	leisure services
Sunderland BC	leisure
Warwick CC	all services
City of York C	leisure services
From the 16 shortlisted authorities (selective exemption from CCT)	
Bedford BC	art gallery and museum
Cambridge CC	no specific services singled out
King's Lynn and West Norfolk BC	all services

Source: DETR, 1997b; Martin, 1997

very good indicators for the arts, it's not something that would come up as poorly performing.'

In the event, only a small number of the pilots considered cultural indicators (Table 3.10) These tended to be those run by smaller authorities who sought to examine all their services. According to one of the team evaluating the pilots for the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR):

> *There are very few arts related services within the pilot authorities. There is some libraries work, some museums work. I haven't come across an Arts and Entertainment Officer whose work generally is covered by the Best Value provided services in Year One. I'm not even aware, as yet, of an arts organisation in the Year Two pilots.*

It is anticipated that when arts services do come to be assessed, it will be in a very similar way to other services.

Table 3.11 Best Value: performance management framework

	National focus	Local focus
'General health' performance indicators	Establish authority-wide *objectives* and *performance measures*	Local aspirations
Service or cross-service performance indicators and some national targets	Agree *programme of fundamental performance* review and set out local performance plan	Prioritise weakest areas – 4–5 year cycle for all services
Service or cross-service performance indicators and some national targets	Undertake fundamental *performance reviews* of selected areas of expenditure	Challenge purpose Compare performance Consult community Compete with others
Year-on-year improvement	Set and publish performance efficiency targets in *local performance plans*	Follow-up action • report on achievement of targets in local performance plan
Test of robustness for local people and central government	Independent *audit/inspection* and *certification*	• address shortcomings
Last resort powers to protect public	Areas requiring *intervention* referred to Secretary of state	• deal with failure

Source: DETR, 1998a

Management framework

The various stages set out for the implementation and assessment of Best Value are shown in Table 3.11.

The Best Value management framework comprises two strands: Best Value Performance Plans and Best Value Reviews. Both involve the use of performance indicators.

Authorities will be required to publish Best Value Performance Plans on an annual basis. These will cover all services, and will comprise:

- a summary of the authority's corporate and service objectives, performance indicators, standards or targets;
- summaries of assessments of the previous year's achievements of service against targets;
- performance indicators, standards and targets incorporated into an action plan for the following year; and
- a statement of the description of setting targets and creating action plans.

Local performance indicators will be set by individual local authorities. These will be tailored to their particular needs. Cross-cutting issues – public health, community safety, social inclusion, environmental sustainability, regeneration, and lifelong learning – will only be able to be assessed at local level. Many arts projects associate themselves with these agendas.

Over a five-year cycle, all local authorities' services will be subject to a 'fundamental' or Best Value Review. The national performance indicators will be set by DETR. It was always stipulated that in carrying out those 'fundamental' performance reviews, authorities should adhere to the govern-

Table 3.12 The 'four Cs'

Challenge	challenge the need for a service to be delivered at all
Compare	compare the levels of service being provided against the best available both inside and outside the public sector
Consult	consult their local community in order to give them a real voice in determining the quality and type of services which they use and pay for
Compete	ensure that the services are competitive, in the sense that they bear comparison with the best and that competition, in whatever form, has been properly employed to bring about the continuous improvements in services that Best Value requires

Source: DETR, 1998a

ment's imperatives – challenge, compare, consult and compete – the 'four Cs' (DETR, 1998a). These are set out in Table 3.12.

Table 3.13 shows the Best Value and Audit Commission performance indicators for 2000/01.

Benchmarking

Best Value is encouraging benchmarking – the comparison of performance between similar local authorities using the same set of indicators. To date benchmarking within the cultural sector has developed largely informally through 'benchmarking clubs' set up to facilitate the exchange of data and information. Those exclusively concerned with museums include the Core Cities group and the Group for Larger Local Authority Museums (GLLAM). By exchanging information, members of such groups are

> *...actually trying to overcome some serious difficulties particularly where money is concerned. Do you include capital debt charges or not? Do you include central establishment charges or not? What do central establishment charges mean in X authority as opposed to Y authority? How do you take into account those little bits of money that appear from different sources from time to time within an authority? So they're looking at some tough methodological issues.*

Outside the public sector, another benchmarking club has been run for a number of years by a group of independent museums for purely commercial reasons.

> *Say, for example, you're the National Tramway Museum in Derbyshire – you get to October and you look back over the summer, and you've had a bloody awful season. One of the things that's important in terms of deciding what you're going to do about it before the next season is finding out whether it's just you that's had a bad year, or whether everybody else has had a bad year. That was effectively the fundamental starting point for their benchmarking club. AIM [the Association of Independent Museums] have never wanted to make this information available publicly. It just circulates within the group.*

In an attempt to give some consistency to the way in which local authorities apply performance indicators to the arts promoters that they fund, ACE

Table 3.13 Best Value and Audit Commission: performance indicators for 2000/01

Best Value performance indicators	
Strategic objective	
BVPI 113	Number of pupils visiting museums and galleries in organised school groups
BVPI 114	Does the local authority have a cultural strategy?
Cost/efficiency	
BVPI 116	Spend per head of population on cultural and recreational facilities
Fair access	
BVPI 119	Percentage of residents by targeted group satisfied with the local authority's cultural and recreational activities
Audit Commission performance indicators for museums and galleries	
13a	The number of museums operated or supported by the authority
13b	The number of those museums that are registered under the Museum & Galleries Commission registration scheme
14a	The number of visits to/usages of museums per 1,000 population
14b	The number of those visits that were in person per 1,000 population
15	The net cost per visit/usage

Source: DETR, 1999; Audit Commission; Home Office

has sought to intervene by suggesting 'benchmarks which authorities can use to assess the relative performance (across authorities) of arts organisations' (ACE, 1999b).

The issues

The Arts Council has protected arts organisations from the inappropriate use of performance indicators. It's been very vigorous in doing that. It's also protected them from the appropriate use of performance indicators.

Previous attempts to measure performance presented officers in the arts funding framework and in local authorities with a series of quandaries. In the former, particularly, these were typically characterised by the implications of unpalatable findings about the profile of attenders and difficulties about accessing the quality of work produced by arts organisations. In the context of a culture which always proclaimed that the arts are unquantifiable and that public subsidy effectively sanctioned the 'right to fail', deliberations also focused on how work conceived as 'innovative' or 'challenging' could be judged. Such predicaments inevitably prompted reconsideration of such fundamental questions as what it was that could or should be measured, how, and why.

This section considers the inheritance of former attempts to measure non-economic performance in the arts funding system and in the context of local authorities' cultural provision. It also examines issues raised by current efforts to introduce performance measurements to the arts and museums.

Access

As already mentioned, in its attempt to research the profile of arts attenders, the Working Party on Planning and Accountability commissioned questions on the back of an Omnibus survey about who it was that attended subsidised arts events. This produced results, which

> *...demonstrated that the arts were overwhelmingly attended by ABs and all the other things we already knew. It didn't really tell us very much about participation rates from other ethnic groups because the sample sizes were too small.*

Although the Museums & Galleries Commission commissioned a review of the potential market for museum visiting some years ago (Davies, 1994) it is still the case that

> *We don't actually know for certain how many people go and who they are. What we know is how many visits are made. The TGI [Target Group Index] stuff actually talks about the percentage of adults who have visited museums and galleries. It's quite low – 24 per cent or so of adults. Even that may be an exaggeration. Other evidence suggests it's actually much lower than that. That's one of the things that needs to be sorted out. The uncomfortable possibility is that there may be relatively few people visiting an awful lot, a more respectable number of people who visit occasionally, but huge numbers who only visit once in a blue moon.*

The Museums & Galleries Commission's recent national survey provides the most up-to-date information on museum visitors' profiles and their frequency of visiting (MORI, 1999). It found that 35 per cent of the adult population said that they had visited a museum or gallery in the previous year, and that their attendance is largely determined by educational level and social class. However the research does not differentiate between attendances at DCMS-sponsored, local authority and other types of museums.

The annual TGI data commissioned by the ACE provide details of the percentage of the adult population who attend arts events, analysed by social grade, education levels and household income. It also examines the proportion of attenders for each type of event who also attend other events. Not only is access to this research restricted (despite being paid for out of public money), but there is a lack of confidence in the data, which depend on respondents' versions of events.

Despite frustrations about the paucity of data on access, there is also a level of discomfort about what a comprehensive audit of arts attendance might reveal:

> *I'm concerned that we've not taken obvious simple steps. But, the reason for that is clear. We'd be embarrassed to the roots of our being if that data were ever gathered. And, if it's gathered it will be disseminated...*
>
> *The things that concern me most are the profile issues, getting proper profiles of arts attenders and comparing them with whom we want to attend. That is one of the most fundamentally problematic political questions in any local authority so it's highly unlikely to be solved in the near future. It appears that in respect of differential access – knowing whether there is evidence of increased access to people who use the arts infrequently, and measuring increased access by people who are economically*

or socially disadvantaged – virtually no new developments have occurred nationally.

The value of the indicators used

But if there have been difficulties in collecting quantitative data, including visitor profiles, there are even greater problems over qualitative data.

An overwhelming sense survives...[that] visitor numbers through the door is both the most obvious and also one of the least satisfactory measures. There have been endless and, so far, fruitless quests to come up with some slightly more qualitative measures... [to] quantitatively measure the quality of the visitor experience. That must apply across the cultural sector quite a lot.

Given that people attend arts events precisely because of the 'qualitative and subjective experience' they offer, it is argued that 'a quantified and objective measurement system can't hope to reflect that'. Moreover, the effect of the arts funding system's emphasis on quantitative measures may have been 'to drive out subjective and qualitative assessment'.

One of the more difficult aspects of ACE's negotiations with DCMS in relation to its funding agreement focused on qualitative measures. For example, the conditions of its funding agreement with DCMS explicitly commit ACE 'to encourage excellence...' and to encourage innovation at every level' (Table 3.7). At present, ACE depends on its collection of quantitative data to describe the amount of new work being undertaken in the form of new commissions (Hacon et al, 1997, 1998, 2000). While this measure is likely to be retained in the future to describe the amount of innovative work being carried out, there are no mechanisms in place as yet to describe the artistic quality of what is being produced. Conceivably, the best that could be done would be to make the judgement as to whether something is 'more innovative', 'suitably innovative' or 'below innovation', and 'above excellent', 'standard excellent' or 'below excellent'.

This is not to suggest that qualitative systems are never used in the cultural sector. They have, in fact, been applied within the museums sector for some years. The Museums & Galleries Commission's Registration Scheme, for example, could be described as primarily qualitative in that it employs a set of relative criteria plus peer review in the form of the Registration Committee (MGC, 1995). The more recent Designation Scheme is similarly conceived (MGC, 1999).

Resistances

As already implied, former attempts to measure the performance of arts organisations and museums met with some degree of resistance. In the context of local authorities, this is manifest at both national and local levels in the Audit Commission's failure to produce performance indicators for the arts and museums until recently, and in the collapse of various local authorities' attempts to assess the performance of their own cultural facilities:

It always struck me that in the first place the difficulty was always going to be getting people to agree that performance indicators of any description were of any value whatsoever. The second problem was in getting them to agree which performance indicators to use. And the third was to get them to actually collect the data and present it in an appropriate way. At one time, I looked at what had happened in one

metropolitan local authority from the mid '80s to the early '90s. There had been at least three attempts to launch a performance measurement system for the authority, all of which foundered because of a mixture of official resistance and elected member indifference.

One reason why local authority arts officers were reluctant to present quantitative performance data was because of how those data might have been interpreted.

Certain data has always been collected as a matter of practice – things like occupancy rates in concert halls and museum visit numbers. They were collected entirely for internal management purposes. But the idea was to try and bury them somewhere out of sight because there was a very strong professional feeling that you didn't want policy to be driven by the numbers. What we [as local authority officers] were trying to do transcended statistics.

There was a very real danger... that if the occupancy levels for, say, the Hallé Orchestra were significantly less than having Roy 'Chubby' Brown, you end up with RCB and not a lot else...You'd end up ... 'dumbing down'.

Within the arts funding system there were also fears about the implications of quantitative data.

The Working Party on Planning and Accountability, for example, was constrained by the possible consequences of its work. The development of performance indicators implied scoring and benchmarking. And the potential existence of such systems was likely to expose arts organisations which were failing financially and make them vulnerable to cuts. Given that those organisations might, in fact, be regarded as strategically significant by their funding bodies, such action would ultimately subvert the arts funding system itself.

The move to score assessments was strongly resisted by all the officers in the funding system and the arts organisations... It did seem politically rather inadvisable to ever produce a report that said '30 per cent of organisations did not meet a quality threshold'. You'd have to ask why you were funding them. If you developed a scoring system, there'd be pressure for everybody to pass. That would undermine the basis of the whole funding system.

Our approach is usually a little more sophisticated if something is strategically important. Amongst one's portfolio of regularly funded organisations are those that are strategically important – ones that you really couldn't countenance losing. All your efforts – when they are seen to be failing – are to support and develop them. Let's take a completely extreme example – a black disability-led arts organisation which is not doing terribly well on the quality front – fails its quality assessment. What one would do with that would not necessarily be to withdraw its funding, but to increase our investment of time, effort, energy, etc to make it work. That's actually what we do the whole time.

A lot of the funding system is actually spent in investing in people and organisations to enable them to develop. If you pulled the plug the first time some organisation hit a crisis, everything would go. But there clearly has to be a fine line between that and saying that you'll never pull the plug.

Other officers in the public sector objected to data representing the public's views. On the one hand, although museums tend to rate highly in local authorities' satisfaction surveys, this can be inherently problematic. How, for instance, might the curators of such museums persuade their governing bodies to invest in improvements? The attitude of the arts funding system towards public opinion has been even more contentious. A Working Party paper of 1992, for example, suggested that its aim of reporting to DNH on improving 'the creative standards of the arts' (Luton and Harrison, 1992) was hindered by officers' prejudice as to the value of audiences' opinions:

> *I remember... trying to look at quality issues and ensure that the views of customers were taken into account... But some people argued that they weren't in a position to make judgements – so how could we possibly take their views into account?*

Consequently, 'quality ...was specified as being fit for purpose'. The term 'fit for purpose' comes from manufacturing industry and the desire to produce cost-effective, fault-free components. But in the context of the arts 'it avoids absolutist views about quality, and ensures that reference is made to the people who are benefiting'. In fact, the arts funding system sought to distance itself from the need to act on judgements of quality at all. The Working Party's 1992 document emphasised the importance of upholding the 'maximum degree of autonomy by constituent parts of the funding system'. It asserted that its work was constrained by the fact that the funding system had no direct control over the creation and production of 'quality' work. Consequently, funding bodies could absent themselves from making judgements about the quality of work produced by the arts organisations which they supported: 'Failure to produce quality work cannot necessarily be equated with poor performance by the funding system' (Luton and Harrison, 1992).

The fact that the Working Party thus disassociated itself with assessing the quality of work produced by sponsored bodies may have inadvertently served to condone the relative absence of quality assessment in the sector in general. But, as an outside observer noted:

> *... many people felt it would have been clever to start imbedding a process of managerial and artistic quality assessment within the funding system.*
>
> *I don't think the arts yet have really caught up with the revolution in quality management. In most parts of the public service now there's a real desire to know how much people enjoy or how much benefit they get from any service whether it's hospital treatment, residential care, home care, adult education. There's a real desire to know how much better-off you are, and what's happened to the quality of your life as a result of being through the process. Only the arts continue in their quality assessment systems to look at whether people think that the booking system is appropriate, the toilets are clean, the cloakrooms are open, and almost never ask people about their perception of the performance, the actors, the direction.*

Resistances to the introduction of performance measures in local authorities can also be put down to the amount of paperwork likely to be generated, and the prospect of having to manage change:

Some senior officers were resistant to them [performance indicators] in that they saw that their freedom to manage their Services appropriately would be constrained by the centre, which was represented by the policy team. Some were reluctant to participate in a corporate scheme because they had actually already got quite sophisticated indicators and they felt that the corporate initiatives were running behind them. So, there was a mixture of reasons why nobody was terribly happy. You'd have to add to that a general feeling that collecting this data and then having to write reports and present them was an unnecessary overhead on getting the job done. This was especially the case when people weren't convinced that the data being collected was reliable, or that the conclusions that could be drawn from it wouldn't be particularly helpful either... Of course, in some instances, they didn't want the true story told.

The development of the new cultural framework and the funding agreements which bind it together is changing the culture of the arts funding system. An Arts Council interviewee highlighted the difficulties of changing habits:

Trying to break out of a culture which is resistant to the collection of data and the use of data for planning purposes is very difficult... The Arts Council and the arts world are afraid of data. The bigger issue... is that as a sector we've been very bad at wanting to try and measure the impact that we have. We've resisted measurement and said 'It's about quality, instinct and gut reaction. That's the basis on which we make decisions, and that's what gives quality to the arts. That quality can't be measured'. I think that's misguided, and it's been extremely unhelpful in making it possible to make a case for the arts.

The other factor is, just in very practical terms within parts of the funding system, that people don't want to use research or data as the basis for decision making and funding allocation. Funding allocation will be made on the basis of historic patterns. This is an endemic, not necessarily a wilful, process.

Even now, the arts funding system is not fully converted – as is manifest in

...the tendency to say 'This is the DCMS needing this for the purposes of the Treasury. Let's try and cut down on the work, and make this as painless as possible'. It's seen as a top-down exercise, rather than being good for planning.

The Heritage Lottery Fund and the Arts Council's lottery unit both referred to wanting to retain 'a degree of latitude' in terms of their commitments to DCMS. As a spokesperson for one of those put it:

We've entertained doing things like 'We will distribute grants according to population weighted by some allowance for economic depravation', and 'We'll attempt to do that within 2 per cent points either way of the agreed figure', and all that sort of stuff. But, nobody liked that much. Essentially, the Trustees were very reluctant... and, some of the senior management are also concerned that we could end up setting ourselves targets which we can't, in fact, realise. So, there's a reluctance there too.

Obviously,that's a general problem of how people view performance indicators.

Whereas, the other alluded to the need

... to have our own reasons for putting down these performance indicators, because government ideas and priorities are going to change. And we mustn't be too tightly tied in to their current priorities. We've got to have an element of flexibility.

There is a political element to the argument with the DCMS. I don't want the Arts Council to be tied too heavily to achieve objectives which we just don't have that much control over. I think that's got to be the truism that underlies all performance indicators. They've got to be simple and they've got to be achievable – all the usual things.

Faced with the prospect of new systems of monitoring, representatives of the arts funding system were also keen to describe the limitations of their potential influence:

The Arts Council can only influence certain things a very little bit. We can barely influence what goes on in the great outdoors. Local authorities fund the arts much more than we do.

We can't take that money, put it on the table, give it to individuals and organisations and know that we're going to get a certain output... One is trying to give these things to them in the hope that they'll create a certain output. What's interesting is where output matches up with outcome. We can't expect for a second that one individual arts organisation will have an influence itself or make a change to the overall outcomes that the Arts Council as a whole might want.

The Arts Council might want one individual organisation to try and encourage as many people as possible to come, if that's appropriate for that organisation. There are certain organisations, like the ICA, where attracting the most number of people is not necessarily appropriate for a given performance. However, within the panoply of organisations that are funded it is incumbent upon us to ensure that the outcomes that we want to achieve do occur by driving at certain outputs from the organisations we fund...The relationship between outputs and outcomes is a big grey area. We can't directly influence the outcomes. That's the inherent problem, and we haven't yet totally resolved it.

These limitations particularly apply to the extent of the Arts Council's likely influence on increasing access:

DCMS likes to think of the number of people attending as one of the key possible indicators ... to do with either participation or consumption in the broadest sense. The thing which influences that, and what makes it almost impossible to use as a performance indicator, is economic activity. If there's an economic downturn, then attendance will drop – not just a little, but significantly.

Simply looking at audience returns... back to 1980, those organisations from which we have collected data regularly [show] that the trend of attendance parallels precisely the trend in GDP. It's identical. It's actually got to do with the measure of economic confidence... it matches that step for step. The TGI/BMRB data

similarly patterns the same swoop. You've got a steady rise all the way through the '60s and '70s, peaking somewhere in the early '80s, getting a dip through the late '80s and rising again towards the mid-'90s. So, the influence of the Arts Council to increase or decrease attendances is very limited indeed.

Interviewees also defended the arts funding system against responsibility for converting non-attenders single-handedly:

People feel, sometimes quite rightly, that there's a push to new audiences, but you have to look at the bigger context. I hope that Ken Robinson's report [National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education, 1999] will look at the impact that changes in education have had on the ability of young people to engage effectively with the arts, because you can't just attack it from one end. That's why people [in the arts funding system] get defensive.

While these issues tend to be raised in relation to the functions of its grant-in-aid, ACE's reservations about the limits of its influence also apply to its lottery funding – in particular the government's requirement that it tackle social inclusion:

Let's say one identifies a geographical area which fulfils all those potential outputs (on the negative side). By creating outputs in that area through the lottery, and indeed through grant-in-aid, one may hope that one tries to create an outcome which ... reverses social exclusion, reverses urban degeneration, unemployment. Our outputs are only one contributory factor. Other things like education, general economy, investment into the area also have a major influence to play. Therefore, to measure us – the Arts Council – on the basis of something over which we can only move the tiller a tiny bit is a little stupid, frankly. We need to find something which is measurable on that basis. An output over a particular period may be the number of new opportunities to attend an arts event within a certain period and an outcome, let's say over a 3–5 year period, may be the number of additional participants within funded arts organisations' programmes.

The comprehensiveness of the indicators

There's a myth that there's a set of performance indicators somewhere out there. And, if only we were clever enough, we could work out what they were.

Criticisms about the value of the data collected to measure performance are closely bound up with questions about the comprehensiveness of the systems being used. The performance indicators inherited from the Working Party have been criticised as insufficient, even by its membership:

They're massively flawed, of course, but then no performance indicator is perfect... In the arts funding system... people have always been striving for perfection and, if it hasn't been perfect, they haven't wanted to do it – 'We can't just have attendance, we need to look at the quality of the work, etc'. But my line is always that partial information is better than no information, provided that it's qualified by its partiality...

While some officers accept that 'something is better than nothing', others disagree:

> *... if you can't have both, then it's best to have neither. It's like the argument on traffic management... Good traffic management requires the heavy congestion of cars and freely available, highly subsidised public transport. If you can't have both you shouldn't have either. There's no point in subsidising public transport if the roads are still congested. It's a complete waste of time. I think the argument over performance indicators in most services is the same. If you can't have a proper performance assessment system which recognises some objective quantitative approaches and some qualitative and subjective approaches, don't bother. By only shining a very restricted light into the room you entirely miss the interesting points of the room.*

Doubts about the validity and inclusivity of the performance indicators being used tend to lead back to fundamental considerations about what is being assessed as well as the appropriateness of such assessments. In local authorities, such basic questions might include:

> *What's Best Value in the arts, and how can you demonstrate it to the local community?*
>
> *What's the existence value of having a museum, an arts centre, a concert hall, a theatre? We all assume that it's a good thing to have a museum and art gallery in a town, but how do you actually measure it?*

In terms of the arts funding system, one interviewee suggested,

> *You've got to go back to the policy context – the debate about what public subsidy is for. In a large part it's about access to the arts, but it's also about enabling risk and innovation and experimentation to take place. It could legitimately be argued that it's about sustaining a sufficiently diverse range of work which the market wouldn't sustain. Some people argue that 'we know not many people get involved in this, but [without subsidy] this whole area of practice will disappear'. That suggests we're into conservation.*

Another interviewee regarded the question 'What are we trying to achieve?' as particularly problematic for the arts:

> *I don't think the arts are very well placed [to answer] that: first, quite a lot of people in the arts have been reluctant to address that question; secondly, they disagree intensely with each other. That's a real weakness.*
>
> *There's a great divide between community arts and fine arts, and between performing arts and permanent arts. When you try to work out 'Why do we provide art in the local area?' the arts community and the politicians are divided. There's an access-oriented group, and there's a group which fundamentally believe that they are providing goodies to the middle class and that if they stopped they would lose votes. That's probably the largest group in most of the important local authorities and at national level. But, then they don't dare say that out loud. If the fundamental reason for the arts is to spend public money by giving it to the middle classes in a way that others won't benefit from – it's very hard to actually put that down on paper*

and to measure whether you've achieved it. There's a whole strain of analysis which says that that is what cultural subsidy is about, but we don't measure it.

However, if claims are made about the effectiveness of the arts to tackle certain social problems, for example, it follows that such assertions should be substantiated:

Look at local authorities, for instance, where you might want to fund an arts organisation because it's good, but most councillors might want to fund it because it may help urban regeneration, ensure that there's a degree of employment and help inward investment. So, do you measure those things? Difficult to say. Is it appropriate for a local authority to measure those things, because those are the outputs they want? Well, if those are the outputs they want, then probably [the answer is] 'Yes, they ought to be measuring that sort of thing'.

This, then, raises questions about the obligations of arts organisations to fulfil the expectations of their funding bodies:

Whether it's the responsibility of the arts organisation which is funded by the local authority to come up with those outcomes is a different question... We can fund an arts organisation to have a certain output ie we can influence output by funding those organisations which we think are excellent and those organisations which we think are innovative, and those which we think do as good a job as possible in reaching a broad audience.

Potential developments

... there's a huge gap between rhetoric and practice. That's a real problem.

This section considers interviewees' attitudes towards potential developments in the arts funding system, across the sector as a whole, and in local authorities.

The arts funding system

Effectively, the Arts Council is more of a monitoring body than anything else. With the annual reviews, the annual funding agreement and the quinquennial appraisal, I can show the DCMS that ... we can make a judgement about how many organisations are 'super-excellent', how many are 'excellent' and how many are 'sub-excellent'. The ones which are below [par] are those which are told 'You're not being innovative enough, you're not being excellent enough. Either buck-up your act, or shuffle-off the funding'.

Arts Council interviewees described their institution's new resolutions as including: developing its evaluation and planning processes; changing the way in which it addresses access; developing new social indicators for its work, and consulting.

...the government's encouraging us to change... There are people... who've been trying to foster a culture of more research and evidence-driven decision making, and a genuine process of planning – where you evaluate at the end of a project, look at the impact it's had and then change your strategies accordingly. It's given us more of a role and more of an opportunity.

In short, they perceived the new Arts Council as a body which would seek to evaluate the impact of its work 'in order that we can continuously improve what we do'. One way of moving towards that is to build on past experience:

> *Our starting point has been to say 'Well, let's at least make use of the inadequate performance indicators that we've got in the short term; let's get this publication out [Hacon et al, 2000]; try and build it into a planning round; and try and make sure that people have access to information. The second stage is to build up a planning process and planning timetable where the information that's generated is actually used, and we can demonstrate that we're using this information. Then as you're doing that, people start to say that the data isn't good enough, we should be collecting different figures – and, that's when you begin to get to where we are now.*

Such a process is likely to have a profound impact on the organisations which currently receive funding. This may be exacerbated by ACE's decision to make its funds more flexible in future 'by removing funding inertia, and ensuring that funds are not tied up'. This will draw on 'funds which may be released from organisations which have received money for a very long time and may no longer be getting it'.

If a culture of monitoring and evaluation takes hold within the organisation, it is also likely to affect lottery funding:

> *It is an undoubted aim that we should ensure... a seamless correlation between the two – that there's no difference in terms of the investment of funds. However, this is complicated slightly by the fact that the DCMS actually only funds us on the grant-in-aid side, and are only interested in performance indicators which relate directly to that... But I think they would wish to ensure that the performance indicators cover all of our activities. I have no doubt that it follows that the stated aim of our Executive Team will be that all activities which occur within the Arts Council occur under the same banner. In order to achieve the same objectives, they must therefore be measured by the same things. But it's not there yet. It's only on the agenda.*

Changes at ACE are manifest in its new policies priorities, with

> *issues like social inclusion ... appearing now which didn't before. The Council is now 'asking everybody to address those issues in their financial plans'. So, that's how it'll flow through. I guess there'll be a lot more than just that.*

Its procedures are also changing, as the development of the New Audiences Programme suggests:

> *This is a discreet programme of work, with £5 million this year and next year from the DCMS. We've set up a pretty systematic way of evaluating the projects that form part of the New Audiences Programme, and we'll have invested quite a considerable amount of money into the evaluation of these.*
>
> *We can direct funds, let's say, at a particular organisation. Nottingham Playhouse, for example, wants to develop the Asian sector of their potential audience with additional funds from the Arts Council... And, we will use the*

feedback of those specific schemes as a means of judging our performance with the DCMS.

Alongside the development of these indicators, the Arts Council has been considering the need for qualitative information and the production of 'soft' indicators for the cultural sector (Donagh, 1999). In furthering this, Comedia and the New Economics Foundation were commissioned by the Arts Council in 1998 to undertake a social audit of the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry (Matarasso and Pilling, 1999). Social auditing, which the consultants recommend as a management tool, is a process by which an organisation 'can account for its social performance, report on and improve that performance. It assesses the social impact and ethical behaviour of an organisation in relation to its aims and those of its stakeholders (Pearce et al, 1997, cited in Matarasso, undated).

Across the sector

Representatives of the arts funding system interviewed for this research referred to their desire to help secure the position of cultural provision in local authorities, and offer support to arts development officers. To these ends, ACE recently published guidance notes on the review and monitoring of arts organisations targeted at local authorities to help with the implementation of Best Value and the arts (ACE, 1999b). This was not envisaged as a strictly one-way process. A spokesperson for the arts funding system described working with local authorities 'so that their consultations feed into our own policy-making processes'.

Given the paucity of data on the arts and museums, people interviewed for this chapter also hoped that one of the indirect benefits of developing new performance indicators might be the production of more comprehensive and comparative information about the sector as a whole:

There has been no attempt to look at that [data on arts organisations funded through the Arts Council and the regional arts associations] and marry it with any of the collection of financial information that local authorities do. It may be that there will be slightly more systematic databases available for comparison purposes. That's the really intriguing issue...

It was also hoped that greater cooperation across the sector as a whole might also encourage the production of comprehensive funding agreements:

Most regional arts boards now have funding agreements with their major organisations. Some local authorities have funding agreements too, and Best Value will encourage a push to develop a shared funding agreement. We [West Midlands Arts Board] already have a shared funding agreement for the Birmingham Rep. with Birmingham City Council. Arguably, it's a good thing if funders can share those funding agreements which may specify targets to be achieved and numbers of performances.

Within the museums sector it is already the case that 'benchmarking clubs' have forced institutions 'to get together... agree what they should be collecting; and... to actually exchange information'.

Local authorities

As already mentioned, various interviewees felt that it would be advantageous for arts and museums – which receive only discretionary funding – to have

their performance assessed:

> *Most of the approaches are driven by corporate results for the local authorities. For the arts it's a real opportunity to demonstrate that they do meet corporate policy priorities... very effectively in terms of money spent.*

Within the context of Best Value it was anticipated how the 'four Cs' (challenge, compare, consult, compete), which are fundamental to the five-yearly reviews, might impact on cultural provision:

'Challenge'

> *On the face of it, the only one of the four C's which is going to threaten the arts under Best Value is the 'challenge' one. Why do we do it ? It raises the same issues as 'What is the rationale for the subsidy?' Luckily for the arts, when you go down the four C's, it's the 'challenge' one that authorities have been most expert in slipping past.*

'Compare'

In terms of making comparisons, authorities are likely to address the ways in which they deliver their cultural services:

> *The line to take now is to identify the factors that are impacting on performance and the fact that, as a local authority, you can do something about them. That process has started in social services. What they're now saying at base is – 'This is what we provide and this is how much it costs to provide it the way we do, compared to how much it's costing somewhere else. If there's a way of doing it more efficiently, we could do more'. It's not about cost-cutting, it's about whether you could do more with the resources we've got. The debate in social services at the moment is about whether you provide it yourself, or whether you purchase it externally.*

The Museums Association, however, has certain reservations about the fact that Best Value is likely to encourage comparisons across local authorities:

> *There is a slight cynicism because we tried to devise measures that make it hard for comparative purposes. There are so many reasons why authority X might have to spend so much more money than authority Y. For example, a long-established museums service is likely to have a huge collection. It's also likely to have inherited quite a few listed buildings. So, it's likely to have enormous expenses although it might not have a huge amount of visitors. Another authority might have twice the number of visitors, but the museum itself might only be ten years old and it might be in a purpose-built building, without all of those listed building expenses.*
>
> *Because the museums service is discretionary, they are all extremely different. So, we're nervous about the data being too clearly comparable.*
>
> *About a year ago we were very concerned that you would boldly compare the figures and simply say this borough spends £3 per head, so we're going to spend £3 per head. But, Best Value makes it less alarming because it provides a framework for authorities to explore why they are spending more than someone else.*

'Consult'

However, it was mooted that consultation might provide a substantial threat to the arts:

The one thing under the 'modernising local government' agenda which is potentially threatening to the arts is the emphasis on public consultation. I think it's central to the Blairist project. It's seen in all parts of the Better Government initiative to date. It's the key novelty in Best Value.

This potential threat is predicated on

...the belief in the arts sector that feedback will be unfavourable. This is not unique to the arts, but it is particularly prevalent in the arts. I think it's essentially that the arts don't believe that the general public is the right audience to comment on its services. There is a fear that public consultation will mean involving the general public in feedback.

Anticipation varied as to precisely what kind of effect this might have. On the one hand, it might make very little difference:

Since the level of scrutiny which will be exercised on these documents is relatively low, I think most local arts organisations will pass muster. Local authorities will be able to get together a story which will enable them to rationalise the subsidy they currently give to the majority of organisations.

Arts organisations will find a way of conforming to the paperwork, that's never been much of an issue. They will use consultants and there will be proformas and templates emerging quite fast... They only want the money and you don't have to actually do the work to get the money – you only have to fill out the paperwork... I can't see why that should be different with Best Value. It is simply a more coherent expression of the current system.

On the other hand, consultation could have a more serious impact:

The question they need to ask is whether people are fully enjoying the stuff they get...

Perhaps it's arrogance. They [arts organisations] don't believe the public have any interesting comments to make; they don't believe the critics have much of interest to say; and, they're not all that sure that the assessors who go round on behalf of the Arts Council have much that's interesting to say. So, it's very rare in any kind of quality management system in the arts to find the public being asked to make comments on the quality of the experience other than the customer care aspects. The poor service experience is virtually always ignored. That's an easy area to rectify.

This could prove highly problematic:

The more public consultation there is... the more threatening it is because ... scrutiny and public consultation could possibly unearth a can of worms.

For example, you need look no further than the claims made for the participation by ethnic minority audiences. Those are often exaggerated, doubled, tripled. If those figures ever became public there would be enormous embarrassment to the funders, regional arts boards, local authorities, the Arts Council... If the small groups who are interested in the arts are too outrageous in the claims they make and

the general public gets in on the act, there will be a lot of antagonism. We've seen that, certainly here in Birmingham, for example, in the annual budget debate where the budget is taken out as a roadshow to local areas. The things that people immediately pick up are the arts expenditures, particularly orchestras, the theatre, the ballet, and the equalities budget. And the more it's defended by its enthusiasts, the worse the situation is. There's nothing more antagonising to a member of the general public than an arts enthusiast explaining why other people should pay for their enthusiasm.

Yet, interviewees within the arts funding system appeared more optimistic about the potential outcomes of consultation, despite the fact that it means changing the culture of arts organisations and of the funding system:

There's also a real opportunity for some organisations to re-invent community arts. Some arts organisations can actually sell themselves on the basis of undertaking community consultation in areas where people are not going to fill out questionnaires and come to meetings.

Clearly it takes a number of years for people to have the confidence to go out and genuinely consult. It's scary, but once you get over this and you're not just manipulating people... to confirm what you want to know, people can be very productive to work with it.

'Compete'

The last of the ' four C's' – 'compete' – begs the question that the arts should show that they are the best providers of whatever benefits they argue that they provide:

That's going to be an interesting one because if arts organisations can be insular enough to simply maintain that they provide artistic benefit then nobody is going to be able to show that there is an alternative competitive solution which is superior. Only arts organisations can do arts, full stop.

One interviewee proposed that museums are increasingly concerned to 'position themselves at the heart of local authority strategies'. But again, this may prove highly problematic:

However, if arts organisations [and museums] are driven, as they sometimes feel they are, to emphasise the economic benefits of what they do, the learning benefits, the social interaction benefits, the health benefits, and there have been very substantial movements in those directions in the past with wonderfully effective work in each of those areas, then they open themselves absolutely for comparison with alternative modes of delivery of health, social interaction, learning, economic development. The competition question becomes real there. I wouldn't expect that to happen, but it's interesting to reflect that the more corporate and holistic an arts organisation attempts to be in its contribution to a local area, the more vulnerable it is.

Methodologies

If you want to make real progress on some qualitative performance indicators you've got to design a methodology for doing that, and it's got to involve some fairly serious qualitative evaluation. And then you've got to make it comparable across authorities, which is crucial. So you've got to agree on what is to be collected.

The processes by which the performance of organisations in the cultural sector might be measured were a major preoccupation of interviewees. Different interviewees suggested different starting points. One suggested devising measures which actually mirrored objectives:

> *... in the arts you'd have to look at a rather more sophisticated bundle of things including school visits, educational potential being realised, work done with disadvantaged groups, and so on. Arguably, if you reached 100 severely disadvantaged people in a year that was far more value than getting 30,000 bog standard visitors through the door.*
>
> *But there was never a satisfactory mechanism to express that through a necessarily simple tabulated performance system. So, there was a general suspicion that the performance indicators and other measures available didn't actually reflect the value of what you were doing. That seems to me to be the central issue that bedevils performance review in the cultural sectors. It all comes down to how you reconcile quantitative indicators and measures with qualitative outputs and outcomes.*

Another stressed the importance of attempting to measure the effectiveness of policy:

> *It's quite difficult. There's a tendency to measure what you can measure. Policies are often notoriously hard. The Audit Commission recently carried out a national study to consider the extent to which stated social exclusion policies are reflected in charging policies and tariffs for services. They looked at leisure facilities and social services. Given the correlation between poverty and health for instance, they were asking whether people who have low incomes have the same opportunities as other people to use local authority activities which are about healthy activities, such as swimming, etc; whether local authorities were making special concessions, and how that was organised.*

And another proposed that local authorities should refer back to their arts strategy:

> *...to remind themselves why it was in the interests of local people to have arts provision, whether by the local authority or by any other publicly subsidised mechanism... The danger is that even those that are well thought out have never really been adopted by any more than a small number of people. They've been tolerated by the rest because they were of no significance. The vast majority of them were only ever token instruments.*

At base, interviewees made it clear that fundamental quantitative indicators were needed to produce evidence of the demographics of arts audiences:

> *We'd want to know who it was involving from the community. Is it involving people from different ethnic minority groups? Are disabled people able to access this, and how? Does it appeal to people who live in estates on edges of towns? Is there any outreach? We might be more interested in the activities going on around particular events. I think that is probably how we would think about it.*

Providing a profile of arts attenders was regarded as the least difficulty:

You don't need surveys to see whether the ethnic, gender or age composition of the audience is in line with the target you set yourself... All you need is for somebody to stand at the door and look at the audience in hall-based performances. It takes three minutes to check the number of black people in an audience in the CBSO [City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra]. Age is more difficult. You can only do it young, middle-aged or old. Gender is pretty good. If you're doing it in an exhibition, museum or gallery, you need somebody on the door to keep a short checklist... Nobody's pretending it's perfect, but it would be a lot better than what we're doing now.

Yet it was anticipated that the publication of such information would be likely to force local authorities to develop pragmatic strategies for attracting new audiences to the arts. One interviewee stressed that the way forward would be to use better and more frequent market research for qualitative performance data:

> *It's about the quality of the experience and how you can measure the joy and the awe and the educational value of wandering round a Monet exhibition. So you've got to actually find ways of measuring that. And the way of doing that appears to be initially through market research testing. The other way forward is going to be through evaluation-type research. The sort of research that actually tries to measure, say, the learning value of a class of kids spending a morning in an art gallery compared with the learning value of time spent in the class room.*
>
> *If these institutions claim that they are essentially educational institutions then one wants to know, 'What educational benefits are they delivering?' That potentially counts as performance data. Yet, very little's assessed, I think. Probably none at all. None of those things can be tackled by an attendant with a clicker at the door. They're major research challenges.*
>
> *In the end, that can only be done through fairly tightly controlled experimentation. You're moving into performance measure through controlled experiments. That seems to me to be one way forward in general terms. But the problem is, of course, that not every local authority will be able to afford to do that sort of thing.*

Local authority libraries were cited as a potentially useful model:

> *They've had agreed performance indicators for years. Even well before the Citizen's Charter the library profession had long agreed that there were certain things that are useful to collect. They have this wonderful system whereby, for a fortnight each year, they collect sample data in detail. This may be a way forward for museums and arts. You pick on a certain time of the year and you do some detailed evaluation.*

Observations and considerations

The major issues which have informed performance assessment in the subsidised cultural sector have remained relatively consistent since the early 1990s. They have embraced 'economy', 'excellence', 'access', 'efficiency' and, occasionally, 'education'. It is only recently that social issues – promoting regeneration and combating social exclusion – and improving public perception of the

arts have been formally added to the goals that the sector is expected to achieve.

In 1991, for example, the framework for the assessment of performance in the integrated arts, crafts and media funding and development system was based on 'excellence' (subsequently reclassified as 'quality'), 'access', 'economy', and 'efficiency'. In 1998, ACE's objectives were cited as – 'access, excellence and education'; and the cornerstones of DCMS's policy are 'access, excellence, education and economic value'. Within the local authority context, the key issues for museums management for 2000–01 are 'quantity', 'quality', 'visits/usage' and 'cost' – concerns expressed more or less explicitly. And, in the context of Best Value, local authority museums, galleries and other forms of cultural provision will be judged in terms of their 'cost/efficiency', 'quality', 'fair access' and 'strategic development' – an objective which embraces 'education'.

But whatever the similarities of these concepts, their status and the precise details of the performance indicators constructed to assess organisations' achievements has changed considerably. The government's recent drive towards greater accountancy has resulted in the fact that 'everything now has to be tied back to objectives and outputs'.

It is assumed that the drive to measure performance will influence future policy. In 1999/2000 local authorities were including museums in their performance 'league tables' for the first time. And, once Best Value comes on stream, authorities will have to account for the value of all their cultural services. DCMS is required to produce an Output and Performance Analysis report; its targets have been identified; and funding agreements with its sponsored bodies are now underpinned by performance indicators.

It is likely that these developments will serve to:

- Encourage sponsored bodies to address various problems which were not confronted in the past. These include: the paucity of data on the range of people attending, and the frequency of their visits; the tendency to gather quantitative, rather than qualitative data, and the quality of its interpretation; the definition and measurement of quality – both in the sense of artistic quality and quality management; and the notion of whether the 'public' is competent to judge 'quality'. Several interviewees described possible methodological approaches to these.
- Eliminate old habits, such as: the arts funding system's protection of vulnerable or failing organisations and its historic funding of other organisations, and the tradition of arts organisations pursuing their own goals rather than those of the sponsor.
- Stimulate a more coherent use of performance indicators. Interviewees suggested that although some bodies used performance indicators to assess the impact of their spending and their planning processes, others did not. In some circumstances, it appears that data had been collected without their function being clear.

The present review has suggested that some of the previous ambivalence towards performance indicators appears to be dissipating.

- Whereas comparisons between organisations were previously conventionally regarded as inappropriate, Best Value is now encouraging benchmarking. Local authorities' museum services and independent museums have

informally established their own benchmarking clubs. Arts organisations are acknowledging the benefits of receiving data from other organisations.

- The fact that stricter definitions and formulae are being applied to performance indicators not only suggests that meaningful comparisons can be made, but raises hopes for the production of better data across the whole of the sector.
- As a result of acknowledging the limits of its potential influence, particularly with regard to access, ACE has developed specific schemes which enable the monitoring of audience development. Within the context of Best Value, the arts will have to justify their claims to deliver economic, educational and social benefits.
- Within the local authority context, it is recognised as strategically advantageous for the performance of discretionary funded museums and arts organisations to be assessed, and thereby demonstrate their contribution to corporate objectives.

However, there are still pockets of resistance to the imposition of performance indicators and evaluation within the cultural sector. And as one Arts Council interviewee put it, 'How far the drive to measure will influence future policy is a moot point'. In the context of Best Value in particular, consultation about people's enjoyment of what is provided may prove even more challenging.

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2.4 EXTRACTS FROM

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Chapter 1, Introduction and Observations, pp xxxix–xlix

Part 11 Funding: Chapter 16, The National Lottery, pp 139–64

Part IV Profile: Chapter 28 Profile of Museums and Galleries, pp 342–359

Part IV Profile: Chapter 31, Profile of the Visual Arts, pp 391–401

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Introduction and Observations

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> *To have a society in which there is no government support for the arts or culture would be a very barren civilization. Of course, there are many cultural activities that can thrive and survive on their own: the popular music industry is a fine example. But there are others, which involve innovative or difficult or new or esoteric work, where public subsidy is entirely justified.*
>
> (Smith, 1998: 18)

This book is not about the state of our civilisation, so much as what arguably makes it fruitful and productive. *The UK Cultural Sector: Profile and Policy Issues* is about those arts and cultural activities which are deemed unable or unlikely to thrive or survive on their own. It covers the built heritage, film, libraries, literature, museums and galleries, the performing arts, public broadcasting and the visual arts – the various domains which fall within the remit of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). It describes how much subsidy those various domains receive, where it comes from, what it's intended for, how it's distributed, how organisations in receipt of it operate financially, whether the sector as a whole looks any different now from how it did before, and the relationship between those cultural activities that can thrive and survive on their own and those that can not.

In covering this territory, the book provides a picture of the sector which is drawn from several different perspectives. It includes data provided by those who provide the subsidies, and by organisations which receive them, plus analyses and interpretations from a range of professionals and commentators who work in or around the sector.

Overview: researching the cultural sector

The most complete data on the subsidised sector are provided by the funders themselves. A collation of their accounts and evidence of their grant-giving suggests that, in 1998/99:

- The sector attracted a total of £5,487 million worth of support. This includes streams of funding from the usual sources – DCMS, the Scottish, Welsh, and Northern Ireland Offices, local authorities, the National Lottery and business sponsorship – as well as other sources, usually overlooked: other government departments, charitable trusts and foundations; higher education institutions; Europe; tax forgone and funding dedicated to regeneration.
- The main funders – DCMS, the Scottish, Welsh, and Northern Ireland Offices, local authorities, the National Lottery, business sponsorship and the licence fee – provided £4,880 million in support. The BBC's licence fee alone accounted for £2,180 million. Without it, the total amount of funding to the cultural sector was £3,307 million.
- The sector appears to have been better funded in 1998/99 than in 1993/94. On the basis of the most reliable data available (those streams of income from DCMS, the Scottish, Welsh, and Northern Ireland Offices, local authorities, business sponsorship and the Lottery) its income increased by over £230 million (in real terms) from the £2,470 million it received in 1993/94 to £2,700 million in 1998/99. However, support from central and local government fell some £190 million in real terms (8 per cent).
- That difference is more than made up by the National Lottery, which provided £369 million in awards in 1998/99.
- Around a third of the sector's income (minus the licence fee) represented capital funding in 1998/99 (even though lottery capital funds would have contained some elements of 'operational revenues'). The situation in 1998/99 was, however, less extreme than it had been in previous years. In 1996/97, the year when lottery awards peaked, closer to 45 per cent of the sector's income was earmarked for capital spend.

However, relatively little is known about the workings of the sector from the perspectives of organisations in receipt of subsidy. The only regular research is that carried out by the Arts Council of England and the regional arts boards. However, their regularly funded organisations are far from being the norm. A survey carried out for this book covered a wide range of organisations – from national institutions with incomes in the millions to small volunteer-run organisations with incomes of less than £1,000. These findings provide the most comprehensive view of the sector as a whole to date. Responses to this survey suggest that:

- funding from public sources made up just over half of the respondents' income;
- the rest was generated thorough earned and unearned income and from private-sector sources;
- about half of respondents' expenditure was committed to their main activities (including their education programmes);
- spending on their main programmes outweighed spending on their education programmes by about 7:1;
- about half of respondents' administrative costs were accounted for by staff costs.

Inevitably, the organisations that we know most about are those which are the most likely to be in receipt of large public subsidies. And, whilst they may not be indicative of the sector as a whole, they nevertheless provide significant insights into what impact government and other bodies' policies and funding decisions might be having on the sector. A small group of organisations provided data about their operations in both 1993/94 and 1998/99, and several observations have been made on the basis of their reports. This group – only a tenth of the number of respondents overall – accounted for over a third of all public subsidies received, and around a third of all of respondents' income and expenditure. The evidence they provide confirms that:

- only a small number of organisations account for a large proportion of all subsidies;
- organisations have experienced reductions in their funding from both central government and local authorities; and
- there are marked changes in the way that these organisations spent their money, characterised by a shift away from spending on administration and employee costs to spending on programmes of activity. This is doubtless a response to the requirement of policy makers and funding bodies for organisations to increase access, improve their education numbers and achieve greater efficiencies – all of which have to be demonstrated by measurable outputs.

There are no statistics available on employment in the subsidised sector per se. However, the findings from the survey carried out for this book suggest that:

- the sector accounted for 198,000 permanent employees, 63,300 freelance or contract staff opportunities, and 55,440 volunteer opportunities; and
- comparisons with 1993/94 data suggest that more organisations are employing more permanent employees and becoming more reliant on volunteers.

Official sources inevitably produce bigger numbers, but they cannot distinguish between the subsidised and non-subsidised sectors. Data for spring 1999 suggest that 647,000 people had their main job in a cultural industry, cultural occupation or both. This marks a 14 per cent increase since 1995 – a rate nearly three times that of the growth in total employment.

About this book: coverage, structure and sources

Coverage

In many respects, *The UK Cultural Sector* explores much the same ground as the Policy Studies Institute's previous publication, *Culture as Commodity? The economics of the arts and built heritage in the UK* (Casey et al., 1996). It collates existing statistical and other available material on the subject, provides overviews and analyses of cultural funding and the financial operations of organisations in

receipt of funding, and presents that material in broad categories of cultural activity: the built environment (and, more specifically, the built heritage); film; libraries and literature; museums and galleries; the visual arts; the performing arts; and public broadcasting.

This book tracks changes that took place between 1993/94, the year covered by *Culture as Commodity?* (Casey et al., 1996), and 1998/99. The period covered effectively begins with the introduction of lottery funding and closes with the reorganisation of the cultural infrastructure, introduced by the DCMS to take effect from the beginning of the 1999/00 financial year. It embraces changes in thinking that run from the launch of the Arts Council of Great Britain's National Arts and Media Strategy, *A Creative Future* (1993), to the promotion of the creative industries (DCMS, 1998a)

However, *The UK Cultural Sector* also differs from its predecessor in many respects. It includes material from 25 contributors – academics, administrators, cultural economists, cultural analysts, civil servants, consultants and statisticians – representing a range of attitudes and approaches. So, it not only presents the perspectives of funding bodies and grant recipients, but those of a wide range of commentators. Their views on the subjects in hand differ, but precisely because of that they throw more light on them than is remotely customary.

This book also departs from *Culture as Commodity?* in that it places more emphasis on the context within which the subsidised cultural sector operates, and provides a greater depth of coverage on employment, funding from local authorities, regeneration sources and Europe, as well as taxes forgone. It also includes time-series data providing comparisons, where possible, between 1993/94 and 1998/99, or similar.

Structure of the book

The observations which follow this introduction set out some of the critical issues which are the focus of much of this book. The book is organised in four main parts: policies affecting the constituent elements of the cultural sector; public and private funding to the sector; the wider cultural sector, and its relationship to the subsidised sector, including employment in the cultural sector; and a detailed profile of the subsidised cultural sector. An afterword discusses some of the concepts underlying the principle of public subsidy of culture. The appendices contain lists of respondents to the survey and other investigations carried out during the course of research, plus technical information – how funding was identified and how the survey was carried out, as well as details of the different regional divisions used by various funders.

Sources and research

The basic research for this book was undertaken in much the same way as for *Culture as Commodity?*

- A review was carried out of published and unpublished documents produced since the publication of Casey et al. (1996), concerned with the financial operations of the cultural sector in the UK and policies affecting it.
- The amount of support going into the cultural sector was calculated on the basis of evidence from a range of sources, including central government, local authorities, business sponsorship and donations, trusts and charitable foundations, and Europe. Where possible, published sources are used, although occasionally references are made to unpublished data. (Appendix 1 describes how the details of such funding were collated.)
- As a matter of course, references are made to funding actually passed to organisations in the sector. However, where this was not possible, figures represent sums awarded – as in the case of data from Lottery distributors. In other instances, estimates were necessary – as, for instance, with respect to regeneration and European funding (Chapters 11 and 13).
- Organisations and individuals in receipt of subsidy during 1998/99 were identified from the annual reports and grant schedules of the sources described above. This population was sampled, and annual (audited) accounts requested. Details of income, expenditure and, where possible, employees were recorded. The processes involved are described in Appendix 2. The data assembled as a result of this exercise were combined with those gathered by the Arts Council of England and the regional arts boards through their annual survey of regularly and fixed-term funded organisations to produce the most comprehensive overview of cultural sector organisations to date.

The reference year for the research was 1998/99. In some cases, however, either 1998 or the organisations' own financial year most closely approximating to 1998/99 was used.

Observations

Whereas the previous pages and the introductions to each part of this book summarise the data presented and the various points covered, the following observations focus on some of the critical issues implied throughout *The UK Cultural Sector*. They are not only pertinent to this study, but inform our perceptions of the sector in general. Predominant among them are the shortcomings of the existing data, the difficulties of describing the subsidised cultural sector and locating it within a wider context, and the relationship between policies, subsidies and outcomes.

Constructing a financial profile of the cultural sector

Despite the quantity of data gathered in this book, constructing an overall profile of the subsidised cultural sector remains highly problematic and is subject to numerous caveats. At base, survey returns from 1,272 organisations suggested that in 1998/99 their combined turnover was £1,746 million. Of that, about 55

per cent was from public subsidies; around 30 per cent was earned; and the remainder would have come from private sources.

The amount of public funding received by those organisations represents about two-thirds of all public funds identified as having been distributed to the sector that year.[1] On the basis of the breakdown of survey organisations' income described above, a crude grossing up suggests that the funded cultural sector in general (but excluding the BBC and public libraries) may have generated as much as £1,500 million through earnings and attracted around £750 million from the private sector.

In terms of employment, a combination of data from museums and galleries, historic properties, the Arts Council of England and the regional arts boards regularly funded organisations suggests that some 65,000 people were employed in the sector in 1998/99. Adding libraries (Table 26.1) and the BBC (Chapter 30) brings this to more like 153,000. In all likelihood, the total number of people employed across the sector was higher.

Comparing the profile of the sector in 1998/99 with the 1993/94 figures is even more difficult. The overview of funding (Part II) and Chapter 23 on employment suggest that the sector received more public subsidy, employed more people and enjoyed a larger turnover than it had previously.

Thus, while the primary function of this book was to map empirically the funding of the cultural sector, it has to be said that the picture it creates is not perfect. In an ideal world, all the data needed to construct a profile of the cultural sector in the UK in 1998/99 would be accessible, robust and sufficiently consistent with previous years' data to allow historical comparisons to be made. Unfortunately, this is not how it is in practice.

Apart from the standard difficulties of producing time-series data, which are outlined in Appendix 1, some organisations are simply either more willing or more capable than others of making data available; some data are simply more reliable than other data, and some cultural and heritage activities are better covered than others (cf Part IV). Even the local authority financial data, described as from amongst the 'most reliable' sources (Chapters 10 and 14) are flawed (see Appendix 1). Some other data, such as the COSLA figures on local authorities' arts spend in Scotland, were still unavailable at the beginning of April 2001 when this book was being edited. Other data on European, regeneration and 'other' government departments' funding collected especially for Casey et al. (1996) and the present volume are, almost by definition, inconsistent. This means that comparisons cannot be made.

Data on attendances is no more satisfactory. A comparison of each of the chapters in Part IV indicates the extent of data available on the number of users and the differences in how that information is presented across the various artforms and heritage activities covered. Comparing the existing data across all those sectors is impossible, because strictly speaking, one would not be comparing like with like. The most comprehensive data set on arts attendances is the Target Group Index commissioned from BMRB (British Market Research Bureau)

1 Minus the licence fee, Foreign and Commonwealth Office funding for the World Service, tax concessions (see Tables II.1 and II.2) plus the costs of public libraries.

by the Arts Council of England. Each year data are collected from around 25,000 adults across Great Britain on the basis of questionnaires completed by 2,000 respondents each month. Summary findings based on the question 'About how often these days do you go to the following [arts events]?' were conventionally included in the Arts Council's reports under the headings 'plays', 'opera', 'ballet', 'contemporary dance', 'classical music', and 'art galleries/art exhibitions'. However, even this summary was absent from the *Annual Review 2000*. For copyright reasons it is only possible to refer to these published figures (see ACE, 2000:100) and copies of the data are only available to a highly restricted readership with the public realm. The research does not distinguish between attendances at subsidised and non-subsidised events.

More worrying, perhaps, is that the way in which data on relatively new sources of funding are being collected is not necessarily any better. There is, for example, no centrally held, consistent and definitive source of information on Lottery funding. Different sets of figures from the distributors and DCMS rarely match, as evidenced by the different totals given in Chapter 16 and Lottery figures used elsewhere in the text. Even official data has its shortcomings. The employment data, used by Creigh-Tyte and Thomas in Chapter 23, are as robust and consistent as they come – not least by comparison with industry data. But these same data are, unfortunately, insufficiently detailed to provide a picture of all the creative industries or of individual cultural sector activities. Moreover, the levels of detail available are not necessarily compatible with other official sources which would have enabled turnover or value added to be described.[2]

These kinds of difficulties have led to *The UK Cultural Sector* having two particular characteristics. One is that the profile of the sector can only be constructed piecemeal and that, consequently, comparisons can only be made with care. The other is that, given the amount of time it takes for data to be collected, processed and collated, the financial profile of the sector necessarily lags behind the development of policy. This book, consequently, tends to retrospectively contextualise data within a more advanced policy framework.

The wider context

However much the subsidised sector developed in the five years from 1993/94 to 1998/99, it remains dwarfed by the creative industries, which are reported to generate revenues of around £104 billion and employ some one million people (DCMS, 2001b).

DCMS defines the creative industries as 'those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property' (DCMS,1998a; 2001b). It recognises that the creative industries have 'a close economic relationship with tourism, hospitality, museums and galleries, heritage and sport', although some (the art and antiques market, crafts, film and video, music, the performing arts, television and radio) are more closely associ-

2 Personal correspondence with Paul Allin, Statistics Unit, DCMS.

ated with the subsidised sector than others. What DCMS refers to as the 'core activities' of the creative industries are associated with, if not central to, the concerns of the subsidised sector – the creation, production and exhibition of crafts; the production and exhibition of film and video; song writing and composition, and live performance of music, etc.

On the basis of their respective turnovers and national employment figures cited above, the subsidised cultural sector and the creative industries seem worlds apart. Spokespeople are, however, prone to blur the distinctions between the one and the other, not least in the context of advocacy (see, for example, Smith, 1998; Robinson, 1998: 8). Indeed, there is political mileage to be gained in highlighting the relationship between the two sectors. But, it is also the case that the relationship is far from easy. Since the mid-1980s the arts funding system has been threatened by the implications of the concepts of the 'cultural' and 'creative' industries. Justifications for subsidy have increasingly been couched in terms of the earning capacity and likely economic contribution of the arts (ACGB, 1988a; 1988b; Smith, 1998). However, few – if any – attempts have been made to scrutinise the nature of the dynamic between the subsidised cultural sector and the creative industries.

Despite its responsibility for leading cross-government support for the creative industries and for the stream of subsidy to the cultural sector, DCMS itself has never attempted to interrogate the relationship between the creative industries and the subsidised sector. Yet, according to the former Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, one of the reasons for subsidy is precisely to support the creative industries.

> *There are, I believe, five principal reasons for state subsidy of the arts in the modern world: to ensure excellence; to protect innovation; to assist access for as many people as possible, both to create and appreciate; to help provide the seedbed for the creative economy; and to assist in the regeneration of areas of deprivation.*
>
> (Smith, 1998: 18–19)

If subsidies are regarded as providing a seedbed for the creative economy, it would be reasonable to consider tracking the precise nature of their contribution – not least, to lay secure foundations for the further development of strategic policy making and for the targeting of funding. Take employment. If, as it is often maintained, the subsidised sector provides a base for creativity and employment in the creative industries, it should be possible to track movement between the sectors. But, in practical terms, this is impossible because data on employment in the subsidised sector cannot be disaggregated from data on employment in the creative industries generally.

While chapters on the policy and profile of the film and public broadcasting (Chapters 3 and 25; Chapters 8 and 30) assume a blurring of distinctions between the subsidised sector and the creative industries, other contributions to this book have sought to analyse aspects of the relationship between the two sectors. Garnham (Chapter 34), for instance, considers the policy context within which public support for the cultural sector in general takes place; Feist (Chapter 19)

tracks points of common ground between the subsidised cultural sector and the creative industries in relation to the performing arts; and, O'Hagan and Neligan (Chapter 21) touch on the role of the subsidised cultural sector as a seedbed for the commercial theatre.

A major obstacle, if not *the* major obstacle, to quantifying the relationship between the subsidised cultural sector and the wider, creative industries is the fact that the existence of the subsidised cultural sector per se is rarely acknowledged. DCMS, which has been closely identified with the creative industries since its foundation,[3] for example, rarely refers to the subsidised cultural sector as such, preferring to allude to the more ambiguous 'cultural framework' (DCMS, 1998b) or the arts funding system (Smith, 1998). In its Green Paper, *Culture and Creativity* (DCMS, 2001), it describes the distincions between the commercial and the subsidised as 'false'. Nevertheless, it remains the case that some cultural activities are subsidised and others are not, and it is those that are subsidised which constitute the focus of this book.

Public subsidy and the cultural sector

The term, 'subsidy' is something of an anathema. 'Subsidy' effectively disappeared from the lexicon of cultural bureaucracies in the 1980s when the notion of subsidy as 'welfare' ceased being regarded as politically correct and the semantics of business and managerialism were introduced. This was when funders began to 'invest', 'sponsor' and 'support'. At about the same time the term 'audiences' was deemed too passive for people who made choices and constructed meaning, and the terms 'participants', 'customers', 'consumers' and, subsequently, 'users' came into common usage.

The question of what the subsidised cultural sector comprises is a vexed one. The working definition used in this book can be found in Appendix 1, although in order to highlight the differences between the subsidised cultural sector and the creative and commercial performing arts, Feist (Chapter 19) uses a more exclusive definition.

To some extent, the constituents of the subsidised cultural sector are likely to change with respect to funding policies. Indeed, the remit and conditions of cultural subsidies have changed over the years. As Creigh-Tyte and Stiven note in Chapter 18, 'government interventions' are ultimately directed at organisations unlikely to 'thrive' or 'survive' on their own: whilst the arts funding system may argue that it never has enough, subsidised organisations have for some time been expected to generate some degree of income as a necessary condition of funding. In England, for example, the conditions of the Arts Council's distribution of grant funding have, over the past 30 years, shifted to accommodate economic and political realities alongside the centrality of artists themselves. Indeed, the tensions which informed the Arts Council of England's recent emphasis on audiences and

3 DCMS (1997). The press release which announced the renaming of the Department of National Heritage as the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, also pronounced the establishment of the Creative Industries Taskforce.

readers (as opposed to artists and writers) in the mid-1990s are highlighted in the chapters on visual arts (Chapter 9) and literature (Chapter 27). In recent years, changes in Arts Council priorities have been manifest in its support of employment creation schemes, as in the case of its £2 million grant to Kirklees Media Centre (Robinson, 1998); interventions in areas formerly considered to be other government departments' responsibilities (as in interim funding for dance and drama students, or the New Deal); its greater emphasis on 'consumers' (making the arts accessible), and its development of strategic initiatives via schemes not necessarily open to applications.

While many subsidies from cultural funders are directed at non-cultural recipients (Appendix 1), the subsidised cultural sector itself also receives some funding (albeit a relatively small amount) from non-cultural funders which is intended to meet non-cultural objectives. Examples covered here include regeneration funds, targeted at the economic, physical and social regeneration of urban areas (Chapter 11) and funding from the European structural funds, intended to address economic imbalances in disadvantaged areas of Europe (Chapter 13). There are, of course, also tax concessions (Chapter 15) which are not conventionally counted as a form of subsidy.

Outcomes

The UK Cultural Sector identifies some £5,289 million of public sector funding as going to the cultural sector (Introduction, Part II). It also presents a detailed overview of the financial workings of the subsidised cultural sector, contextualised by policy issues. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that this book should implicitly also raise questions about the outcomes of cultural subsidies. Does cultural funding produce the results intended by funders? What difference does funding make to the sector itself or to the wider world? In short, what are the ramifications of subsidy?

By definition, the different pockets of funding covered in this book tend to have different intentions. Not all are necessarily compatible. And some funders – the DCMS, for example – are more concerned than others to assess the outcomes of their support. According to the former Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport:

> *This subsidy is not 'something for nothing'. We want to see measurable outcomes for the investment which is being made. From now on, there will be real partnership with obligations and responsibilities.*
>
> (DCMS, 1998b)

The Department itself and its sponsored bodies are committed to excellence; innovation; access for the many; promoting the creative industries; and assisting in the regeneration of areas of deprivation. Given that the DCMS is directly and indirectly responsible for the largest tranches of subsidy to the cultural sector, it seems reasonable to ask: to what extent are its objectives being delivered?

The degree to which the relationship between policy, funding, and the achievement of policy or strategic objectives is discernible is, as yet, unclear. Despite the instigation of DCMS's targets, funding agreements, earmarked pockets of funding (such as New Audiences or free admission to national museums and galleries) and the establishment of QUEST (the Quality, Efficiency and Standards Team), no evaluations of the extent to which grant funding is delivering policy objectives have been published in the UK beyond the quantitative measurement of certain aspects of cultural organisations' performances. Indeed, up to 1998/99, museums and galleries and the arts funding system had successfully managed to avoid performance measurement (Selwood, 2000).

Changes in cultural policy might be expected to have led to major changes in the constituency of the subsidised cultural sector. But the portfolio of DCMS-sponsored bodies is essentially static, and the core body of organisations supported by the arts funding system changes very little. This presumably reflects a desire for years of investment to ensure 'excellence'. But to what extent has the subsidised sector changed from being funding-led to being policy-led? Have those portfolios of historically sponsored bodies shifted to delivering policy rather than dictating it? Does the cultural funding system perpetuate its own client base, or can those core institutions ultimately be regarded as catalysts of change? Will the collection and analysis of performance indicators make any difference? Are the relatively large amounts of funding delivered through capital lottery projects necessarily expected to deliver relatively larger changes than the smaller amounts expected from revenue funding?

Several chapters in this book lay foundations for interrogating claims about the relationship between policy, funding and outcomes. O'Hagan and Neligan (Chapter 21), for example, consider innovation and diversity in the subsidised and commercial theatre sectors; Johnson and Thomas (Chapter 20) reflect on the substance of reports on the economic impact of the arts; the various art form chapters (Part IV) examine the extent of visits and usage. These chapters also raise questions about the relationship between policy, cultural activities and evaluations. To what extent are economic impact studies useful? Can they assess economic regeneration? Is it appropriate for economic measures to even be applied to arts venues or events intended to meet social or cultural, as opposed to economic, objectives? What are the policy implications of the finding that museum visits across the board have plateaued if not declined (Chapter 28)? Indeed, how reliable are the data that have led to these findings? Are the funding practices of the arts funding system actually encouraging the production of new work?

These are pertinent questions. DCMS's projected figures (DCMS, 2001a and Table 18.1) suggest that more will be spent on the cultural sector in the future. Given the government's insistence that subsidies carry obligations, the prospect of increased subsidy implies even more in terms of formal commitments. Whether or not the academic research agenda for the future is concerned with piecing together data which describe the scale of public subsidies to the sector, it may be the case that the DCMS, under its new Secretary of State Tessa Jowell, has to concern itself with evaluating the extent to which those subsidies are delivering their objectives.

16
The National Lottery

Sara Selwood, University of Westminster

By the close of the 1998/99 financial year, the National Lottery had provided nearly £3 billion for the cultural sector in the UK. This chapter considers the development of National Lottery support for the arts and built heritage up to that time. It is written in three sections: the first considers the formation of policies and programmes; the second looks at the financial impact of the Lottery, in particular the amount of funding available and how it was distributed; and the third section discusses more general issues raised by Lottery funding – questions of additionality, the sustainability of Lottery projects and the organisations responsible for them, and the economic impact of Lottery projects.

The chapter focuses on England in particular, and the two main distributors of Lottery funding to the cultural sector, the Arts Council of England (ACE) and the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). It does not touch on the wider issues pertaining to the economic and social impact of the Lottery as a whole – ethics, gambling, local spending and wider employment effects (Evans and White, 1996; Evans et al., 1997; White et al., 1998).

Policy, planning and programmes

In the years immediately preceding the advent of Lottery funding, relatively few new major sources of funding, in particular capital funding, had opened up to the cultural sector. Exceptions included the Foundation for Sport and the Arts[1] which

1 The Foundation, providing funding for the cultural sector as shown overleaf, is funded by the Pools Promoters Association. It supports the arts, museums and galleries throughout the UK, benefiting amateur and professional arts, and focusing on community participation and the 'grassroots' in particular. Its records do not distinguish between its capital and revenue grants, so it is unclear precisely how much capital it provided.

Foundation for Sport and the Arts: funding for the arts, 1991/92–1998/99

£ thousand

	Amounts paid	Amounts approved	Total
1991/92	3,708	8,756	12,464
1992/93	18,010	16,375	34,385
1993/94	19,814	16,548	36,372
1994/95	17,515	18,110	35,625
1995/96	17,159	16,365	33,524
1996/97	12,692	16,292	28,984
1997/98	9,225	9,445	18,670
1998/99	5,370	7,126	12,496

Source: Foundation for Sport and the Arts annual reports.

was established in 1991, and the five-year Museums and Galleries Improvement Scheme (1990/91–1995/96) funded by matching contributions of £2 million a year from the Wolfson Foundation and Family Trusts and the Department of National Heritage (DNH). Table 16.1 lists the most reliable data on capital funding available before the Lottery.[2] It suggests that in 1994/95, some £302 million was available to the sector (including funding to the built heritage). In 1995/96, Lottery capital funding provided over twice this amount (see Tables 16.4 and 16.5).

The sheer change in the scale of funding that the Lottery brought about is illustrated by the Arts Council of Great Britain and its successor ACE's previous giving. In 1993/94 its Building for the Arts scheme, which funded feasibility studies, provided £130,270 (for 53 grants, each averaging less than £2,500); and, in 1994/95, the last year of this scheme, £72,023. None of the other arts councils were providing capital funding at this time. Two years later, in 1996/97, when the largest amounts of awards were distributed, the ACE's lottery unit provided capital awards worth £358 million at an average of £468,000 each (ACE, undated).

National Lottery Act 1993

The National Lottery etc. Bill, which the Conservative government introduced in 1992, heralded major changes to the funding of the cultural sector. It was introduced by the new Department of National Heritage (DNH), and received Royal Assent in October 1993. The main provision of the National Lottery Act was to provide a major new source of funding for five 'good causes' – the arts, sport, heritage, charities and millennium celebrations. It established a framework based on three principles:

1 The proceeds of the Lottery would augment, rather than replace, public expenditure.
2 The net proceeds (determined by the total turnover and the precise percentage set aside for good causes by the selected operator after taking account of Lottery duty at 12 per cent, the prize fund, and operating costs) would be equally divided between the five 'good causes'.
3 Funding was to be distributed by independent bodies, rather than ministers. Funding to the arts and heritage would be organised by the existing arts councils and the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF), which would be responsible to the Secretary of State for National Heritage. Two new bodies, which in the event also provided funding to the cultural sector – the Millennium Commission and the National Lottery Charities Board – would be established to oversee the distribution of money to celebrate the millennium and to charities and other institutions funded for charitable, benevolent and philanthropic purposes.

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2 Although the ACE published a list of potential sources of partnership funding for the Lottery applicants, it gave no indication of levels of capital funding which had actually been distributed at the time (The Factary, 1994).

Table 16.1 Non-Lottery capital funding to the cultural sector, 1993/94–1998/99

£ million

	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99
Museums and Galleries						
DNH/Wolfson: Museums and Galleries Improvement Fund (a)	4.000	4.000	4.000	n/a	n/a	n/a
DCMS: Assets accepted in lieu of tax	3.115	6.160	7.407	2.171	6.785	25.299
MGC: purchase grant funds	1.705	1.965	1.402	1.243	1.243	1.187
MGC: capital grants	0.415	0.401	0.372	n/a	n/a	n/a
National Art Collections Fund	1.743	2.469	2.750	1.789	2.407	2.445
National Fund for Acquisitions	0.266	0.270	0.307	0.225	0.286	0.182
English local authorities	23.467	27.536	22.767	23.465	29.051	62.324
Scottish local authorities	4.500	5.108	5.019	5.293	3.526	–
Welsh local authorities	0.875	30308	2.368	1.097	2.116	0.604
Northern Ireland local authorities	–	–	–	–	–	–
Recorded subtotal	*40.086*	*51.217*	*46.392*	*35.283*	*45.414*	*92.041*
Libraries						
Wolfson Public Libraries Improvement Scheme (a)	n/a	n/a	n/a	3.000	3.000	3.000
English local authorities	–	–	–	–	–	–
Scottish local authorities	–	–	–	–	–	–
Welsh local authorities	2.707	2.324	1.307	1.864	1.633	2.007
Northern Ireland local authorities	–	–	–	–	–	–
Recorded subtotal	*2.707*	*2.324*	*1.307*	*4.864*	*4.633*	*5.007*
Arts, museums and galleries, and heritage						
Business support for capital projects	–	13.867	4.880	15.811	18.038	33.522
Built heritage (b)	221.198	227.466	284.255	449.889	410.919	362.604
Heritage						
National Heritage Memorial Fund (c)	10.173	9.689	12.800	10.066	3.112	4.735
Arts						
ACGB/ACE	0.130	0.072	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
English local authorities (d)	–	–	–	70.927	57.747	–
Scottish local authorities (e)	–	6.8	–	4.5	11.3	–
Welsh local authorities	–	–	–	–	3.232	3.815
Northern Ireland local authorities	–	–	–	–	–	–
Recorded subtotal	*0.130*	*6.872*	*n/a*	*75.427*	*72.279*	*3.815*
Recorded total	264.12	301.75	336.83	581.27	551.28	496.99

Sources: ACE; DNH/DCMS annual reports; National Assembly for Wales; Scottish Executive; DETR; McAndrew and O'Hagan, 2000; Chapter 24.

Notes
a) Funded equally by the government and the Wolfson Foundation and Family Charitable Trust.
b) Taken from Table 24.5, this includes overheads and administrative costs, as opposed to grant payments. It does not include prizes and awards of higher education institution funding identified for 1998/99 only. The inclusion of this sum assumes that the vast majority of funding for the built heritage from non-Lottery sources is capital. There are, however, some exceptions. EH, for example, has funded conservation posts since 1992/93. In 1998/99 it funded 60 conservation officer posts, at an estimated cost of just over £1 million.
c) These are the amounts that the Fund provides for loans and the purchase of items across its remit: land, buildings, museums and galleries, industrial, transport and maritime, manuscripts and archives. These could not be disaggregated. A disaggregated sum for 1998/99 provided by NHMF has not been used, since it differs considerably from the published figure.
d) Arts activities and facilities including theatres, only identified separately from 1996/97.
e) Gross capital expenditure for arts facilities and equipment.

The task of the distributors was to select projects for funding from applications, and ensure that the projects were delivered as proposed and conferred the public benefit claimed for them. The government expected Lottery funding to be spread widely through the country, that the grants would benefit everyone 'irrespective of income', and that projects should be funded in response to 'the expressed needs of the general public, to create lasting assets'. However, the distributors were not licensed to create strategies for distributing funding, nor could they solicit applications.

Lottery funding was intended to provide support for what had been a capital-starved sector – constructing new buildings, improving old buildings, carrying out feasibility studies and design competitions for building projects, buying equipment including musical instruments or vehicles and commissioning public art (ACE, 1994).

The HLF was established by NHMF to distribute heritage funding. A fund of last resort, the NHMF's function is to safeguard the UK's most important heritage. It was empowered, under the National Heritage Act 1980, to give financial assistance towards the cost of acquiring, maintaining and preserving: land of aesthetic, historical or ecological significance; historic buildings; museum, gallery, library and archive collections; and industrial, transport and maritime heritage. Its funding, thus, predominantly, if not exclusively, comprised capital. The HLF, which was bound by the NHMF's remit, could: fund the construction of new buildings designed to house or enhance access to land, buildings or collections with importance to the heritage; and acquire items intended to complement collections of importance to the national heritage (HLF, 1995)

The priorities of the distributing bodies were set down in the Policy Directions issued by Secretary of State for National Heritage in June 1994. These specified that distributors should:

- consider the range of activities falling within their remit;
- fund only charitable projects benefiting the general public;
- concentrate funding on projects involving capital expenditure (in exceptional circumstances they could provide revenue funding or endowments for projects which had received capital funding but which would not otherwise be completed);
- consider the viability of projects;
- ensure that projects are supported by a significant element of partnership funding from non-Lottery sources, including support 'in kind';
- collect the information necessary to inform their decisions, and that in doing so they might consult with independent expert advisors.

It was also stated that distributing bodies should not solicit applications or fund organisations over which they have material influence. Any buildings supported by capital funds should be of the highest architectural quality and should encourage the greatest accessibility, as well as complying with the needs of people with disabilities.

Early concerns about Lottery funding of culture

Even before completing its passage through Parliament, the National Lottery etc. Bill had raised any number of issues about the distribution of funding to the cultural sector. These emerged in a context in which there were no formal needs assessments, and distributors' inability to solicit applications was used in retrospect to justify their lack of strategic approaches. As the regular coverage of the Lottery in such publications as *Arts Digest*, *Lottery Monitor* and *The National Lottery Yearbook* suggests, these issues informed debates about the Lottery, and influenced reforms to the distribution of funding. They covered: likely 'winners' and 'losers'; additionality; the implications of major injections of capital for revenue funding; and reflected some anxiety about the stability of current levels of Lottery income.

For example, it was suggested that a few high-profile, 'élitist' projects would swallow up most of the available funds and that smaller, lower-profile projects would lose out. This called into question the ethics of the arts Lottery funding being used to support capital schemes for institutions with national or international audiences and reputations, already revenue funded by the ACE – 'cash for the toffs – and the toffs' pleasure' (Tomkins, 1994). Various agencies highlighted the need for smaller organisations to receive funding, especially those in London, which was relatively less successful than other regions in attracting grants under £1 million (see, for example, Tomkins, 1994; 1996; Leisure Futures and CELTS, 1996).

Various awards made during 1995 appeared to confirm that funding was, indeed, going to élitist projects: the HLF's award of £13.25 for the Churchill Archive, and the three largest ACE grants (£78.5 million to the Royal Opera House, £30 million to Sadler's Wells, and £15.8 million to the Royal Court). Such awards were even criticised by cultural advocates, who regarded their cumulative effect as a public-relations disaster (NCA/NMC, 1996). Indeed, a survey by the Consumers' Association in September 1996 suggested that three-quarters of the public thought that too much money was being spent on a few big projects (*Which?*, 1997)

Another concern expressed was the potentially restricted nature of projects eligible for funding by the HLF in particular. Bound by the legislation that governed the NHMF's operations, the Fund could award grants only to sites or other assets in, or intended for, public or charitable ownership and of national importance. Moreover, it was subject to the criticism that by complying with the orthodoxies of its parent body and primarily funding 'listed' buildings, 'recognised' land and 'conservation areas' (FitzHerbert and Rhoades, 1997: 117) it excluded property in private ownership, education and access projects and locally important heritage.

The sustainability of Lottery capital projects was also questioned. Given organisations' lack of reserves, there was a strong likelihood that new or enhanced institutions supported by Lottery capital funding would create more pressure for revenue funding. Despite a caveat enabling Lottery distributors to provide revenue, the HLF's £1.43 million endowment to Chetham's Library, Manchester in 1995/96 and the £7 million to Baltic Flour Mill, Gateshead in 1997, were the

exceptions rather than the rule. At the time of writing (summer 2000), news stories about Lottery projects falling foul of over-optimistic predictions of visitor numbers, and their consequent failure to generate a viable level of admission revenues, were becoming increasingly familiar.

It was further queried whether Lottery funding was in fact 'additional', and not used to support activities which might otherwise be funded by government, and whether Lottery programmes were stimulating new forms of activities. Questions about additionality have dogged the history of Lottery funding, focusing on: those subsidised cultural flagships receiving Lottery funding; the fact that Lottery projects receive partnership funding, which is often channelled through government bodies (such as Single Regeneration Funding, or European Regional Development Funding); and the advent of Lottery revenue funding.

The principle of 'access for all' led to scrutiny of whether funding from the HLF and ACE in particular was gravitating towards London and the South East, rather than being equally spread throughout the UK and England respectively. The fact that the earliest, largest, ACE grants went to London-based companies reinforced such concerns. Moreover, during its first full year of operation, over 50 per cent of the ACE's funding went to London, as did 43 per cent of the HLF's. The distributors' defence rested on the location of the largest organisations and heritage assets, and their necessity to respond to individual applications as they came in (Gummer, 1996; HLF/NHMF, 1997).

By early 1996, the regional arts boards (RABs) had presented the case for better regional representation, comparing the centralisation of arts funding to regional administration of the Charities Board and the Millennium Commission's proposals (Hewitt and Dixon, 1996). The majority of the public also thought that the money should be distributed equally to all regions of the country (*Which?* 1997).

Another concern was the prospect that a large proportion of the money raised through the sale of Lottery tickets would come from those sections of the community, particularly those on low incomes, least likely to identify with or participate in the successfully funded projects (see, for example, LGIU, 1996). The fact that Lottery-capital-funded projects might well have to charge admission to generate necessary revenues was thought likely to hinder access.

Other 'losers' were identified as: charities, including those involved in medical research (although, as Evans and White (1996: 9) suggest, findings of research into the impact that the Lottery was having on the public's donations to charities varied considerably); libraries (the HLF is able to support special, historic library collections, but not public lending or current information services); and literature, which had virtually no capital requirements.

It was also feared that inequities in funding might be exacerbated by the difficulties of securing the hard commitment of funding partners, particularly in deprived areas. The potential of projects across the board to meet the partnership requirements was also in some doubt. As the Director of the then Association for British Sponsorship of the Arts (ABSA) put it, 'Where is all this extra cash going to come from?' (Colin Tweedy cited in ABSA, 1995). In the event, deprived areas attracted much European Union and Single Regeneration Bid funding which was used as partnership funding for Lottery projects (see Chapters 11 and 13). At a

more modest level, given that the equivalent costs of volunteer labour and donated goods were admissible as partnership funding, this was less of a problem for smaller projects than had been anticipated.

Resentment was expressed that certain individuals were seen to be benefiting disproportionately from the Lottery – in particular a small number of consultants and architects' practices. Artists are reported as receiving about half the minimum daily rate offered to consultants by the ACE (*Arts Digest* 30: 44). This issue was brought to the fore by Richard Rogers' practice winning nearly £1 million to carry out a feasibility study for the South Bank in 1994/95. That he was in a position to tender for work (despite going through due process), while being an ACE Council member, raised the spectre of conflict of interests, previously largely neglected in the arts funding system.

The competence of the distributors was questioned in particular: their ability to manage the thousands of applications anticipated; and the arts councils' ability to distribute film funding. The former came under the spotlight with the evaluation of the administration of the Arts for Everyone programme – especially the A4E main programme which had an approval rate of 12 per cent (Annabel Jackson Associates, 1999). With respect to the latter, the ACE's film funding eventually passed to the Film Council, and SAC's passed to Scottish Screen.

Lastly, it was feared that the percentage of Lottery proceeds received by the five good causes might be downgraded in the future. This fear was realised with the advent of a new sixth good cause, as shown in Table 16.3 below.

All of these concerns were reflected in changes to legislation and the Directions issued by the responsible government departments (the DNH, the Scottish Office, the Welsh Office and the Department of Education, Northern Ireland), as well as in the Lottery distributors' funding programmes themselves.

New Policy Directions, 1996

By January 1996, within a year of the first awards having been made, the DNH and the other responsible government bodies announced that they would be consulting the distributors about developing their remits. The possibility of various one-off revenue strands to Lottery funding was discussed, focusing on youth, talent and participation – all perceived as crucial for satisfying expectations about the 'public good'.

This consultation coincided with the publication of the government's expenditure plans in March 1996. DNH's plans showed a projected diminution of £5 million in ACE's funding from 1995/96 to 1996/97, and of £8.2 million by 1997/98 and 1999/99. The government also planned cutting NHMF's grant-in-aid, allocating £8 million in 1997/98 and £7.5 million in 1997/98 and 1998/99, against the £12 million allocated in 1993/94. The proposed cuts in the ACE's budget reinforced existing concerns about the pressures on revenue funding. As the Chair of the ACE's Lottery Board speculated, 'Within two years, we might have nearly twice as much money for capital grants from the Lottery as for revenue funding from the government' (Gummer, 1996: 29).

Arts Council of England programmes

The new Directions, which the DNH issued in April 1996, allowed the arts distributors to provide revenue funding for a wider range of organisations than before, and to fill perceived gaps in provision. This meant that voluntary and community organisations, which had never received grants from the arts councils before, were now eligible for funding. Although these schemes targeted at such recipients began a proliferation of Lottery funding programmes, they did little to answer the shortage of revenue funding exacerbated by capital grants.

The ACE, for example, designed its new revenue programme to: develop creative abilities and artistic talents and skills, particularly for young people; increase access to and participation in the arts, particularly in remote areas and areas in need of regeneration; and to enable arts organisations to gain long-term stability. It launched four new schemes, as outlined below, to run for specified periods alongside its capital programme: the Arts for Everyone (A4E), a stabilisation programme, a film programme, and funding for dance and drama students. As Table 16.2 shows, the other arts councils followed a similar model.

- The A4E main programme offered professional, voluntary and amateur groups opportunities to: create new work; develop new audiences; encourage participation in the arts and encourage young people, in particular, to participate and realise their creative potential. It offered smaller grants than conventional Lottery funding and had similarly lower partnership-funding thresholds. A4E Express was a fast-track pilot scheme aimed primarily at youth, voluntary and small professional organisations, which had previously received no funding whatsoever.
- The Stabilisation Programme (launched in September 1996) was designed to 'strengthen arts organisations creatively, managerially and financially' by putting them on a firmer financial footing. It aimed to eradicate the root causes of their instability (ACE, 1997).
- Under the film franchise schemes, three consortia – DNA Films, The Film Consortium and Pathé Pictures – were awarded a combined total of £96 million for 120 films to be made over a six-year period. Any profit made by the films was to result in a proportion of funding being returned to ACE. In April 2000, the new Film Council assumed responsibility for all DCMS film funding, including Lottery funding, with the exception of Artists' Film and Video.
- The Interim Funding Scheme (IFS) for Dance and Drama Students, co-funded by the Department for Education and Employment, was designed to help students of dance, drama and stage management pay their fees for certain accredited courses at independent colleges. Their only other option for support was though discretionary grants from their local education authorities (ACE, 1997).

Heritage Lottery Fund programmes

The new Directions allowed HLF to support the work of Building Preservation Trusts, which acquire buildings then repair and convert them to new uses and

Table 16.2 Arts Lottery programmes from 1995/96 (a)

	From 1995/96 (capital funding)		From 1996/97 (revenue funding)	1998/99 (cross-distributor funding)
ACE	Capital (equipment; building; feasibility studies)	Film Programme (films for cinema; greenlight fund; artists' film and video film franchise)	A4E (main and express) Stabilisation Interim Funding Scheme for dance, drama and stage management students	Millennium Festival Awards for All
ACNI	Capital (equipment building feasibility studies)	Film	New Work (b) Access Advancement Interim Funding Scheme	Millennium Festival
SAC	Capital (equipment; building; feasibility studies/ artists in environmental schemes; design competitions; arts in public)	Film production (short film; exploitation)	New Directions (access and participation new work; talent, skills and creative abilities) Advancement	Millennium Festival Awards for All
ACW	Capital (equipment; building; feasibility studies/artists in environmental schemes; public art)	Film	Arts for All (c) Dance and Drama awards	Millennium Festival

Sources: ACE; ACW; SAC and ACNI National Lottery Fund, annual reports, various years.

Notes
a) These breakdowns reflect the arts councils' categories as used in their annual accounts and Lottery reviews.
b) This is a capital programme.
c) For training, access and participation.

sell them on, by contributing to the shortfall between the total project cost and the estimated market value of the building after project completion. To date, the HLF has received no money back on the sale of properties.

The HLF had already launched three new programmes in January 1996 to help it achieve a regional spread of major projects over the UK and to fill gaps in the existing funding provision. These included: the Major Museum, Library and Archive Projects Assessment Programme for projects seeking grants of over £1 million; the Urban Parks Programme, which sought to reverse the decline in urban open spaces and improve the quality of life in neighbourhoods (Harding, 2000); and, in partnership with English Heritage, the Joint Scheme for Churches and other Places of Worship in England, which sought to complement existing public funds.

The operations of the HLF were, however, still limited by the restrictive clauses of the National Heritage Act 1980 which determined whom and what kind of projects it could fund. It was only when the National Heritage Act 1997

received Royal Assent, and the Secretary of State issued new Directions in 1998, that the HLF was able to extend its remit.

National Heritage Act 1997

The National Heritage Act 1997 was partly a response to the National Heritage Committee's report of 1996 and to the demands which became apparent once Lottery funding became available (HoC, 1996). It greatly increased the range of applicants and the types of project HLF might support by:

- effectively removing the concept of an eligible recipient, so, on the proviso that assistance would result in public benefit, the HLF could support such projects as comprehensive townscape schemes and national parks;
- enabling the HLF to improve access to the heritage, to support the study, understanding and enjoyment of the heritage, the maintenance and development of heritage skills, to support public exhibitions and to create records of heritage; it also extended the HLF's powers to assist IT projects and the interpretation of heritage.

The HLF launched its Revenue Grant Programme in April 1998. It addressed a range of new activities: information and communications technology, archaeology, education, information, and documentary heritage. The Museums and Galleries Access Fund (launched in July 1998) was designed to encourage: the development of new audiences, increased participation in museums, and major touring initiatives by national and other leading regional museums and galleries.

The National Lottery Act 1998

Before the 1997 election, the Conservatives were planning to introduce a sixth good cause, the Millennium Information and Communication Technology Fund (DNH, 1997). However, in July 1997 (three months after coming into office), the new Labour government set out its proposals for reforming the Lottery in a White Paper, *The People's Lottery*, which developed the proposals made in Labour's pre-election report, *The National Lottery. Initiatives and Recommendations* (Labour Party, 1996). The subsequent National Lottery Bill was introduced in 1997, and the Act received Royal Assent in July 1998. The government's intention was to enable:

> *The benefits of Lottery money to be more widely spread; greater confidence that money is allocated fairly across Britain and to different groups; new areas benefiting from the Lottery, particularly health, education and the environment, to help to ensure that the Lottery as a whole adds more to success and quality of life in the next millennium; Lottery money is spent according to a strategy, taking account of assessed needs; and decisions on individual grants taken closer to the grassroots.*
>
> (*The People's Lottery*: 3)

Amongst the changes brought about by this legislation, the following developments affected the cultural sector directly.

- A new, sixth good cause and distributor was established: the New Opportunities Fund which was created to allocate funds to support health, education and environmental initiatives.[3] Contingent upon its establishment was the reduction of funds to the other good causes and distributors from October 1997. It had previously been anticipated that the dissolution of the Millennium Commission would result in an increased share for the remaining good causes (HLF, *Lottery Update 12*, November 1998: 3).
- The National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA) was established to support and promote new talent and ideas in health, education and environment. NESTA was established with a £200 million endowment, expected to produce annual income of £10 million per year. It is not a distributing body and does not receive an on-going share of the fund. NESTA's first programme, Invention and Innovation, opened for applications in November 1999.
- Decision-making was delegated to home countries and English regional offices.
- The ability to participate in joint schemes for the distribution of funding was realised in the Millennium Festival awards and Awards for All, a small-grants programme for small charities and community groups, and shared by all the distributors. The pilot was launched in Scotland, and extended to the East Midlands in September 1998 before going national in April 1999. Similar schemes in Wales and Northern Ireland are administered separately by each of the distributors (see Table 16.2).

The 1998 Act also effectively reversed certain aspects of the previous legislation by specifying the need for each distributor to consult upon and produce: a strategic plan, including a statement of the policy and financial directions issued by the Secretary of State and how it was complying with these; a statement of the estimate of the likely amount of funds available to the distributor; a statement of the distributor's assessment of the sector's needs that it has the power to deal with; and, a statement of the distributor's priorities in meeting those needs (ACE, 1999a).

While the details of the new Policy and Financial Directions issued in August 1998 differed from distributor to distributor, those issued to the NHMF (HLF, 1999) and the ACE (ACE, 1999a) stressed the government's desire to shift the distributors' previous focus 'away from big spending on bricks and buildings and concentrate on making sure more lottery money goes on people and activities' (as suggested by Hewitt and Dixon, 1996). These Directions emphasised the:

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3 Launched in January 1999, its first three initiatives include: healthy living centres, out-of-school-hours activities, ITC training for teachers and school librarians. Three more initiatives announced in November 1998 included: cancer prevention, detection, treatment and care; green spaces and sustainable communities; community access to lifelong leaning (*New Links for the Lottery*, Cm 4466).

- requirement to ensure that all parts of the UK have access to funding;
- scope for reducing economic and social deprivation and the need to promote access, for people from all sections of society;
- need to ensure that their powers to solicit applications are used in connection with their strategic objectives; and
- desirability of working with other organisations, including distributors.

Other government initiatives of around the same period encouraged the social and economic directives within the cultural sector. The Coalfields Lottery conference, November 1998, highlighted the need for Lottery funding to contribute to the regeneration of areas that had fared less well in the past (DCMS, 1998), and a subsequent report highlighted ways of improving lottery funding to those areas (Gore et al., 2000). By July 1999, the DCMS reported to the Social Policy Unit on how to maximise the impact on poor neighbourhoods of government spending and policies on arts and leisure (DCMS, 1999).

Lottery funding to the cultural sector

Against the background of the issues raised in the previous section, this section considers the financial impact of the Lottery, including how much Lottery funding was made available to the cultural sector until the end of the 1998/99 financial year, and how it was distributed. More specifically, the section considers: whether the demand for funding was met; what was funded; where the funding went; and, what kind of recipients it went to. It should be said that, in many respects, there are considerable difficulties about addressing these questions, however interesting they might be, since they don't necessarily coincide with the original objectives of the Lottery.

The distributors' income

> *Initial predictions suggested that the Lottery would realise monies for the arts at rather less that the Government's grant in aid of £186 million per annum. Even so, the doubling of the arts budget was a matter of great consequence.*
>
> *The latest predictions (Camelot) suggest that in 1996/97 £300 million will be raised for the arts.*
>
> (Hewitt and Dixon, 1996)

In the event, the success of the Lottery meant that it produced more funding for the cultural sector than even the revised predictions suggested. In 1996/97, the National Lottery Distribution Fund provided £612 million for the arts and heritage (including countryside and land). By the end of 1998/99, these two good causes had received £2.7 billion in all. The sector also benefited from funding from the Millennium Commission (particularly through its funding of major projects such as Tate Modern and its Awards for All programme) and the Charities Board. So, in purely financial terms, the Lottery has brought an enormous boon to the sector.

Table 16.3 Percentage of Lottery funds allocated by distributors, 1994/95–1998/99

Percentages

	At 31.3 1995	At 31.3 1996	At 31.3 1997	1.4.– 13.10. 1997 (a)	15.10.97– 31.3.98	1.4.98– 14.2.99 (b)	15.2.– 16.5.99	17.5.99– 30.6.99	1.7.99
Arts	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	16.67	16.67	5.00	16.67	16.67
of which									
ACE	16.66	16.66	16.66	16.66	13.88	13.88	4.16	13.88	13.88
SAC	1.78	1.78	1.78	1.78	1.48	1.48	0.44	1.48	1.48
ACW	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.83	0.83	0.25	0.83	0.83
ACNI	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.47	0.47	0.14	0.46	0.46
Other good causes									
NLCB	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	16.67	16.67	5.00	16.67	16.67
NLF	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	16.67	16.67	5.00	16.67	16.67
MC	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00
Sport	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	16.67	16.67	5.00	16.67	16.67
NOF	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	13.33	13.33	60.00	13.33	13.33

Sources: National Lottery Distribution Fund Accounts, various years; DCMS.

Notes

a) The New Opportunities Fund was created in this period, and was entitled to a share of Lottery funds from 14 October 1997.

b) During 1998 the Secretary of State guaranteed the arts councils and the HLF their current share in Lottery funding up to 2001.

The percentage of Lottery funding used to support the New Opportunities Fund has meant a reduction in the share for the other good causes, which declined by 3.3 per cent (Table 16.3). When the Millennium Commission's funding is wound up, its share of funding will go to the New Opportunities Fund, which will then receive a third of the total amount allocated to good causes. This was due to take place at the end of December 2000, then postponed to August 2001.

The distributors' expenditure

Notwithstanding their income from the National Lottery Distribution Fund, the distributors' commitments and running costs determine the amount that they have to spend. As Table 16.4 shows, in the early years of the Lottery, the arts councils and the HLF, in particular, accumulated a large surplus. However from 1997/98, coinciding with the reduction in their income, the arts councils (especially ACE) and the HLF over-committed themselves. The ACE provides the most extreme example of this. According to its Strategic Plan of 1999 (ACE, 1999a), it anticipated a diminishing total spend culminating in £135 million in 2001/02 – a third of what it spent in 1996/97. It could be argued that these projected figures are to do with tamping-down demand. The amount of funding promised by Camelot is £15 billion over seven years – £5 billion more than the current licencees will have provided.

This downward trend in ACE's expenditure particularly affects its capital programme. Subtracting the £69 million currently reserved for specific projects, ACE's capital spend would average £41 million a year, less than 20 per cent of its capital expenditure in 1997/98. This reduction in ACE's funding had already taken effect before the end of the period considered in this chapter. In 1998/99

Table 16.4 Income and expenditure of Lottery distributors, 1994/95–1998/99

£ million

	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	Total
Income from National Lottery Account						
ACE	48.900	255.360	262.802	297.648	241.748	1106.458
ACW	2.934	15.303	15.722	17.842	14.757	66.558
SAC	5.224	27.313	28.208	32.538	26.573	118.856
ACNI	1.644	8.590	9.055	10.361	8.919	38.569
HLF	58.691	306.065	316.953	366.274	310.962	1358.945
Subtotal	*117.393*	*612.631*	*632.740*	*724.663*	*602.959*	*2690.386*
Grants made						
ACE	n/a	229.918	344.450	455.794	57.925	1088.087
ACW	n/a	10.323	12.018	18.807	12.706	53.854
SAC	n/a	19.831	30.195	35.387	31.265	116.678
ACNI	n/a	5.187	5.084	4.652	8.940	23.863
HLF	n/a	70.906	235.516	406.556	383.324	1096.302
Subtotal	*n/a*	*336.165*	*627.263*	*921.196*	*494.160*	*2378.784*
Cost of administering Lottery grants						
ACE	1.411	6.864	14.719	22.937	21.038	66.969
ACW	0.183	0.493	0.844	1.187	1.272	3.979
SAC	0.224	0.452	1.188	1.900	1.911	5.675
ACNI	0.075	0.175	0.294	0.617	0.756	1.917
HLF	1.299	3.895	10.739	11.992	11.900	39.825
Subtotal	*3.192*	*11.879*	*27.784*	*38.633*	*36.877*	*118.365*
Accumulated funds brought forward						
ACE	0.000	47.489	66.067	–30.300	–211.383	n/a
ACW	2.751	4.487	2.860	–2.152	0.779	n/a
SAC	5.000	7.030	3.205	–4.748	–6.602	n/a
ACNI	1.567	3.228	3.677	5.091	–0.777	n/a
HLF	57.392	231.264	70.698	–52.274	–84.262	n/a
Subtotal	*66.711*	*293.498*	*140.097*	*–84.383*	*–302.254*	n/a

Sources: HLF, ACE, ACW, SAC and ACNI National Lottery Fund, annual reports, various years.

ACE's total grant spend was £57.9 million – less than 15 per cent of what it had spent the previous year. In the 20 months from August 1998 to March 2000, ACE only had £55 million available for new capital awards (ACE, 1998).

The main causes of this reduction in funds are commitments already made to certain projects, including: funding reserved for specific projects (South Bank Centre and the Regional Music Centre, Gateshead); funding earmarked for new schemes (the National Foundation for Youth Music; Publications, Recordings and Distribution; and National Touring Projects), as well as ACE's allocations to revenue and regional funding. The net effect is that less funding will be going to fewer major projects, and that projects which have already received feasibility awards or funding for the first phase of development may end up being refused capital funds or offered substantially lower awards than expected.

Satisfying the demand for funding

However much money was made available to the good causes, demand inevitably exceeded supply. Distributing bodies do not issue information about applicants'

Examples of success rates of all applicants to distributors of Lottery funds

Distributor/programme	Success rate (%)	At date
ACE		
Capital programme	About 50	August 1998
Arts for Everyone Main	11	End of programme
Arts for Everyone Express	44	End of programme
Film Production	about 33	1997/98
Other Arts Councils		
ACW	72	1999
ACNI	78	1999
SAC	Figures not available	
HLF		
Capital and Revenue Programme	53	1999
Urban Parks Programme	About 11	1999
Joint Places of Worship	9	1999

Source: research by *Lottery Monitor*.

success or failure rates on a regular basis, if at all. The box above illustrates snapshots of success rates at particular times. Except for the A4E success rates, assessed at the end of the programme, the figures given cannot be taken as representative of the programmes identified as a whole.

However, to some extent, certain funding schemes, at least, responded to demand. Before the most recent Directions insisted that the distributors should consult their constituencies, the HLF had revised its original allocations for the Urban Parks programme as a result of the sheer number of applications. This programme, like A4E, was conceived to appease disquiet over the perceived élitism of certain early major capital grants, and to provide support for those parts of the country 'not overburdened with an abundance of funding'. The Urban Parks programme was initially launched in 1996 with £50 million for a three-year period. But by March 2000 it had awarded 314 grants totalling £170 million to urban parks. Of that, funding went to 48 of the most 50 deprived areas in the UK. A4E was reported to have been initially launched with £22.25 million (*Arts Digest*, 17: 40), although in the event it delivered awards worth £49.9 million.

What was funded

There are different ways to answer the question, 'what was funded?' One response is a quantitative description of the number and value of awards made by region, artform, heritage activity or scheme, another might be on the basis of the value of the partnership funding delivered. Another response might focus on less tangible effects of Lottery funding, describing, for example, the extent to which the objectives of Lottery funding were delivered – how much more access was created, and to what extent social deprivation was eradicated. In practice, however, the first approach is standard. Consequently, our understanding about 'what was funded' is determined by the nature of the data easily collated by the distributors. Thus, Table 16.5 shows funding to arts activities and heritage areas. Drama and music

received almost 50 per cent of arts funding between them, with museums and galleries receiving nearly 50 per cent of all heritage funding, and historic buildings receiving some 30 per cent. The vast majority of that heritage funding went on bricks and mortar, and within that a high percentage was spent on repair, physical improvements and extensions. The fact that these activities attracted the bulk of funding is more or less consistent from 1994/95 to 1998/99.

Given the original non-strategic nature of Lottery funding, it is not surprising that the distributors' annual reports analyse their grant-giving as illustrated in Table 16.5, rather than on the basis of effectiveness. But, as the ramifications of government policy can be seen on the priorities of the distributors, this should, logically, change. Both A4E and the HLF's Museums & Galleries Access Fund have built-in assessment requirements designed to reveal how far funded projects have succeeded in delivering the programmes' objectives. Were the same principles applied to the new ACE capital programme, this would imply a series of annual statements on: the degree to which greater access to the arts had been achieved, projects' success in reaching new audiences and participants, and the extent of cultural diversity provided.

Assessments of what has been funded are quite often based on the use of proxies – the substitution of one measure for another. One example might be the amount of Lottery funding committed to revenue awards, which can be seen as a move away from bricks and mortar to people and activities (Table 16.6). Another example might be that the analysis of funding on a local-authority basis not only demonstrates whether an equitable geographical balance of provision has been achieved, but more specifically provides a crude measure of whether funding has been distributed to areas of high deprivation. Although several of the national museums and galleries funded by DCMS and various flagship arts organisations which have received large capital grants are actually located in deprived areas (Selwood, 1997: 13–14), recent initiatives have been intended to address issues of social and economic deprivation. The HLF's capital programme, for example, is currently targeting local, neglected aspects of heritage, and the Urban Parks, Townscape Heritage and Places of Worship programmes are being refocused to help areas of social and economic deprivation. New initiatives are likely to concentrate on the coalfield areas and urban green spaces.

Other proxies include funding by grant size (Table 16.7). The size of awards, for instance, is generally considered to be indicative of the extent to which distributors are funding projects of national, regional, local and community interest. It also reflects organisational size, as well as perceptions of competencies, sustainability and, in the case of the HLF, 'heritage merit'. The HLF's decision to allocate 50 per cent of its budget to grants below £1 million, delegated to the four country committees on the basis of population, illustrates the relationship between grant size and equitable access to funding (HLF, 1999). These smaller awards include capital funding for equipment and feasibility studies, as well as revenue funding intended for access and participation projects.

According to *Lottery Monitor*, the average size of awards across the board has halved over the last six years. More than 17,000 awards were made in the first nine months of 2000, compared with 16,620 in the whole of 1999 and 4,321 in 1995,

Table 16.5 Total Lottery grants to the cultural sector by artform and heritage asset, 1994/95–1998/99

£ million

	1994/95 (a)	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	Total
Arts (b)						
Architecture	n/a	0.838	0.988	1.267	0.837	3.929
Broadcasting	n/a	0.738	7.130	0.123	0.000	7.991
Circus	n/a	0.206	0.956	0.241	0.208	1.612
Combined arts (c)	n/a	66.242	71.061	71.714	24.673	234.690
Dance	n/a	30.823	32.020	48.496	9.476	120.816
Drama and mime (c)	n/a	135.759	129.857	84.170	24.924	374.709
Film and video	n/a	11.749	35.044	21.290	9.753	77.835
Literature	n/a	1.244	1.948	3.373	4.112	10.677
Music	n/a	45.835	61.905	58.024	39.283	205.046
Opera/Music theatre	n/a	61.451	0.708	3.379	1.386	66.924
Visual arts and crafts (c)	n/a	25.376	61.086	73.439	24.856	184.756
Other	n/a	1.751	1.758	7.668	9.934	21.111
Subtotal	*n/a*	*382.011*	*404.461*	*373.183*	*150.443*	*1,310.097*
Heritage (d)						
Historic buildings (c)	n/a	39.973	104.583	121.738	82.175	348.469
Industrial transport and maritime (c)	0.419	16.199	65.936	23.019	19.324	124.897
Manuscripts and archives	13.254	7.844	23.175	11.691	21.836	77.800
Museums and collections (c)	0.650	216.634	215.045	114.211	93.261	639.801
Subtotal	*14.323*	*280.650*	*408.739*	*270.660*	*216.596*	*1,190.967*
Charity Lottery Board (e)	n/a	0.715	1.273	1.976	2.082	6.047
Total	14.323	663.376	814.472	645.819	369.121	2,507.111
At real (1998/99) prices	*16.150*	*726.971*	*864.703*	*666.892*	*369.121*	*n/a*
Percentage change year-on-year	n/a	4,401.480	18.950	–22.880	–44.650	n/a

Sources:
Arts Council of England; Scottish Arts Council annual reports, various years; Arts Council of Wales; Arts Council of Northern Ireland National Lottery Report, various years; Department for Culture, Media and Sport website (www.lottery.culture.gov.uk); Heritage Lottery Fund.

Notes
a) Only the Heritage Lottery Fund identified grants made in this year.
b) Grants made by the four arts councils and by the Millennium Commission.
c) Including Millennium Commission awards.
d) Grants made by the Heritage Lottery Fund and by the Millennium Commission.
e) Could not be separately identified by artform.

Charity Lottery Board: estimated value of grants to cultural projects, 1995/96–1998/99

	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	Total
Total number of awards	2,591	4,613	7,159	7,545	21908
Estimated number of awards at average of 1.2 per 100 grants	31	55	86	91	263
Estimated value of arts grants at average of £0.023 million per grant (£m)	0.715	1.273	1.976	2.082	6.047

Source: Department for Culture, Media and Sport website (www.lottery.culture.gov.uk).

Table 16.6 Capital and revenue grants awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the four arts councils, 1994/95–1998/99 (a)

£ million

	1994/95 (a)	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	Total
HLF						
Capital grants	14.323	173.076	392.913	265.545	206.384	1,052.242
Revenue grants	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	8.441	8.441
Subtotal	*14.323*	*173.076*	*392.913*	*265.545*	*214.825*	*1,060.682*
ACE						
Capital grants	n/a	229.918	363.551	247.700	88.900	930.069
Revenue grants	n/a	n/a	n/a	76.100	31.400	107.500
Subtotal	n/a	229.918	363.551	323.800	120.300	1,037.569
ACW						
Capital grants	n/a	11.280	14.030	21.957	7.198	54.466
Revenue grants	n/a	n/a	0.042	4.618	7.038	11.698
Subtotal	n/a	11.280	14.072	26.575	14.236	66.164
SAC (b)						
Capital grants	0.282	24.041	24.189	29.883	12.092	90.487
Revenue grants	n/a	3.525	6.614	11.335	11.510	32.984
Subtotal	*0.282*	*27.566*	*30.803*	*41.218*	*23.602*	*123.471*
ACNI (c)						
Capital grants	n/a	5.860	6.788	4.587	8.800	26.036
Revenue grants	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.935	0.899	1.834
Subtotal	n/a	5.860	6.788	5.522	9.699	27.870
Total, of which:	14.605	447.700	808.128	662.661	382.662	2,315.756
total capital grants	14.605	444.175	801.472	569.673	323.375	2,153.300
total revenue grants	n/a	3.525	6.656	92.988	59.287	162.456

Sources: personal correspondence with HLF, ACNI, SAC, ACW; various ACE annual reports and National Lottery Reports.

Notes
a) The distinctions between capital and revenue funding projects are shown in Table 16.2, exceptions are described in the following notes.
b) Film is counted as revenue. For the purpose of this table, advancement, which SAC counts as capital and revenue, is counted as revenue.
c) Film and New Work programmes are counted as capital expenditure.

the first year of Lottery grants. Money is flowing faster too: £1.6 billion was awarded between January and October 2000, compared with less than £1 billion in 1999.

Partnership funding is not solely regarded as additional money, but as evidence of a wider interest in and support for projects. Table 16.8 shows various programmes' minimum requirements for partnership funding. Despite initial worries that it would prove difficult for smaller projects (especially those in areas of high deprivation) to find other sources of funding, it proved more of a problem for some of the larger flagship Lottery projects. Years after starting their Lottery projects (and, contrary to the funding criteria) several ACE award-winners were still struggling to find sufficient partnership funding (National Audit Office, 1999).

Table 16.9 shows the amounts of partnership funding attracted in 1998/99 by Lottery projects funded by the HLF and the arts councils. With the exception of film projects, funding from the Lottery distributors exceeds partnership funding –

Table 16.7 Heritage Lottery Fund and Arts Council of England Lottery awards by size, 1994/95–1998/99

	1994/95		1995/96		1996/97		1997/98		1998/99	
	No. of awards	% of spend	No. of awards	% of spend	No. of awards	% of spend	No. of awards	% of spend	No. of awards	% of spend
HLF										
Under £50,000	n/a	n/a	124	1	270	1	344	2	445	4
£50,000–£99,999	n/a	n/a	64	2	119	2	176	4	168	5
£100,000–£499,999	n/a	n/a	111	12	187	8	321	22	238	19
£500,000–£999,999	n/a	n/a	17	5	51	7	62	13	63	15
£1m–£10m	n/a	n/a	29	53	77	46	57	45	48	40
Over £10m	n/a	n/a	4	26	10	35	4	14	3	18
ACE										
Under £50,000	5	9	275	2	2,376	5	3,648	10	495	15
£50,000–£99,999	1	5	123	3	234	6	272	9	223	21
£100,000–£499,999	0	0	55	4	102	8	152	17	98	25
£500,000–£999,999	2	86	31	7	52	12	33	10	27	25
£1m–£10m	0	0	33	23	59	48	53	58	21	57
Over £10m	0	0	8	70	6	40	3	32	1	18

Sources: HLF and ACE.

albeit to varying degrees. The private sector contributed the largest share of partnership funding across the board (providing nearly 50 per cent), with the arts receiving the lowest proportion of funding from this source.

Where the funding went

Both the ACE and HLF were subject to criticism for their relative neglect of the regions in relation to London and the South East (not least in the annual editions of *National Lottery Yearbook*) and despite the sheer weight of cultural organisations in those areas. But, as Table 16.10 shows, the disparities between the levels of funding received in London and elsewhere have narrowed since 1995/96. This has presumably been in response to various factors: bad press; public opinion; the elimination of major flagships from the picture once they have received their Lottery funding; the advance of the government's programme of regionalisation; and the advent of schemes such as A4E. Between November 1996 and the end of the 1998/99 financial year, A4E alone provided £71.7 million of Lottery money to the regions. Nevertheless, London still received the largest share for the A4E main programme, and almost the largest share for A4E Express.

Table 16.8 Minimum partnership funding required by selected Lottery programmes, end of 1998/99

Programme	Minimum partnership funding required
Awards for All	None
ACE	
Capital (a) and revenue programmes	25% for projects over £100,000; 10% for under £100,000
Stabilisation	Not fixed
Arts for Everyone	Not fixed
Film Production	10–50% generally
NLCB	None required
HLF	
Main grants programme (a)	25% for projects over £100,000; 10% for under £100,000
Revenue grants	25% for projects over £100,000; 10% for under £100,000
Urban Parks	25% for projects over £100,000; 10% for under £100,000
Museums and Galleries Access Fund	Not fixed
Joint Places of Worship	25% for projects over £100,000; 10% for under £100,000
Millennium Commission	
Millennium Awards	10%
Millennium Festival Award for All	Not fixed
NOF	Not fixed

Source: research by *Lottery Monitor.*

Note
a) These requirements are as reported in DNH, 1996.

In terms of the distribution of ACE funding, ACE had no small-grant schemes operating in 1998, other than the pilot Awards for All in the East Midlands where four grants of less than £5,000 were made. But the funding of regional programmes developed as a result of ACE's package of various Lottery programmes centred on, and managed by, the regions (ACE, 1999a). This included small-scale capital funding (grants under £100,000); a new regional arts revenue programme (announced in May 1999, to continue 'Lottery support for many of the areas reached by A4E' (ACE, 1999b)); and small grants including Awards for All and the Year of the Artist, 1999/00. All in all, this is expected to provide an average of £26.4 million per year to the regions between 1999/2000 and 2001/02. However, this represents about the same level of funding as before: between November 1996 and the end of 1997/98, A4E Express and Rounds 1 and 2 of the main programme provided £49.9 million; and, during 1998/99, Rounds 3 and 4 of A4E main programme provided £21.6 million.

At the outset of Lottery funding, the HLF was the most centralised of all the distributors, based as it was in London with no regional representation. Despite its remit to cover the whole of the UK, its funding remained disproportionately weighted to the South East of England – a tendency that it defended on the basis of the distribution of what was narrowly defined as 'heritage assets'. Moreover, it is alleged that where its funding went to the regions it was concentrated in more advantaged local-authority areas – probably because these were the sources of

Table 16.9 Sources of partnership funding attracted by Lottery projects, 1998/99

£

Distributor	New hard commitments	Central government	Local authorities	ERDF	Other public	Private	Total partnership funding
HLF	319,438,27	15,616,013	47,502,288	4,398,871	43,137,081	104,775,720	215,429,973
ACE	140,426,46	0	19,716,385	3,297,322	51,729,471	58,725,436	133,468,614
SAC	322,666,32	0	1,716,003	2,879,110	10,081,233	15,855,954	30,532,300
ACW	13,978,58	0	904,835	1,079,409	1,171,000	15,972,344	19,127,588
ACNI	8,311,41	0	7,090,273	1,874,398	8,002,766	4,557,422	19,834,859
Total	*514,821,04*	*15,616,013*	*76,929,784*	*11,839,110*	*114,121,551*	*199,886,876*	*418,393,334*
Artform and heritage activity							
Heritage							
HLF	173,586,489	4,818,019	39,350,530	4,295,214	29,362,880	78,393,963	156,220,606
Museums and galleries							
HLF	145,851,777	10,797,994	8,151,758	103,657	13,774,201	26,381,757	59,209,367
ACE	379,905	0	0	0	0	58,120	58,120
SAC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ACW	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ACNI	20,600	0	8,000	0	0	10,000	18,000
Total	*146,252,282*	*10,797,994*	*8,159,758*	*103,657*	*13,774,201*	*26,449,877*	*59,285,487*
Arts							
ACE	116,337,125	0	19,565,147	2,838,959	48,615,548	39,850,203(a)	71,020,654
SAC	29,720,466	0	1,691,003	2,879,110	9,276,233	8,405,487	22,251,833
ACW	12,697,139	0	904,835	107,949	1,000	8,410,545	10,395,789
ACNI	8,092,396	0	7,064,273	184,398	7,927,242	4,472,132	19,648,045
Total	*166,847,126*	*0*	*29,225,258*	*6,982,876*	*65,820,023*	*21,288,164*	*123,316,321*
Libraries							
ACE	556,825	0	0	0	0	0	0
SAC	382,375	0	25,000	0	0	138,600	163,600
ACW	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ACNI	75,000	0	2,000	0	0	5,500	7,500
Total	*1,014,200*	*0*	*27,000*	*0*	*0*	*144,100*	*171,100*
Film							
ACE	18,360,107	0	54,461	457,363	3,023,839	18,001,312	32,594,707
SAC	2,563,482	0	0	0	805,000	7,311,867	8,116,867
ACW	1,281,443	0	0	0	1,170,000	756,179	8,731,799
ACNI	123,416	0	16,000	0	75,524	69,790	161,314
Total	*22,328,448*	*0*	*70,461*	*457,363*	*5,074,363*	*32,944,768*	*49,604,687*
Other							
ACE	4,792,497	0	96,777	0	90,084	815,801	1,002,662
Total	514,821,042	15,616,013	76,929,784	11,839,110	114,121,551	160,036,673	378,543,131

Source: DCMS, distribution body management returns.

Note: a) Not entirely accounted for by the existing partnership categories.

'best applications', and conceivably the greatest possibilities of partnership funding (FitzHerbert et al., 1996: 98).

Despite setting up regional teams in 1997, it was only towards the end 1998, in response to the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee, that the HLF established Committees for Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England with

Table 16.10 Total Lottery grants to the cultural sector by home country and region, 1994/95–1998/99

£ million

	1994/95 (a)	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	Total
HLF and Millennium Commission funding by GOR (England)						
East	13.254	7.922	28.745	15.359	12.409	77.689
East Midlands	0.000	8.731	8.307	5.467	8.211	30.716
London	0.000	154.505	131.113	87.059	46.084	418.761
North West	0.650	46.102	54.893	22.634	34.739	159.018
North East	0.000	3.206	14.060	11.864	1.336	30.466
South East	0.000	11.390	31.713	32.740	19.748	95.591
South West	0.000	7.686	46.476	14.662	21.063	89.887
West Midlands	0.000	1.755	19.541	11.776	15.339	48.411
Yorkshire and the Humber	0.000	11.573	23.551	17.136	11.157	63.417
Subtotal GORs England	*13.904*	*252.868*	*358.399*	*218.696*	*170.087*	*1,013.955*
Arts Lottery funding by RAB (England)						
Eastern	0.000	6.883	6.120	6.906	5.179	25.088
East Midlands	0.000	13.380	13.232	10.741	2.420	39.772
London	0.000	166.594	158.651	67.925	32.028	425.198
North West	0.000	52.709	23.557	40.240	5.424	121.930
Northern	0.000	14.839	19.030	51.300	6.708	91.878
South East	0.000	4.744	14.848	6.297	19.588	45.478
South West	0.000	13.132	10.618	20.054	3.793	47.597
Southern	0.000	30.681	14.409	24.160	5.330	74.581
West Midlands	0.000	16.553	59.633	46.147	4.995	127.328
Yorkshire and Humberside	0.000	11.196	29.570	11.804	5.155	57.724
Subtotal RABs England	*0.000*	*330.711*	*349.668*	*285.574*	*90.621*	*1,056.574*
England	13.904	583.579	708.067	504.270	260.708	2,070.529
Wales	0.000	13.397	20.215	30.049	25.231	88.893
Scotland	0.419	57.287	73.106	80.075	40.973	251.861
Northern Ireland	0.000	8.397	11.607	18.578	27.086	65.668
National funding	0.000	0.000	0.204	10.870	13.041	24.115
National Lottery Charity Board (b)	n/a	0.715	1.273	1.976	2.082	6.047
Total	14.323	663.375	814.473	645.818	369.122	2,507.112
At real (1989/99) prices	*16.380*	*747.979*	*892.553*	*685.647*	*381.166*	*2,507.112*
Percentage change year-on-year	n/a	4,466.312	19.329	–23.181	–44.408	557.748

Sources: HLF, ACE, ACW, SAC and ACNI National Lottery Fund, annual reports, various years, DCMS website (www.lottery.culture.gov.uk); HLF.

Notes
a) Only the Heritage Lottery Fund identified grants made in this year.
b) Could not be separately identified by region.

powers to award grants for projects. Since April 1999, the country and the English regional committees have been able to awards grants of up to £1 million. The *2000 Corporate Plan* includes allocations per country on a per capita basis, delegated budgets to the English regions and the announcement of a contingency plan to enable the Fund to improve the position of under-performing English regions (HLF/NMHF, 2000).

Who received funding

Initially, both ACE and HLF funded organisations which already fell within the remits of the Arts Council and the NHMF – providing, as it were, more for those which already had. Having primarily supported capital projects, on a non-strategic, responsive and first-come-first-served basis, both bodies increasingly targeted their funding in accordance with the secondary legislation and Directions. These targets are ultimately determined by government objectives. And, since 1996, all the arts councils and the HLF have considerably expanded their remits to include voluntary and community organisations that had not previously received funding from either body – not least in response to questions about whose heritage is being funded (ACE, 2000b). The Arts Council of Wales is unique in having published (in annual reports) breakdowns of how its Lottery grants were distributed according to different types of groups, with professionals accounting for around 33 per cent; amateurs, around 46 per cent; community groups, 13 per cent; and educational groups, around 5 per cent. Nevertheless, these patterns of funding have been instigated without the benefit of formal needs assessments, and the distributors' preference is still for the arts and heritage establishments.

How has the Lottery affected the cultural sector overall?

The first section of this chapter examined various issues which have dogged the Lottery since the advent of funding for the original five good causes; the second section considered their development and gradual resolution. The final section considers three of the general issues raised by Lottery funding of the cultural sector: additionality, the sustainability of Lottery projects and the organisations responsible for them, and the economic impact of Lottery projects.

Additionality

Although the ACE and the HLF's Lottery revenue schemes, by definition, address perceived gaps in existing provision, it is has become increasingly unclear what might or might not constitute a breach of the principle of additionality – the idea that Lottery funding should not replace other funds. The ACE's announcement in June 1999 that it would no longer separate out its Lottery income from its DCMS grant is a case in point. Other contentious examples include the following.

- There is some ambiguity about those schemes which have taken up funding responsibilities for activities regarded as falling within the remit of local authorities, and which were intended to galvanise local government or other funding bodies into concerted action. Examples include the ACE dance and drama student programme, which filled a gap in discretionary funding and was eventually taken over by the Department for Education and Employment. The Scottish Arts Council never funded an equivalent scheme precisely because it regarded such funding as a government reponsibility.

- The HLF's Urban Parks programme was similarly conceived to address local authorities' failure to repair and maintain the park infrastructure. Its funding of new manager posts is intended to be made permanent at the end of the grant period, usually five years. This kind of situation applies to other local authority facilities. A 1996 report (KPMG, 1996) identified backlogs costed at £102 million of maintenance and repairs in museums and sport facilities (probably an underestimate) – precisely the kind of project targeted by Lottery capital funding for refurbishment and improvements.
- The Year of the Artist (1999/2000), funded by ACE Lottery funds, falls within the tradition of the 'Year of...' projects, funded throughout the 1990s under the Arts Council's Arts 2000 scheme.

Sustainability

The Lottery was never intended to remedy under-funding. It has, nevertheless, highlighted the issue of the sustainability of award-winners. Four issues pertaining to sustainability are considered here – those that impact on projects, organisations, funding bodies and local government. They include: the threat represented by Lottery projects' failure to generate a viable level of admission revenues; the fact that revenue needs inevitable follow-up injections of capital; the revenue implications of capital projects for organisations' operating costs; the cost to funding bodies bailing out projects; and, in the wider context, local authorities' tendency to shift funding towards high-profile Lottery projects at the expense of existing provision.

Firstly, there are reports of Lottery projects which have fallen foul of over-optimistic predictions of visitor numbers, resulting in organisations' failure to generate viable levels of admission revenues. Unfulfilled expectations of partnership funding and escalating project costs are also becoming increasingly common. These situations leave two options open – reduction in operations and ultimately closure (as in the case of the National Centre for Popular Music, Sheffield) or top-ups from funding bodies – as with ACE supplementary grants going to Sadler's Wells, the Royal Court Theatre, the National Glass Centre, the Cambridge Arts Theatre, Victoria Hall/ Regent Theatre, Dovecot Arts Centre, Milton Keynes Theatre, and the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (HoC, 2000). Others falling outside the remit of the present study include the Earth Centre, Doncaster, and, of course, the Millennium Dome, Greenwich.

Secondly, an examination of the costs for the museums sector in England, in particular the operating costs of newly created museums and the occupancy costs of extensions, suggests these may be daunting. Babbidge (2001) has suggested that between the beginning of January 1995 and December 1999, HLF projects alone had created additional costs of some £29 million for UK museums.

> *At a time of reducing public subsidy, an expectation that museums will generate more earned income, and a static market, there is a substantial risk that many museums will find themselves over-committed. Thus, rather than remedy-*

> *ing the problems of historic under-funding for museums, there is a risk that lottery money will be creating problems for the next generation.*
>
> (Babbidge, 2001)

Thirdly. there is the spectre of distributors having to provide supplementary grants to projects which have not gone according to plan. This is highlighted by the number of grants the Millennium Commission has made to the Dome. The same problem typifies several ACE projects. The House of Commons Public Accounts Committee (HoC, 2000), for example, found that 13 out of the 15 projects it examined had received supplementary grants – with eight alone receiving almost £20 million.

> *The uncertain financial health of some grant recipients, coupled with the fact that some have not yet attracted all of the funding they require from other sources, serve to highlight ACE's exposure to financial risk.*
>
> (HoC, 2000)

The Committee observed that this problem might have been avoided had the ACE enforced 'the special conditions which they attach to offers of grants before huge sums of lottery money are paid out'. Moreover, the bigger the project, the greater the risk of having to provide more money.

Lastly, research carried out in 1996 found that within English local authorities' leisure services there was a significant shift in funding allocations in response to Lottery awards. Where resources were transferred to higher-profile Lottery-funded schemes, this tended to be at the cost of reductions and cut-backs in service levels (as in staffing and opening hours) and facility maintenance, offset by increased income from charging above the rate of inflation (KMPG, 1996).

Assessing the impact of the Lottery on the sector

To date, there have been relatively few studies of how Lottery-funded cultural projects have affected local, regional or national economic and social wellbeing (Evans and White, 1996: 5) although a Millennium Commission Economic Impact Study is forthcoming.

Even though creating employment was never one of the Lottery's original objectives, the ACE has attempted to measure the effect of Lottery projects, including A4E, on employment (Evans, 1998; Johnson and Thomas, 1997; Larter, 1999). A study of employment arising from the first 1,000 arts Lottery awards in England found that less than 75 per cent of the total value of projects represented actual new spending, since Lottery monies were being matched by historic, 'in-kind' closure and other 'non-additional' expenditure. A high concentration of contracts had been won by a small number of architects, surveyors and engineering firms and Lottery assessors, who were mostly London-based. Employment arising from those first 1,000 arts Lottery awards (worth £1 billion in new spending) was estimated at between 12,500 and 17,800 full-time equivalents posts,

with the lion's share being accounted for by building, construction and related design and materials supplies. In many cases, public art commissions (an integral part of new-build awards) resulted in between 10 and 20 per cent of the total costs going to artists (although it is unclear how much constituted fees; see Chapter 31). Changes in Lottery policy are likely to have affected the employment effects of the Lottery.

The rhetoric of much capital funding is that it contributes to regeneration. Again, this was never one of the Lottery's original objectives. In that sense, the issues raised by independent assessments of cultural projects credited with spearheading urban regeneration in the early 1990s in cities suffering from the effects of industrial decline, such as Birmingham and Glasgow, might well apply to Lottery-funded capital projects. These critiques raised questions about the extent to which prestige projects have had a trickle-down effect – how they improved the economic and social positions for less-well-off residents, what kind of employment they generated, and so on (see, for example, Loftman and Nevin, 1992; Booth and Bloye, 1993). Methods of assessing the social impact of projects are probably still too crude to be used to assess the social wellbeing resulting from Lottery projects (Selwood, 2000).

In conclusion, it would appear that, while Lottery funding has been distributed to the cultural sector since 1995, and distributors are now confronting the issue of where funding is going, relatively little is known about the effect that Lottery monies are having on the sector itself, or the wider economy, or the social wellbeing of the communities it touches. Some qualitative research into the benefits to end-users is, however, underway. Given the government's concern to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of funding across the cultural sector (Selwood, 2000), it seems all the more remarkable that there still has not been 'any attempt to monitor even the programmes of one distributor for value for money, employment outcomes, usage, access, financial position, development of new programmes, etc.'(White et al., 1998: 23).

28
Profile of Museums and Galleries

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The majority of museums and galleries in the UK are subsidised. Even museums classified as 'independent' often receive support in the form of core funding or Lottery grants. Consequently, it is enormously difficult to distinguish between the subsidised and commercial museums sectors, and so this chapter does not attempt to do so. The chapter collates existing data on museums and galleries in the UK. It describes and compares: the data sources; number of museums; their turnover, including consumer spend; employment; and visitors. It contextualises this information with comments from museum funders and administrators. The chapter focuses on museums and galleries with permanent collections. Galleries without collections, showing temporary exhibitions, are considered elsewhere under 'visual arts' (Chapter 31).

Determining the number of UK museums and galleries

Data sources

Over the past five years, various forces have conspired to encourage the production of better statistics across the museums sector – including the government, as a way of measuring efficiency (Selwood, 2000), and the area museum councils, as a way of mapping their sectors in advance of strategic planning (West Midlands Area Museums Service, 1996; South West Museums Council, 1999). Local authorities are now collecting data for the national league tables and Best Value reviews. And, while most of it remains unpublished, individual museums have also been gathering data for their own purposes. Twenty-two museum services contribute to the Group for Large Local Authority Museums' (GLLAM) annual benchmarking exercise, and 22 individual museums to the Association of Independent Museums (AIM) Comparative Trading Survey. But despite all those efforts, data on the museums sector as a whole remain fundamentally scarce:

It is widely acknowledged that there are serious gaps in information on all the important criteria that measure the role of museums in society and their use of public funding. Apart from the obvious difficulty with quantifying just how

> *many 'museums' there are, the gaps include accurate estimates of the number of visitors, understanding different visitor types, the motivation for visiting or not visiting by different sectors of the population, financial comparisons, staffing comparisons, and the use and effectiveness of marketing. Although the museums world is awash with reports on just about every aspect of their work, it is a knowledge deficit that defeats strategic thinking about museums.*
> (Middleton, 1998: 8).

In addition to the data on the museums and galleries sponsored by DCMS, which appear in the Department's annual reports, there are two sources of national museum statistics which pertain to the period up to 1998/99, both of which were updated annually:

- *Sightseeing in the UK*, which is produced for the four home-country tourist boards and has collected data from UK tourist attractions since 1978; and
- DOMUS (the Digest of Museum Statistics), administered by the Museums & Galleries Commission (MGC) between 1993 and 2000, when responsibility for it passed to Resource, the new Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries. DOMUS collected data from the museums and galleries included in the MGC's Registration Scheme. Its most recent data are for 1998.

Although both surveys were indirectly funded by the DCMS, there was no co-ordination between the two, and numerous discrepancies exist between them (Selwood and Muir, 1997). From 1993 to 1998, the period examined in this chapter, the number of museums and galleries making returns to *Sightseeing in the UK* changed very little – staying around the 1,700 mark. The number of returns to DOMUS varied by about 450.

Various other ad hoc surveys of the museums sector were published between 1993/94 and 1998/99, including those produced at a regional level, such as: an investigation into the impact of the Lottery (Davies, 1997); the market for museums (East Midlands Museums Service, 1996); and the management of university collections (for example, Arnold-Forster, 1999). At a national level, research has focused on various aspects of the museums sector including: audiences (MORI, 1999); employment (HOST Consultancy, 1999); economic impact (Brand et al., 2000); museums' public-service provision (Coles et al., 1998); conservation provision and collection types (Carter et al., 1998).

The number of museums and galleries

According to conventional wisdom, there are about 2,500 museums in the UK (Carter et al., 1999), although estimates of the size of the museum population ultimately depend on what is understood to constitute a museum. The Museums Association's yearbook contains the most comprehensive listing of museums and related organisations in the UK. In 1999 it had around 2,800 entries, not all of which complied with the Association's own definition of a museum. Stripping out museum services, arts centres, contemporary art galleries (without permanent

collections), country parks, heritage centres, railways, archives, etc. leaves around 2,300 entries.

The DOMUS surveys cover registered museums which, by definition, comply with the Museums Association's definition of a museum (see Chapter 6) as well as the MGC's minimum standards. In 1998 there were 1,719 registered museums, of which 1,389 (81 per cent) returned information to DOMUS (Carter et al., 1999). *Sightseeing in the UK* focuses on organisations for which visitor numbers are known or can be reliably collected. In 1998, it covered 1,746 bodies which described themselves as museums or galleries (Hanna, 1999), including those with no permanent collection and which display only temporary exhibitions, such as the Hayward Gallery. Needless to say, there is inevitably some overlap in the make-up of the three listings described above. Indeed, 54 per cent of the 2,300 museums on the Museums Association's database were registered.

A rather more contentious way of estimating the size of the museums population in the UK is on the basis of standards – the quality of the visitor experience they offer, the degree to which they meet standards of efficiency and effectiveness, and satisfy the government's efforts to increase access and encourage lifelong learning (Middleton, 1999: 16). On the basis of this logic, Middleton reckons there are between 1,250 and 1,500 museums in the UK 'in the sense that both government and the target audience would immediately recognise them'. He classifies one third of these as representing the leading edge of good practice; one third as competent, but not leading-edge; and one third as meeting the basic requirements of registration.

Despite museums' expenditure on improving their facilities,[1] as Middleton observes, a sizeable proportion of the sector has a long way to go to satisfy the requirements of visitor care:

- one in five has no labels and one in four no interpretation panels;
- over one in two has no member of staff with specific responsibility for education;
- two out of three don't produce a plan of the museum;
- two out of three have no café;
- one in three has no temporary exhibition space;
- one in five has no toilet facilities, and four out of five have no baby-change facilities;
- only one in five has a marketing policy;
- over half carried out no visitor research in the past five years; and
- less than half train staff in visitor care, and two out of three don't have a member of staff specifically responsible for visitor care (Coles et al., 1998).

Moreover, there is some evidence to suggest that more museums were opening for less time in 1998 than in 1997 (Carter et al., 1999).

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1 *Sightseeing in the UK* found that nearly a third of the museums and galleries it surveyed had spent at least £1,000 on developments intended to increase the attractions or facilities during 1998. The majority (52 per cent) had spent up to £5,000, and 4 per cent had spent over £250,000 (Hanna, 1999).

The tension between the number of museums and the quality of what they do is a key issue in the museums sector. As a spokesman for one of the funding bodies interviewed for this chapter put it:

> *In recent years the prevailing professional view has been that there are too many museums in the UK and new ones should be discouraged because they may put even more pressure on the limited public funds available and supply will outstrip visiting demand. More recently, it has been suggested that too many poor quality museums are diluting the strength of the brand and these should, in some way, be distanced from the 'better' ones. Unfortunately, this does not square well with the pressure from communities to create their own museums.*

The museums population in the UK is far from static. One estimate suggests that new museums have been opening at the rate of nearly one a week on average between the early 1980s and the late 1990s. These are generally volunteer-run and attract fewer than 10,000 visits a year (Middleton, 1998). Another, more cautious estimate, proposes that between 1993 and 1998 inclusive, 162 museums and galleries are known to have opened and 97 to have closed (Hanna, unpublished data).

Table 28.1 provides a breakdown of museums in the UK by type and location. Local authorities own about 40 per cent; about 55 per cent are the responsibility of the private sector, charities, universities and government-funded bodies; and, the government is responsible for the remainder. *Sightseeing in the UK* and DOMUS data agree fairly closely on this.

Table 28.1 Number, type and location of registered museums in the UK, 1998

	Number	Percentage
Type of museum		
Armed services	93	7
English Heritage	9	1
Independent	547	39
Local authority	563	41
National	37	3
National Trust	67	5
University	73	5
Total UK	1,389	100
Location (area museums council region)		
East Midlands	84	6
North West	114	8
North East	50	4
South East	448	32
South West	164	12
West Midlands	99	7
Yorkshire & Humberside	114	8
Total England	1073	77
Scotland	237	17
Wales	58	4
NI	21	2
Total UK	1,389	100

Source: Carter et al., 1999.

Income, expenditure and employment

There are, theoretically, two ways of looking at museums' turnover from a national perspective: examining the amount of subsidy to the sector plus, where possible, the amount of income generated by the sector; and analysing museums' own reports of their income and expenditure. Examining funding is generally taken to be the more accurate of the two.

Levels of subsidy to the sector

Government expenditure passes to museums through various routes: the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) for England; the Scottish Executive, the National Assembly for Wales and the Northern Ireland Assembly (formerly the Scottish Office, Welsh Office and the Education Department, Northern Ireland Office respectively); the Ministry of Defence (which funds six museums of national status and about 40 regimental museums). In England, the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) funds pass to museums via the Arts and Humanities Research Board (previously via the Higher Education Funding Council for England) which supports museums in higher education institutions.

Table 28.2 shows the value of funding to the sector between 1993/94 and 1995/96. DCMS's funding for the sector in 1998/99 was almost £9 million less than in 1993/94, although it is set to rise from 1999/2000 with additional funding being earmarked to meet government objectives (DCMS, 1998a; 1998b).

As in other areas of activity, the biggest change to the finances of the museums sector has been the advent of Lottery funding. The HLF alone has accounted for injections of capital ranging from just over half a million to over £200 million per year (Table 28.3). In total, the HLF, the arts councils and the Millennium Commission had provided over £645 million to the sector by the end of 1998/99. Table 28.4 shows the relative importance of HLF and other sources of capital income utilised by members of the GLLAM group in 1998/99.

It has been suggested that, by the end of 1999, HLF capital projects had already created somewhere in the region of £30 million additional operating costs for UK museums. The expectation that museums would generate more earned income against the reality of a static if not diminishing visitor market (see below) suggests that many will find themselves financially over-committed. Rather than remedying the problems of the historic under-funding of museums, there is some risk that Lottery money is actually creating problems for the future (Babbidge, 2001). As an academic observer interviewed for this chapter noted:

> *Lottery funding has provided an incredible opportunity to review and develop museums. It's still too early to assess its long term impact on museums and it's difficult to predict, because investment has been intuitive rather than planned. In years to come, we may look back and wonder how so much could have been spent without any discernible strategic framework.*

Table 28.2 Funding for museums and galleries in the UK, 1993/94–1998/99

£ million

	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99
Central government						
DCMS (a)	221.315	231.900	235.619	223.492	221.018	212.366
Scottish Office	25.000	28.000	27.000	29.000	32.000	30.000
Welsh Office	14.500	12.800	12.500	12.300	12.300	12.700
Northern Ireland Office	8.931	10.103	9.580	9.361	9.428	9.120
Subtotal	*269.746*	*282.803*	*284.699*	*274.153*	*274.746*	*264.186*
National Lottery						
Heritage Lottery Fund	n/a	0.650	120.984	215.045	113.035	93.261
Millennium Commission	n/a	0.000	95.650	0.000	1.176	0.000
ACE	n/a	n/a	1.856	2.978	0.196	0.300
SAC	n/a	n/a	0.536	0.014	0.198	0.013
ACW	n/a	n/a	0.070	0.000	0.001	0.000
ACNI	n/a	n/a	0.000	0.000	0.004	0.000
Subtotal	*n/a*	*0.650*	*219.096*	*218.037*	*114.610*	*93.574*
Local authorities						
England (b)	141.948	154.360	154.009	157.113	166.724	186.709
Wales	5.681	8.299	7.955	6.858	7.989	6.080
Scotland	35.979	38.063	44.975	41.756	33.322	34.061
Northern Ireland (c)	1.714	–	–	–	2.553	–
Recorded subtotal	*185.322*	*200.722*	*206.939*	*205.727*	*210.588*	*226.850*
Business sponsorship (d)	9.040	17.170	9.204	12.759	18.313	31.790
Total	464.108	501.345	719.938	710.677	618.258	616.400
Other central government departments (e)						
Ministry of Defence (f)	–	–	–	–	–	11.779
DETR (g)	–	–	–	–	–	1.800
DfEE (h)	–	–	–	–	–	8.889
Foreign & Commonwealth Office (i)	–	–	–	–	–	0.660
Subtotal	–	–	–	–	–	*22.468*

Sources: Annual reports of DNH and DCMS; Scottish Office; Welsh Office; Northern Ireland Office; HLF; DETR; Welsh Office survey of local authority expenditure; Scottish Office, *Scottish Local Government Financial Statistics*; ABSA/Arts & Business, *Business Support for the Arts/Business Investment in the Arts*; *The Forum for Local Government and the Arts, 1993/94.*

Notes

a) These figures include revenue funding for the sponsored museums including the Royal Armouries, the MGC and Acceptance in Lieu of Tax. The 1998/99 data for MGC are not directly comparable to previous years, because of changes in the presentation of the accounts. There are considerable difficulties in calculating this figure since the published accounts of actual spending in the plans and estimates issued by DNH/DCMS vary considerably, as shown below.

£million	1993/94	1994/95	1996/97	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99
Cash Plans: DNH annual report, March 1997	215	225	228	214*	211*	207*
Cash plans: DCMS annual report, April 1998	215	225	228	214	227*	208*
Cash plans: DCMS annual report, March 1999	212	223	228	214	211	204*
Cash plans: DCMS annual report, April 2000	–	217	219	212	205	203*
DCMS news release 167/98, 24 July 98	–	–	–	–	–	209*
DCMS news release 309/98, 14 December 98	–	–	–	–	212*	203.7*

* Plans and estimates

b) It is doubted that Section 48 bodies are included in these figures, which were supplied by DETR.

c) 1993/94 figure from *The Forum for Local Government and the Arts, 1993/94*;1997/98 figure provided by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

d) Figures from the annual ABSA/Arts & Business survey of companies. May overlap with matching funding for the DCMS sponsored Pairing Scheme. For the sake of accuracy, separate figures for the Pairing Scheme have therefore been excluded from this table.

e) Due to the difficulty in obtaining these data, figures were only collected for 1998/99.

f) Babbidge, 2001. These figures include the MOD spend on major museums as well as the spend on regimental and corps museums based on army estimates.

g) London Transport Museum.

h) This refers to AHRB funding plus £140,000 Study Support.

i) Commonwealth Institute.

Table 28.3 Capital funding for musuems and galleries in the UK, 1993/94–1998/99

£ million

	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99
Central government						
DNH/ Wolfson: Museums & Galleries Improvement Fund (a)	4.000	4.000	4.000	n/a	n/a	n/a
DCMS: Assets accepted in lieu of tax	3.115	6.160	7.407	2.171	6.785	25.299
Subtotal	*7.115*	*10.16*	*11.407*	*2.171*	*6.785*	*25.299*
Government agencies						
MGC: purchase grant funds	1.705	1.965	1.402	1.243	1.243	1.187
MGC: capital grants	0.415	0.401	0.372	n/a	n/a	n/a
National Fund for Acquisitions	0.266	0.270	0.307	0.225	0.286	0.182
Subtotal	*2.386*	*2.636*	*2.081*	*1.468*	*1.529*	*1.369*
SO: capital grant Burrell	0	–	–	–	–	–
Lottery						
Heritage Lottery Fund	n/a	65	120.984	215.045	113.035	90.984
Millennium Commisison	n/a	95.650	0	1.176	0	96.826
ACE	n/a	n/a	1.856	2.970	0.191	0.100
SAC (a)	n/a	n/a	0.536	0.014	0.085	0
ACW (a)	n/a	n/a	0.070	0	0.001	0
ACNI (a)	n/a	n/a	0	0	0.004	0.021
Subtotal	*n/a*	*160.650*	*123.446*	*219.205*	*113.316*	*187.931*
Local authorities						
England	23.467	27.536	22.767	23.465	29.051	62.324
Scotland	4.500	5.108	5.019	5.293	3.526	–
Wales	0.875	3.308	2.368	1.097	2.116	0.604
Northern Ireland	–	–	–	–	–	–
Recorded subtotal	*28.842*	*35.952*	*30.154*	*29.855*	*34.693*	*62.928*
Other (b)						
Business sponsorship for capital projects	–	8.444	1.255	2.643	4.361	17.991
Recorded subtotal	–	*8.444*	*1.255*	*2.643*	*4.361*	*17.991*
Recorded total	38.343	217.842	168.343	255.342	160.684	295.518

Source: Table 16.1.

Notes:
a) Details for 1998/99 from DCMS.
b) NHMF expenditure on museums and galleries could not be disaggregated.

The regional distribution of funding

As in the case of other areas of activity considered elsewhere in the present volume, funding for museums and galleries is distributed unevenly throughout both the UK (Tables 28.5 and 28.6) and England (Table 28.7), with London and the South East taking the lion's share. Substantial amounts of public funding to the museums sector also go to the North West and Yorkshire, locations of national museums' headquarters outside London.

Area museum councils (AMCs) are the main channels for government support to the regions. They provide regionally determined packages of advice, information, services and project grants. In recent years, their role has expanded to

Table 28.4 Group for Large Local Authority Museums: capital income by source, 1998/99

	percentage of capital income
HLF	57.2
ACE Lottery	11.9
SAC Lottery	0
EU	0
Sponsorship	0
Private donations	0
Local authority	28.0
Grants and trusts	0
SRB	0
Other	2.4
Total	99.5

Source: GLLAM.

include the provision of advice for funding sources such as the HLF and European Structural Funds, and they now work with the new regional cultural consortia. These increased administrative responsibilities are manifest in an overall decrease in their grant funding against an increase in their administrative spend. In short, they are becoming less and less able to meet the demands of their constituencies as the real value of their grant aid is reduced. The inevitable consequence of this is that they will provide fewer services – evidenced, for example, by the closure of their conservation services (Winsor, 1999) – and become more strategic (Babbidge, 2001).

Museums' income and expenditure

There are considerable difficulties in extracting information about their income and expenditure from many museums and galleries. Despite having to construct accounts for registration and funding applications, many museums and galleries have difficulties providing exact financial data. These institutions include those run by local authorities, universities, the National Trust, English Heritage and the armed forces. Their accounts tend not to stand alone, they don't necessarily pay overheads, and are reliant on central services (see Chapters 17 and 32). This problem is highlighted by DOMUS's attempts to extract financial data from museums.

DOMUS's questions on museums' finances have always generated a low response rate. It was only in 1999 that DOMUS published financial data for the first time, and it did so on the basis of figures being submitted by less than 60 per cent of all registered museums. Those museums were reported to have had a gross revenue income of £505 million for 1998 against an expenditure of £448 million – figures which would have referred to the1997/98 financial year.[2]

2 The DOMUS questionnaires were sent out in June, so the survey was unable to recover audited financial information from the most recent financial year. The financial information received was, therefore, at best likely to relate to the financial year before last.

Table 28.5 Expenditure on museums and galleries by home country, 1993/94–1998/99

£ millions

	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99
National						
Millennium Commission	n/a	n/a	–	1.176	–	–
England						
DCMS	221.200	231.900	237.619	223.492	221.018	212.366
HLF	n/a	0.650	106.941	197.373	98.913	89.858
Millennium Commission	n/a	n/a	95.650	–	–	–
Local authorities	141.948	154.360	154.009	157.113	166.724	186.709
Business sponsorship (a)	8.234	15.984	8.413	10.827	15.990	28.869
HEFCE/AHRB	–	–	1.956	–	–	8.749
Recorded total	*371.382*	*402.894*	*604.588*	*588.805*	*502.646*	*526.551*
Wales						
Welsh Office	14.500	12.800	12.500	12.300	12.300	12.700
Heritage Lottery Fund	n/a	n/a	0.626	2.436	0.624	2.696
Local authorities	5.681	8.299	7.955	6.858	7.989	6.080
Business sponsorship	–	0.004	0.084	0.175	0.150	0.155
Recorded total	*20.181*	*21.103*	*21.165*	*21.769*	*21.063*	*21.631*
Scotland						
Scottish Offce	25.000	28.000	27.000	29.000	32.000	25.000
Heritage Lottery Fund	n/a	n/a	13.276	14.917	12.729	0.461
Local authorities	35.979	38.063	44.975	41.756	33.322	34.061
Business sponsorship	0.643	1.084	0.610	1.713	1.970	2.732
SHEFC	–	–	–	–	–	0.700
Recorded total	*61.622*	*67.147*	*85.861*	*87.386*	*80.021*	*62.954*
Northern Ireland						
Northern Ireland Office	8.931	10.103	9.580	9.361	9.428	9.120
HLF	n/a	n/a	0.141	0.319	0.768	0.247
Local authorities	1.714	–	–	–	2.553	–
Business sponsorship	0.059	0.081	0.098	0.044	0.203	0.035
Recorded total	*10.704*	*10.184*	*9.819*	*9.724*	*12.952*	*9.402*

Sources

Department for National Heritage annual reports 1995–1997; Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Annual Reports 1998–1999;

Department of the Secretary of State for Scotland and the Forestry Commision, *The Government's Expenditure Plans*, various years;

The Government's Expenditure Plans: Department report by the Welsh Office, various years;

Expenditure Plans and Priorities, Northern Ireland: The government's expenditure plans, various years;

Heritage Lottery Fund; DETR; Welsh Office survey of local authority expenditure;

Scottish Local Government Financial Statistics, various years, Government Statistical Service; *Partnership in Practice*, The Forum for Local Government and the Arts, 1993/94; ABSA/Arts & Business *Business Support for the Arts/Business Investment in the Arts*, various years; Table 12.2.

Note: a) Excluding national and non-regional funding of £105,000 in 1993/94 and £15,500 in 1995/96.

Consumer spend

Throughout the 1990s, self-generated income has become increasingly important for museums – not least in local-authority museums as a response to budget cuts. Between 1989 and 1998, museums' income from consumers' spending increased by 86 per cent (Hanna, 1999: 29). In 1998, over 90 per cent of museums and galleries relied on this form of revenue: 70 per cent generated income from admissions and donations; 22 per cent from catering; and 91 per cent from retailing. But, it is unclear precisely how much income is generated this way.

Table 28.6 Business support for museums and galleries, by English RAB and home country, 1993/94–1998/99 (a)

£ millions

	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99
England						
East	0.196	0.092	0.055	0.116	0.022	0.190
East Midlands	0.006	0.096	0.029	0.089	0.061	0.119
London	6.618	13.461	6.098	8.774	10.076	22.005
North West	0.463	0.218	0.812	0.659	0.698	0.615
Northern	0.197	0.450	0.293	0.261	0.075	0.190
South East	0.251	0.139	0.064	0.058	0.009	0.069
South West	0.096	0.042	0.039	0.156	0.114	0.077
Southern	0.016	0.255	0.352	0.137	0.148	1.378
West Midlands	0.088	0.196	0.387	0.151	3.645	2.721
Yorkshire & Humberside	0.302	1.034	0.285	0.427	1.142	1.505
Total England	*8.234*	*15.984*	*8.413*	*10.827*	*15.990*	*28.869*
Scotland	0.643	1.084	0.610	1.713	1.970	2.732
Wales	0	0.004	0.084	0.175	0.150	0.155
Northern Ireland	0.059	0.081	0.098	0.044	0.203	0.035
National funding/other	0.105	0.016	0	0	0	0
Total United Kingdom	9.040	17.170	9.204	12.759	18.313	31.790

Source: ABSA/Arts & Business *Business Support for the Arts/Business Investment in the Arts*, various years.

Note: a) This may include figures for the Pairing Scheme. A similar regional breakdown for the Pairing Scheme is not available.

Sightseeing in the UK does not collect data on the amount of revenue received from visitors, although DOMUS identified museums and galleries as generating £37 million, 7 per cent of their income (Carter et al., 1999). This is probably a gross underestimate. The AIM comparative-trading survey for 1998 found that the 22 museums in its constant sample alone attracted £22.8 million from admissions and £14.4 million from retail.

An ad hoc survey of the museums and galleries sponsored by DCMS suggested that changes in the amounts of self-generated income (covering admissions, catering, retailing including reproductions and conferences) attracted by individual institutions between 1993/94 and 1998/99 varied enormously. One was found to have achieved a 283 per cent increase since 1994/95, whereas another saw its self-generated income fall by 28 per cent compared with 1993/94.

Admissions

Accounts of the national-average adult admission charge in 1998 range from £2.18 to £2.80 (Hanna, 1999; Museums Association, 1999). A sizeable proportion of museums charged considerably less than the average. (According to *Sightseeing in the UK*, nearly half of all museums charged £1.50 or less, whereas the Museums Association database suggests that this was true of 30 per cent.) The cost of admission may be determined by type of museum, with independents charging some of the highest prices and universities the lowest. But, there are enormous variations in the amounts charged even by the same type of museum (Bailey et al., 1998).

Table 28.7 Selected sources of funding for museums and galleries in the English regions, 1998/99

A. Ministry of Defence, Area Museum Council, Arts and Humanities Research Board and Area Museum Council funding, by area museum council region

£ thousand

	MOD	DCMS	AHRB	AMC
East Midlands	40	–	0	260
North East	35	975	218	332
North West	66	15,874	1,816	758
South East	10,420	178,473	6,512	1,324
South West	868	1,381	59	467
West Midlands	310	0	121	403
Yorkshire & Humberside	40	7,700	23	804
Total England	11,779	204,403 (a)	8,749	4,348

Sources: Babbidge, 2001; Table 12.2; area museum council annual reports.

Note: a) See Table 28.2, note a.

B. Local authority and Heritage Lottery Fund, by Government Office Region

£ thousand

	Local authority	HLF £
East	17,539	10.091
East Midlands	16,934	1.634
London	12,867	26.316
North East	11,303	1.568
North West	26,848	26.614
South East	32,247	5.643
South West	13,465	15.727
West Midlands	34,727	8.144
Yorkshire	20,779	3.494
Total England	186,709	99.231

Sources: DETR, HLF.

Around 50 per cent of museums charge for admission to their core collections.[3] DOMUS puts this at 49 per cent for 1998, and both the Museums Association and *Sightseeing in the UK* specify 51 per cent.[4] It is unclear whether this changed between 1993 and 1998: *Sightseeing in the UK* data show the percentage of museums charging as fluctuating by 2 per cent; DOMUS suggests it rose by 6 per cent, and the DOMUS constant sample showed a 1 per cent decline between 1997 and 1998.

Employment

Estimates of the number of jobs in the museums sector vary considerably. The most consistent measure of employment in the sector is produced by the Labour

3 See Chapters 6 and 15 for a discussion of VAT as related to museum changes.

4 This does not include those that charge for special exhibitions, unless, as in the case of the Royal Academy, these are the only forms of display.

Table 28.8 Employment in museums and galleries in the UK, 1993–98

	Sightseeing in the UK	DOMUS	DOMUS constant sample
1993			
No of paid jobs	20,700	n/a	n/a
FTEs	15,500	13,045	n/a
volunteers	16,000	7,877	n/a
1994			
No of paid jobs	19,671	n/a	n/a
FTEs	14,900	11,047	n/a
volunteers	17,200	11,649	n/a
1995			
No of paid jobs	20,067	n/a	n/a
FTEs	15,100	11,854	n/a
volunteers	16,339	15,608	n/a
1996			
No of paid jobs	19,210	n/a	n/a
FTEs	14,550	–	n/a
volunteers	17,560	–	n/a
1997			
No of paid jobs	19,740	n/a	n/a
FTEs	14,940	13,603	5,576
volunteers	17,400	20,120	4,624
1998			
No of paid jobs	21,061	n/a	n/a
FTEs	16,030	15,365	5,461
volunteers	18,900	25,206	5,545
% change 1993–98			
FTEs	3	18	n/a
volunteers	18	220	n/a

Sources: Hanna, 1999; Selwood and Muir, 1997; Coles et al., 1998; Carter et al., 1999.

Force Survey, which reported 37,075 people being employed in museums in 1999 (see Chapter 23 above).

It is estimated that nearly 20 per cent of museums do not employ paid staff (Hanna, unpublished data for 1999). Nevertheless, returns to DOMUS and *Sightseeing in the UK* suggest that in 1998 there were between 15,365 and 16,300 paid full-time equivalents (FTEs) in the sector, and somewhere between 18,900 and 25,206 volunteers.[5] These FTE estimates may be too low. GLLAM data for 1998/99 found that the 22 museum services contributing to its survey employed 1,884 FTEs.

While both DOMUS and *Sightseeing in the UK* suggest that the numbers of paid FTEs and volunteers has increased since 1993/94, the way they quantify that change is quite different (Table 28.8). The DOMUS constant sample, however, discerned a small fall in the number of paid FTEs (down 2 per cent) between 1997 and 1998, against a 20 per cent rise in the number of volunteers.

In addition to official data sets (see Chapter 23 above), a variety of sources provide information on the characteristics of the museums workforce, in particu-

5 The *Sightseeing in the UK* employment data cover all staff except those solely concerned with conservation.

lar reports by MTI (Museums Training Institute, subsequently Cultural Heritage NTO) whose data embrace a range of associated heritage activities[6] (HOST Consultancy, 1999; MTI, 1997; PIEDA plc, 1996).

- Security and support staff (front of house and security, technical and maintenance) outnumber professional staff (those concerned with care and interpretation of collections, marketing, PR and fundraising) by about 2:1 (HOST Consultancy, 1999).
- In general, the workforce is heavily reliant on part-time workers (44 per cent of total employment). Indeed, growth in the sector between 1994 and 1998 (5,000 new employees) is largely accounted for by part-time workers, who accounted for 71 per cent of the estimated expansion.
- Evidence also suggests that pay for museums jobs has lagged behind increases in earnings in other public-sector occupations. There are no trainee posts for non-graduates and so the financial prospects for new entrants are limited (Babbidge, 2001)
- While the workforce is relatively highly qualified (with just under a third having first or higher degrees), it is ageing (with 60 per cent of workers being over 40 years). It is also characterised by a large proportion of women (57 per cent) and relatively few people from ethnic minorities (4 per cent) (HOST Consultancy, 1999). It is difficult to obtain any reliable trend data, but a general impression is that there is insufficient new blood coming into museums as a result of too few incentives, posts being cut, and established staff being reluctant to move on (Babbidge, 2001).
- Museums with a national remit employ the largest number of permanent staff – 43 per cent of the total (Carter et al., 1999).
- In many respects the nature of the workforce has changed because of tighter core funding and the demands being made of the sector. Recent ad hoc surveys have, for example, identified increases in freelance staff (Hasted, 1996), and decreases in conservation staff (Winsor, 1999).

Audiences for museums and galleries

There are between 80 million and 114 million visits to museums in the UK. DOMUS and *Sightseeing in the UK* respectively cite between 79.6 and 77.7 million visits for 1998. The 2,300 museums on the Museums Association's database suggest 113.7 million visits; GLLAM identified 11.6 million visits to the 22 museums represented by the group; and AIM, 6.1 million.

6 This covers built heritage (ancient monuments; archaeological sites; designed landcapes and parks; botanical and historic gardens; historic buildings; preserved railways; historic ships; industrial heritage organisations); zoos, wildlife parks and aquaria; places of worship; museums and arts galleries; venues for touring exhibitions; historic libraries and archives; conservation organisations; heritage theme parks; science centres; consultants/ freelancers and support organisations.

Table 28.9 Numbers of visitors to the museums and galleries sponsored by DCMS, 1993/94–1998/99

million

	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99
British Museum (a)	6.0	6.2	6.1	6.5	6.1	5.5
Geffrye Museum	0.04	0.05	0.05	0.06	0.06	0.09
Horniman Museum & Gardens	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Imperial War Museum (b)	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.4
Museum of London	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Museum of Science & Industry in Manchester	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.3
National Gallery (c)	3.9	4.2	4.5	5.0	5.8	4.8
Natural History Museum	1.7	1.6	1.5	1.8	1.8	1.9
National Maritime Museum	0.6	0.6	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.8
National Museums & Galleries on Merseyside (d)	1.4	1.4	1.2	1.2/0.8	0.6	0.7
National Portrait Gallery	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.0
National Museum of Science & Industry (e)	2.7	2.5	2.7	2.5	2.4	2.2
Sir John Soane's Museum	0.5	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Tate Gallery (f)	2.7	2.8	3.0	2.5	2.2	3.0
Wallace Collection	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Victoria and Albert Museum (g)	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.6	1.5	1.5
Total	24.2	24.2	24.1	25.0/24.6	24.3	24.0

Sources: DCMS annual reports; National Gallery.

Notes

a) Visitor figures for 1998/99 reflect the closure of the Museum of Mankind, the departure of the British Library and restricted access during major building works.

b) The figures for the Imperial War Museum include: Duxford Airfield, the Cabinet War Rooms, and HMS Belfast.

c) Figures shown from 1992/93 are figures supplied by Gallery for calendar year 1992 onwards.

d) 1996/97 numbers reported as 1.21 but adjusted to 0.75 for new counting base; 1997/98 figures onwards based on till sales count.

e) The figures for the Science Museum include: the National Railway Museum, the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television, and The Wroughton outstation. National Museum of Photography, Film and Television closed all year, 1998/99.

f) The figures for the Tate include: Tate Gallery Liverpool and Tate Gallery St Ives. Tate Gallery Liverpool closed for redevelopment, 1997/98.

g) The figures for the V&A include: the Theatre Museum, the National Museum of Childhood and the Wellington Museum. Visitor figures for the Royal Armouries not available.

Accuracy of information

There are, however, doubts as to the accuracy of all these data. Visits are counted in a number of ways, with some methods being more accurate than others. Museums which charge admission to their core collections and record admission numbers through their box offices are assumed to produce relatively accurate figures. The figures for museums with free entry, where visits are counted manually, are far less likely to be accurate. Table 28.9 shows that before the introduction of charges, the number of visits to the National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside were overestimated by 400,000 – as much as a third. Indeed, the accuracy of counting after charges are introduced has been cited as accounting for the fall in numbers. A fire count at the British Museum in 1993 also found the museum's figures to be out – also by a third – although no adjustments were subsequently made to its data (Creigh Tyte and Selwood, 1998). However, the assumption that manual counting always produces higher attendance figures is not necessarily true. Comparisons made at Bristol Museums and

Art Gallery found that electronic counting devices provided higher figures than manual counts (correspondence with Stephen Price). It has been suggested that the only accurate method of counting manually is by video (Thomas et al., undated). As one civil servant put it: 'Unless the museums world can crack this issue of validating its basic usage data, I don't see how we can ever say anything sensible about how popular or otherwise museums are.'

No effective checks are made of the accuracy of data submitted by museums to the national surveys. *Sightseeing in the UK* rings museums and galleries known to have over 50,000 visitors which have not completed their questionnaire. If DOMUS receives no data in any one year, it reverts to the previous year's values.

Trends

The number of visits to museums and galleries is set to rise as a result of the number of museums opening, and the number of Lottery-funded capital developments coming on-stream. This expectation might have prompted certain requirements for the accuracy of data and the establishment of baseline figures but, in the event, little has changed. In fact, far from rising, the number of visits is variously described as reaching a plateau, or as 'static and falling' (Middleton, 1998; Davies, 2000).

- Both DOMUS and *Sightseeing in the UK* indicate a fall in visitor numbers for the period, 1993/94 to 1998/99, although this may be indicative of smaller numbers of returns. Nevertheless, the DOMUS constant sample (1997 and 1998) also shows a fall of 4 per cent.
- The number of visits to the museums and galleries funded by DCMS shows a slight fall (see Table 28.9).
- Data collected on the basis of interviews with the public also show a falling-off from 12.7 million visits in 1992/93 to 11.9 million in 1996/97 (BMRB/TGI data cited in Middleton, 1998: 18).

Only the indices used by *Sightseeing in the UK* show an increase in visits (Table 28.10).

Over the past few years, increasing emphasis has been placed by funding and other bodies on the importance of museum visitors (see Chapter 6). While the data cited above are indicative of the number of visits, they reveal nothing about the number or nature of visitors across the UK.

Frequency of attendance

Twenty-two per cent of visitors to museums and galleries are reported to be from overseas, and another 32 per cent are children (Hanna, 1999), which means that the remaining 46 per cent of visitors are British adults.

Estimates based on population surveys suggest that between 22 and 35 per cent of the adult population visits museums (Leisure Tracking Survey,

Table 28.10 Visits to UK museums, 1993/94 and 1998/99

		1993/94 (million)	base	1998/99 (million)	base	% change in visit numbers
DOMUS	UK	69.5	1569	65.5 (a)	1252	–5.8
Sightseeing in the UK	UK	78.6	1789	77.7	1747	–1.1
DCMS-sponsored museums and galleries	England	24.2	16	24	16	–0.8
Indices:						
Sightseeing in the UK constant sample (b)	UK	115		119		
Sightseeing in the UK including new museums and closures (b)	UK	125		130		

Sources: Selwood and Muir, 1997; Coles et al, 1998; Hanna, 1999; DCMS annual reports; National Gallery.

Notes:
a) Combined with previous DOMUS survey results for non-responding museums, plus nationals not included in DOMUS, brings this figure up to 79.7m.
b) 1976 = 100.

1997–1998, cited in ONS, 1999; and MORI, 1999, respectively). The latter source suggests that visiting museums and galleries is surpassed in popularity only by going to the cinema (59 per cent) and going to a well-known park or garden (36 per cent), and that it is more popular than attending live sporting events (26 per cent). Moreover, those who visit museums and galleries are likely to do so frequently. MORI (1999) found that people visited museums an average of three times in the year of their survey (see also Davies, 1994); and that 8 per cent of the population visited five times or more.

Rather less is known about non-visiting. Non-visiting is often associated with museums and galleries' perceived élitism. However, MORI (1999) found that as few as one in a hundred respondents were intimidated by museums. Non-visitors' main reason for not attending was that there was 'nothing they wanted to see'. Minority ethnic origins are sometimes also regarded as inhibiting people from visiting. Research found that the proportion of members of ethnic minorities visiting was similar to that amongst the general public (MORI, 1999), and that the profile of such visitors mirrored that of the general population (Desai and Thomas, 1998).

Profile of attenders

An issue considered in Part I of this book is the desire by government and various other agencies for museums and other forms of cultural provision to be 'for the many and not just the few'. Indeed, since the mid-1990s various initiatives have been directed towards achieving broader access and encouraging lifelong learning. However, there are no comparative data which would enable any changes in the visitor profile to be measured.

Although the percentage of visitors from particular social classes may vary on a regional basis, in general the frequency of visiting is associated with educa-

Table 28.11 Socio-economic group of visitors to selected museums and galleries sponsored by DCMS, 1997

Percentage

	AB	C1	C2DE	Total
V&A	89	(a)	11	100
British Museum	41	50	9	100
National Museum of Science and Industry	52	34	14	100
Imperial War Museum	47	33	17	97
National Gallery (b)	49	31	9	89
National Maritime Museum	34	45	21	100
Natural History Museum	41	38	21	100
Tate Gallery	91	0	8	99
Average (mean)	55.5	33	13.75	

Source: *Hansard*, Written Answers 14 January 1998.

Notes
Totals may not sum to 100 per cent because of rounding.
a) Figures for AB include C1.
b) 10 per cent not specified.

tional levels and social class (see, for example, Henley Centre's Leisure Tracking Survey, cited in ONS, 1999). The most frequent visitors identified by MORI (1999) were likely to be over 45, to have been through higher education, work full-time, live in or around Greater London and have no children.

Social group and educational level also influence the type of museums most visited. People with no formal qualifications have been found to be more likely to go to natural history museums, whereas those with high educational qualifications were more likely to go to the national and archaeological museums. Both groups included frequent attenders of social/local-history museums (MORI, 1999).

An ad hoc survey of the museums and galleries sponsored by DCMS produced data from four more institutions than are shown in Table 28.11. Those that had carried out any visitor research provided a useful comparison with those museums shown in the table in that none were based in central London. On average, a lower percentage of their visitors were from social groups ABC1 (70 per cent, as opposed to 84 per cent for the London-based institutions in the table); and more were from social groups C2DE (29 per cent as opposed to 14 per cent) (see also Creigh-Tyte and Selwood, 1998). This suggests that the profile of museum visitors is rather more complex than is generally supposed. As a museums consultant interviewed for this chapter confirms:

> *The perception, among journalists and other commentators, is that museums and galleries can be lumped with opera, ballet, etc. as a high-brow activity pursued by a relatively small élite social group. Research allegedly supports this view. In fact, the picture is much more complicated that this suggests. Perhaps the better educated visit more often, but they certainly don't have a monopoly on visiting. Nevertheless there is room for improvement. We need more relevant and contemporary exhibitions with are pitched at attracting a more educationally and culturally diverse audience.*

Summary

In the period 1993/94 to 1998/99 the museums sector was subject to increased pressure from government to demonstrate levels of efficiency and quality standards. As a result of this, local-authority museum services are, for the first time, becoming nationally accountable. This may well encourage the production of more and better statistics, but for the time being hard data on museums remain very partial. Their analysis is complicated by the fact that the primary data are collected according to four different systems of regional accounting (area museum council regions; regional tourist boards; regional arts boards and government office regions: see Appendix 3).

Levels of funding from central government barely diminished, but are set to rise. Local authority funding has risen, although much of this is accounted for by capital funding which carried no guarantees for the future. While Lottery funding has changed the financial landscape of the sector, it has created more demands for revenue funding at a time when this is unlikely to be forthcoming in the form of core funding or admissions income. Although the political will exists for museums to attract more visitors, attendances have plateaued, if not declined. The expansion of employment in the sector is largely due to the recruitment of part-time workers and volunteers.

31
Profile of the Visual Arts

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Introduction

During the second half of the 1990s, when Brit Art hit the headlines with unerring regularity, it appeared that there was much to celebrate about contemporary visual art in the UK. Its influence seemed boundless. At the same time as British artists in the Royal Academy's *Sensation* exhibition were scandalising the taxpayers of Brooklyn, they were also being credited with spearheading regeneration back home. The galleries and exhibitions in which their work is exhibited have been cast in the role of urban catalysts and as central to the allure of cultural tourism (Allthorpe-Guyton, 1997; TMS, 1997) – Tate Modern being the most obvious example. But, even if the presence of the visual arts has been regarded as benefiting local and regional economies (see Chapter 20, above), it doesn't necessarily follow that the financial health of the sector itself is buoyant, or that the majority of artists are bathing in reflected financial glory (DTZ PIEDA Consulting, 2000).While the YBAs (Young British Artists) may be renowned for the prices for which their work sells, artists' average earnings are only marginally more than what a full-time worker paid the minimum wage might expect to take home.

This chapter collates existing statistical information on arts and crafts, focusing in particular on: the turnover of the subsidised visual arts sector; the number of people working in it; their employment status; their earnings; and the size of their audiences. It primarily focuses on England.

There are, however, a number of caveats that have to be applied to this exercise, not least that there are so few sources of hard data available on the visual arts in the UK. Moreover, where data exist, there tend to be problems in harmonising them. Some aspects of the sector are covered by national data, and others only by ad hoc surveys which present snapshots of various years or particular geographical areas. This paucity of data means that the visual arts are not covered by the quarterly statistical journal, *Cultural Trends*. The sector also tends to receive scant attention in overviews of the cultural sector as a whole – Casey et al. (1996) being no exception.

This lack of data can probably be put down to the pervasive influence of modernism, which has informed attitudes towards the visual arts throughout the

twentieth century (see Chapter 34, below). As a result, the majority of artists have traditionally been regarded as functioning beyond the marketplace, and even the bureaucracy of the arts funding system has largely mitigated against its being subject to various forms of accountability. The visual arts are effectively the only artform still not charging for access, and recent studies have pointed to its practitioners' lack of business acumen (Honey el al., 1997; La Valle et al., 1997). Bodies as varied as the Creative Industries Task Force (Anderson, 2000) and the Fine Art Trade Guild and the Society of London Dealers (SLAD/FATG, 1996) have attempted to rectify this 'skills mismatch'. Other research has drawn attention to the fact that many artists regard the need to earn their living as a necessary evil rather than a positive force (Douglas and Wegner, 1996). Paradoxically, their lack of commercialism is reinforced by the rhetoric of the creative industries, which places artists at its very core (DCMS,1998). The fact that their practice is regarded as involving 'innovative or difficult or new or esoteric work' and, as such, falls outside the interests of the market, is precisely what justifies its public subsidy (Smith, 1998:18).

Much of the data drawn on in this chapter derive from1996 to 1998 – a period when arts-funding bodies' attention was drawn to the economic situation of the visual artist. According to the London Arts Board, changing patterns of funding were having a detrimental impact on artists' incomes. These changes included: cuts in Treasury and local authority funding for the arts and a fall in sponsorship monies which resulted in an increase of visual arts organisations in serious financial crisis; the fact that Lottery capital schemes and Arts for Everyone programmes were directed at formally constituted arts organisations, rather than individuals; the market having become reliant on artists' receiving low fees; unsympathetic tax and social security rules; and the introduction of the New Deal for the young, long-term unemployed, which threatened artists' reliance on the benefits system (LAB, 1998).

The wider sector: turnover, employment and earnings

The wider sector for the visual arts constitutes design (as in 'art and design'); crafts; and, the art trade. However, certain caveats apply to the data about those activities. What passes for headline data is, at best, approximate.

Turnover

Table 31.1 summarises estimates of the turnover of parts of the art, craft and design sector. In 1997, approximately 750 businesses traded in twentieth century art, with sales of £250 million (MTI, 1997). The UK's trade in contemporary art is substantially smaller – worth about £35 million in 1995/96.[1]

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1 The market is disadvantaged by VAT on contemporary works which the government applies at full rate (17.5 per cent), in comparison to reduced rates elsewhere – notably in France and Germany (at 5.5 and 7 per cent respectively). It has been suggested that the threat of Droit de Suite may also have financial implications for the contemporary art market (Selwood and Thomas, 1998). See Chapter 22.

Table 31.1 Information on the turnover of the wider visual arts sector

£ million

Activity	Estimate of turnover	At 1998/99 prices
Turnover of craftspeople	400 (a)	458
Expenditure on design in the UK economy	12,000 (b)	12,700
Overseas earnings of design consultancies	358 (b)	380
Turnover of contemporary art trade	35 (c)	40

Source: Based on Selwood and Dunlop, 1998.

Notes
a) Knott, 1994 based on1993 research.
b) Sentance and Clarke, 1997.
c) Butlar Research, 1994.

Employment

It is estimated that about half a million people work in art, craft and design: about 123,500 in arts – of whom around 34,000 are visual artists (O'Brien, 1997); 25,000 people in crafts (Crafts Council, 1995); and 299,000 in design (Sentance and Clarke, 1997).

Earnings

Individuals working in the arts, crafts and design earned just over £3 billion in 1996 – a sum arrived at by multiplying the average earnings by the number of people working in the sector (Selwood and Dunlop, 1998). Research published in 1997 found that visual artists earned an average of £7,590 in 1994/95 – a sum which includes non-artistic sources (Shaw and Allen, 1997). Craftspeople earned £11,101 in 1992–93 (Knott, 1994), and designers, anything from £10,250 – for a junior in furniture design – to £42,000 – for a creative director in product design (Design Week and Major Players, 1997).

The relationship between subsidised and private visual arts sectors

The relationship between the commercial and subsidised sectors is symbiotic. It is common for artists to be discovered and shown by dealers before graduating to exhibitions in the subsidised sector, say at the Serpentine Gallery; or for subsidised galleries and dealers to collaborate. There are also examples of commercial galleries receiving subsidy. No attempt has been made to explore the effects of the relationship between the subsidised and commercial sectors on artists' careers and earnings since Willi Bongard's listings of artists' prices, published in the journal *Kunst Compass* in the 1980s.

The subsidised sector: turnover, earnings and audiences

Turnover

The amount of subsidy from central government increased year-on-year since 1993/94 (Tables 31.2 and 31.3). The arts councils provide a relatively small percentage of the revenue funding to the sector. Between 1993/94 and 1998/99 the English regional arts boards (Table 31.4) annually provided around twice as much funding to the sector as the Arts Council of England (ACE). At the time of writing the arts boards' funding was set to increase in the future as a result of the devolution of the ACE's major clients in 1999.

Since 1997/98 business sponsorship has also provided a larger share of visual arts funding than the combined arts councils (Table 31.5). Little is known about the amount of funding available to the sector through private sector prizes and awards, but in 1997 the amount of such funding available to UK artists and photographers represented over 80 per cent of central government funding to the sector.

Lottery funding has also added considerably to the sector's turnover. Between 1995/96 and the end of 1998/99, visual arts and crafts had been awarded £184 million by the four arts councils (Table 31.2) – over twice as much as the value of revenue funding from government sources (£88 million).

The largest Lottery awards to have been distributed by ACE to date were towards the creation of the New Art Gallery, Walsall; Baltic Flour Mill, Gateshead; the National Glass Centre, Sunderland; Tate Modern; and, the Lowry Centre, Salford – an arts centre which includes several galleries. Over half (54 per cent) of all ACE's capital funding for the visual arts went on the first four of these projects alone (Table 31.6).

In addition to these projects, the visual artists have benefited by the Lottery in three ways, through its funding of: artists' film and video; Arts for Everyone; and artists' commissions.

- According to the ACE, the publication of film production guidelines in 1997 specifically for artists' film and video represented the first 'real possibility for works of substance' to be commissioned from artists outside broadcasting. Given its failure to realise proposals for a Lottery-funded arts programme agency to take responsibility for the former film and video department's range of collaborative schemes with broadcasters, this is the only mechanism supporting innovative work for broadcast.
- Arts for Everyone provided one-off grants to small groups and established organisations for a range of projects, encouraging access to the arts, particularly amongst young people.
- One of the criteria for the ACE's capital programme required applicants to address 'the contribution of artists, craftspeople and film and video makers to their building projects' – a concept which built on 'percent for art' developed in the UK in the late 1980s (Selwood, 1995).

Table 31.2 Funding for the visual arts and crafts in the UK, 1993/94–1998/99

£ million

	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99
Central government via the arts councils (a)						
ACGB/ACE	3.880	4.238	4.707	4.661	5.161	5.148
Scottish Arts Council	1.845	1.943	1.996	1.930	2.054	2.093
WAC/ACW	1.011	0.991	1.361	1.415	1.425	1.237
Arts Council of Northern Ireland	0.808	0.829	0.856	0.806	0.573	0.611
Crafts Council (b)	n/a	n/a	3.520	3.632	3.696	3.844
Regional arts boards (c)	7.893	8.323	8.928	9.346	9.667	10.311
Subtotal	*15.436*	*16.324*	*21.368*	*21.791*	*22.576*	*23.244*
National Lottery (d)						
Arts Council of England	n/a	n/a	21.240	47.951	67.652	20.278
Scottish Arts Council	n/a	n/a	1.822	8.930	3.134	1.688
Arts Council of Wales	n/a	n/a	2.287	2.324	1.942	2.237
Arts Council of Northern Ireland	n/a	n/a	0.026	0.283	0.711	0.653
Millennium Commission	n/a	n/a	0.000	1.599	0.000	0.000
Subtotal (e)	*n/a*	*n/a*	*25.376*	*61.086*	*73.439*	*24.856*
Local authorities (f)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Business sponsorship (g, h)	3.133	4.649	7.855	5.165	9.654	9.347
Total	18.570	20.973	54.599	88.042	105.669	57.446

Sources

ACGB/ACE annual report, various years; SAC annual report, various years; WAC/ACW annual report, various years; ACNI annual report, various years; RABs' annual reports and accounts; Lottery data supplied directly by the Arts Councils of England and of Wales; ACNI, *Annual Lottery Report,* various years; ABSA/Arts & Business *Business Support for the Arts/Business Investment in the Arts*, various years.

Notes

a) Expenditure on grants and guarantees for the visual arts, crafts, artists' film and video.

b) The Crafts Council changed its method of accounting in 1995/96. Previous figures for operational costs other than staff are not strictly comparable. The figures given in this table include grants as well as the Craft Council's own direct spending on exhibitions, library and photo store, craft development, etc.

c) Not including grants made by the Eastern Arts Board, which could not be identified by artform. These figures do not overlap with ACE funding.

d) These figures largely refer to capital funding. However, these include revenue funding which in the case of ACE is identified in the following table:

£ million

1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99
n/a	n/a	n/a	1.659	7.035	4.536

e) Of which the following amounts represent revenue funding: 1996/97, £1.659m; 1997/98, £7.035m; 1998/99, £4.536m.

f) Local authority expenditure on the visual arts and crafts could not be disaggregated from existing data.

g) Figures from the annual ABSA/Arts & Business survey. May overlap with matching funding for the DCMS sponsored Pairing Scheme.

h) Component of business sponsorship for arts and crafts capital projects:

£ million

1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99
–	0.165	0.442	0.088	0.107	1.161

By the close of the original ACE capital programme (see Chapter 16), a total of 2,021 projects had been funded on the basis of awards worth approximately £1 billion, excluding partnership funding (Annabel Jackson Associates, 1999). Although not all the projects funded are expected to be complete until 2004/05,

Table 31.3 Expenditure on visual arts and crafts by home country, 1993/94–1998/99

£ million

	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99
England						
ACGB/ACE	3.880	4.238	4.707	4.661	5.161	5.148
Lottery (ACE and MC)	n/a	n/a	21.240	49.550	67.652	20.278
Local authorities	–	–	–	–	–	–
Business sponsorship	2.543	3.765	7.284	4.740	9.303	8.742
Regional arts boards	7.893	8.323	8.928	9.346	9.667	10.311
Wales						
WAC/ACW	1.011	0.991	1.361	1.415	1.425	1.237
Lottery (Arts Council of Wales)	n/a	n/a	2.287	2.324	1.942	2.237
Local authorities	–	–	–	–	–	–
Business sponsorship	0.087	0.129	0.046	0.008	0.301	0.279
Scotland						
Scottish Arts Council	1.845	1.943	1.996	1.930	2.054	2.093
Lottery (Scottish Arts Council)	n/a	n/a	1.822	8.930	3.134	1.688
Local authorities	–	–	–	–	–	–
Business sponsorship	0.202	0.217	0.268	0.166	0.045	0.260
Northern Ireland						
Arts Council of Northern Ireland	0.808	0.829	0.856	0.806	0.573	0.712
Lottery (Arts Council of Northern Ireland)	n/a	n/a	0.026	0.283	0.711	0.653
Local authorities	–	–	–	–	–	–
Business sponsorship	3.133	4.649	7.856	5.165	9.654	9.347
National/non-regional funding						
Business sponsorship	0.279	0.506	0.258	0.251	0.005	0.067

Source: Table 31.1.

it is estimated that the total value of artists' commissions they will have generated (both integral and stand-alone projects) will be around £70 million, including partnership funding. Thus, the visual arts will have received substantially more from the ACE's capital funds than Table 31.2 shows directly.

Table 31.4 Regional arts boards: expenditure on the visual arts, crafts, film and video, 1993/94–1998/99

£ million

	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99
Eastern	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
South East	0.446	0.468	0.567	0.637	0.676	0.739
North West	1.251	1.231	1.200	1.256	1.342	1.398
West Midlands	0.729	0.710	0.637	0.709	0.760	0.600
East Midlands	0.468	0.521	0.551	0.528	0.529	0.566
South West	0.586	0.593	0.674	0.719	0.820	0.834
Southern	0.517	0.522	0.547	0.599	0.617	0.626
Yorkshire & Humberside	0.972	1.009	1.076	0.986	1.155	1.267
Northern	1.523	1.504	1.916	2.123	1.905	2.358
London	1.401	1.765	1.761	1.789	1.862	1.925
Total	7.893	8.323	8.928	9.346	9.667	10.311

Source: RABs annual reports.

Table 31.5 Business sponsorship of visual the arts by English RAB area and home country, 1993/94–1998/99 (a)

£ million

	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99
England						
East	0.072	0.048	0.030	0.007	0.000	0.003
East Midlands	0.023	0.016	0.001	0.009	0.016	0.018
London	1.976	3.057	5.799	4.310	7.053	6.590
North West	0.081	0.172	0.074	0.012	0.136	0.059
Northern	0.039	0.018	0.699	0.125	0.014	0.026
South East	0.034	0.015	0.005	0.036	0.022	0.243
South West	0.047	0.157	0.045	0.039	0.089	0.090
Southern	0.064	0.090	0.031	0.018	0.050	0.017
West Midlands	0.132	0.060	0.432	0.041	1.417	0.059
Yorkshire & Humberside	0.075	0.131	0.170	0.142	0.506	1.639
Total England	*2.543*	*3.765*	*7.284*	*4.740*	*9.303*	*8.742*
Scotland	0.202	0.217	0.268	0.166	0.045	0.260
Wales	0.087	0.129	0.046	0.008	0.301	0.279
Northern Ireland	0.022	0.032	0.0002	0.000	0.000	0.000
National funding/other	0.279	0.506	0.258	0.251	0.005	0.067
Total United Kingdom	3.133	4.649	7.856	5.165	9.654	9.347

Source: ABSA/Arts & Business *Business Support for the Arts/Business Investment in the Arts*, various years.

Note: a) This may include figures for the Pairing Scheme. A similar regional breakdown for the Pairing Scheme is not available.

Artists' earnings

Research carried out into artists' career paths, earnings and employment and tax status indicates: multiple job-holding; an imbalance between artistic and non-artistic work; relatively low levels of income from artistic practice; and a paucity of commissions, awards, bursaries and residencies. While this multifaceted nature of artists' work patterns has conventionally been perceived as problematic, Summerton (undated) has suggested that there is evidence of preference within the constituency for 'a kaleidoscopic portfolio' of work.

Unfortunately, national statistics on employment and earnings are of little use in assessing how much fine artists earn. Information about this group is aggregated with that about other kinds of practitioners and in practical terms cannot be disaggregated because the sample would be too small and unreliable.

According to the standard occupational classification, in 1995 artists, commercial artists and graphic designers in full-time employment earned an average of £366.2 per week, £19,042 per year (see Chapter 23). Those who were self-employed and worked full-time earned less than half that (Selwood and Dunlop, 1998). According to ad hoc studies of visual artists, they earned even less.

By comparison with the official statistics, the data produced by one-off studies tend to be less accurate. They are typically based on smaller samples, usually focus on artists who have some relationship with the funding system and only refer to particular geographical areas. Much of the data available (published since Casey et al., 1996) refers to the mid-90s. However, the advantage of such studies is that they provide more focused data.

Table 31.6 Largest capital visual arts awards made by the Arts Council of England, 1994/95–1998/99

	ACE award (£ million) funding	Partnership (£ million)	Total (£ million)	ACE award (a) visual arts capital 1995–1999
New Gallery, Walsall	15.75	9.48	25.23	12.33
Gateshead MBC: Baltic Flour Mill	40.905	18.16	59.065	32.02
National Glass Centre, Sunderland	5.951	5.48	11.431	4.66
Tate Modern (b)	6.2	6.579	12.779	4.85
Total				53.86

Source: ACE, annual review: National Lottery Report, 1999.

Note:
a) as % of its visual arts capital spend of £127.761 million.
b) Tate's accounts provide a total of £134.5m, made up as follows: Millennium Commission, £50m; ACE £6.2m; English Partnerships, £12m; donations, £47.85m; finance and other benefits £18.45m.

The reports by Shaw and Allen (1997) and Baker Tilly (1997) on behalf of the National Artists Association are the most detailed investigations into artists' economic circumstances since the Brighton and Pearson report of 1985. They suggest that little has changed in the intervening decade. Artists have continued to earn substantially less than the average wage from all their sources of income; they hold one or more other jobs usually unconnected to their artistic practice; and are likely to be financially supported by, if not dependent upon, a partner.

Shaw and Allen's (1997) findings are based on responses from 523 individual artists and 69 exhibition organisers and refer to the 1994/95 financial year. They found that the average artist's annual income was £7,590 – a sum which refers to artists' total earnings, including income from non-artistic sources. The average for manual workers in Britain at that time was £17,148 (New Earnings Survey, April 1995, cited by O'Brien, 1997). Around two-thirds of artists earned less than £10,000, and over one third earned less than £5,000. Moreover, artists can expect to see only a gradual increase in their earnings the longer they remain in the labour force. A year and a half after graduation, a third earned less than £5,000, whereas for those who had graduated between two and a half and three and a half years previously, only a quarter earned less than £5,000.

Most artists are self-employed and finance periods of production themselves (Honey et al., 1997, based on 1996 research). Fewer than half (47 per cent) work full-time at their principal artistic activity. Only about 10 per cent derive all their income from artistic work; about 60 per cent earned less than half their income from it; and nearly 39 per cent earned nothing from it (O'Brien, 1997; Scottish Arts Council, 1995). On average, the amount that artists earn from their artistic practice is very low – around £1,746 (O'Brien, 1997).

Artists' two most important sources of income are teaching and work unrelated to their practice, even though they tend to regard exhibitions, sales and commissions as vital to their professional status. Yet, despite the arts funding system's rhetoric that by funding galleries they are benefiting artists, this tends not to be manifest in fees – 'the market has become reliant on low fees and payments to

Table 31.7 Sources of artists' income, 1994/95

	Degree of importance attributed to each source of income by number of respondents											
	1 (highest)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 (lowest)	Total	Rank
Private sales	40	58	71	50	21	12	4	5	7	10	278	1
Sales at exhibitions	38	67	54	41	16	14	7	11	6	11	265	2
Teaching	108	35	36	21	8	9	8	7	6	8	246	3
Private commission	32	41	51	28	16	12	7	2	1	11	201	4
Workshops/residencies/ community arts projects	36	50	22	26	20	7	8	7	1	10	187	5
Commissions for public places	38	24	12	9	7	5	6	3	60	16	180	6
Work unrelated to artistic practice	83	30	12	22	12	6	2	2	1	9	179	7
Grants/awards	29	29	20	18	19	7	7	4	2	9	144	8
Fees for exhibitions	5	6	19	17	23	8	3	6	6	23	116	9
Management of exhibitions/commissions/events	7	8	5	4	8	8	2	5	0	16	63	10
Gallery stipends/ retainers	4	4	5	5	3	1	0	0	3	21	46	11

Source: Shaw and Allen, 1997.

Base: 523 artists and 69 exhibition organisers.

artists' (LAB, 1998). Between 1993 and 1996, 72 per cent of artists had never received a fee from a publicly funded space. The average gross income from an exhibition in a public space was £143 (excluding Exhibition Payment Rights, which had effectively ceased operation as a national scheme by 1997, materials and expenses). In terms of commissions: the median fee was £500 (with the lowest being £70 and the highest being £75,000). Only 26 per cent of artists received a design or concept fee for a public-sector commission and just under half had received a designated budget for materials and expenses. On average, artists received £250 from sales in commercial galleries (Shaw and Allen, 1997). Grants and awards for artistic work, also indicators of esteem, rank about eighth in terms of the importance of the contribution they make to artists' income (Table 31.7).

Artists' incomes from Lottery projects should have improved through recommended professional rates of fees and payments advocated by the National Artists Association and ACE and which are required by the Lottery as part of the application procedure. However, as yet, no data are available on the amounts artists have received in fees. Although the large-scale, stand-alone commissions (such as Anthony Gormley's *Angel of the North*) have tended to receive the most publicity, the majority of funding has gone to the crafts sector –benefiting 'makers' rather than 'fine artists' (Ben Heywood, ACE, correspondence with the author).

For their part, artists' descriptions of their careers point to the fact that making money is not the driving force behind making work. Nor is the amount of money earned as a result of artistic practice necessarily seen as signifying success (Baker Tilly, 1997; Douglas and Wegner, 1996; Honey et al., 1997; Shaw and Allen, 1997).

> *A significant proportion of the artists surveyed had a relatively low level of interest in, or awareness of, the business side of their profession. In many ways, this is compounded by their relative poverty and desperation to have their work shown, which in turn reduced their bargaining power and self-confidence. Many artists indicated that they are prepared to work 'for little, nothing, or at a loss', to have their work seen.*
>
> (La Valle et al., 1997)

A standard reflex is for visual arts funders to argue the case for more money for artists. But whereas funding from foundations, like the Paul Hamlyn Foundation's Awards for Artists, has few if any conditions attached to it, support from public funding bodies is more accountable. The ACE and the regional arts boards are currently working on a visual artists action plan. In 1998, the London Arts Board consulted artists about a proposed artists' initiative scheme (Etches, 1998), characterised by key grants being tied to the development of secure, affordable and accessible studio space and an information service for London artists.

Given its inability to supplement artists' incomes directly, much of the ACE's efforts in the late 1990s were dedicated to lobbying to protect artists' social security benefits. The New Deal announced in 1997 affected artists up to the age of 24 (a group which includes young graduates) who support their creative work by signing on. As the most vociferous objectors to the government's Welfare to Work programme suggest, the New Deal potentially cuts off the 'life-blood' of our creative future (Alan McGee cited by O'Rorke, 1998). It becomes an option after claimants have been on full benefits for six months. At this point, they are offered various options – subsidised employment, voluntary placement, a position with the Environmental Task Force, full-time training and education – which the ACE argued 'would do nothing for their career development and prevent them from creating work' (Donagh, 1998). It was not until 2001 that DCMS proposed extending the New Deal for Musicians to other creative careers (DCMS, 2001: 27).

Audiences

There are virtually no data on audiences for the visual arts. ACE data taken from the Target Group Index Survey conflate attendances at art galleries and art exhibitions. It suggests that 8.3 million people (21 per cent of the population) attended art galleries and exhibitions in 1998/99. However, this figure duplicates much of what is covered by the museums and galleries data (see Chapter 28). But, in effect, no figure is attributable to what the arts funding system supports, namely the contemporary visual arts.

Data on visual arts audiences are even more complicated by the fact that visual arts venues tend to be free. The figures for visits to non-charging venues are generally inflated and notoriously inaccurate (Chapter 28). Consequently, it is unclear how much credibility to attach to the increases in audiences reported by ACE and the regional arts boards' regularly funded organisations (Chapter 33).

Over the period considered in this chapter, the ACE had at least two initiatives which were intended to consider the development of visual arts audiences: its research into public attitudes to the Year of Visual Arts in the North of

England, and New Audiences. Unfortunately, neither throws any light on the national picture. New Audiences was a £5 million programme, launched by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport in September 1998, intended to help to deliver access for all and 'bring new art to new people'. The evaluation of the Year of Visual Arts (Harris Research Centre, 1998) specifically identified awareness of the year of visual arts rather than producing any overview of the size of the visual arts audience or its profile.

32
Survey Findings

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This chapter comprises three sections. The first presents an overview of the 1998/99 returns of a survey of organisations in the cultural sector carried out specifically for this volume. It describes: the number of respondents; their location; their total income, including the value of their public subsidies; and their expenditure. The second section analyses the survey results by artform and heritage area, and the final section compares a constant sample or organisations responding both to this survey and to another covering the same data from five years before.

Overview

Respondents' characteristics

The population identified for the survey consisted of a core of 7,920 organisations, of which just under one third (2,429) were surveyed (see Appendix 2 for the survey methodology). A further 61 organisations which had made returns to Casey et al's 1996 survey but which were not found listed among funders' grant schedules were also added. Data were received for 1,272 organisations (51 per cent of the sample). The number of sites and venues included among the returns is, however, actually higher than this suggests because in some cases, particularly the national museums and galleries, the annual accounts from which data were collected cover several institutions.[1]

Tables 32.1 and 32.2 provide breakdowns of these returns by artform and heritage activity, and by region. The detailed activity categories were collapsed to provide larger samples (as in Casey et al., 1996). The relationship between the original and the collapsed categories is shown in Table 32.1. At least three-quarters of respondents were based in England (Table 32.2). London and the South East accounted for nearly a third of all respondents.

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1 For example, the return from the National Galleries of Scotland covers the National Gallery of Scotland, the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, the National Gallery of Modern Art and the Dean Gallery, as well as its outstations at Paxton House, Berwickshire, and Duff House, Banff.

Table 32.1 Returns by artform and heritage activity, 1998/99

Returns by original category	Number	(%)	Collapsed categories	Number	(%)
Visual arts			Visual arts	131	(10)
Architecture	2	(*)			
Multimedia	8	(1)			
Visual arts	121	(10)			
Combined arts			Combined arts	260	(20)
Arts centres	38	(3)			
Festivals	35	(3)			
Combined	187	(15)			
Built heritage	76	(6)	Built heritage	76	(6)
Performing arts			Performing arts	507	(40)
Ballet	6	(0)	Dance	69	(5)
Other dance	63	(5)			
Drama	219	(17)	Drama	219	(17)
Opera	32	(3)			
Music	219	(17)	Music	219	(17)
Orchestra	52	(4)			
Other music	135	(11)			
Libraries and literature			Libraries and literature	64	(5)
Library	16	(1)			
Literature	48	(4)	Literature	48	(4)
Film and video (a)	40	(3)	Film and video (a)	40	(3)
Museums and galleries	165	(13)	Museums and galleries	165	(13)
Services	29	(2)	Services	29	(2)
Total	1,272	(100)		1,272	(100)

Base: 1,272 responses drawn from annual accounts, short questionnaire and ACE/RAB data.

Note: a) ACE/RAB data also include broadcasting.

Income and expenditure

Respondents' combined turnover was £1,746 million (Table 32.3), just over half the total funding to the sector identified above in Table II.1 (minus the BBC licence fee).

Over half (55 per cent) of respondents' combined income (£951.8 million) consisted of public subsidies – funding from central government, the arts funding system (the arts councils and the regional arts boards), local authorities and Europe, the Lottery and various 'specialist' funders (such as English Heritage, the British Film Institute and the Museums & Galleries Commission). Respondents generated the remaining 45 per cent of their income (£794.3 million) from earnings and unearned and private-sector sources.

Whereas a third of funding to the sector was capital (see Table II.6 above), capital income accounted for only one-tenth of survey respondents' turnover. Overall, respondents' income exceeded their expenditure by £76 million. However, this is not a long-term surplus.

Table 32.2 Returns by home country and government office region, 1998/99

	Number	(%)
England		
East of England	103	8
East Midlands	57	4
London	249	20
North East	50	4
North West	100	8
South East	151	12
South West	127	10
West Midlands	69	5
Yorkshire & the Humber	98	8
Total England	*1,004*	*79*
Northern Ireland	20	2
Scotland	129	10
Wales	118	9
Total	1,271	100

Base: 1,272 responses drawn from annual accounts, short questionnaire and ACE/RAB data.

A breakdown of the income and expenditure data collected from 1,034 organisations (81 per cent of the respondents) provides a rather more elaborate picture of the relationship between the different components of the sector's income and expenditure (Table 32.4). The overall picture shown in Table 32.4 concurs with that of the larger group of respondents shown in Table 32.3. However, the percentage of Lottery income shown in 32.4 is about twice that shown in Table 32.3. This suggests that Lottery funding was most likely to go to organisations with larger incomes which is a characteristic of the organisation whose accounts were used in Table 32.4.

The organisations in Table 32.4 committed half their combined expenditure on direct costs associated with their public programmes (their main programmes and education programmes). They spent seven times as much on their main

Table 32.3 Headline income and expenditure figures for all respondents, 1998/99

	£ thousand
Public subsidy	
Arts councils and RAB subsidy	194,380
Local authority	72,690
Lottery	121,104
Central government	62,032
Specialist funder	5,536
European funding	7,275
Other public subsidy	38,965
Subtotal	*951,748*
Total income	1,746,055
of which total capital income	174,359
Total expenditure	1,669,913

Base: 1,272 organisations drawn from annual accounts, short questionnaire and ACE/RAB data.

Note
Subtotals and totals may not always appear to add up to the sum of their constituent parts. This reflects missing values within sub-categories of funding.

Table 32.4 Breakdown of respondents' income and expenditure, 1998/99

£ thousand

	Income
Earned income	483,601
Public subsidy	
Arts councils and RAB	185,139
Local authority	66,095
Lottery	211,996
Central government	11,930
Specialist funder	5,228
European funding	7,033
Other public subsidy	33,414
Subtotal	*908,358*
Private and unearned income	
Sponsorship	23,403
Trusts, donations etc	66,261
Memberships	7,866
Investments	74,770
Subtotal	*219,767*
Total income	1,634,176
of which, total capital income	124,056
	Expenditure
Programme of activities	
Main programme costs	528,628
Education programme costs	72,298
Subtotal	*707,042*
Administrative costs	
Marketing costs	38,454
Staff costs	222,506
Overheads	142,441
Subtotal	*438,377*
Capital costs	194,212
Any other expenditure	81,659
Total expenditure	1,555,773
Deficit (a)	105,911
Surplus (a)	184,216

Base: 1,034 organisations drawn from annual accounts and ACE/RAB data.

Notes
a) Surpluses were recorded by 541 organisations, and deficits by 474.Subtotals and totals may not always appear to add up to the sum of their constituent parts. This reflects missing values within sub-categories of funding.

programmes as on their education programmes. Half their administrative costs were accounted for by staff costs, and a third by overheads.

The size of survey respondents' annual incomes varied enormously, ranging from those with over £1 million to those with less than £1,000. The majority (60 per cent) had incomes of £100,000 or more (Table 32.5); about 25 per cent had incomes over £500,000. At the other extreme, 29 per cent operated on less than £50,000 per year.

Table 32.5 Number of survey respondents, by size of income, 1998/99

Income (£)	Number	(%)
1m+	206	(16)
500,000–999,999	107	(8)
100,000–499,999	457	(36)
50,000–99,999	148	(12)
25,000–49,999	99	(8)
10,000–24,999	84	(7)
5,000–9,999	77	(6)
1,000–4,999	83	(7)
under 1,000	11	(1)
Total	1,272	(100)

Base: 1,272 organisations drawn from annual accounts, short questionnaire and ACE/RAB data.

Only a relatively small percentage of respondents' income has been identified as capital. The figures shown in Table 32.6 provide a breakdown of different public sources of capital funding, which is almost exclusively associated with Lottery funding from the arts councils and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

A common assumption about the Lottery is that the distribution of Lottery funding (capital funding in particular) was concentrated in London and the South East. This was certainly the case amongst survey respondents, with London and

Table 32.6 Breakdown of capital income from public sources, 1998/99

	£ thousand
Central government:	
DCMS, WO, SO, NIO	10,668
Other government departments	19,603
Arts councils	864
Specialist funders (a)	379
RABs	1
Local authorities	975
Lottery distributors (b)	
Arts councils	100,213
Heritage Lottery Fund	23,091
Subtotal	138,571
Lottery partnership funding (c)	15,267
European funders	114
Other public subsidy	3,184
Total capital income	174,359

Base: 1,272 organisations drawn from annual accounts, short questionnaire and ACE/RAB data.

Notes
a) The only returns pertained to heritage and collections funders.
b) No income was recorded from the Millennium Commission or the National Lottery Charities Fund.
c) This category refers only to the 425 returns from the ACE/RAB survey. The inclusion of this category assumes that partnership funding is from public sources.
Subtotals and totals may not always appear to add up to the sum of their constituent parts.
This reflects missing values within sub-categories of funding.

Table 32.7 Breakdown of capital income from public sources by region and home country, 1998/99

	England (%)												
	East of England	East Midlands	London	North East	North West	South East	South West	West Midlands	Yorkshire & Humberside	Northern Ireland (%)	Scotland (%)	Wales (%)	Total (£ thousand)
Central government:													
DCMS, WO, SO, NIO	0	0	75	8	3	0	0	7	1	0	3	2	10,668
Other govt depts	0	0	54	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	46	0	19,603
Arts councils	0	0	80	0	0	14	0	0	2	0	0	4	864
Specialist funders (a)													
Heritage	0	0	0	0	88	0	0	0	0	0	12	0	351
Collections	0	0	0	0	50	0	7	2	36	0	7	0	28
RABs	0	0	0	0	0	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Local authorities	0	0	69	0	1	1	20	0	0	0	8	0	975
Lottery distributors: (b)													
Arts councils	4	0	66	0	16	1	1	12	0	0	0	0	100,213
Lottery partnership (c)	5	0	22	0	32	1	2	35	3	0	0	0	15,267
Heritage Lottery Fund	0	1	52	0	0	6	4	0	1	0	37	0	23,091
Subtotal	*3*	*0*	*5*	*0*	*15*	*2*	*1*	*12*	*1*	*0*	*6*	*0*	*138,571*
European funders	0	0	0	0	38	0	0	0	54	0	0	9	114
Other public subsidy	3	1	18	3	1	27	1	2	14	0	20	11	3,184
Total capital income (%)	3	0	59	1	13	2	1	10	1	0	11	0	174,359
No of organisations	103	57	249	50	100	151	127	69	98	20	129	119	1,272

Base: 1,272 organisations drawn from annual accounts, short questionnaire and ACE/RAB data.

Note
a) These include, for example, English Heritage, BFI, Museums & Galleries Commission etc.
b) No income was recorded from the MC/NLCF.
c) This applies only to the 425 responses from the ACE/RAB survey.

Table 32.8 Types and sizes of employment categories, 1998/99

	Permanent	Freelance	Volunteer
Number	26,035	8,757	7,609
Mean	25.18	8.47	7.36

Base: 1,034 organisations drawn from annual accounts and ACE/RAB data.

the South East accounting for nearly 60 per cent of capital income from public sources (Table 32.7).

Employment

Grossing up the data available on the number of people employed in respondents' organisations in 1998/99 (Table 32.8) to the total population of the subsidised sector identified for the survey (7,920 organisations) suggests around 198,000 permanent employees, 63,360 freelance or contract staff, and 55,440 volunteers. Comparisons cannot be drawn with the findings in Chapter 23 above on employment in the cultural sector, given the differences in the definitions used and the fields covered.

Comparisons between regularly funded and other funded organisations

Comparing the organisations regularly funded by the Arts Council of England and the regional arts boards (ACE/RABs) with other arts organisations which were captured by the survey not only extends our knowledge about the subsidised sector beyond the confines of arts funding system, but also serves to contextualise the data presented in Chapter 33 below.

ACE/RAB regularly-funded organisations have larger incomes than the other organisations surveyed (as a comparison between Table 32.9, and Table 32.5 suggests). The vast majority (84 per cent) have annual incomes of over £100,000. Just over 2 per cent attract less than £25,000. The sector as a whole is much more diverse.

Table 32.9 Arts Council of England and regional arts boards' respondents, by size of income, 1998/99

Income (£)	Number	(%)
1m+	84	(20)
500,000–999,999	49	(12)
100,000–499,999	215	(51)
50,000–99,999	50	(12)
25,000–49,999	19	(4)
10,000–24,999	8	(2)
5,000–9,999	0	(0)
1,000–4,999	0	(0)
under 1,000	0	(0)
Total	425	(100)

Table 32.10 Comparison between regularly funded and other funded arts organisations: income and expenditure, 1998/99

£ thousand (mean)

	ACE/RAB regularly funded organisations	Other funded organisations
Income		
Earned income	472	465
Public subsidy		
Arts councils and RABs	359	54
Local authority	75	56
Lottery	264	164
Central government (a)	–	20
Specialist funder (a)	–	9
European funding (a)	–	12
Other public subsidy (a)	17	43
Recorded subtotal	*714*	*993*
Private and unearned income		
Sponsorship	39	12
Trusts, donations etc	34	85
Memberships	–	13
Investments	39	96
Recorded subtotal	*111*	*284*
Total recorded income	1,297	1,778
Expenditure		
Programme of activities		
Main programme costs	424	572
Education programme costs	51	83
Recorded subtotal	*474*	*830*
Administrative costs		
Marketing costs	51	28
Staff costs	363	112
Overheads	157	124
Recorded subtotal	*571*	*321*
Capital costs	429	19
Any other expenditure	–	134
Total recorded expenditure	1,474	1,526
Surplus/deficit (b)	51.14/(331)	100/(472)
Number of respondents	425	609

Base: 1,034 literature, film and video, visual arts, combined and perfoming arts organizations.

Notes
a) ACE/RAB data do not disaggregate details of income from central government, specialist funders or Europe. These are shown uner 'other public subsidy'.
b) For the ACE/RAB-funded organisations, surpluses were recorded by 169 organisations and deficits by 254. For the other funded organisations, surpluses were recorded by 220 respondents and deficits by 372.
Subtotals and totals may not always appear to add up to the sum of their constituent parts. This reflects missing values within sub-categories of funding.

Table 32.10 provides a rather better basis for comparison, in that both columns refer specifically to arts organisations – combined arts, performing arts, literature, visual arts, film and video companies. As suggested above, only a relatively small percentage of respondents' income overall was identified as capital. Within this context the comparison between the ACE/RAB regularly funded organisations and other funded organisations is, nevertheless, striking. ACE/RAB organisations were likely to receive two-thirds more Lottery income, most of which would have been capital funding, than other organisations. Table 32.10, thus, supports the common assumption that the non-strategic policies which characterised the first years of the arts-capital programme meant that organisations already supported by the arts funding system were the most likely to receive funding from the arts councils (see Chapter 16 above).

There are other differences between these two groups of organisations.

- ACE/RAB clients are more likely to be dependent on their primary funder (in this case the ACE or the RAB) for the majority of public subsidy. Non-ACE/RAB organisations show evidence of attracting a larger percentage of their support from a variety of funders.
- ACE/RAB-funded companies appear to be more successful at raising sponsorship (which accounts for over a third of all their income from private and unearned sources). This may reflect the fact that the sample contains high-profile national companies, such as the Royal Opera House, the Royal Ballet and the Royal National Theatre. The other group of organisations appears better at raising support from trusts and foundations.
- ACE/RAB organisations' administrative costs account for a larger percentage of their expenditure than their programme costs. Their average staff costs are over three times those of other organisations. Non-ACE/RAB-funded organisations are more likely to spend more on their programmes of activity.
- In terms of employment, ACE/RAB arts organisations appear to involve far more people than other organisations. They are far more likely to employ freelance staff and volunteers, in particular (Table 32.11).

Table 32.11 Comparison between regularly funded and other funded arts organisations: employment, 1998/99

Number of employees

	Permanent	Freelance	Volunteer
ACE/RAB organisations (425)			
Number	9,290	8,211	4,496
Mean (including 0s)	22	19	11
Other organisations (609)			
Number	16,745	546	3,113
Mean (including 0s)	28	1	5

Base: 1,034 literature, film and video, visual arts, combined and perfoming arts organisations.

Table 32.12 Returns by region and home country, by type of activity, 1998/99

Percentages

Government office region	Visual arts	Comb arts	Built herit	Perf arts	Lit/ Lib	Film	Mus & gal	Services
England								
East of England	8	10	8	7	13	8	6	7
East Midlands	5	5	3	4	0	5	7	3
London	22	14	12	25	26	20	14	17
North East	5	3	5	5	3	3	1	7
North West	8	11	8	7	10	8	7	0
South East	12	14	20	11	11	5	10	17
South West	10	11	14	9	5	13	11	3
West Midlands	6	5	1	5	2	15	7	10
Yorkshire & the Humber	8	5	4	8	10	5	12	10
Total England	*83*	*78*	*75*	*81*	*78*	*80*	*76*	*75*
Northern Ireland	1	3	3	1	2	3	1	10
Scotland	5	9	16	9	11	15	15	14
Wales	12	9	7	10	11	3	8	3
Total	101	99	101	101	102	101	1	102
Number of respondents	131	260	76	507	64	40	165	29

Base: 1,272 responses drawn from annual accounts, short questionnaire and ACE/RAB data.

Note: Figures may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

Survey results by artform and heritage activity

Geographical distribution

London and the South East fairly consistently boast the highest percentage of returns in any area of activity (Table 32.12). However, a relatively large percentage of responding museums and galleries are based in Yorkshire and the Humber, and Scotland, and a relatively large percentage of built heritage organisations are based in Scotland. A combination of the scale of funding available in those locations, and the sheer number of classified sites and buildings in Scotland, is likely to account for this. (See, for example, Table 28.5 and Babbidge (2001) for museum funding; Table 24.5 on built heritage.)

Income and expenditure

Table 32.13 compares various artforms and heritage activities' share of the total income and expenditure identified. Performing and combined arts companies jointly account for over 40 per cent of all the public subsidy and income accounted for by survey respondents. They also account for nearly 50 per cent of the expenditure. Drama companies have the largest single share of income and expenditure.

The size of organisations' incomes varied considerably, even within individual arts and heritage categories. This is indicative of the wide-ranging nature of the survey (see Appendix 2). As many as 20 per cent of performing arts organisations and nearly 25 per cent of museums and galleries had turnovers of over £1 million (Table 32.14). At the other end of the scale, the turnovers of nearly 25 per cent of

Table 32.13 Headline income and expenditure figures for all respondents, by type of activity, 1998/99

	Activity (percentage)									
	Visual arts	Comb arts	Built herit	Perf arts	Lib/ Lit	Film	Mus & gals	Services	Total (%)	Total (£ thousand)
Public subsidy	3	7	6	32	11	1	39	0	100	1,001,850
Total income	4	8	7	35	10	1	35	0	100	1,746,055
Total capital income	8	6	18	53	0	0	14	0	100	174,359
Lottery capital income	10	7	8	66	0	0	9	0	100	138,571
Total expenditure	4	9	6	40	10	1	30	0	100	1,669,913
Number of respondents	131	260	76	507	64	40	165	29	1,272	

Percentage

	Performing arts		
	Dance	Drama	Music
Public subsidy	7	14	11
Total income	6	17	12
Total capital income	21	18	14
Lottery capital income	27	23	16
Total expenditure	7	17	16
Number of respondents	69	219	219

Base: 1,272 responses drawn from annual accounts, short questionnaire and ACE/RAB data.

visual arts, performing arts and literature organisations were under £25,000. Across the board, respondents were most likely to have incomes of between £100,000 and £499,999.

A breakdown of respondents' income and expenditure (Table 32.15) illustrates the complexities of subsidised performing arts organisations (as referred to in Chapter 19). These companies not only account for the largest percentage of income earned by respondents, but also for the vast majority of public subsidies from the arts councils and the regional arts boards, local authorities and the Lottery and sponsorships. They also account for the most capital expenditure.

Table 32.15 implies that built heritage account for a very small share of the cultural sector's income and expenditure. This is misleading. Responses from the

Table 32.14 Respondents by size of income and type of activity, 1998/99

Percentage

	Visual arts	Comb arts	Built heritage	Perf arts	Lib/ Lit	Film	Mus & gals	Services
1m+	10	12	17	20	14	3	24	3
500,000– 999,999	10	10	12	7	6	15	8	3
100,000–499,999	37	45	30	33	34	58	24	55
50,000– 99,999	15	13	13	9	14	3	14	10
25,000– 49,999	8	6	14	7	9	5	11	10
10,000– 24,999	5	5	8	8	3	3	7	10
5,000–9,999	5	5	3	7	3	8	9	3
1,000–4,999 (a)	10	3	3	8	11	8	4	3
Under 1,000 (a)	3	0	0	1	5	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Number of respondents	131	260	76	507	64	40	165	29

Base: 1,272 organisations drawn from annual accounts and ACE/RAB data.

Table 32.15 Breakdown of respondents' income and expenditure, 1998/99

	Activity (percentage)												
	Visual arts	Comb arts	Built herit	Perf arts	Literature	Film	Mus & gals	Services	Dance	Drama	Music	Total (%)	Total (£ thousand)
Income													
Earned income	5	9	9	49	8	1	19	0	5	28	16	100	483,601
Public subsidy													
Arts councils and RABs	7	13	0	78	1	1	1	0	17	28	33	100	185,139
Local authority	5	23	4	52	1	1	14	1	5	32	15	100	66,095
Lottery	6	6	3	44	1	0	40	0	18	13	13	100	211,996
Central government	0	2	28	2	2	0	65	2	0	2	0	100	11,930
Specialist funder	2	8	27	9	3	10	37	4	0	9	0	100	5,228
European funding	10	62	4	2	0	4	15	3	0	1	1	100	7,033
Other public subsidy	5	22	9	23	2	4	34	0	1	12	10	100	33,414
Subtotal	*3*	*7*	*3*	*34*	*13*	*1*	*38*	*0*	*8*	*15*	*11*	*100*	*908,358*
Private and unearned income													
Sponsorship	5	14	1	71	3	1	4	0	8	26	37	100	23,403
Trusts, donations etc	7	8	9	21	16	0	39	0	2	8	11	100	66,261
Memberships	35	27	3	12	2	0	9	13	0	5	6	100	7,866
Investments	9	6	12	19	4	0	50	1	1	15	3	100	74,770
Subtotal	*7*	*7*	*7*	*22*	*6*	*0*	*49*	*1*	*2*	*10*	*10*	*100*	*219,767*
Total income	4	8	5	37	10	1	34	0	6	18	12	100	1,634,176
of which, total capital income	11	8	2	75	0	0	2	0	30	26	19	100	124,056
Expenditure													
Programme of activities													
Main programme costs	5	9	3	40	4	1	38	1	4	21	14	100	528,628
Education programme costs	3	5	23	28	1	1	39	0	4	12	12	100	72,298
Subtotal	*4*	*9*	*7*	*35*	*3*	*1*	*40*	*1*	*4*	*19*	*13*	*100*	*707,042*

Table 32.15 *continued*

Activity (percentage)	Visual arts	Comb arts	Built herit	Perf arts	Literature	Film	Mus & gals	Services	Dance	Drama	Music	Total (%)	Total (£ thousand)
Administrative costs													
Marketing costs	7	14	4	50	4	1	17	1	8	26	16	100	384,454
Staff costs	9	12	2	59	6	1	10	0	10	26	23	100	222,506
Overheads	5	11	7	43	4	2	27	1	7	21	15	100	142,441
Subtotal	*7*	*12*	*5*	*50*	*5*	*1*	*20*	*1*	*8*	*23*	*18*	*100*	*438,377*
Capital costs	7	5	0	81	0	0	6	0	25	17	39	100	194,212
Any other expenditure	0	4	2	3	0	0	90	0	0	2	2	100	81,659
Total expenditure	5	8	5	41	11	1	29	0	7	17	17	100	1,555,773
Number of respondents	104	206	70	411	52	34	130	27	61	185	165	1034	1,034

Base: 1,034 organisations drawn from annual accounts and ACE/RAB data.

Table 32.16 Value of capital income from public sources, by type of activity, 1998/99

	Activity (percentage)								
	Visual arts	Comb arts	Built herit	Perf arts	Lit/Lib	Film	Mus & gals	Services	Total (£ thousand)
Central government									
DCMS, WO, SO, NIO	0	3	88	0	2	0	7	0	10,668
Other govt depts	0	0	54	0	0	0	46	0	19,603
Arts councils	0	41	0	57	0	0	2	0	864
Specialist funders	0	0	95	0	0	0	8	0	369
RABs	0	0	0	100	0	0	0	0	1
Local authorities	0	8	9	63	0	0	21	0	975
Lottery distributors									
Arts councils	0	44	0	53	0	0	3	0	249
Heritage Lottery Fund	0	0	47	0	0	0	53	0	23,091
MC/NLCB	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Subtotal	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*23,340*
European funders	0	0	38	0	0	0	54	9	114
Other public subsidy	0	3	10	19	1	0	66	0	2,832
Total capital income	0	953	31,590	1,814	196	10	24,203	10	58,776
Capital income as % of total income	0	2	54	3	0	0	41	0	100
Number of organisations	71	152	76	291	38	25	165	29	847

Base: 847 organisations drawn from annual accounts and short questionnaire.

National Trust and the National Trust for Scotland were deliberately excluded from the analysis, because neither organisation disaggregates built heritage and natural heritage in their accounts, and any attempt to do so on our part would be inaccurate. The National Trust's income was £182.4 million and its expenditure, £151.8 million; the National Trust for Scotland's income was £25 million and its expenditure £22.3 million. Neither organisation would commit to a detailed breakdown, but the National Trust's estimate is that around two-thirds of its finances can be attributed to the built heritage. The National Trust for Scotland puts it at more like 50 per cent (personal communications).

Museums and galleries and the built heritage were the main recipients of capital funding amongst survey respondents. Table 32.16 demonstrates that explicitly, with the former accounting for over 40 per cent and the latter for over 50 per cent of the total amount identified. The only other activities amongst survey respondents with significant capital income were combined and performing arts. Visual arts respondents recorded no capital income whatsoever.

The rest of this section considers survey findings on the distribution of various sources of:

- income – public subsidy, earned income (box office, merchandising and trading), private-sector income (from membership, donations, investment, other income and sponsorships); and
- expenditure – programme costs, administration costs (staff, marketing and other overheads), staff costs and capital spend.

Table 32.17 Public subsidy as percentage of respondents' total income by type of activity, 1998/99

Percentage	Visual arts	Comb arts	Built herit	Perf arts	Lib/ Lit	Film	Mus & gals	Services
Less than 1	10	3	18	9	9	13	16	3
1-9	4	3	8	5	5	0	8	0
10-19	9	7	11	9	2	10	8	10
20-39	11	20	13	18	23	18	14	21
40-59	13	20	11	22	17	15	16	14
60 to 79	24	26	13	22	19	23	20	21
80 plus	29	21	26	15	22	23	17	31
Total	100	100	100	100	97	100	100	100
No. of respondents	131	260	76	507	64	40	165	29

Percentage	Performing arts		
	Dance	Drama	Music
Less than 1	3	5	16
1-9	0	5	7
10-19	3	5	15
20-39	4	16	23
40-59	23	27	16
60 to 79	41	27	11
80 plus	26	14	12
Total	100	99	100
No. of respondents	69	219	219

Base: 1,272 organisations drawn from annual accounts and ACE/RAB data.

Note: Figures may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

Public subsidy

All the organisations surveyed were in receipt of public subsidy. Table 32.17 compares the percentage of income made up by public subsidy in terms of each area of cultural activity considered. Dance companies emerge as the most likely to be dependent on public subsidy. For nearly 70 per cent, public subsidy accounts for upwards of 60 per cent of their income. Over half the visual arts and service organisations, and nearly half the film organisations, were in receipt of this level of public funding.

By comparison with arts organisations, heritage bodies were far less likely to attract much in the way of public funding. Around 25 per cent of built heritage organisations and museums received less than 10 per cent of their income from public sources. This applied to only 3 per cent of service organisations and dance companies

Earned income

Organisations concerned with film and music – the most popular activities, after cinema, which attracts 56 per cent of the population (Office for National Statistics, 1999) – were also the most likely to generate earned income (Table 32.18). Nearly 25 per cent of respondents in both categories earned 60 per cent or more of their income.

Table 32.18 Earned income as percentage of respondents' total income by type of activity, 1998/99

Percentage	Visual arts	Comb arts	Built herit	Perf arts	Lib/ Lit	Film	Mus & gals	Services
Less than 1	16	6	30	6	17	15	8	26
1-9	19	15	16	8	13	9	24	19
10-19	17	17	7	13	21	9	20	11
20-39	21	30	24	31	17	24	13	11
40-59	9	18	9	24	15	21	15	15
60 to 79	8	11	10	12	10	0	12	19
80 plus	10	2	4	7	6	24	8	0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
No. of respondents	104	206	70	411	52	34	130	27

Percentage	Performing arts		
	Dance	Drama	Music
Less than 1	2	5	7
1-9	18	5	7
10-19	23	11	11
20-39	44	31	26
40-59	10	28	25
60 to 79	2	13	14
80 plus	2	6	9
Total	100	100	100
No. of respondents	61	185	165

Base: 1,034 organisations drawn from annual accounts and ACE/RAB data.

A large percentage of organisations earned relatively small percentages of their incomes. Over 50 per cent of organisations in the categories of visual arts, built heritage, library and literature, services and museums and galleries, and over 40 per cent of dance organisations, generated less than 20 per cent of their incomes. In some respects (as in the case of visual arts and libraries) this may be related to not charging admission. In others, as in the case of service organisations, it may be associated with providing free or very cheap education and access services. In terms of dance, it may simply reflect low attendance and a lack of interest on the part of potential audiences. The ACE's *Facts and Figures about the Arts* (ACE, 1999) cites contemporary dance as attracting the lowest percentage of adult attenders of any artform covered. As Table 32.17 implies, this reveals the arts funding system is particularly concerned to support and maintain less popular artforms.

Private-sector and unearned income

For more than 70 per cent of dance organisations, and 50 per cent of visual arts and service organisations, the private sector and unearned monies provide upwards of 60 per cent of their income (Table 32.19). However, this is not necessarily indicative of those art forms' success in raising sponsorship (Table 32.20). For the vast majority of organisations, sponsorship had little impact on their finances – it rarely made up as much as 10 per cent of their income.

Table 32.19 Private and unearned income as percentage of respondents' total income, 1998/99

Percentage	Visual arts	Comb arts	Built herit	Perf arts	Lib/ Lit	Film	Mus & gals	Services
Less than 1	9	3	19	8	8	15	19	4
1–9	4	1	9	5	4	0	6	0
10–19	10	6	10	8	2	12	5	11
20–39	10	18	13	16	21	15	15	22
40–59	13	22	11	25	17	15	19	11
60 to 79	29	29	14	23	23	26	21	19
80 plus	26	20	24	14	25	18	15	33
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
No. of respondents	104	206	70	411	52	34	130	27

Percentage	Performing arts		
	Dance	Drama	Music
Less than 1	2	4	16
1–9	0	4	8
10–19	2	4	15
20–39	2	17	21
40–59	25	30	21
60 to 79	41	29	11
80 plus	30	12	9
Total	100	100	100
No. of respondents	61	185	165

Base: 1,034 organisations drawn from annual accounts and ACE/RAB data.

Table 32.20 Sponsorship as percentage of respondents' total income, 1998/99

Percentage	Visual arts	Comb arts	Built herit	Perf arts	Lib/ Lit	Film	Mus & gals	Services
Less than 1	73	63	94	59	85	74	89	89
1–9	20	28	3	32	13	12	9	4
10–19	5	7	1	5	0	12	1	4
20–39	2	3	1	3	0	3	1	4
40–59	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
60 to 79	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
80 plus	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
No. of respondents	104	206	70	411	52	34	130	27

Percentage	Performing arts		
	Dance	Drama	Music
Less than 1	66	58	58
1–9	26	38	27
10–19	7	2	8
20–39	2	2	6
40–59	0	0	0
60 to 79	0	0	1
80 plus	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100
No. of respondents	61	185	165

Base: 1,034 organisations drawn from annual accounts and ACE/RAB data.

Programmes of activity

The percentage of expenditure that organisations dedicated to their programmes – such as their main programmes and their education programmes – varies enormously (Table 32.21). Music, museums and galleries and built heritage were the only activities in which a quarter of respondents committed over 80 per cent of their expenditure to this.

Nevertheless, comparatively large percentages of museums and galleries and built heritage organisations also spent relatively little on these core activities – suggesting considerable diversity with these constituencies. This was particularly true of heritage organisations. Around 30 per cent of museums and galleries and built heritage organisations devoted less than 20 per cent of their expenditure to programme activities.

Administration

The percentage of spend on administration depends on the type of organisation, the nature of its income portfolio, popularity, and so on. Many charities use 80:20 as a guiding ratio – 80 per cent direct charitable spend: 20 per cent fundraising, management and administration. Administration costs obviously vary depending on the nature of the organisation, and service providers are likely to have a relatively high spend. Arts Council of England Lottery applications usually look for a 10–15 per cent spend on administration.

Table 32.21 Programme of activities as percentage of respondents' total expenditure, 1998/99

Percentage	Visual arts	Comb arts	Built herit	Perf arts	Lib/ Lit	Film	Mus & gals	Services
Less than 1	7	6	19	2	6	3	15	4
1–9	6	6	3	2	4	12	5	4
10–19	8	9	6	4	8	6	12	4
20–39	29	33	10	18	19	29	17	19
40–59	19	16	10	31	29	15	4	15
60–79	18	17	23	24	21	12	20	33
80 plus	13	13	30	18	13	24	28	22
Total	99	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
No. of respondents	104	206	70	411	52	34	130	27

Percentage	Performing arts		
	Dance	Drama	Music
Less than 1	2	2	4
1–9	3	3	1
10–19	7	5	3
20–39	28	17	14
40–59	46	38	18
60 to 79	13	23	29
80 plus	2	12	32
Total	100	100	100
No. of respondents	61	185	165

Base: 1,034 organisations drawn from annual accounts and ACE/RAB data.

Note: Figures may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

Table 32.22 Administration as percentage of respondents' total expenditure, 1998/99

Percentage	Visual arts	Comb arts	Built herit	Perf arts	Lib/ Lit	Film	Mus & gals	Services
Less than 1	5	1	7	6	10	3	3	0
1–9	8	5	19	6	2	15	22	11
10–19	4	11	20	11	8	6	18	7
20–39	19	17	21	24	23	21	12	37
40–59	25	21	9	33	29	18	9	15
60 to 79	23	30	9	14	19	21	12	15
80 plus	15	14	16	6	10	18	23	15
Total	99	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
No. of respondents	104	206	70	411	52	34	130	27

Percentage	Performing arts		
	Dance	Drama	Music
Less than 1	0	3	12
1–9	3	4	9
10–19	2	8	18
20–39	15	26	25
40–59	46	39	21
60 to 79	23	14	10
80 plus	11	5	6
Total	100	100	100
No. of respondents	61	185	165

Base: 1,034 organisations drawn from annual accounts and ACE/RAB data.

Note: Figures may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

Levels of spending on administration amongst respondents vary enormously. Table 32.15 suggests an approximate 60:30 ratio across the board – 60 per cent plus on direct spend: 30 per cent administration and overheads. In practice, the percentage spent on administration varies considerably (Table 32.22). Between 40 and 50 per cent of built heritage organisations and museums and galleries committed less than 20 per cent of their expenditure to administration, whereas nearly 25 per cent of museums and galleries spent 80 per cent plus.

Spend on administration in performing arts organisations varies enormously. Whereas only 5 per cent of dance organisations kept these costs to under 20 per cent of their expenditure, this was true of 39 per cent of music organisations. Over a third of dance organisations spent 60 per cent or more of their expenditure on administration.

Staff costs

Very few responding organisations spent over 60 per cent of their expenditure on staff (Table 32.23). Those most likely to were library, literature and film organisations. At the other end of the scale, a great many organisations recorded spending less than 1 per cent on staff. This applies to over half the built heritage organisations and museums and galleries, and a sizeable percentage (25–50 per cent) of visual arts, performing arts, film, services and music organisations. This indicates a reliance on volunteers. Built heritage and museums and gallery

Table 32.23 Staff costs as percentage of respondents' total expenditure, 1998/99

Percentage	Visual arts	Comb arts	Built herit	Perf arts	Lib/ Lit	Film	Mus & gals	Services
Less than 1	25	22	54	28	21	26	54	33
1–9	6	8	16	9	12	9	8	7
10–19	4	8	6	15	12	6	6	22
20–39	32	30	10	31	33	35	11	19
40–59	28	24	13	14	12	12	18	15
60 to 79	5	7	1	3	12	12	3	4
80 plus	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	103	101	100	100	100	100	100	100
No. of respondents	104	206	70	411	52	34	130	27

Percentage	Performing arts		
	Dance	Drama	Music
Less than 1	7	22	42
1–9	3	8	13
10–19	8	16	16
20–39	41	39	18
40–59	34	13	8
60 to 79	7	3	3
80 plus	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100
No. of respondents	61	185	165

Base: 1,034 organisations drawn from annual accounts and ACE/RAB data.

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 because of rounding.

respondents, in particular, tended to keep their staff costs low relative to the rest of their expenditure. Over 60 per cent of both groups spent under 10 per cent of their expenditure on staff.

Employment

On the basis of responses, combined and performing arts organisations appear to be the most likely to employ volunteers (Table 32.24). Activities with the largest numbers of permanent staff are museums and galleries, libraries and literature and drama. The sample appears not to support the notion that museums and galleries are attracting more volunteers than paid employees (see also Table 28.8).

Constant sample

The 127 organisations in the constant sample responded to the survey carried out by Casey et al. (1996), as well as that undertaken for the present volume. (They represent 37 per cent of all the organisations that responded to Casey et al., 1996.) Their returns provide a basis for comparing data from 1993/94 and 1998/99.

Table 32.24 Number and type of employees, 1998/99

	Volunteers		Freelance/contractual		Permanent		
	Number	Mean	Number	Mean	Number	Mean	Number of respondents
Built heritage	20	0	10	0	1,574	22	70
Combined arts	2,147	10	1,598	8	2,166	10	206
Film	149	4	207	6	273	8	34
Literature & libraries	106	2	118	2	2,975	57	52
Museums & galleries	11	0	124	1	9,571	74	130
Services	0	0	0	0	54	2	27
Visual arts	622	6	507	5	865	8	104
Performing arts, of which:	4,554	11	6,193	15	8,607	21	411
Dance	132	2	1,008	17	991	16	61
Drama	1,033	6	2,105	11	5,186	28	185
Music	3,389	21	3,080	19	2,430	15	165
Total	7,609		8,757		26,085		1,034

Base: 1,034 organisations drawn from annual accounts and ACE/RAB data.

Characteristics of the constant sample

The profile of the constant sample differs slightly from that of the 1998/99 respondents as a whole in relation to the distribution of artforms and heritage activities, organisations' geographical locations, and size of income. The constant sample includes slightly higher percentages of combined arts organisations and museums and galleries, and a lower percentage of performing arts companies (Table 32.25, compared with Table 32.1). It has a lower percentage of organisations from England and a higher percentage from Scotland (Table 32.26, compared with Table 32.2). And, it contains a higher percentage of organisations with annual incomes of £500,000 and over, and a lower percentage of those under £50,000. The last characteristic is more exaggerated in the group of 64 respondents which provided full details for both 1993/94 and 1998/99 (Table 32.27, compared with Table 32.5).

Despite comprising only a tenth of all the 1998/99 respondents, the constant sample accounts for just over a third (36 per cent) of public subsidy received; just under a third of the total income and the same proportion of expenditure (Table 32.28, and see Table 32.3). While the constant sample may not precisely

Table 32.25 Constant sample by collapsed artform and heritage activity

	Number	(%)
Visual arts	9	(7)
Combined arts	33	(26)
Built heritage	2	(2)
Performing arts	38	(30)
Libraries and literature	6	(5)
Film	5	(4)
Museums and galleries	28	(22)
Services	6	(5)
Total	127	(100)

Base: 127 constant sample responses drawn from annual accounts, short questionnaire and ACE/RAB data.

Table 32.26 Constant sample by region and home country

	Number	(%)
England		
East of England	2	(2)
East Midlands	6	(5)
London	32	(25)
North East	4	(3)
North West	9	(7)
South East	13	(10)
South West	9	(7)
West Midlands	4	(3)
Yorkshire & Humberside	9	(7)
Total England	*88*	*(69)*
Northern Ireland	5	(4)
Scotland	26	(20)
Wales	8	(6)
Total	127	(100)

Base: 127 constant sample responses drawn from annual accounts, short questionnaire and ACE/RAB data.

represent the sector as a whole, the amount of public subsidy it attracted means that it is highly likely to reflect the impact of public policy and the impact of funding strategies.

The constant sample received £19.5 million of capital income (about 11 per cent of the respondents' capital income as a whole). Of that, about half (£9.8 million) was from the arts councils, Lottery units and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Comparisons across the various artforms and heritage activities, 1998/99

Between 1993/94 and 1998/99, the total income of constant-sample respondents increased by over 20 per cent, and their expenditure by 3 per cent (see Table

Table 32.27 Constant-sample respondents by size of income, 1993/94 and 1998/99

	All respondents				Those providing detailed information			
	1993/94		1998/99		1993/94		1998/99	
Income (£)	Number	(%)	Number	(%)	Number	(%)	Number	(%)
1m+	33	(26)	40	(31)	28	(44)	34	(53)
500,000–999,999	11	(9)	11	(9)	8	(13)	7	(11)
100,000–499,999	43	(34)	51	(40)	18	(28)	18	(28)
50,000–99,999	18	(14)	15	(12)	3	(5)	3	(5)
25,000–49,999	12	(9)	4	(3)	3	(5)	0	(0)
10,000–24,999	5	(4)	5	(4)	1	(2)	1	(2)
5,000–9,999	2	(2)	1	(1)	1	(2)	1	(2)
1,000–4,999	1	(1)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
under 1,000	2	(2)	0	(0)	2	(3)	0	(0)
Total	127	(100)	127	(100)	64	(100)	64	(100)

Bases
127 constant-sample responses drawn from annual accounts, short questionnaire and ACE/RAB data.
64 constant-sample responses drawn from annual accounts and ACE/RAB data.

Table 32.28 Headline income and expenditure of constant-sample respondents, 1993/94 and 1998/99

£ thousand

	1993/94 prices	1998/99 prices	1998/99	Percentage change
Public subsidy				
Arrts councils and RABs	14,004	16,016	15,853	–1.01
Local authority	12,544	14,346	12,886	–10.18
Lottery	n/a	n/a	33,977	n/a
Central government (a)	245,480	280,741	19,772	–92.96
Specialist funder (a)	1,361	1,556	1,693	8.77
European funding (a)	–	–	325	–
Other public subsidy (a)	589	674	7,516	91.04
Recorded subtotal (b)	*273,978*	*313,333*	*342,007*	*9.15*
Total income	372,214	425,679	548,939	22.45
Total expenditure	387,840	443,549	488,227	2.95

Base: 127 constant-sample responses drawn from annual accounts, short questionnaire and ACE/RAB data.

Notes
a) ACE/RAB data do not provide details of income from central government, specialist funders or Europe. These are shown under 'other public subsidy'.
b) The 1993/94 figure is calculated rather than recorded.

32.28). As Table 32.29 reveals, the rate of change in the incomes of various artforms and heritage activities covered is very different. At one extreme, the average income of service organisations and museums and galleries has increased by over half, whereas, at the other, libraries and literature organisations' has diminished by almost one third.

In general terms, income from private-sector sources had almost doubled, particularly in the visual arts, libraries and museums (Table 32.30). The Arts Council of England and regional arts board data in Chapter 33 show a decline in the value of their funding from the private sector and unearned income. This trend is also evident in the Arts Council of England and regional arts boards data presented below in Chapter 33.

Table 32.31 shows a 5 per cent rise overall in organisations' average expenditure from 1993/94 to 1998/99. Visual arts and service organisations show marked increases in expenditure of nearly two-thirds, whereas libraries and literature show the sharpest decline. However, the nature of organisations' expenditure has changed radically, shifting from administration (and employee) costs to spending on programmes of activities. On average, programme costs have increased fourfold, whereas administration costs fell by about three-quarters. Again, data in Chapter 33 show a similar, although less extreme, trend – with a marked increase in education-programme spending.

Employment

As far as it is possible to compare the 1993/94 and 1998/99 data, it would appear that the number of people employed in organisations in the constant sample

Table 32.29 Average income and expenditure of constant-sample respondents, by type of activity, 1993/94 and 1998/99

Means (£ thousand)

	Visual arts	Combined	Built heritage	Perf arts	Lit/ Lib	Film	Mus & gal	Services	Overall
Income									
Public subsidy									
Arts councils and RABs									
1993/94	99.6	54.8	0	280.3	18.5	4.6	13.4	22.8	110.3
at 1998/99 prices	*113.9*	*62.7*	*0*	*320.6*	*21.2*	*5.3*	*15.3*	*26.1*	*126.1*
1998/99	105.2	78.4	0	302.9	18.8	7.0	17.7	27.0	124.8
Local authority									
1993/94	47.7	68.5	23.5	122.0	24.7	22.6	173.9	6.8	98.8
at 1998/99 prices	*54.6*	*78.3*	*26.9*	*139.5*	*28.2*	*25.8*	*198.9*	*7.8*	*113.0*
1998/99	25.7	86.0	12.5	126.3	29.2	27.4	164.9	10.0	101.5
Lottery									
1993/94	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
at 1998/99 prices	*n/a*	*n/a*	*n/a*	*n/a*	*n/a*	*n/a*	*n/a*	*n/a*	*n/a*
1998/99	7.9	23.5	75.0	25.9	0.2	21.8	1,136.2	12.0	267.5
Central government									
1993/94	0	1.3	1,079.0	0.1	15,289.3	0	5,410.9	6.2	1,932.9
at 1998/99 prices	*0*	*1.5*	*1,234.0*	*0.1*	*17,485.5*	*0*	*6,188.1*	*7.1*	*2,210.5*
1998/99	0	0	0	0.2	0	0	705.9	0	155.7
Specialist funder									
1993/94	0	1.8	4.0	0.9	0	33.6	39.0	0	10.7
at 1998/99 prices	*0*	*2.1*	*4.6*	*1.0*	*0*	*38.4*	*44.6*	*0*	*12.2*
1998/99	0	0.5	0	12.9	0	21.2	38.3	1.0	13.3
European funding									
1993/94	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
at 1998/99 prices	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
1998/99	7.1	0	0	0	4.2	2.4	8.0	0	2.6

Table 32.29 continued

Means (£ thousand)

	Visual arts	Combined	Built heritage	Perf arts	Lit/ Lib	Film	Mus & gal	Services	Overall
Other public subsidy									
1993/94	3.4	5.5	0	2.5	3.0	4.6	8.3	0.8	4.6
at 1998/99 prices	*3.9*	*6.3*	*0*	*2.9*	*3.4*	*5.3*	*9.5*	*0.9*	*5.3*
1998/99	15.8	23.8	603.0	10.1	6.2	23.2	172.5	2.5	59.2
Recorded subtotal									
1993/94 (a)	150.7	131.9	1,106.5	405.8	15,335.5	65.4	5,645.5	36.6	2,157.3
at 1998/99 prices	*172.3*	*150.8*	*1,265.4*	*464.0*	*17,538.3*	*74.8*	*6,456.4*	*41.9*	*2,467.2*
1998/99	162.9	212.1	1,930.0	482.0	15,430.5	106.8	7,770.7	111.0	2,693.0
Total recorded income									
1993/94	203.8	404.6	1,786.0	935.1	27,919.5	233.2	6,926.6	99.0	3,287.5
at 1998/99 prices	233.1	462.7	2,042.5	1,069.4	31,929.9	266.7	7,921.5	113.2	3,759.7
1998/99	339.2	512.6	2,462.0	1,082.6	22,460.3	365.8	12,329.4	181.7	4,322.4
Expenditure									
1993/94	183.2	415.2	1,859.5	1,002.2	20,206.7	266.0	7,385.3	98.5	3,053.9
at 1998/99 prices	*209.5*	*474.8*	*2,126.6*	*1,146.2*	*23,109.2*	*304.2*	*8,446.1*	*112.6*	*3,759.7*
1998/99	349.7	547.8	2,152.5	1,086.6	22,421.2	383.6	10,138.6	180.0	3,844.3
Number in the constant sample	9	33	2	38	6	5	28	6	127

Base: 127 constant sample responses drawn from annual accounts, short questionnaire and ACE/RAB data.

Notes
a) Calculated rather than recorded.

Table 32.30 Breakdown of average income of constant-sample respondents, by type of activity, 1993/94 and 1998/99

Means (£ thousand)

	Visual arts	Combined	Built heritage	Perf arts	Lit/ Lib	Film	Mus & gal	Services	Overall
Earned income									
1993/94	50.5	369.0	124.5	669.6	9,263.0	8.0	1,544.4	2.0	1,503.9
at 1998/99 prices	*57.8*	*422.0*	*142.4*	*765.8*	*10,593.5*	*9.1*	*1,766.2*	*2.3*	*1,719.9*
1998/99	104.0	375.6	107.0	806.9	10,381.7	5.0	2,109.1	3.0	1,552.7
Public subsidy									
Arts councils and RABs									
1993/94	194.3	177.4	0	398.3	17.7	0	17.1	35.5	182.5
at 1998/99 prices	*222.2*	*202.9*	*0*	*455.5*	*20.2*	*0.0*	*19.6*	*40.6*	*208.7*
1998/99	217.8	256.9	0	458.3	16.3	10.0	22.6	7.0	215.3
Local authority									
1993/94	91.8	112.3	23.5	159.3	49.0	5.0	202.1	7.5	148.1
at 1998/99 prices	*105.0*	*128.4*	*26.9*	*182.2*	*56.0*	*5.7*	*231.1*	*8.6*	*169.3*
1998/99	47.0	104.4	12.5	176.4	57.7	45.0	209.9	0.5	153.7
Lottery									
1993/94	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
at 1998/99 prices	*n/a*	*n/a*	*n/a*	*n/a*	*n/a*	*n/a*	*n/a*	*n/a*	*n/a*
1998/99	17.7	0	75.0	32.3	0	0	1,142.6	14.0	408.3
Central government									
1993/94	0	6.0	1,079.0	0	30,578.7	0	6,403.4	18.5	3,669.5
at 1998/99 prices	*0.0*	*6.9*	*1,234.0*	*0.0*	*34,971.1*	*0.0*	*7,323.2*	*21.2*	*4,196.6*
1998/99	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.4	0	0.1
Specialist funder									
1993/94	0	8.4	4.0	1.2	0	0	48.3	0	18.1
at 1998/99 prices	*0.0*	*9.6*	*4.6*	*1.4*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*55.2*	*0.0*	*20.7*
1998/99	0	2.6	0	20.0	0	0	48.3	0	24.1
European funding									
1993/94	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
at 1998/99 prices	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
1998/99	8.5	0	0	0	8.3	0	10.2	0	4.4

Table 32.30 continued

Means (£ thousand)

	Visual arts	Combined	Built heritage	Perf arts	Lit/ Lib	Film	Mus & gal	Services	Overall
Other public subsidy									
1993/94	0	0	0	2.4	6.0	23.0	10.1	0	5.0
at 1998/99 prices	*0.0*	*0.0*	*0.0*	*2.7*	*6.9*	*26.3*	*11.6*	*0.0*	*5.7*
1998/99	6.5	77.9	603.0	11.5	11.7	5.0	146.9	2.0	83.1
Subtotal public subsidy (a)									
1993/94	286	304.1	1,106.5	561.1	30,651.3	28.0	6,680.5	61.5	4,023.2
at 1998/99 prices	*327.1*	*347.8*	*1,265.4*	*641.7*	*35,054.1*	*32.0*	*7,640.1*	*70.3*	*4,601.0*
1998/99	297.3	440.3	1,930.0	702.9	30,838.0	60.0	8,612.5	169.5	8,890.0
Private and unearned income									
Sponsorship/ memberships/ donations									
1993/94	36.5	67.0	508.0	94.2	399.0	22.0	419.8	30.0	197.1
at 1998/99 prices	*41.7*	*76.6*	*581.0*	*107.7*	*456.3*	*25.2*	*480.1*	*34.3*	*225.4*
1998/99 (a)	133	61	257.5	97.6	2872	28	232.5	0	273.1
Investment and other income									
1993/94	0.8	25.0	47.0	8.3	174.3	1.0	491.5	1.0	272.8
at 1998/99 prices	*0.9*	*28.6*	*53.8*	*9.5*	*199.3*	*1.1*	*562.1*	*1.1*	*312.0*
1998/99	55.8	24.3	167.5	28.5	192.8	1.0	443.8	9.0	183.5
Subtotal private and unearned income									
1993/94	37.3	92.0	555.0	102.5	573.3	23.0	911.3	31.0	575.8
at 1998/99 prices	*42.6*	*105.2*	*634.7*	*117.2*	*655.6*	*26.3*	*1,042.2*	*35.5*	*658.5*
1998/99	216.3	85.3	425.0	121.6	3,064.7	29.0	2,368.2	9.0	1,038.3
Total income									
1993/94	373.3	711.6	1,786.0	1,333.1	40,487.7	59.0	8,260.1	94.5	6,102.9
at 1998/99 prices	*426.9*	*813.8*	*2,042.5*	*1,524.6*	*46,303.4*	*67.5*	*9,446.6*	*108.1*	*6,979.4*
1998/99	617.8	901.0	2,462.0	1,635.6	44,284.3	94.0	13,793.1	181.5	3,480.0
Number in the constant sample	4	7	6	23	3	1	22	2	64

Base: 64 constant-sample responses drawn from annual accounts and ACE/RAB data.

Note
a) Calculated rather than recorded.

Table 32.31 Breakdown of average expenditure of constant-sample respondents, by type of activity, 1993/94 and 1998/99

Means (£ thousand)

	Visual arts	Combinded	Built heritage	Perf arts	Lit/ Lib	Film	Mus & gal	Services	Overall
Artistic costs									
1993/94	90.3	298	1,462.5	599.5	790	8	743.3	17	592.6
at 1998/99 prices	*103.3*	*340.8*	*1,672.6*	*685.6*	*903.5*	*9.1*	*850.1*	*19.4*	*677.7*
1998/99	279.0	716.0	1,978.5	1,234.0	2,675.3	84.0	8,012.4	8.5	3,482.4
Administration									
Employee costs									
1993/94	139.0	222.3	216.0	571.9	16,755.3	27.0	4,349.6	49.0	2,527.8
at 1998/99 prices	*159.0*	*254.2*	*247.0*	*654.0*	*19,162.1*	*30.9*	*4,974.4*	*56.0*	*2,890.9*
1998/99	152.8	66.9	68.0	121.7	7.3	0	562.6	29.0	257.4
Subtotal admin									
1993/94	319.0	702.3	1,798.0	1,387.0	40,386.3	57.0	8,394.3	88.5	5,433.7
at 1998/99 prices	*364.8*	*803.2*	*2,056.3*	*1,586.2*	*46,187.4*	*65.2*	*9,600.1*	*101.2*	*6,214.2*
1998/99	261.5	149.3	166.0	374.8	1,016.3	1.0	1,769.7	154.0	833.4
Total expenditure (a)									
1993/94	319.0	710.6	1,859.5	1,412.4	40,386.3	57.0	8,848.6	88.5	5,601.8
at 1998/99 prices	*364.8*	*812.7*	*2,126.6*	*1,615.3*	*46,187.4*	*65.2*	*10,119.6*	*101.2*	*6,406.5*
1998/99	617.8	894.3	2,152.5	1,640.7	44,082.3	85.0	11,212.9	162.5	6,720.4
Surplus									
1993/94	265.0	18.5	0	27.2	162.2	2.0	466.8	6.0	224.2
at 1998/99 prices	*303.1*	*21.2*	*0*	*31.1*	*185.5*	*2.3*	*533.9*	*6.9*	*256.4*
1998/99	71.0	38.0	309.0	62.1	659.5	0	3,793.3	19.0	1,485.7
Deficit									
1993/94	16.0	22.3	73.5	217.6	21.0	-0	785.6	0	266.1
at 1998/99 prices	*18.3*	*25.5*	*84.1*	*248.9*	*24.0*	*0*	*898.4*	*0*	*304.4*
1998/99	24.0	35.0	0	159.0	713.0	1.0	687.0	0	292.0

Table 32.31 continued

Means (£ thousand)

	Visual arts	Combinded	Built heritage	Perf arts	Lit/ Lib	Film	Mus & gal	Services	Overall
Number in the constant sample	4	7	6	23	3	1	22	2	64
Number recording surplus, 1993/94	1	4	0	13	2	1	17	2	40
Number recording surplus, 1998/99	1	4	2	16	2	0	16	2	43
Number recording deficit, 1998/94	3	3	2	10	1	0	5	0	24
Number recording deficit, 1998/99	3	3	0	7	1	1	6	0	21

Base: 64 constant-sample responses drawn from annual accounts, short questionnaire and ACE/RAB data.

Note: a) Calculated rather than recorded.

Table 32.32 Number of and type of employees in the constant sample, 1993/94 and 1998/99

Percentage

	1993/94		1998/99		
	Permanent	**Volunteer**	**Permanent**	**Freelance**	**Volunteer**
None	47	98	31	84	92
1–4	6	0	8	3	3
5–9	5	2	6	2	0
10–14	3	0	3	2	2
15–19	3	0	5	3	0
20–29	3	0	9	3	0
30 plus	33	0	38	3	3
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Base: 64 organisations drawn from annual accounts and ACE/RAB data.

increased and that a higher percentage of organisations employed permanent staff and more had volunteer workers (Table 32.32).

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Markets and Users

Submitted by Sara Selwood, University of Westminster, 29 May 2001

Introduction

> **'Museums belong to everybody. All members of society have a right to visit ar use them'**
>
> (Museums Association Ethics Committee, 1999).

Museums and galleries (henceforth 'museums') are amongst the UK's most popı attractions. Over 77 million visits are made to museums per year (Sightseeing F 2000:22) – more than any other category of visitor attraction as defined by the tourist boards. Museums are a major draw for overseas visitors, with a third bei motivated to visit the country because of its museums. Nearly a third of adults i in the UK claim to have visited a museum or gallery in the past year (MORI, 20(Museums also represent a focus for their local communities. Almost two thirds c museums involve volunteers - between 19,000 and 25,000 volunteers were acti 1999 (Sightseeing Research, 2000:47; Selwood, 2001a) and over half UK muse supported by Friends organisations, of which there are some 730 (Carter et al, : with an estimated total of around half a million members[1].

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- What are central government and local authorities' expectations of muse what is the likely impact of policy and funding initiatives on regional mus
- How many museums does the sector comprise, how many visitors and us it have; who are they; and, who might they potentially be?
- How is the museums' market changing? What is the likely impact of trenc number of museums and demographic change on regional museums? An
- What might museums and the museums infrastructure have to do to secı regional museums' place in the market?

Each set of questions is addressed in a different section of the chapter.

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Introduction

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Nevertheless, in recent years, the number of visits to museums have fallen, if not plateaued. The reasons for this are complex and due to a number of variables which affect the context within which museums operate. This chapter considers a number of questions pertaining to the marking to regional museums:

What are central government and local authorities' expectations of museums, and what is the likely impact of policy and funding initiatives on regional museums?

How many museums does the sector comprise, how many visitors and users does it have; who are they; and, who might they potentially be?

How is the museums' market changing? What is the likely impact of trends in the number of museums and demographic change on regional museums? And,

What might museums and the museums infrastructure have to do to secure regional museums' place in the market?

Each set of questions is addressed in a different section of the chapter.

The chapter draws exclusively on the most recent existing data and where necessary, anecdotal evidence. It, consequently, presents a picture of the market which is, at best, piecemeal. It attempts to steer a path through statistics which often refer to different years, which are often unreliable, incompatible, contradictory or simply don't exist. Much research is out of date, different definitions of museums are used, regional data are presented according to different bureaucratic systems (i.e. area museum council/Government Office Regions and tourist regions). And, because of inconsistencies, meaningful comparisons over time are difficult. Survey data often fails to cover children, who make up a large proportion of all visitors, and users in the widest sense tend not to be considered.

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1. Central and local government expectations

Central and local government invest substantially in museums2. Since the 1980s museums have become increasingly accountable, not least because of the scale of public investment in them and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) currently has high expectations of the role they can play

'...in generating social change by engaging with and empowering people to determine their place in the world, educate themselves to achieve their own potential, play a full part in society and contribute to reforming it in the future' (DCMS, 2000a).

This applies to the museums it sponsors as well as those not directly within its remit.

The government's expectations of the sector are specified in a number of documents which focus on access, education and social inclusion (DCMS, 1998; Anderson, 1999; DCMS, 1999a; DCMS, 2000a, DCMS, 2001a; DCMS, 2000b). The clearest statements of current attitudes are, however, probably the schedules of performance indicators which list the requirements for government sponsored museums and local authority museums (DETR, 1999; DCMS, 1999b). These highlight the significance attached to the number of visits and the type of users that museums and galleries should be attracting. These indicators are not only fundamental to assessments of museums' performances, but theoretically also linked to allocations of funding. Government funding – in the sense of its core funding of the nationals and non-nationals, plus its project funding for other museums - is earmarked precisely in order to achieve these ends.

Local authority museums are subject to the requirements of Best Value, designed to ensure that local government services are of high quality and delivered at optimum cost. The Audit Commission, charged with auditing Best Value process in local authorities, has established three quality standards that will define the top services to which all museum services should aspire. These include: adopting professional standards and recognised best practice for service components, including visitor and information services; performing well in terms of choice, access, audience development and visitor participation, and quality; and, influencing, responding to and adopting government and national policies, priorities, guidance initiatives and legislation (Babbidge, 2001: 21).

While DCMS's expenditure plans look promising for the museums it supports (DCMS, 2001b), no such certainty exists for local authority or independent museums, which will have to come to terms with the impact of Best Value, and will need to generate income in the context of a static, if not declining market.

Best Value represents a considerable challenge for local authority museums. Under-resourced museums already have a history of reducing expenditure on collections care, marketing, events, temporary exhibitions, education and outreach. This means that they have not remedied shortcomings or improved access. The future for such museums may be bleak. They may find themselves achieving low grades in their Best Value reviews and being judged unlikely to improve. In such circumstances, local authorities will find it hard to justify continuing their funding, and Best Value may ultimately lead to a withdrawal of support (Babbidge, 2001: 21-23).

Independent museums in receipt of local authority funding may also fall within the scope of Best Value. The reduction or loss of such support may prove critical. By definition, independent museums are dependent on the market. While the government has already saved two collections of national significance, this is unlikely to set precedent. A recent review of Scottish industrial museums and heritage sites cast doubt on the future of several independents (Scottish Museums Council, 2000) and an analysis of the performance of six English museums with designated collections shows that between 1994/95 to 1998/99 they experienced a fall in their combined self-generated income (Babbidge, 2001: 25).

The regional imbalance of Heritage Lottery Funds for museum projects has been well recorded (see, for example, Selwood, 2001a; Babbidge, 2001: 27). The majority of capital funds have gone to new museum capital projects and extending existing facilities in London in particular (Selwood, 2001a; 2001b). But, the legacy of such projects is likely to comprise an additional burden for museums' operating budgets, the scale of which has been described as 'daunting'. It is estimated that Heritage

Lottery Fund projects have created an additional £29 million operating costs for UK museums. At a time of tight finances and relatively little project funding being available regional museums (Babbidge, 2001:115-116); variable levels of sponsorship (Selwood, 2001a); declining attendances; and the directive that museums contribute to combating social inclusion, the prognosis for museums' ability to generate more income is not good.

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2. The market

The museums market depends on the relationship between the number of museums and the number of visits made; the size of museums' share in the leisure and heritage markets; the profile of visitors and why they chose to visit or not.

The supply side

There is no absolute figure for the total number of museums in the UK. Official sources estimate between 2,000 and 2,500 (DCMS, 1998; Carter et al, 1999:5), although it has been suggested that there are probably between 1,250 and 1,500 which 'realistically justify the title of museum in the sense that they deliver a certain quality of the visitor experience, meet standards of efficiency and effectiveness, and satisfy the government's efforts to increase access and encourage lifelong learning' (Middleton, 1998:15).

Between 1960 and 1999 there were nearly half as many closures and transfers to other bodies amongst local authority museums services as there were openings (Babbidge, 2001:19). Across the museums sector as a whole, nearly one museum a week opened between the early 1980s and late1990s. This was partly offset by a high number of closures, particularly amongst museums with less than 20,000 visits a year (Middleton, 1998: 21). However, the percentage of museums with small numbers of visits per annum has still increased, although their operations have been described as 'marginal'. But even if some 50 per cent plus of museums attract less than 10,000 visits a year (or 30 visits a day at most) this means that combined they account for about 8.5 million visits (or over 10 per cent of the total market)3.

Museums' market share

People's primary leisure occupations are domestic. 'The British are... couch potatoes, nearly all of them saying that their chief leisure pursuit is watching the box' (Worcester, 1999)4.

Museums are perceived as operating in several markets – the most obvious being education, heritage and leisure (Davies, 1994:14-15). Whilst recent data covers the children's market for informal sites of learning (MORI, 2001:19), there are no comparative studies of museums' place in the 'lifelong learning' market. Comparisons between museums and other heritage and leisure providers are, however, more common.

In terms of leisure activities away from home, the most popular is going to the cinema. In 1999 there were 127.9 million admissions (ONS, 2001a: Table 12.3). Whereas nearly 60 per cent of the adult population went to the cinema in the year up to November/December 1999, less than half that percentage visited a museum (MORI, 2001: 5). The fact that museums' have more visits than any other category of visitor attraction as defined by the tourist boards (Sightseeing Research, 2000:22) can, at least, be partly attributed to the sector comprising more organisations than any other category. The museum sector also has the largest percentage of free admissions – 60 per cent, against an average of 55 per cent (Sightseeing Research, 2000:22).

According to one set of data, the same percentage of the population visited a well-known park and garden (28 per cent) as visited a museum. Slightly fewer visited stately homes and theme parks (25 per cent); theatre/opera/ballet (24 per cent); famous cathedrals or churches, zoos/wildlife parks/reserves, and live sports events (23 per cent). Pop and classical concerts were attended by 16 per cent and 9 per cent of the population respectively (MORI, 2001:5).

The data on trends in market share are contradictory. One source finds that all the various types of activity listed above had lost some percentage of their share since the previous year, but that museums had lost rather less than parks and gardens, zoos and cathedrals/churches (MORI, 2001: 5). Another

finds that museums were the only visitor attraction to have lost some of its share of visitors (Sightseeing Research, 2000: 56).

The demand side
There is no absolute figure as to the total number of visits to museums in the UK either.

Figures for1998/89 vary between 78 million and 114 million, depending on which museums are included and the accuracy of the count (Selwood, 2001a). There is no national data on the number of users – questions about usage only having been introduced to the Audit Commission performance indicators for museums and galleries for 2000/01 (DETR, 1999).

According to the most consistent data, visits to museums increased by about 14 per cent in the ten years between 1989 and 1999 (Sightseeing Research, 2000:15), but there was some falling-off in the second half of the 1990s. The 1999 figure of 77.1 million visits to museums and galleries is the lowest since the early 1990s, and the average number of visits is almost a third down on what it was in 1982 (Sightseeing Research, 2000: 49). These facts are variously interpreted as evidence that attendances are falling, that they have plateaued, that 'there simply aren't enough visitors to go around' (Patrick Greene cited in Alberge, 2000), or that supply now exceeds demand (ETC, 2001).

The latest year on year comparisons only serve to confirm a downward trend. DOMUS shows a fall of 4 per cent in the number of museum visits between 1997 and 1998 (Carter et al, 1999:17); Sightseeing Research (2000:9) reports a 1 per cent fall between 1998 and 1999; MORI's household survey shows a 7 per cent fall in people reporting that they had visited museums in 1998 and 1999 (MORI, 2001:5); and, the Association of Independent Museums comparative trading survey is reported to have identified an 8 per cent drop in visitors numbers in the first half of 2001 compared to 1999.

The nationals and museums in London are essentially bucking the trend – not least given the initial success of exhibits in the estimated 800,000 square feet of lottery-funded new or refurbished exhibition space created in London alone (Butler, 2000). DCMS sponsored museums alone reported 24 million visits for1998/99 (DCMS, 2000c) – 31 per cent of all visits to UK museums for that year5. Indeed, the figures for the UK as a whole reveal that as few as 4 per cent of museums accounted for as many as 52 per cent of all visits (Sightseeing Research, 2000:18 and 23). London alone accounts for 33 per cent of all visits to museums in the UK.

These facts imply the seriousness of regional museums' predicament. But, of course, not all regional museums are as vulnerable as others. Large metropolitan museums have very different sets of opportunities to smaller museums in neighbouring urban conurbations or in rural areas. The vast majority of museums (66 per cent) attracted less than 20,000 visits each, and are thus unlikely to have exceeded 65 visits on any one day. The size of disparities in regional distribution are highlighted by the fact that Northern Ireland and Cumbria both only account for 1 per cent of all visitors (Sightseeing Research, 2000:49).

Visitors
Overseas visitors account for a large proportion of the UK's museum visits. In 1996, half of the 31 million overseas visitors to the UK took in a museum visit (McCormick, 1999). They represented 40 per cent of visits to London museums, but a rather smaller percentage of visits elsewhere. Children (under 16) also account for a large share of museum visits – making 30 per cent of all visits (Sightseeing Research, 2000:28)

These figures imply that less than half (47 per cent) of all museum visits are by adults resident in the UK. This group is likely to account for 36.3 million visits. Given that they make an average of 2.8 visits per year, it can be surmised that 12.9 million adults visited museums in 1999. This implies that 21 per cent of the population visit museums6, which is rather lower than MORI's 28 per cent (MORI, 2001:5).

Moreover, if, as MORI suggests, a quarter of visitor are 'frequent users', in that they visit at least five times a year (MORI, 1999: 20), it follows that as few as 3.25 million people (less than 5 per cent of the population) make almost half (44 per cent) of all visits.

Museum visitors tend to be characterised by social class, education, ethnicity and age. As the following data suggests, Bordieu and Darbels' 30 year-old observations about museum visiting still hold true:

Social class and educational standard are usually taken to be the main determinants of people's propensity to visit museums and the frequency with which they do so. ABs account for an estimated 40 per cent of all museum visits, and DEs, 14 per cent. Nearly 50 per cent of ABs visited in 1999 compared to 15 per cent of DEs (MORI, 2001:16). ABs also make the most visits (averaging 3.2 visits per year) and DEs the least (2.6 visits per year). Museum visiting is similarly, directly correlated to educational achievement. The vast majority of people with postgraduate degrees visit museums, whereas only a minority with no formal qualifications do so (MORI, 1999: 8).

Ethnicity is also intrinsic to museum visiting. White visitors account for nearly all museum visits (95 per cent) and Asians only 1 per cent. Visits by the black population are so few as to not register (MORI, 2001:15-16). A similar percentage of the white and Asian populations visit (30 per cent), museums, as compared with only 10 per cent of the black (African/Caribbean) population.

Age and lifestyle affect museum visiting as well. The composition of the national profile of museum visitors shows that the over 65s make more visits than any other lifestage groups (16 per cent) and that students and young adults with children (16-24) make amongst the least (7 and 4 per cent respectively). But, these figures conceal the fact that 84 per cent of people over 65 don't go to museums and that almost 40 per cent of students do. (MORI, 2001: 8-9).

Families which are most likely to visits are those which children aged between 5 and 10 (13 per cent of all museum visits). Those with older or younger children account for a substantially smaller percentage of visits. Young adults with children only accounted for 4 per cent of visits (MORI: 2001:8-9).

Visitors' place of residence is another variable, although this largely correlates with the percentage of museums in those regions. Whereas Londoners account for 15 per cent of all visits by adults resident in the UK, residents of Northern Ireland only account for 1 per cent (MORI, 2001:14).

There is no national data available on the percentage of visits accounted for by local residents or UK residents on holiday.

Non-visitors

The characteristics of non-attenders' logically represent the other side of the coin. A comparison of the museum visitors with the UK population as a whole suggests that CE2s, DEs, the over 65s, adults with children and black people are under represented (MORI, 2001: 9 and 14).

Reasons for visiting and staying away

There is a vast literature on people's reasons for visiting and staying away from museums, which ranges from sweeping generalisations to the idiosyncratic and personal7.

Reduced leisure time, a decrease in domestic holidays, new developments in leisure including the use of computer games and the internet, eating out, fitness clubs, the advent of multiplexes and, Sunday shopping increasingly account for more of people's leisure time. They are, therefore, perceived as representing competition for museum visiting. This is particularly so in the case for ABC1s who comprise the core audience for museums (MORI, 2001: 5-6, 23). These factors are, of course, also likely to affect attendances in other leisure and heritage segments (cf, for example, ACE, 2000).

If the type of people who tend to visit museums are distinguished by their relatively elevated social position, higher educational levels and income, it follows that non-visitors tend to come from lower social classes and ethnic minorities, and that they have lower educational attainments and less income. Indeed, studies often explore their subjects' negative image of museums as being based on intimidation, discomfort, and other factors associated with exclusion (Harris Research Centre 1993;

Moore, 1997). Recently, social inclusion has come to be identified with encouraging non-visitors participation in museums and other cultural activities (Dodd and Sandell, 1998).

The museums sector itself takes a fairly pragmatic view of what impacts on visitor trends from one year to another. In 1999, for instance, museums cited the following variables as having the most positive effect on attendances; more or better marketing (30 per cent); more special events (18 per cent); longer opening hours (16 per cent); and extra attractions or facilities (10 per cent) as the most positive factors. Conversely, the following were regarded as having inhibited visits: shorter opening hours (19 per cent); less favourable weather (18 per cent); repairs and renovations (14 per cent); less marketing, fewer school parties, and fewer exhibitions (each 10 per cent) (Sightseeing Research, 2000: 58).

There is evidence to suggest that more museums across the board were opening for less time in 1998 than in 1997 (Carter et al, 1999:14), and that museums' spending on improvements declined from 1998 to1999 - with a larger percentage of museums spending relatively less than previously (cf Sightseeing Research, 2000: 64; 1999: 48).

Museum users themselves (depending on the questions asked) are likely to say that they go to museums out of general interest, or because they had been before and wanted to go again. They are prompted by advertising or word of mouth; drawn to see temporary exhibitions; encouraged by their children wanting to go. They said that they visited because the museum happened to be open at a convenient time. Non-visitors account for not going on the basis that there was 'nothing of particular interest'. They assume that it will be too costly; that they would find it difficult to get there, or to get around; it would be boring; the children wouldn't be interested; or, that it is not open when they had time to visit (MORI, 1999:13). These characteristics are picked up in both national and local surveys (cf, for example, MORI and Heart of England Tourist Board, 2000). There is beginning to be some evidence to suggest that users may go against the visitor trends. For example, that although ethnic minority children are less likely to make museums visits than while children, they use museum websites more (MORI, 2001:18).

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3. Anticipated changes in the market for regional museums

The market for regional museums is circumscribed by various factors - not least, meeting the requirements of their various stakeholders – most importantly, their funders and the publics (see above). Other variables considered here include: the growth of the sector and quality of its services; anticipated changes in visitor figures; and, changing demographics; and, new technologies. Whilst many of these are beyond museums' control, it is nevertheless crucial that the sector devises strategies to survive by anticipating change and being proactive rather than merely responsive. This section, thus, sets the context for the following section which contains proposals addressed to regional museums themselves and their supporting infrastructures.

Number of museums

A sizeable proportion of museums have a long way to go in terms of meeting minimum standards of visitor care. This includes registered museums which are expected to meet minimum standards. But the most recent survey of registered museums' visitor services found that:

one in five had no labels and one in four no interpretation panels;

two out of three had no plan of the museum;

two out of three had no café;

one in three had no temporary exhibition space;

one in five had no toilet facilities, and four our of five had no baby change facilities;

less than half train staff in visitor care, and two out of three don't have a member of staff specifically responsible for visitor care; and

over one in two have no member of staff with specific responsibility for education.

Standards are also low in terms of registered museums' marketing and market intelligence, with:

only one in five having a marketing policy; and

less than half have carried out visitor research in the previous five years (Coles et al, 1998).

It has been suggested that a number of museums are unlikely to survive, with as many as a third 'unlikely to be able to meet the more exacting criteria of the new millennium' (Middleton,1998:75) and that the most vulnerable are those with relatively low attendances, poor standards of visitor care and undeveloped marketing intelligence and skills. The prevailing professional view, is that:

... there are too many museums in the UK and new ones should be discouraged because they may put even more pressure on the limited public funds available and supply will outstrip visiting demand. More recently, it has been suggested that too many poor quality museums are diluting the strength of the brand and these should, in some way, be distanced from the 'better' ones. Unfortunately, this does not square well with the pressure from communities to create their own museums (Anonymous funding officer, cited in Selwood, 2001a).
But, conceivably against the odds, the percentage of museums with small numbers of visits still continues to grow.

The number of visits
While the number of visits to museums and galleries is set to rise as a result of the number of new museums opening and Lottery funded capital developments coming on stream, as yet, it is still too early to discern the impact of such projects. As yet, no data is available for attendances at museums across the UK for 20008. But, even if museums don't achieve the inflated targets written into their Lottery applications, they are likely to increase their user numbers. However, whether this serves to arrest declining visitor numbers in the short or long-term remains open to question. Certainly, evidence from a major metropolitan centre suggests that during1999 growth was evident in museums in 'outer' districts where museums were not closed for refurbishment and had been involved in collaborative marketing schemes (correspondence with Alex Saint, Arts About Manchester). Whether this can be interpreted as bucking the trend or displacement is not clear.

Demographic change
Whatever happens to the numbers of museum visits, it is likely that anticipated changes in the demographic composition of the UK population will impact on the profile of museum visitors in the longer term.

The UK is experiencing a gradual 'greying' of the population - people are living longer, baby-boomers are moving on to 'young-old age', and the birth rate has fallen. This may represent a real boon for museum attendances.
Whereas the population is currently fairly evenly balanced between the under 25s, those aged 25-40 and those aged 50 plus, within the next few decades – older people will outnumber the young for the first time.

These young-older people – aged 55-64 – are, and will be, amongst the most economically powerful and socially important. They have large incomes, savings and a history of political activism. They are richer, healthier and more socially active than cohorts of the same age in previous generations.
The scenario for old-older people (aged 75+) is less good. They tend to be women and the majority live alone. They are the most economically and socially vulnerable group in society. They tend to have the highest instance of immobility, and lead less active lives - spend more significant amounts of time

watching TV and pursue the most sedate leisure occupations. Nothing in future projections suggests how that this will change.

Museums conventionally regard families as important because children represent the future of museum going, and because families are assumed to be profoundly influential social units.

However, the 'nuclear family' is under thereat. The typical household of a married couple is declining. Many couples are choosing not to have children, and there is a rapid growth in the single person household, and fewer women are staying at home (ACE, 2001:39). For museums targeting the family market is increasingly difficult given that the family groups increasingly include single parents, extended families, bi-nuclear families, foster parents and other combinations.

British higher educational enrolments are growing sharply. This is likely to benefit museums because people participating in higher education are not only likely to visit museums, but also to bring their children (Worcester, 1999).

Over half the adult population is now working. More men are working right up to retirement age, and more women are working, and for longer hours. Female skills are regarded as best suited to the modern workplace.
Work patterns inevitably affect the amount of time people have to visit leisure sites (Worcester, 1999). The typical 9-5 working day is changing and a growth for part-time, flexible and contract working is forecast (ACE, 2001:39). But, this does not necessarily mean that people will have more free time to visit museums during the conventional working day.

Older people have 32 per cent more free-time than all adults in general (Worcester, 2000). In this sense, they are an obvious target for museums.

It has been suggested that attendances at cultural events parallels the trend in GDP precisely (Selwood, 2000: 121-122). Incomes are set to rise by 30 per cent by 2010 (Hewison, 2001:11) and disposable incomes should be up16 per cent on what they were in 1998. However, the rich will get richer and the poor, poorer.

Despite having accounted for the majority of museum visitors, ABC1s are likely to have less time to spend their money. Moreover, their personal finances will be subject to more commitments and their spending on culture may be curtailed by such demands as health insurance, pensions and their children's higher education.
Changes in technology
In the next ten years will see the emergence of an e-culture, with a proliferation of TV channels and the scope for the personalisation of electronically mediated cultural services (Hewison, 2001:14). This should encourage access, provide a focus for museums' marketing and enhance the role they can play in lifelong learning. However, not all the population have will be reachable through new technologies.

At present, people over 45 and especially those over 65, for example, are increasingly being left behind in terms of new technologies, with comparatively low usage of desktop computers (7 per cent of over 65s vs. 37 per cent of British population); data modem to the internet (2 per cent vs 13 per cent); use of e mails (3 per cent vs 23 per cent) and mobiles (10 per cent vs 39 per cent)(Worcester, 2000). This may of course change if, as the under 45s grow older, they keep maintain all their technology skills.

The use of multimedia is already a characteristic of museums. In principle, it not only increases access to museums and their collections, but provides users with a wider range of information both in and away from museums. However, opinion is divided as to whether it will enhance or reduce the sense of value attached to the experience of visiting museums (Nairne, S, 2001 and Henley Centre,1995: 80). But if, by definition, this greater access represents a gateway to increased access and individual entitlement, it also reinforces the wider social role of museums and their obligation to serve a broader public.

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4. What can the museums infrastructure do to secure the future market for regional museums?
Users are central to the survival of regional museums. Whilst independent museums have always depended on their trading income to survive as a matter of course, publicly subsidised local authority museums and museums with designated collections have only recently come under formal pressure to increase access as a result of project funding and Best Value. These museums are simultaneously having to contribute to combating social exclusion, improve their visitor services, and efficiency. The declining value of their core funding and the operating costs of Lottery funded capital projects also mean that they are under pressure to generate more income. Targeting visitors is an obvious source.

But, despite the DCMS's mantra, 'museums for the many', it is not clear which category of audience should take precedence – those who were previously excluded, or more of the same. In many respects, the task of attracting both may be incompatible, if not impractical for regional museums with limited resources. At a time of declining numbers of visits, museums cannot afford to lose their loyal constituencies (Friends, volunteers and frequent visitors). Indeed, they need to build up repeat visits (Black, 2000). Social inclusion programmes are probably heavy on resources and unlikely to generate income9. It has yet to be seen how the nationals have succeeded in expanding their visitor profiles or satisfied the social inclusion clauses in their funding agreements – and, how their examples might serve as models for regional museums.

The following proposals assume that: users are central to the revitalisation, if not the development, of the market for regional museums; that placing users at the core of museums strategies will require the political will and support of the museums infrastructure; and, that individual museums themselves are willing to change. Given that the necessary financial support will have to go beyond short-term project funding, there will need to be some degree of overhauling the funding system. But, as DCMS itself has admitted:

One of the great weaknesses of art and sport funding systems, is a tendency towards to inertia arising from the difficulty of changing existing patterns of support. Once buildings, organisations and staff are in place, they tend to displace as the primary focus of concern the objectives they were intended to meet, or the communities they were intended to serve (DCMS, Policy Action Team 10, 1999:44).
Many of these observations have already been raised in other contexts, but no determined or co-ordination action has as yet been taken to address them. This is precisely the kind of failure of strategic thinking that various commentators (for example, Middleton,1998; Babbidge, 2001) have already remarked on.

Users at the centre of museums' strategies
The Museums Association's ethical guidelines on access established the principle that 'museums belong to everybody':

Museums have a duty to provide access today. Unlike other cultural organisations, they equally have a duty to safeguard for future generations their collections and other resources, including information and expertise (Museums Association Ethics Committee,1999).
But, in practical terms, there is little to help museums identify or meet users' needs or show how such needs might be used strategically be used as the lynch-pin for all museum activities. Rand (1996) proposes a 'visitors' bill of rights' and outlines a model, which simultaneously codifies visitors' needs, lobbies for respect for visitors, and sets standards for museums staff. Little of what she suggests is undiscovered by visitor studies, but she highlights the gap between the acquisition of such knowledge and its application, indeed its failure to influence the delivery of museum services and programming.

Implications for the museums' infrastructure
Given the persistence of mandarin traditions in the museums sector, making users the focus of all museum activities implies radical and long-term change, not least in terms of centralised sources of support for museums.

There needs to be comprehensive and accurate data about UK museums visitors and users, capable of producing robust and comparable time-series.

There needs to be a comprehensive and objective analysis of the marketplace. How and why museums in different contexts perform better or worse thank others, the levels of market share achieved within those contexts.

All museums should be equipped with a basic data capture package for visitor information. This would allow for a standardised information gathering exercises – covering for example: visitor numbers; demographics; visitor satisfaction by individual service area; visit length and content; and an open feedback channel. Data collected should be comparable across institutions and available for collective interpretation. Correlations between different variables, such as low visitor numbers, opening hours, type and of museum should be easily accessible. Such data should be processed by a central data processing source for all museums by region. This may be a role which Resource's revamped DOMUS database could assume.

There is already a plethora of information about markets and users, this needs to be gathered and made available centrally so that it is available to all museums in the most accessible form and can make use of it effectively.

All museums should have access to centralised or regionally co-ordinated programme of quality marketing and business management training (Middleton, 1998:78-80). Museum staff need help to segment their market sensibly and develop parallel strategies to appeal to different sectors. It is unhelpful to burden them with the goal of blanket popular access.

In recent years there have been calls for the branding, if not the re-branding, of museums on the basis of common values (Middleton, 1998:77). Without this the sector is liable to be judged on by its weakest link. Branding implies shared values such as standards of customer care services, protocols and systems, with 'gradings' and 'codings'. With standardised basics individual museums will be better able to establish their individual appeal and differentiated marketing approaches and users to meet their expectations. This may be a new role which Resource's museums registration scheme could take on.

Implications for individual museums

The desirable outcomes of putting users at the centre are obvious for individual museums. This should not enable them to attract more users, but a wider range of users; they will be able to use their resources more strategically; deliver higher quality experiences; have qualitative impact on visitors; develop new services; etc.

It is fundamental to such ambitions that museums define their intentions in relation to the resources at their disposal. Are museums' targets quantitative or qualitative? Repeat visitors may be key to the sustainability of museums (Black, 2000). Should they resist the pressure to be permanently chasing increased visitor numbers?). A genuine shift to the social inclusion agenda is possible, as Tyne and Wear has demonstrated (Fleming, 1999). However, this may carry some risk of levelling-off of visitor figures. If museums are concerned with qualitative outcomes, such as providing lifelong learning, they should measure the impact of visits as the purpose of subsidy and use their findings to improve the programmes they offer.

Museums need to anticipate and plan for change in the market - not just react after the event. They will have to anticipate changes in tastes and habits. For instance, will baby-boomers necessarily be as interested in heritage as previous generations of older people? Will they be equally willing to serve as donors, friends and volunteers? Other key critical factors will include the growth of minority populations, particularly in regional centres. Museums will have to market their appeal to different lifestages and interests (such as, lifelong learning agendas, the ageing population, and families).

For their own benefit, museums need to overcome any unwillingness or inability they might have to engage with their local communities either by way of the experiences they provide, or their marketing.

The consequences of their failing to do so are manifest in the notion that pressure from communities to create their own museums has resulted in a dilution of the brand (see above). This suggests that 'quality' institutions need to change to include community activity, or to play a different role in helping raise community standards.

Social inclusion should be perceived as a business imperative, not an ethical obligation:

In Manchester young black people (second and third generation) are enjoying inclusion in most aspects of mainstream society in larger numbers than ever before - they are a 'young' demographic profile and are consequently growing . They live in areas close to urban centres, and are an ever increasing 'force to be reckoned with'. Their young white peers are interested in diversity ... (e.g. world music). Therefore, targeting this group is not just about representation and inclusion, but also about meeting potential market demand, planing ahead and responding to the market (correspondence with Alex Saint, Arts about Manchester).
Although collaborations may not be easy in a competitive climate, they will be necessary for museums seeking to secure their position in the market (Middleton, 1998:78; Arnold-Foster and Davies, 1998). Collaborations might cover a range of activities - fundraising, marketing, sharing collections, expertise, best practice. As one example suggests, certain groups, such as families, may appear difficult to reach, but doesn't make then an unattractive market and collaborative marketing may provide the most viable approach:

The key is quality of experience and targeted communication. Evidence suggests that collaborative marketing aimed at providing purposely designed information aimed at meeting the exclusive needs of one audience is effective (www.familyfriendly.org.uk). The most recent audience survey at all arts venues in Greater Manchester (November 2000) found that families represented nearly 30 per cent of the overall market, with museums and galleries having a higher market share – not least because of their permanent provision (Correspondence with Alex Saint, Arts About Manchester).
It may also be the case that the nationals' relationship with regional museums should be exploited to a higher degree.

Museums must be able to create an identify for themselves within their the region (MORI, People's Panel, 2000) which may require critical assessments of their collections, extreme make-overs and modernisation (Shorland-Ball, 2000).

Putting users at the centre is likely to have a significant impact of the internal management of museums, and may lead to profound and long-lasting change. It may, for example, involve reconstructing the workforce to one which inclusive and representative of the population as a whole, and which may have the added bonus of making museums appeal as a real career choice (Babbidge, 2001:30-31). Museums will have to develop PR and marketing skills pools; develop a range of partnerships within the wider community; and collaborate with other regional museums, central agencies and other museums.
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Notes
Please note: Use the 'Back' button on your browser to return to the text.

1 Calculated on the basis of British Association of Friends of Museums' 300 groups having an average of 666 members (BAFM, 2001).

2 Indeed, museums account for the largest portion of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's (DCMS) direct funding. In 1998/99, the last year for which comprehensive financial details are available, the sector received about £610 million of public funding (from DCMS and other government departments; local authorities; and the National Lottery) against which it is known to have generated at least another £32 million in business sponsorship, and upwards of £37 million in consumer spend

(Selwood, 2001), plus some £4 million plus from its Friends' organisations - a sum calculated on the basis of British Association of Friends of Museums' groups having an average subscription of £8.28 per single person (BAFM, 2001).

3 Calculated on the basis of 1,746 museums (Sightseeing Research, 2000).

4 Other commonplace domestic leisure occupations are entertaining friends at home (96 per cent of the population); listening to the radio (88 per cent), records and tapes (78 per cent). Around 65 per cent of the population reads books (ONS, 2001: Table 12.6).

5 Although they are not the most recent, the figures for 1998/99 are used here for the sake of consistency with other data.

6 The Office for National Statistics (2001a:Table 1.1) gives the UK population for 1999 as 59.5 million.

7 Hudson (1993: 37), for example, recalls a mother who brought her two sons to the National Museum of Film, Photography and Television, Bradford, because her small son had learned to read there. The museum had many visitor- activated exhibits and the boy was anxious to read the instructions in order to make things work.

8 Sightseeing in the UK 2000, is scheduled for publication in August 2001.

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Abbreviations
ACE Arts Council of England

BAFM British Association of Friends of Museums

DCMS Department for Media, Culture and Sport

DETR Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions

ETC English Tourism Council

GDP Gross Domestic Product

ONS Office of National Statistics

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2.6 'Audiences for Contemporary Art: assertions vs the evidence' (2002)

in Colin Painter (ed), *Contemporary art and the home.*
Oxford: Berg, pp 11–33
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Audiences for Contemporary Art: Assertion vs Evidence

Sara Selwood

> Something has shifted in the national cultural psyche. Football, suddenly is out, Art is in . . . A nation once obsessed by soccer is suddenly mad for conceptual art (Riddell 2001).

If the press is anything to go by, it looks as if interest in contemporary visual art is one of the country's biggest growth areas. The critic, Matthew Collings, whose latest book is actually called *Art Crazy Nation* (2001a), maintains that the public 'definitely think it's for them', and that a mutual admiration society has grown up between artists and the public. Whereas they might once have said '"Sod the public!". . . now, artists think about the public all the time' (Collings 2001b).

It's not only journalists who are contributing to the hype. The professional alliance, the Visual Arts and Galleries Association, contends that 'people are flocking to see visual arts events as never before (*ArtsBusiness* 2001: 3). And pillars of the establishment are investing in make-overs which typically involve associating themselves with contemporary art. The V&A, for example, is banking on the fact that its proposed Spiral and centre for contemporary art and culture will transform the museum's fusty image (National Audit Office 2001: 25–7). The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has been using contemporary art and design to re-brand Britain:

> Britain has a new spring in its step. National success in creative industries like music, design and architecture has combined with steady economic growth to dispel much of the introversion and pessimism of recent decades. 'Cool Britannia' sets the pace in everything from food to fashion (Leonard 1997: 13).

As well, both Young's, the brewers, and Bombay Gin have based advertising campaigns on the celebrity of young British artists – the former with a parody of Damien Hirst's *Away from the Flock*, and the latter featuring Tracey Emin herself (Millard 2001: 33 and 73).

But, not everybody is convinced. The Tate is usually credited with spearheading whatever change is perceived to have taken place – largely as a result of the Turner Prize (awarded annually, with one exception, since 1984) and the opening of Tate Modern. And, the evidence usually cited is the latter's phenomenal success in attracting a reported 5.25 million visits during its first year, well over twice as many as expected. So, it seems paradoxical that 'the man who made us love art' (Aidin 2001), aka the Director of Tate, Sir Nicholas Serota, is sceptical. He claims not to be 'deluded' and is only too well aware that many people 'are delighted to praise the museum, but remain deeply suspicious of the contents'.[1] In a recent lecture, he described the kind of headlines which the 1999 Turner Prize attracted as indicative of the fact that people are still wary of being 'deceived' by contemporary art and that they regard artists as no better than 'emperors parading in their new clothes':

> 'Eminence without merit' (*The Sunday Telegraph*). 'Tate trendies blow a raspberry' *(Eastern Daily Press),* and my favourite, 'For 1,000 years art has been one of our great civilising forces. Today, pickled sheep and soiled bed threaten to make barbarians of us all' (*The Daily Mail*) (Serota 2000).

Such distrust is fairly standard, although it's hard to tell whether it's the media that informs and sustains public opinion, or vice versa. Either way, there's no doubt that particular controversial works shown at the Tate are what people have come to associate with contemporary art. Indeed, unpublished research carried out for the *At Home with Art* project suggests that respondents specifically identified contemporary art with the Turner Prize, Damien Hirst, Tracey Emin, formaldehyde, unmade beds, the 'bricks' and 'crappy nappies'. Moreover, the majority of respondents participating in this research were alienated from contemporary art, fearful of being duped by it and, ultimately, 'exulted' in their rejection of it . Conceivably, all that distinguished the reception which greeted one of Carl Andre's *Equivalents* 25 years ago was that distrust of contemporary art used to be even more explicitly associated with the fact that it was being paid for out of the public purse (Iles 1987). It probably goes without saying that exhibitions of Old Masters are beyond such criticism. They continue to attract the largest audiences both wordwide and in the UK (*The Art Newspaper* 2001).

So, in a world in which hype combines with suspicion, what do we actually know about people's consumption of contemporary art in England? Is it really the case that as a nation we are 'mad' for it? This chapter examines the evidence. It comprises five sections which consider:

- The political context and policy background which is encouraging what Collings refers to as 'the new pro-art public' (2001b: 14)

- the size and the profile of the audience for contemporary art
- the robustness of the data
- the public's attitude to contemporary art
- some observations.

Political Context

> The arts are for everyone. Things of quality must be available to the many, not just to the few (Smith 1998: 42).

In many respects, encouraging people to love art is a government project. According to Labour, one of the party's defining characteristics on coming to power in 1997 was its 'fundamental belief that the individual citizen achieves his or her true potential within the context of a strong society'. It regarded culture as central to this agenda, insisting that 'the arts are not optional extras for government; they are at the very centre of our mission' (Smith 1998: 42). There were four cardinal principles against which that commitment was given: that the arts should be for everyone; that they should be a part of our everyday lives; that cultural activity has an important contribution to make in working toward the government's goal of high and sustainable levels of employment; and that the arts should be made an integral part of our education service (Smith 1998: 22–7), ultimately providing a key to a rich life for individuals and the prosperity of the nation (DCMS/DfEE 2000: 3). While the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's (DCMS) agenda and some of the associated personnel have moved on since these statements were made, this kind of thinking officially still informs the Department's vision up to 2011 (DCMS 2001).

Given that it believes that 'the arts are a civilizing influence', the Labour government requires 'arts organisations to reach out into the communities around them' (Smith 2000: 14). Labour has introduced major changes in the management of the cultural infrastructure. Before the present government came to power, central government's attitude toward cultural policy was essentially distinguished by a policy vacuum, implied via the arm's-length principle and the working practices of such bodies as the Arts Council of England (ACE). However, in 1998 DCMS created a new and proactive role for itself in what it referred to as a 'new cultural framework' (DCMS 1998). This involved the Department's assuming 'a more strategic place in the complicated structures of cultural policy and funding' and formalizing the conditions of its relationship with its sponsored bodies and, ultimately, the whole of its funding stream. This centered on 'the delivery of appropriate outputs and benefits to the public' in relation to the delivery of the government's own objectives – the promotion of access and social inclusion, the

pursuit of excellence and innovation, the nurturing of educational opportunity and the fostering of the creative industries. Commitments to developing audiences for contemporary visual arts and increasing their understanding are, thus, fundamental to the Department's funding agreements with the Tate and the Arts Council.

The Tate, like all DCMS's other sponsored museums, is subject to the Department's desire to increase access. Following a review which began in the summer of 1997, DCMS devised access standards (DCMS 1999b), developed its own code of practice on access, and insisted on the production of access plans as a condition of grant funding (DCMS 1999b). It also promotes museums as 'centres for social change' (DCMS 2000a) and is encouraging their contribution to the learning society (DCMS/DfEE 2000). The Department has, of course, also pursued the principle of free admission to the museums it sponsors. It provided the Tate, for example, with an initial additional £5 million and thereafter £6 million per year to ensure free entry to Tate Modern (DCMS 2000b). At this time, entry to the national fine art museums tended to be free. And, although free admission to all the nationals was in prospect (it was introduced from 1 December 2001), the additional money to the Tate prompted accusations of favouritism toward the arts from the scientific community, who regarded the government's activities as not only polarizing the arts and sciences but ultimately prejudicing popular access to science. As the Director of the Science Museum put it:

> The public who enjoy places like this [the Science Museum] are being told they are second class citizens: if you want to enjoy science, you pay . . . Of course there has to be access to art. But science has to thrive, and it has to thrive in terms of popular access (Sir Neil Cossons cited in Radford 2000).

It remains to be seen whether free access to the nationals impacts on the audience numbers for the Tate and other fine art museums.

It might be considered that another example of the visual arts receiving 'preferential' treatment is the Baltic, a contemporary arts centre in Gateshead, due to open in 2002. This was the first Lottery project to be awarded revenue funding – £1.5 million per year plus guaranteed partnership funding for its first five years of operation.[2]

DCMS's rationalization of the arts funding system, as part of the New Cultural Framework, initially included the amalgamation of the Crafts Council into the Arts Council. The subsequent incorporation of the Regional Arts Boards (RABs) into the Council as well, means that the arts are more directly accountable to central government than ever before (DCMS 1998; ACE 2001a and 2001b).

Since 1998, ACE's objectives have conspicuously coincided with those of DCMS. The Council's present chairman admits that

Too often in the past, the arts have taken a patronising attitude to audiences. Too often artists and performers have continued to ply their trade to the same white, middle class audiences. In the back of their minds lurks the vague hope that one day enlightenment might descend semi-miraculously upon the rest , that the masses might one day get wise to their brilliance (Robinson 1998: 4).

And he expressly promised that the 'new Arts Council' would

> . . . place its emphasis squarely on creating new audiences . . . Widening access to the arts and acting imaginatively to bring in and keep new audiences will be right at the core of everything we do at the Arts Council (Robinson 1998: 5).

ACE's proposals for a 'new single national body' are predicated on the assertion that the funding and support of the arts needs to satisfy, first and foremost, 'the public, as the ultimate beneficiary of its work' (ACE 2001b). In practice, the access strategy of ACE's Visual Arts Department currently focuses more on developing the infrastructure rather than audiences per se (ACE b undated).[3] Nevertheless, within the context of the arts funding framework, access to the visual arts should have directly been boosted by Lottery funding[4] and the New Audiences programme, in particular.[5]

The Audience for Contemporary Art

Despite these intentions to increase audiences for contemporary art, it is not clear what difference initiatives introduced by ACE or DCMS have made, or are making, to the national picture. Indeed, it could be argued that it's too soon to say how these initiatives are influencing the national picture.

While such Lottery schemes as *Arts for Everyone* and *Awards for All* may well have changed the profile of the visual arts, their greatest impact will have been to encourage greater participation at community level and among young people. Although participation is generally regarded as a step toward inspiring attendance at art events, levels of participation and attendance are currently often considered together (as in Jermyn et al. 2001 and ACE 2000a), or even mutually referred to as 'engagement' (Bridgwood and Skelton 2002). However, the two are nevertheless distinct. It is only attendances that are considered in the present chapter.

The evaluation of the Arts Council's New Audiences programme is due in 2003, but a report on its first year (Jermyn et al. 2000) did not identify the number of new audiences attracted.[6] Curiously, the form that the Arts Council designed for organisations to report on their New Audiences' projects contains no explicit references to new audiences (ACE a undated).

One strand of the New Audiences programme is *New Contexts*, which is intended to reach new audiences by placing arts events in non-traditional spaces such as nightclubs, club-like venues and festivals. However, an evaluation of the pilot found that *New Contexts*' audiences comprised people who were, in fact, more likely than the general public to participate frequently in arts-related events – with 83 per cent claiming to go to galleries/art exhibitions once a year or more (Jermyn 2000).

Individual initiatives aside, the standard data on the size of the national audience for the visual arts remain thin on the ground. A signal weakness of the sector is its inability to provide hard data to support claims as to the popularity of contemporary art. On the basis of the evidence presently available, we don't actually know how many people 'consume' the visual arts overall, whether there are more of them than there used to be, or if their profile has changed.

In addition to various pieces of ad hoc research, the Arts Council annually collects two sets of information about attendances to the visual arts:

- One comes from the Target Group Index (TGI), an omnibus survey of 24,000–26,000 adults in England, Scotland and Wales. This asks: 'about how often these days' respondents go to arts events; when they last went; and which arts activities they like to read about in the print media or watch on TV. The closest category TGI has to contemporary visual arts is 'art galleries and exhibitions'.
- The other collects audience/attendance figures from organizations which receive regular and fixed-term funding from the ACE and the RABs – the 'arts funding system'. These performance indicators cover England only. Precisely because these data exclude those galleries associated with the most high-profile Lottery projects – Tate Modern, New Art Gallery Walsall and The Lowry, all of which receive core revenue funding from other bodies – in theory, the ACE data should serve a barometer of what's going on on the ground.

At the time of writing (November 2001), the latest TGI data available was for 1999/2000, and they show 21.5 per cent of the adult population as attending arts galleries and exhibitions.[7] But a comparison of the figures collected over the years contains little to suggest that a larger percentage of the population are attending contemporary visual arts events than previously – even after over £182 million of arts Lottery funding alone had been ploughed into the sector.[8] In fact, the data (Table 2.1) show that between 1993/94 (the year before the advent of Lottery funding) and 1997/98, a higher percentage of the population said they were going to art galleries and exhibitions than in 1999/2000.

The most recent data that ACE and the RABs have gathered from their visual arts clients refer to 1999/2000.[9] These draw on a wide range of organizations dedicated to the visual arts, photography, architecture and crafts. The aggregated

Table 2.1 Percentage of the adult population who currently attend arts events

	% of the adult population
1989/90	21.2
1990/91	21.4
1991/92	21.1
1992/93	20.4
1993/94	21.6
1994/95	21.4
1995/96	21.8
1996/97	22.4
1997/98	22.3
1998/99	21.1
1999/2000	21.5

Source: TGI data, ACE (2000b: Table 6.1); Arts Council of Great Britain/England annual reports

'audience' for these organizations is 5.5 million (close to Tate Modern's reported attendances during its first year). But this figure collates the numbers of 'consumers' provided by bodies as varied as individual publications and publishers,[10] professional support organizations[11] and public art agencies[12] – all of which have different understandings of 'audiences' and 'attendances'. A constant sample of 21 galleries (excluding the Hayward) suggests that their total audience (actuals plus estimates) fell some 3 per cent between 1998/99 and 1999/2000.

Comparison of Visual Arts with Football Audiences

In making claims for the popularity of contemporary art, advocates have been known to assert that more people go to art galleries than to football matches (Riddell 2001). Not only is this curious, given that both contemporary art and football have been criticized as relatively elitist,[13] but it's unclear what such claims are based on or even what the comparison might prove. The Museums and Galleries Commission once boasted that 'more people go to museums each year than go to football matches and the theatre combined – some 74 million in 1990' (MGC 1992). But this particular claim makes no sense given that it rests on the Commission's misinterpretation of its own data – namely, that the 74 million refers to visitors, when in fact it refers to the number of visits made.

Comparisons between the data available on attendances at football matches and art galleries are difficult, in that it's impossible to relate like with like. The best that can be done is to consider the relative percentages of the adult population interested in the two activities and the respective sizes of their aggregate audiences.

- TGI data (Table 2.1) indicate that about 22 per cent of British adults attended 'art galleries and exhibitions' and that of those who don't go, just over 2 per cent watch coverage of art galleries and exhibitions on TV. (No data are available for radio coverage.) Data from the same source show that closer to around 36 per cent of adults resident in the UK attended live matches, watched matches on TV or listened to radio coverage (Mintel 2000b: 7).
- The 32 galleries that contributed to the ACE/RAB's aggregate visual arts attendances in 1999/2000 attracted 4.4 million reported visits plus a further 600,000 estimated visits. These probably account for the majority of attendances within the subsidized sector, with the exception of public art.[14] To construct a more accurate estimate of the size of the national audience for contemporary visual arts one would need to add attendances at those subsidized organizations which didn't make returns to the ACE, and those funded outside the arts funding system, as well as private-sector galleries.

  No aggregate attendance figure is available for commercial galleries, and institutions tend not to disaggregate attendances for contemporary art. However, some figures for temporary exhibitions of contemporary art are available in addition to those provided by the ACE. *The Art Newspaper*'s annual attendance report for 2000 suggests a further 2.4 million.[15] Moreover in 2001, the contemporary art fair, Art 2001, attracted 40,000 visits. On the basis of the evidence available, there would have been a minimum of 7.5 million attendances at galleries and exhibitions of contemporary art in England in 2000.

  The aggregate attendance at Carling Pemiership and the Nationwide divisions 1–3 matches for 1999/2000 is around 25 million.[16] Attendances at Premier League matches alone represent just under 50 per cent of this total.

  Even allowing for the fact that the above estimate for visual arts is conservative and that it excludes the majority of public art projects, art comes out of the comparison badly – not least on the basis of potential capacity, cost and availability.

- The average capacity of football grounds diminished following the fire at Bradford City and the Hillsborough tragedy. This means that at top level, many clubs are operating at, or approaching, full capacity. While this only affects the top Premiership clubs, it has nevertheless restricted the market's development (Mintel 2000b). In contrast, many of our major galleries have recently had extensions funded by the Lottery in order to benefit everyone 'irrespective of income'.[17]

  Although capacity is conventionally discussed in relation to the performing arts, there are no published estimates as to what full capacity for visual arts venues

throughout the country might be, nor any indications as to whether they are remotely approaching this. Tate Modern was exceptional in having to control access on a number of weekends in June and over one bank holiday in August 2000, shortly after opening. This was due to congestion in the galleries, which occurred when the overall totals for the day exceeded 35,000 and the number of visits per hour exceeded 6,000 (correspondence with Penny Hamilton and Nadine Thompson, Tate, 1.11.01).

- The majority of visual arts organizations are free to visit, whereas the average cost of attending Football League matches varies from about £15 for first division to £9 for third division (conversation with John Nagle, Football League, 7.11.01). Tickets for Premiership games can now exceed £40 per match, particularly among the London clubs and for European matches, which can be explained by demand exceeding supply, and the rise in footballers' wages (Mintel 2000b). In contrast, prices for other Football League matches have only risen with inflation.

  Fees paid to artists probably make little or no impact on most galleries' costs, particularly in the subsidized sector. The latest research available found that between 1993 and 1996 just 8 per cent of artists received a fee, and that in public-funded galleries the average was £143 (Shaw and Allen 1997).[18]

- Whereas most galleries are probably open at least 7 hours a day and 10 months of the year[19] and public art is, by definition, free and accessible around the clock – access to live football is more restricted. Premiere League teams play 38 matches per season (half at home, and half away) and Football League teams 46 matches, with matches lasting 90 minutes.[20]

Profile of the Audience for Contemporary Art

Despite being paid for by public money, the ACE's TGI data are copyright and – apart from the headline figures published in the Arts Council's annual report – cannot be reproduced. So, it's only possible to generalize about its findings.

In terms of the overall picture, the data reveal little that's surprising. People from social groups AB are the most likely to attend art galleries and exhibitions, as are the most highly educated (identified as being those with a terminal education age of 19 or over) and those from tranches of the population characterized as wealthy and prosperous.[21] Indeed, the TGI data confirm gallery-goers as typically having the same characteristics that were identified over 30 years ago as informing 'the love of art' (Bourdieu et al. 1991: 110).[22]

TGI also reveals that the majority of visual arts attenders also go to other kinds of arts event and that what they attend tends to have minority appeal – ballet,

contemporary dance, opera and classical music and jazz (all of which attract around 10 per cent of the population or less).

The variables by which ACE analyses the TGI data include gender, age and social group, education, annual household income, ACORN group (A Classification Of Residential Neighbourhoods – a system which classifies the population according to similar housing, demographic and socio-economic features), and readership of newspapers. These remain constant and are uninfluenced by research findings which suggest moving on from the standard orthodoxy of describing arts attenders in terms of their socio-economic standing and demographic characteristics. DiMaggio (1996), for example, has begged the question, what makes art-museum visitors different to other people?

> Art-museum visitors are more secular, trusting, politically liberal, racially tolerant and open to other cultures and lifestyles, and much more tolerant and interested in high culture than are comparable non-visitors. These differences represent a distinctly modern disposition, evincing first a faith in progress and scientific (and artistic) authority and, second, an open cosmopolitan orientation to both people and cultures (DiMaggio, 1996: 161).

The Robustness of the Data

Whatever the picture suggested by the above data, various caveats have to be applied to it.

Despite having been commissioned and analysed by the Arts Council for 15 years, anecdotal evidence suggests that TGI users[23] are critical of the reliability of respondents' accounts; question respondents' definitions of art galleries and exhibitions; and wonder why the Arts Council's published summary of results doesn't more fully exploit the data. Thus, despite DCMS and the Arts Council's professed concern to promote access to the arts, especially among people who are socially excluded, the published TGI analyses contain no time-series data on attendances by social grade or ACORN group – both of which it covers. Consequently, no shifts within the profile of gallery-goers, or groups moving from having been 'excluded' to 'belonging', are discernible. Moreover, although the arts funding system specifically supports contemporary visual arts practice, the TGI's classification 'art galleries and exhibitions' manifestly doesn't coincide with this. (It is likely to embrace historical fine art, design, schools, amateur, society and craft exhibitions.) Consequently, TGI data are of no value in identifying the audience for subsidized contemporary art – but then, they don't purport to. The percentage of the population consuming contemporary art will, inevitably, represent only a fraction of the picture presented.

Various caveats also have to be applied to the ACE/RAB performance-indicator figures. The figures reveal nothing about how many people constitute the audience for visual arts organizations – and whether this constituency includes a lot of people who 'consume' the visual arts infrequently or a smaller group who do so habitually. Nor do they reveal the extent to which the audience for subsidized contemporary arts comprises those professionally engaged in the visual arts. This group accounts for a sizeable percentage of attendances at the 'independents' and at private views, which often represent the largest concentration of numbers present in galleries at any one time.

Although the Arts Council asks organizations to distinguish between actual and estimated attendances, it's not clear how these are differentiated in practice. Visual arts' attendance figures (like many museums') are known to be unreliable, not least because admission tends to be free and there are no box office systems in place used to count audiences (Jermyn et al. 2000: 3) – a fact that mitigates against any detailed analysis of aggregate audience profiles. And, although the figures are scrutinized before inclusion, one difficulty of the ACE/RAB data is its inclusion of returns from several public art agencies (conversation with Paul Dwinfour, ACE, 1.11.01).

What distinguishes quantifying audiences for the visual arts from those for plays or concerts is the pedantic issue of whether people are actually looking at or contemplating the artworks on display or merely passing by. Nowhere is this question more apposite than in attempts to interrogate audiences for public art projects. This highlights the question of what meaning can be attached to audience numbers.

The vast majority of ACE capital lottery projects were required to make some kind of commitment to public art, a criterion which resulted in over £54.4 million worth of commissions. An evaluation of these public art projects found that only around half the projects surveyed were able to estimate the minimum and maximum numbers of people who would see or pass the given artwork in an average week. These suggested a potential audience in the region of 5.1 to 6.7 million people in any one week (Table 2.2) – numbers which are heavily skewed by two or three schemes which accounted for around 90 per cent of this total estimated audience (Annabel Jackson Associates 1999: 28). But, would every pedestrian, every driver and passenger passing through Trafalgar Square once or twice a day, for example, count as a member of the 'audience' for the public artworks installed on the fourth plinth over the past couple of years?

If quantitative data for the visual arts are problematic, so too are the qualitative data. On the one hand, attitudinal research about contemporary art is far less common – and is virtually non-existent at a national level; on the other, what research exists is less reliable because it draws on smaller sample sizes; and, responses may be ambiguous.[24] Moreover, there is no way of telling whether

Table 2.2 Audience numbers and people passing by public art works in an average week

	Schemes with this minimum		Schemes with this maximum	
Audience size band	**Number**	**Audience**	**Number**	**Audience**
Up to 100	14	936	4	190
101–1,000	51	29,281	43	28,000
1,001–10,000	39	146,130	56	250,715
10,001–100,000	7	338,423	12	526,423
Over 1000,000	2	4,620,000	3	5,920,000
All	113	5,134,770	118	6,725,328

Source: Annabel Jackson Associates, 1999: 28

research findings which pertain to particular projects are nationally applicable or reveal general truths.

The Publics' Attitude to Contemporary Art

Despite the political and bureaucratic will to increase attendances for the arts, virtually no research has been carried out in the UK which examines the nature of people's interest in or engagement with contemporary art. The last publicly available piece of research commissioned by the Arts Council that most closely matches this description was undertaken 10 years ago (Robb 1992). But given the sector's resistance to the notion that the number of attendances can be regarded as a measure of arts events' success (Jermyn et al. 2000), one might have imagined that there would be a greater visible investment in qualitative research.

The closest there is to a national survey about awareness of and attitudes toward contemporary art was carried out by the private sector. In 2000, Pizza Express commissioned research into attitudes to modern art[25] in anticipation of the launch of its Prospects 2001 Art Prize (QBO 2000). The prize is intended to make art more accessible (being linked to the displays in the company's restaurants) and to encourage emerging artists. The survey sample of 1,028 people were socio-economically representative of the UK adult population.[26] In general, the survey asked whether respondents liked modern art and, if not, why not; whether they had ever bought any, and if so why, and what they had paid for it. Responses were analysed according to such variables as gender, social group and whether or not respondents had visited galleries. Although the results were celebrated by Pizza Express (QBO 2001) it is actually unclear whether they reveal any changes in popular taste.

- Despite the current celebrity status of 'young British artists', respondents identified Damien Hirst as the tenth and Tracey Emin as the fifteenth most well-known artist of all time (QBO 2001).[27]
- Of respondents, 40 per cent claimed to visit galleries and said that they went at least once every six months. This figure contrasts with the TGI findings, which show 21.5 per cent of the population as having gone to art galleries and exhibitions in 1999/2000. This disparity may partly be accounted for by the fact that the Pizza Express sample contains a higher percentage of C1 and C2s and fewer DEs than the TGI sample, and that it comprises a smaller and conceivably less accurate sample.
- Across the sample as a whole, 38 per cent of respondents – 1 in 3 – claim to like modern art. Although the majority of ABs surveyed either don't like modern art or wouldn't commit themselves to expressing a preference (63 per cent), it was nevertheless still the case that people most likely to like modern art were those who visited galleries and who came from social groups A and B. The percentage of people who liked modern art and didn't visit galleries diminished through the social groups C1, C2, DE.
- The reasons people gave for not liking modern art were similar across all social groups, gallery visitors and non-visitors. In order of diminishing importance these were: 'I prefer old fashioned art' (40 per cent); 'I don't understand it' (28 per cent); 'It's a big con' (13 per cent); and 'It's too pretentious' (9 per cent). No reasons given (10 per cent).

Although there is nothing to suggest if, or how, gallery-going might influence people's taste, the survey revealed that gallery-going ABs were the most likely to have bought 'a piece of modern art' (23 per cent), as against only 6 per cent of non-gallery goers. The majority of purchases had cost up to £100 (67 per cent) – but, in grossing up, the survey estimates this market to be worth £774 million (QBO 2001). People's reasons for buying, in diminishing order of importance, had to do with liking 'the look of it' (75 per cent); 'because the colours went with my décor' (12 per cent); as 'a gift for someone else' (6 per cent); or, as an investment (5 per cent). ABs were the most likely to have bought it because it was created by someone they knew. But, beyond the 1 per cent of respondents who referred to the works they had bought as capturing the 'essence of the country' and representing 'a tranquil scene', none of the other, unprompted reasons people gave for their purchases pertained to its meaning or symbolic value. This either suggests that people regard art as primarily decorative, that they are reluctant to discuss their feelings about it, or that the survey methodology (telephone interviews) mitigated against it.

The Pizza Express research appears to confirm a relatively high level of interest in and awareness of modern art. It appears to lay the ghost of populist taste for

'pert pets and sultry sirens' (Dewhurst 2001) – personified by Tretchikoff's *Miss Wong* – and to contradict the findings of Komar and Melamid's mid-1990s survey of Americans' tastes in art.[28]

If, for the sake of argument, we accept that there has been 'an incredible shift in the attention that the media pay to visual art in this country . . . [and] a complete shift in audience attention too' (Craddock 2000: 130), what has happened? In what ways have people's 'consumption' and understanding of contemporary art changed? As the critic, Sacha Craddock asks: 'Is art easier to understand now? Have people become more sophisticated? Or, is it about something else?' (2000: 130).

The present Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport insists that access and excellence are not mutually exclusive (Jowell 2001). But, it may well be that the relationship between access and lifelong learning is more problematic. It has, for example, been suggested that the sheer number of people passing through Tate Modern, by definition, undermines the quality of visitors' experience.

> The quiet relationship between the artwork and individual is fast becoming replaced by 'been there', 'done that' and quickly grasping what the work is about. Controlling audience flow becomes the major factor with this new phenomenon (Craddock 2000:130).

While this implicitly begs questions about the ideal conditions in which to contemplate art, research undertaken for the Education and Interpretation Team at Tate Modern suggests that this view is rather too damning (Fisher 2001), and that visitors are interested in the displays and want to find out about them. Attitudinal research carried out among a cross-section of visitors (first-time and repeat visitors, and 'arts confident' and 'arts unconfident' visitors) focused on their use of the interpretation material provided (wall texts, captions, audiotours, etc). Because it is a new attraction, the gallery attracts a considerable proportion of first-time visitors, many of whom feel compelled to see around the whole building. Despite being on a visual high, fatigue inevitably sets in and such visitors are only able to take in a limited amount of information about individual works. But, as the proportion of repeat visitors increases, this is likely to change. It appears that the vast majority of people read some of the interpretative texts available, and while they don't necessarily have the time to take in large amounts of writing (and assume that the audiotour might 'slow them down and get in the way'), they nevertheless appreciate information provided in digestible chunks close by the artworks.

So, how far do these various pieces of research go to answering the question posed by the critic, Judith Bumpus, 'Is "difficult" art popular or not?' (2000). The phenomenon of what she refers to as 'difficult art pulling them in at Bankside',

'albeit served up in popularly palatable form', highlights the issue. Media coverage tends to focus on the apparent transformation of public taste. Millard (2001), for example, regards visual artists as 'tastemakers'. Collings merely refers to the public's shock of recognition rather than their considered appreciation:

> Twenty years ago an ordinary person might have wandered into an art gallery, seen some typed sheets of paper on the wall . . . they'd know it wasn't for them. Now they know different. Instead of going 'Uh?' the public can say, ' Oh look, it's a dead shark' . Or, 'Crikey! Obscenity? Our favourite – we see it on TV all the time! (2001b: 12).

While such stories assert changes in the public response to contemporary art, they tend to skirt around the degree to which the art world might, or might not, seriously wish to embrace the masses. There are those among the cognoscenti who contest the desirability of a shared culture (Brighton 1999a; 1999b), and those who aspire to preserving visual art's status as an elite form, in that while

> . . . the art of the past century lost touch with its popular audience . . . the conjunction of wealth and intellectual obscurity, once a deterrent, may now be an asset.
>
> Today, when nothing is a treat, art remains enticingly apart and special (Bumpus 2000).

Others simply denigrate the popularity of Tate Modern as synonymous with what they perceive as its vacuousness:

> It's a silly woolly, crowded, meaningless place, but I go there anyway; I suppose for the same reasons that everyone else does: it's friendly and free, it's part of modern trivia.
>
> . . . the whole operation is establishment instead of anti-establishment. The new giddy, amusing, slightly empty idea of art that the self-help warehouse shows of the 90s stood for, in a punky way, is now the official idea of art that Tate Modern stands for, in a dutiful way . . . it stands for playful empty ironic vacuity, hyper-professionalism, a sort of innocuous chumminess, pc values and slightly diluted sexy fizz (Collings 2001a: 25).

Close

The issue of what people take in, how they benefit from contemporary art, and the terms and nature of their engagement and identification with it are, arguably, central to the current political mission to increase learning and justifications for subsidy. These are the issues that tend to be overlooked by the art press. Whereas the tyranny of modernism formerly protected publicly funded artists from having any responsibilities to the public, it is now contended that

There can be no artistic independence – in the sense of adolescent irresponsibility – when the artist is paid by the State, any more than there is when he or she is financed by an aristocratic, religious or commercial patron. There is only a legitimate negotiation about values, duties, rights and benefits.

Uncomfortable as this might be . . . it is actually straightforward enough. More complex, and not much considered by society today, are the ethical responsibilities that artists have to the rest of humanity (Matarasso 2000: 70).

Moreover, it has been argued from within the world of the arts that the sector as a whole needs to assume greater responsibility:

> The Turner Prize is justly celebrated for raising all sorts of questions in the public mind about art and its place in our lives. Unfortunately, however, the intellectual climate surrounding the fine arts is so vaporous and self-satisfied that few of these questions are ever actually addressed, let alone answered.
>
> Why is it that that all of us here [at the Turner Prize] – presumably members of the arts community – probably know more about the currents of thought in contemporary science than those in contemporary art? Why have the sciences yielded some great explainers like Richard Dawkins and Stephen Gould, while the arts routinely produce some of the loosest thinking and worst writing known to history? . . .
>
> . . . there could and should be a comprehensible public discussion about what art does for us, what is being learned from it, what it might enable us to do or think or feel that we couldn't before.
>
> Most of the public criticism of the arts is really an attempt to ask exactly such questions, and, instead of priding ourselves on creating controversy by raising them, trying to answer a few might not be such a bad idea . . .
>
> If we're going to expect people to help fund the arts, whether through taxation or lotteries, then surely we owe them an explanation of what *value* we think the arts might be to them (Eno, 1996: 258–9).

When, in the Dimbleby Lecture 2000, the Director of the Tate described his own experience of contemporary art, he also expressed his hopes that that it might provide others with 'insights that are no less profound than those gained from the experience of earlier art' (Serota 2000).

The Arts Council has begun to be concerned about evaluating art education projects (Woolf 1999), but very little – if anything – is known about the nature of the vast majority of people's encounters with contemporary visual art. These experiences are, for the most part, casual and relatively unmediated. But so long as the rhetoric of the Arts Council insists that that the public is central to its mission, its lack of interest in finding out about how audiences respond to and perceive contemporary art is anathema. As one of the Council's visual arts officers recently admitted, 'We have very little information on visual arts audiences . . . nothing that concentrates on contemporary visual arts. It's a big gap!' Perhaps now

would be a good time to start collecting data and analysing and acting on what is discovered.

Notes

For abbreviations used, see References, p. 30.

1. Tate Modern's need to ensure audiences may partly explain its programme of special exhibitions, 2002–03, which primarily comprise work by 'modern' rather than contemporary artists: Andy Warhol; Matisse/Picasso; Donald Judd; Eija-Liisa Ahtila; and Barnett Newman.
2. Although the Baltic still has to raise the balance of its £3 million per annum running costs after support from the ACE lottery and its other funding partners (www.balticmill.com/whatis/funding.html), these guarantees of revenue are presumably intended to save the centre from the fate that has met other Lottery-funded projects which had over-optimistic predictions of visitor numbers and which failed to generate sustainable incomes.
3. The key tasks being identified as to: secure, sustain and develop the visual arts infrastructure of key agencies and venues; develop a department-wide touring strategy; and develop a department-wide publishing and distribution strategy.
4. ACE's capital programme not only funded visual arts projects but required applicants to address 'the contribution of artists, craftspeople and film and video makers to their building projects', thereby extending the principles of 'percent for art' which had been introduced in the UK in the late 1980s. By the close of the original capital programme, over 2,000 projects had been funded on the basis of awards worth approximately £1 billion, excluding partnership funding which should have been characterized by some degree of artist involvement (Annabel Jackson Associates 1999).
5. The New Audiences Programme was established by the Secretary of State in April 1998, out of his desire for the arts to be a part of our everyday lives. 'I want to encourage cultural activity to come to the people, rather than always expecting the people to go to the activity' (Smith 1998: 44–5). New Audiences is intended to bring new audiences to the arts and take new art to audiences across the country. To date, the programme has received £20 million and runs through 2002, with a full programme evaluation due in 2003 (Jermyn et al. 2000; www.artscouncil.org.uk/arts/new audiences.html).
6. The number of attendances recorded cover different types of contact – performances, readings or exhibitions or involvement in participatory activities

such as workshops. Although a high proportion of the projects examined specifically targeted people who do not traditionally attend the arts, the report contains no information as to how many became arts attenders as a result. Nor is there any breakdown of attenders by art form.

7. A recent pilot study, undertaken by the Office for National Statistics on behalf of the Arts Council of England and which anticipated a full survey involving some 6,000 people in England, suggests 24 per cent of respondents had been to an art, photography or sculpture exhibition in the 12 months prior to interview (Jermyn et al. 2001). A further 16 per cent had been to video, multimedia or live/performance. This latter category of activity overlaps with the Arts Council's working definition of visual arts. Research carried out for Resource in November/December 1999 suggested that 28 per cent of the population had been to a museum/art gallery in the previous 12 months (MORI 2001: 5).
8. This figure is the total of arts Lottery funding from the Arts Councils of England, Scotland and Wales which has been identified as going to visual arts projects up to the end of 1998/99. It does not include partnership funding (Selwood 2001a: Table 31.2) and funding from the Millennium Commission, and the New Opportunities Fund.
9. The visual arts organizations covered – independent galleries; local authority-run museums and galleries; the Hayward Gallery; public art, photography and general developmental agencies/support organizations involved in promotional activity (Dwinfour et al. 2001). Given that several of these are primarily concerned with offering professional services (Acme Housing Association, *Art Monthly*, Arts Services Grants, National Artists Association, Public Arts Forum, Visual Arts and Galleries Association, etc.), references to this data set have been restricted to art galleries.
10. For example, *Arts Monthly, Frieze*, AN Publications, *Everything Magazine*, *Creative Camera, Portfolio Magazine* and the Crafts Council.
11. For example, the National Artists Association, ADAPT Trust, Engage, AXIS Visual Art Information Service, Art Services Grants, Acme Housing, Public Art Forum, Devon Guild of Craftsmen.
12. For example, Commissions East, Freeform, Grizedale Society, Public Art Development Trust, Public Art South West, Public Arts, Yorkshire Sculpture Park.
13. About one-third of men regard football as an expensive middle-class game (Mintel 2000b).
14. Respondents include the Hayward Gallery, MOMA, Arnolfini, the Whitechapel Gallery and Ikon.
15. This includes contemporary exhibitions at the following galleries – not included in the ACE data: the Serpentine, the National Gallery, the Royal

Academy, the Royal College of Art, the National Portrait Gallery, the Tate, the Barbican, the Museum of London, the Whitworth, Dulwich Picture Gallery, the ICA, Camden Arts Centre and the Estorick Collection. The listing is not comprehensive.

16. Dobson and Goddard (2001) cite 25.4 million for 1999.
17. These were the government's requirements of Lottery funding as specified by the National Lottery Act, etc. 1993. For a history of the evolution of Lottery funding and its intentions see Selwood (2001b).
18. By the time Shaw and Allen's report was published (1997), Exhibition Payment Right had ceased to operate as a national scheme. The average payment was found to have been £154.
19. The Museums and Galleries Commission found that 62 per cent of museums were fully open to the public 10–12 months of the year (MGC 1999: Table 1.11). The generalization that galleries are probably open at least 10 months of the year allows for closure for the changeover of exhibitions.
20. No attempt to compare viewing figures for football and contemporary art on television has been made here because of the difficulties of comparing existing television figures for the former (Mintel 2000a) with figures for the latter which would need to be disaggregated from the figures for arts coverage in general.
21. According to ACORN these comprise wealthy achievers, suburban areas; prosperous pensioners, retirement areas; affluent executives, family areas; affluent urbanites, town and city areas; prosperous professionals, metropolitan areas; better-off executives, inner city areas.
22. Another piece of research commissioned by the ACE found that those attending exhibitions were most likely to be from professional or 'intermediate' groups (Jermyn et al. 2001).
23. The Arts Council of England has permission to make the data available to assist clients of the Arts Council of England, the Scottish Arts Council, the Arts Council of Wales and the RABs.
24. Such ambiguities are explored by Bridgwood and Skelton (2002).
25. The survey assumed that 'modern' was synonymous with 'contemporary' (conversation with Liz Faye, QBO).
26. A comparison of the distribution of this sample with that used by TGI, 1999/2000 (ACE 2000c) suggests some differences, not least that the TGI data is drawn from a substantially larger sample (around 24,000 adults) and from a smaller reference area (England, Scotland and Wales). The percentages of ABC1, C2s and DEs in the two samples differ.
27. The top ten includes Picasso (1), Monet, Rembrandt, Constable, Gainsborough, Turner, Cézanne, Hockney, Pisarro, Hirst (10) (QBO 2001).

28. In 1993, the artists Vitaly Komar and Alex Melamid received a $40,000 grant from the Nation Foundation to make a telephone survey of Americans' taste in art. They interpreted their survey results in the paintings, *America's Most Wanted* and *America's Least Wanted*. See Bird 2001: 114.

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Abbreviations

ACE	Arts Council of England
ACORN	A Classification of Residential Neighbourhoods
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
MGC	Museums & Galleries Commission
RAB	Regional Arts Board
TGI	Target Group Index

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2.7 'WHAT DIFFERENCE DO MUSEUMS MAKE? PRODUCING EVIDENCE ON THE IMPACT OF MUSEUMS' (2002)

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SARA SELWOOD

What difference do museums make? Producing evidence on the impact of museums

Since the Financial Management Initiative of 1982, successive governments have assumed that better management of Britain's public services would result in greater efficiency, effectiveness and value for money. These aspirations are manifest in demands for 'strategies', 'monitoring', 'assurances' as to the 'delivery' of 'targets', and evidence of 'outputs'[1] and 'outcomes'.[2]

Following the 1997 election, Labour has accelerated this agenda in two ways. On the one hand, the Chancellor of the Exchequer has made it very clear how government departments are expected to justify demands for extra cash. Given that 'the something-for-nothing days are over', the current Comprehensive Spending Review requires all departments to present their case for extra spending as 'a priority', produce 'a clear strategy for reform to deliver value for money' and demonstrate a 'track record of increased resources leading to improved results'.[3] On the other hand, the Cabinet Office is pushing the notion of a more rational, modernised government characterised by its pursuit of evidence-based policy.[4] Both initiatives are directly and indirectly impacting on the management of museums.

This article is about the demands for evidence of museums' 'impact' – in particular, the promise of greater effectiveness in exchange for greater 'investment'. It considers the context for the prevailing preoccupation with collecting evidence; it reviews the current state of our knowledge; and it examines some of the difficulties of squaring the circle – reconciling the aspiration with the practical difficulties of acquiring and presenting evidence.

Background

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport's (DCMS) current bid to the Treasury includes a request for extra funding to reform English regional museums as recommended by the Regional Museums Task Force's 2001 report, *Renaissance in the Regions: A New Vision for England's Museums*. Its

success depends on the extent to which other departments' bids are prioritised, the persuasiveness of the DCMS's case, and the weight of the evidence presented.

The Regional Museums Task Force was established in 2000 following the expression of growing concerns about the underfunding of major regional museums and galleries in England. This was perceived to be preventing museums from using their collections to provide as many opportunities for learning, inspiration and enjoyment as they might. Symptoms of this problem were identified as including 'not enough curators with appropriate expertise, high-quality exhibitions being mounted only infrequently, inadequate education services, and a general failure to meet governing-body and user expectations'.[5]

Following recent increases in funding to the arts[6] and the creation of the People's Network, the Task Force's report proposed the injection of substantial central government funding – some £270 million between 2002/3 and 2006/7.[7] This would enable museums' governance arrangements to be modernised at regional level; commit regional museums to delivering government objectives; and it also held out the promise of evidence being produced of the impact of government investment. This is intended to demonstrate the net effects of the new regional framework – in other words, how well it has fulfilled its promise of reform and value for money and whether it is has effected sustainable change. If the funding is provided, the immediate tasks that lie ahead for Resource (the Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries) and the museums involved are to provide baselines of those museums' current performance against which their success can be measured; plan for change; and, identify target outputs and outcomes.

The preoccupation with impact

> The sector cannot continue to compete with other increasing demands for expenditure on education, health, law, etc without the essential ammunition that performance measurement offers. The greater the impact, the greater the chance that the role and fundamental potential of the sector will be fully recognised across government and by the public.[8]

Renaissance in the Regions implicitly suggests something of the extent to which government policy towards museums has changed in recent years and the degree to which the sector is having to comply with it. What formerly passed for government policy was essentially implied by the actions of the former Museums & Galleries Commission. But, since the 1998 Comprehensive Spending Review, the DCMS has recast itself as a strategic body and as such has explicitly sought to extend its influence throughout

the infrastructure and to establish a new relationship with its sponsored bodies – based around their responsibility to deliver government objectives through 'output and outcome-based targets'.[9]

The DCMS has taken an unprecedented and increasingly active role in respect of the museums sector as a whole. Best Value is bringing local authority cultural services into line, and the department has already streamlined major components of the museums' infrastructure – not least in the establishment of Resource, which is itself replacing the Area Museum Councils with Single Regional Agencies. It has promoted museums both as vehicles for the delivery of government policy by its development of standards for access policies[10] and as 'centres for social change' and 'for learning'.[11] Moreover, it assumes their contribution to various DCMS initiatives as well as to its regional agenda. Whereas the direct funding of regional museums by the DCMS's predecessors was ad hoc and largely down to historical accident, the department's Designation and Education Challenge Funds provide strategic support for important regional collections.

So, while *Renaissance in the Regions* potentially provides a lifeline for regional museums, it also presents the DCMS with a means of bringing them into the fold.[12] In courting the DCMS, and ultimately the Treasury's support, the Task Force's report promises two kinds of deliverables:

- those that reflect the government's modernisation and rationalisation agendas – ensuring excellence and high quality in the delivery of core services; increasing museums' efficiency and accountability; and serving as a focus for 'joined-up' government;
- and, those that focus on the delivery of a range of outcomes closely associated with government objectives – education and learning; access and inclusion; economic regeneration.[13]

Although many regional museums have prioritised the public as ultimate beneficiaries for some time, the aspirations articulated in *Renaissance in the Regions* contribute to a formal shift towards 'the people', and away from the traditional primacy of museums' collections and the various functionally related processes of collecting, documenting, preserving, exhibiting and interpreting material evidence. Where collections are discussed, the emphasis is on 'inspiration and creativity'.[14] Recasting the role of museums 'from being about something to being about somebody'[15] has been described as 'the most fundamental change that has affected museums during the past half-century'.[16]

Within the context of UK cultural policy, nowhere is this concern with 'the people' more conspicuous than in the challenge to produce evidence of

social impact. Indeed, social impact is increasingly perceived as an essential function of public services:

> Reducing the incidence of social exclusion is currently at the heart of British public policy. If cultural organisations hope to have the importance of their work recognised ... they need to take account of these concerns. There is a broader practical reason however ... Changing values, consumption patterns, demographics – these and other trends are constantly affecting the audiences and markets on which cultural institutions depend.[17]

For the museums sector, the political and pragmatic imperatives of combating social exclusion and maintaining, if not increasing, their market share are only too real.[18] Despite massive lottery investment and a series of high-profile openings in 2000, museum visitor numbers are stagnating. Previous years have seen numbers plateau, if not decline.[19] The sector is under constant pressure to attract new audiences and expand out from its core predominantly white, ABC1 base.[20]

But, of course, both managing the transition towards a more democratic museums sector and providing the evidence to show that such change is occurring are easier said than done. There are profound difficulties in providing solid evidence for the contribution that cultural organisations can make to the government's target areas of crime, health and so forth, or to broader indicators of community development and quality of life. But nevertheless, claims need to be substantiated beyond the anecdotal, and using rigorous instruments of measurement.[21]

The state of impact research in the museums sector

A signal weakness of the museums sector has been its inability to provide data to support the claims made about it – albeit quantifying museums' popularity, accounting for the 'state' of our regional museums, or 'measuring or evaluating the range of social claims made for museum provision.[22] 'The lack of core data severely hampers museums in their ability to state their worth ... leaving little choice for the advocate other than the liberal use of, for example ...'.[23] Reading between the lines, much of the evidence used in *Renaissance in the Regions* – as elsewhere – is anecdotal or refers to the immediate impact of individual projects.[24] More generally, many of the statistics we have on museums are incomplete or inaccurate. There are no absolute figures for the total number of museums in the UK; the total number of visits to museums; the percentage of the population who visit. The profile of the sector that we are able to construct comprises a patchwork of facts and figures which provide an approximate picture, but

which are insufficient to describe the situation at any specific point in time, or reveal the effect of change.[25] Moreover, the data that exist tend to quantify what can be quantified, rather than providing answers to questions that need addressing. There are no dedicated, fully reliable, comprehensive year-on-year trend data. There is little comparability between existing data, which have often been gathered in different ways, use different reporting periods, so that they cannot be aggregated.[26] This means, for example, that existing data sets don't allow us to assess with any degree of accuracy or sophistication the impact that capital lottery developments per se have had across the museums sector. The demise of DOMUS, the former Museums & Galleries Commission's database of museum statistics, means that there are now even fewer trend data than in previous years.

Although groups of museums have set up benchmarking clubs to produce comparative data for their own management purposes (for example GLLAM (Group for Large Local Authority Museums) and AIM (Association of Independent Museums)), the present paucity of national data in general suggests an ambivalence, if not aversion, to collecting reliable evidence about the impact of the sector. This resistance is particularly marked with respect to top-down systems of accountability. And, it is conceivably most conspicuous with respect to those museums with the closest proximity to the DCMS.

Assessing the impact of DCMS-sponsored museums

Museums account for the largest part of the department's direct funding – nearly 25 per cent of its 'voted-in' funding, with at least £274,763 million planned for 2003/4,[27] and they consequently carry much of the responsibility for delivering the DCMS's objectives as set out in its Public Service Agreement. The department's funding agreements set out the principles of its relationship with its sponsored bodies, including the targets that each museum is committed to meeting in relation to government objectives and the strategic framework within which each institution is required to plan and report. These agreements are not just triennial paper exercises, but a focus for six-monthly reviews by DCMS officials and the minister responsible.

As part of the 1998 Comprehensive Spending Review, the DCMS undertook to develop measures to ascertain and enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of government-sponsored museums. Its *Review of the Efficiency and Effectiveness of the National Museums and Galleries* (1999)[28] resulted in no less than nine reports on 'measurement and improvement' and included an agreed set of standard performance indicators against which the performance of sponsored museums could be measured. These were devised on the

Table 1 The evolution of performance indicators for DCMC-sponsored museums

	Objective	Performance indicators from the efficiency and effectiveness review (a)	2000/2001 core targets (b)	2001/4 core targets (c)
1	Access & inclusion	**User numbers** • total visitor numbers (broken down by type) • participants on off-site programmes • website usage	✓ (d) ✓ website visits	✓ (e) ✓ ✓
2	Access	**Loan venues** (venues in the UK and overseas)	✓	✓
3	Access	**Quality of environment** • quality of environment for collections (% stored/displayed at appropriate standards) • condition of collections (estimated % in stable condition)	✓ ×	✓ ×
4	Access	**Public image of national museum and gallery**	×	×
5	Access	**Quality of collection documentation** • % of collection documented to stated internationally accepted standards • % of collection documented in electronic format to internationally accepted standards	×	×
6	Access	**Electronic access (proportion of collection internet accessible)**	✓	✓
7	Access	**Rate of exhibition renewal**	×	×
8	Access	**Percentage of time open**	✓	✓
9	Access	**Publication output**	×	×
10	Access	**Visual access**	×	×
11	Excellence & education	**Evaluation of user satisfaction** • overall satisfaction • satisfaction with exhibitions and interpretation • visitors' services • facilities • quality of learning experience • collections • exhibitions and interpretation	×	×
12	Education	**Uptake of educational programmes (by visitors to National Museum and Gallery)**	• learners in on-site programmess	learners in on-site and outreach programmes

			• learners in outreach programmes	
13	Education	**Collaborative educational projects**	×	×
14	Social inclusion	**Social inclusion** (narrative of projects involving • ethnic minorities • socio-economic categories C2, D and E • with disabilities)	• percentage visitors from ethnic minorities • percentage visitors from C2, D and E	× ×
15	Value for money	**Grant in aid per visitor**	×	✓
16	Value for money	**Proportion of spend on administration and corporate support**	×	×
17	Value for money	**Proportion of spend on security and facilities mgt/bdgs maintenance** • security • buildings maintenance	× ×	× ×
18	Value for money	**Self-sufficiency indicators**		×
19	Value for money	**Annual savings achieved (£)** • efficiency savings (decreased unit costs) • economy savings (achieved by stopping doing something)	✓	×
20	Value for money	**Grant in aid as a proportion of total operating spend**	✓	×
21	Value for money	**Average number of days lost through sickness**	average days lost sick per employee	✓
22	Value for money	**Energy costs**	×	×
Total no. of performance indicators:		22	10	8

Notes and sources:
a) DCMS (1999) *Review of the Efficiency and Effectiveness of the National Museums and Galleries*. London: Department for Culture, Media and Sport
b) DCMS (1999) DCMS Funding Agreements 1999–2002 and 2000–2001 Funding Agreement Core Targets: http://www.culture.gov.uuk/heritage/index.html
c) DCMS (2000) 'Guidance on 2001/4 Funding Agreements'. Unpublished
d) children and repeat visitors as percentage of total specified
e) numbers of child visitors, repeat visitors and visitors over 60 specified

basis of the DCMS's priorities: increasing access and inclusion; excellence and education; and value for money.

Table 1 tracks the evolution of core performance indicators for DCMS-sponsored museums from 1999/2000 to 2003/4. Following a pilot, ten out of the twenty-two performance indicators agreed by the efficiency and effectiveness review in 1999 made it to the one-year funding agreements issued for 2000/2001. Some indicators were dropped because they had proved impractical and hadn't generated sufficient information; others, were lost as the process of developing the agreements became more refined. The only two indicators, which the DCMS defined as 'qualitative outcomes' (concerning the public image of institutions and user satisfaction) were abandoned at this point. Following a review of all the DCMS's 2000/2001 funding agreements,[29] the number of key 'strategic indicators' used in the three-year funding agreements for museums for 2001/4 fell to eight.

Of these, the remaining core targets for access and inclusion focus on user numbers (the total number of visits by child visitors, repeat visitors and visitors over 60; participants in off-site programmes; and website visits). Other indicators of access comprise: the number of loan venues in the UK; percentage of collection stored at the right environmental quality; percentage of the collection electronically accessible; and percentage of time open. The only education indicator is uptake of educational projects (by number of learners in on-site and outreach programmes). And the two remaining value for money indicators are grant in aid per visitor, and average days lost through sickness per employee.

The most significant omission in the light of government policy is the social inclusion indicator. This was originally intended to provide a

> Narrative description of all projects aimed at increasing the involvement of the following groups in the work of the museum: ethnic minorities; socio-economic categories C2, D & E; people with disabilities. The narrative should include an estimate of the nos of target people, whether as audience or in other practical ways.[30]

By the 2000/2001 funding agreements, indicators of 'non-traditional users' had been reduced to '% visitors from ethnic minorities; % visitors from C2, D and E SEGs'. It is certainly the case that both constituencies have always been under-represented amongst UK museum visitors.[31] And it is clear from the social inclusion targets shown in Table 2, prepared for 2001/2, by DCMS-sponsored museums that individual museums had very different ideas of what they might be able to achieve.

But, in the event, the issue of social inclusion proved too much. Museums complained about the problems of data capture and the *Telegraph* accused

Table 2 Social inclusion targets for DCMS-sponsored museums, 2001/02

	% visitors from ethnic minorities	% visitors from C2, D and E SEGs
British Museum	11	14
Geffrye Museum	15	56
Horniman Museum and Gardens	25	31
Imperial War Museum	5	22
Mus. of Science & Industry Manchester	7	20
Museum of London	17	33
National Gallery	1.5	9
National Maritime Museum	6	22
National Mus. & Gals on Merseyside	3	36
National Portrait Gallery	8	10
Natural History Museum	13	26
Royal Armouries	6	46
Sir John Soane Museum	6	6
Tate	6	11
V&A	12	16
Wallace Museum	6	6
% of UK population, 2001	8	52

Sources:
DCMS (1999) DCMS Funding Agreements 1999–2002 and 2000–2001 Funding Agreement Core Targets: http://www.culture.gov.uuk/heritage/index.html
MORI (2001) *Visitors to Museums & Galleries in the UK* (London: Resource), 16

the DCMS of threatening museums' funding if specific ethnic quotas weren't met.[32] While the department's defence was that it was sticking to its mantra 'museums for the many, not just the few' and that there was no quota per se[33] (see also Table 2), in some quarters the indicator was interpreted as fundamentally racist:

> There are so many questions: who decides who are the right visitors to museums? What do museums do if the 'wrong' people are coming? Are Jews a racial minority? This is an anti-integrationist strategy, designed to perpetuate racial differences and the social divisions that come from them.[34]

Divisions amongst DCMS-sponsored museums were represented by the Royal Armouries and the Tate. A spokesperson from the former stipulated that they could not contemplate asking visitors '"Is that a suntan, or do you come from the Orient?" ... I don't think it is feasible or politically acceptable to ask them',[35] whereas the latter has persisted in monitoring, for its own management purposes, the number of visitors who define themselves as from ethnic minorities.

The pragmatic difficulties of producing the evidence for the impact of museums

So, what we currently have in place for the national museums is a system which specifically collects data on outputs: how many people visit (in particular, how many children and people over 60), and how many have been before; how many people participate in education and off-site programmes; how many hits the websites get; the percentage of time the museum is open; how widely bits of the collection are distributed geographically; how much of it can be electronically accessed; and the environmental adequacy of its storage; the value of grant in aid per visitor; and the average number of days lost per member of staff. If QUEST's criticism still holds, the quality of reporting is likely to be inconsistent.[36]

But, how useful are these in identifying 'improved results', or tracking 'real achievement in the areas of greatest priority'? Even if museums can distinguish between the number of visits and the number of visitors – something which appears to elude the minister herself,[37] – neither this figure nor the relative age of visitors will be of much use in measuring the impact of policies to combat social exclusion. While the DCMS is content to regard some outputs as proxies for outcomes – for example, the number of repeat visits as indicative of the likelihood that visitors' quality of life is being enhanced; the percentage of time open as 'a good measure of the availability of the collections for access';[38] or, even, the percentage of ethnic

minority visitors as a measure of social inclusion – the underlying assumptions may themselves be fundamentally flawed. Ultimately, the DCMS's advocacy of the benefits of museum visiting amounts to little more than a combination of spin and common sense:

> Free admission has democratised the nation's treasures making them accessible to all. That has to be good for our children, for students and for those who simply want to enjoy these wonderful exhibits.[39]

> They [the national museums] are giving millions of people the opportunity to be stimulated, educated and inspired. The figures also demonstrate clearly the valuable, and sometimes underrated contribution that the national museums and galleries make to our cultural and economic wealth.[40]

Before the current measures appeared in the 2001/4 Funding Agreements, QUEST had already criticised the limitations of the measures previously used. It regarded them as quantitative rather than qualitative – as focusing on outputs rather than outcomes. And it had called for a reform of the 'performance measurement regime which moves away from the measurement of activity and towards the measurement of impact and change'.

> Too many performance indicators concentrated on enumerating levels of activity rather than considering what the impact of that activity was. *This meant that an enormous amount of statistical data was being gathered, but that outcomes could go largely unanalysed.*
>
> The effect of targets was dissipated by overuse and insufficient linkage to the objectives, *resulting in a preoccupation with relatively small incremental changes in quantity, but little attention to quality and no common drive towards real achievement in the areas of greatest priority.*[41]

QUEST continues to pursue the issue of developing outcome-related measures as the most meaningful indicators of impact.[42]

It is significant that the DCMS has found such measures elusive, and that it is not alone in doing so. Attempting to measure the impact of museums through outcomes is tantamount to measuring what modernism always cast as unmeasurable. Given that the sector still has to get to grips with such basic outputs as visitor numbers, producing evidence of social impact remains essentially aspirational. Nevertheless, the growth of research capacity within the DCMS's non-departmental public bodies (such as Resource) and the sheer amount of research that they and other funding and policy bodies are currently generating suggest something of the pressure they are under to deliver.[43] Many projects are intended to devise methodologies for capturing outcomes, to produce impact evaluation toolkits and ensure standards of delivery.[44] And it is implicitly assumed that these initiatives will contribute to overcoming a series of barriers which have not

only prevented hard evidence on the impact of the cultural sector from being collected, but which are endemic to the cultural sector. Those obstacles are ideological, practical and managerial.[45]

Despite funding agencies' current enthusiasm for collecting reliable evidence about the impact of their sectors, and evaluating the success of funding programmes, the present paucity of data suggests a previous ambivalence, if not aversion, to such exercises – not only amongst potential data providers, but also amongst data collectors. Both Lord Evans, Chair of Resource, and Peter Hewitt, Chief Executive of the Arts Council of England, have recently criticised what they perceive as the over-regulation of our cultural institutions and the crippling effects of accountability which 'diminish the very free spirit that the monies are aimed at'.[46] Other ideological objections to evaluations include the accusation that they are reductionist in that they set precedents for justifying the sector in terms of social or economic usefulness (emphasising the role of Tate Modern and Tate St Ives as economic catalysts, for example); and that they tend to overstate the utility of the sector at the expense of less measurable benefits (in other words, stating economic impact as opposed to an assessment of what visitors gained from their museum experience).

Practical objections include the fact that evaluation is not perceived as being central to the work of museums and that museum workers have little experience of it.[47] In addition, there are considerable methodological problems to be overcome. These include clarity of purpose; establishing definitions and working principles; determining where benefits should accrue – whether to individuals or communities; identifying appropriate measures – indicators of self-esteem, a growing sense of identity as part of a group or community, or 'inspiration resulting in creativity';[48] setting baselines from which progress can be measured;[49] understanding how long it might take for impacts to be manifest. As Resource has suggested, the experience of visiting a museum may ultimately change people's lives and shape their careers in ways which will be apparent to the individual only many years later.[50] There is the need to ascertain cause and effect – what creates what impact. 'The learning experience ... is influenced by the whole experience of the visit (galleries, social interaction, shop, café, publications, digital media etc).'[51]

Then there are questions about who should be involved in evaluation. Measuring the impact of museums is intended to provide an objective record of what difference they have made, or are making. Logic dictates that if the ultimate beneficiaries are intended to be users, assessment should focus on the outcomes for them. But an outcome-based and user-focused approach will inevitably be characterised by subjectivity. Take the issue of

museums encouraging access and learning, a subject under some scrutiny by Resource.[52] Potential learners may have no tangible sense of what they hope to learn and their learning is often unexpected, informal, experiential, and it may impact on their feelings and attitudes rather than on their acquisition of concepts. Any evidence of outcomes will inevitably be relative – coming down to the individual having developed their skills, increased their knowledge, or changed aspects of their behaviour, attitudes, status and life-condition.[53]

Then, there is the absence of a culture of managing for outcomes to contend with. The establishment and the successful launch of Tate Modern is one exception; the practice of the Natural History Museum to conceive exhibitions with specifically intended learning outcomes is another.[54] But within the sector there is no culture of illustrating models of success; and little public interrogation of the causal link between what has been archived and how. The example currently most often cited in the museums' literature is Tyne & Wear Museums Service's refocusing of its activities, which resulted in an increase in the proportion of C2DE visitors.[55] There are any number of instances of museums commissioning visitor research but not acting on its findings. More worrying, given the government's attempts to increase accountability in the public sector and its moves towards evidence-based policy, is that there is little indication that those data collected so far have been used to inform strategy or policy decisions. DOMUS, based on annual surveys carried out between 1994 and 1999, is a prime example.[56] The knock-on effect of this kind of experience is that organisations become unwilling to contribute to surveys which have no palpable outcomes, or to comply with demands for information considered as excessive.

Close

Delivering hard evidence on the impact of museums is of major concern to those public policy bodies involved. It is regarded as critical in respect of the sector's potential to secure increased funding and demonstrate its efficiency, effectiveness and value for money. But, despite the government's desire to pursue evidence-based policies, little has been achieved so far. The quality of extant quantitative data is questionable, and securing qualitative data is fraught with methodological problems. The museums sector faces a number of dilemmas in conforming to government demands. While Resource is currently reviewing extant statistical data sets and considering how and which outputs to quantify in the future, it is also striving to produce evidence of the impact of museums which broadly comply with the government's access and learning agendas. Logically, this calls for a

user-focused and outcome-based system of evaluation. To date, the organisation's sights are set on devising access and learning standards – which may produce evidence, but which will not serve to measure change. Calibrating the impact and effectiveness of particular aspects of service provision is still some way off. Constructing a system that comprises a modest number of reliable measures of output, which stand as proxies to access and social inclusion, would in itself be a considerable improvement.

The fact that the 'arm's-length principle' is continuing to diminish as a result of the new accountability implies that the government needs to pursue its goal of evidence-based policy closer to home. This implies that all departments, including the DCMS, should have a data collection centre and knowledge management base. What is not clear, given that decisions necessarily ultimately continue to be made for political reasons and on an intuitive basis – and that changing the cultural implies both radical change and cost – is why things shouldn't largely continue as before.

Notes

This article is based on two unpublished papers: 'The Impact of Museums', delivered at an AHRB strategy seminar 'Monitoring and Evaluation', British Academy, 20 March 2002, and 'Developing Performance Indicators for the Nationals', delivered at a colloquium 'Measuring What We Do in Museums: Research, Case Studies and Discussion', Smithsonian Institution, 27 June 2001. I am grateful to colleagues in QUEST, DCMS, DCMS-sponsored museums, and Resource for their time, interest and advice.

1 Defined as the direct products of activities usually expressed as measurable units, such as the number of services provided or the number of people provided for. For example, facilitating 300,000 new opportunities to experience the arts and 200,000 new educational sessions as proposed in DCMS, *A New Cultural Framework* (London: Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 1998).

2 Defined as the benefits or changes in skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours – in short, the difference a particular service made; for example, inspiring a young person to have a lifelong interest in the arts. See IMLS, *Outcome-Based Evaluation for IMLS-Funded Projects for Libraries and Museums* (Washington DC: Institute of Museums and Library Services, 1999).

3 Gordon Brown, cited in A. Grice, 'Billions have to be cut from spending plans, Brown warns', *Independent*, 20 March 2002: <http://www.independent.co.uk/story.jsp?story=276411>.

4 Cabinet Office, Performance and Innovation Unit, *Adding it Up* (2000): <http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/innovation/2000/addingcoiadc>.

5 RMTF (Regional Museums Task Force), *Renaissance in the Regions: A New Vision for England's Museums* (London: Resource, 2001), 18.

6 ACE, *Annual Review 2001, Breaking New Ground A Review of the Year* (London: Arts Council of England, 2001), 2–3.

7 RMTF, *Renaissance in the Regions*, 127.

8 QUEST, *Modernising the Relationship*, part 1, *A New Approach to Funding Agreements* (London: Quality, Efficiency and Standards Team, 2000), 19.
9 DCMS, *A New Cultural Framework*.
10 DCMS, *Museums for the Many: Standards for Museums and Galleries to Use when Developing Access Policies* (London: Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 1999).
11 DCMS, *Libraries, Museums, Galleries and Archives for All: Co-operating Across the Sectors to Tackle Social Exclusion* (London: Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2001); DCMS/DfEE, *The Learning Power of Museums – A Vision for Museum Education* (London: Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2000).
12 It could be argued that Labour's 'new cultural framework' (DCMS, *A New Cultural Framework*) represents a move towards not only greater accountability, but increased centralisation. It effectively marks a final blow for the 'arm's-length principle', and the incorporation of the regional arts boards into a new single arts funding and development body (as of 1 April 2002) means that the arts are more directly accountable to central government than ever before. The Institute of Ideas' *Museums for 'the People'? Conversations in Print* (London: Academy of Ideas, 2001) perceives central government funding to regional museums as furthering what they refer to as the 'new orthodoxy' – 'vacuous slogans of relevance, accessibility and inclusiveness'.
13 RMTF, *Renaissance in the Regions*.
14 RMTF, *Renaissance in the Regions*, 52–4. The Museum Association's 1998 redefinition of museums also recognises them as primarily being for 'the people'. 'Museums enable people to explore collections for inspiration, learning and enjoyment'.
15 S. E. Weil, 'From Being About Something to Being For Somebody: The Ongoing Transformation of the American Museum', *Daedalus*, special issue, *American Museums*, 128:3 (Summer 1999).
16 Kenneth Hudson, cited by S. E. Weil, 'Transformed From a Century of Bric-a-Brac', in IMLS, *Perspectives on Outcome Based Evaluation for Libraries and Museums* (Washington DC: Institute of Museums and Library Services, 2000), 6.
17 F. Matarasso, 'Foreword. A Cultural Imperative?', in QUEST, *Social Inclusion in Action*, final draft (London: Quality, Efficiency and Standards Team, 2002).
18 S. Selwood, *Markets and Users*, Renaissance in the Regions working paper (2001): <http://www.resource.gov.uk/information/policy/marktuser.asp>.
19 Ibid.
20 MORI, *Visitors to Museums & Galleries in the UK* (London: Resource, 2001), 15–16.
21 This is increasingly true of private sector grants in the UK. See P. McCurry, 'Let's Be Honest', *Guardian*, 19 December 2001: <http://society.guardian.co.uk/fundraising/story/0,8150,620672,00.html>. In the US, the Institute for Museum & Library Services' adoption of outcome-based evaluation took its lead from evaluation practices introduced in 1995 by the private sector, in particular the United Way a federation of some 1,400 community-based fundraising organisations (see IMLS, *Perspectives on Outcome Based Evaluation for Libraries and Museums*, 4–15.
22 M. Allison, *Realising the Potential: The Case for Cultural Services. Museums*, Local Government Association (2001): <http://www.lga.gov.uk/Publication.asp?1section>, v.

23 B. Sheppard, *Museums in the Community: Measuring Impact*, Remarks for th Museum Trustee Association Annual Meeting, 21 October 2000: <http://www.imls.gov/whatsnew/current/sp102100.htm>.

24 RMTF, *Renaissance in the Regions*, 19–20; DCMS (2002) *Examples of Good Practic* <http://www.culture.gov.uk/role/research_north.html>; F. Coalter, *Realisin the Potential of Cultural Services*, Local Government Association (2001): <http:/ www.lga.gov.uk/Documents/Briefing/Our-Work/Cultural/Advocacy.pdf>

25 Selwood (ed.), *Markets and Users*; S. Selwood, 'Profile of Museums and Galleries in S. Selwood, *The UK Cultural Sector: Profile and Policy Issues* (London: Polic Studies Institute, 2001), 342–59.

26 QUEST, *Modernising the Relationship*, 10; Selwood, *The UK Cultural Secto* Appendix 1.

27 This figure excludes allocations to Resource, the Designated Museum Challenge Fund and Single Regional Agencies; DCMS, *Annual Report 20(* (London: Stationery Office, 2001).

28 DCMS, *Review of the Efficiency and Effectiveness of the National Museums an Galleries* (London: Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 1999).

29 QUEST, *Modernising the Relationship*.

30 DCMS, *Review of the Efficiency and Effectiveness of the National Museums an Galleries*.

31 MORI, *Visitors to Museums & Galleries in the UK*, 15–16.

32 I. Cobain, 'Museums Angry over Order to Increase Ethnic Visitors', *Sunda Telegraph*, 21 May 2000.

33 C. Smith 'No quotas', letter to the *Daily Telegraph*, 29 May 2000.

34 Lord Tebbit, cited by Cobain, 'Museums Angry over Order to Increase Ethni Visitors'.

35 Cobain, 'Museums Angry over Order to Increase Ethnic Visitors'.

36 QUEST, *Modernising the Relationship*, 10

37 In the 2002 Annual Lecture to the Association of Independent Museums, Tess Blackstone reported Resource as having estimated that 'there are over 2,50 museums in this country visited by over 80 million people each year'. Thi figure, of course, refers to the number of visits not visitors.

38 DCMS, *Review of the Efficiency and Effectiveness of the National Museums an Galleries*, 76.

39 DCMS, *Free admission to museums 'a spectacular success' says Tessa Jowell*, Pres release 2/02 (London: Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 7 Januar 2002).

40 DCMS, *Visitor numbers for national museums and galleries up twenty percen Chris Smith hails new figures as a 'success for art, heritage and education'*, Pres release 104/01 (London: Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2 Apri 2001).

41 QUEST, *Modernising the Relationship*, 10 – their emphasis.

42 QUEST, *Social Inclusion in Action*.

43 Overviews of the literature appear in 'Lottery Social Impact Study' a unpublished report containing a review of research studies and methods carried out by North London University for DCMS, 2001. See also QUEST *Social Inclusion in Action*; and H. Jermyn, *The Arts and Social Exclusion: A Revie Prepared for the Arts Council of England* (2001): <html://artscouncil.org.uk/publications/docs/socialexclusionreview.doc>.

44 For example: LGA, *Tackling Poverty and Social Inclusion through Cultural Services: A Toolkit for Local Authorities*, Local Government Association (2001): <http://www.lga.gov.uk/Publication.asp?1section>; J. Dean, R. Goodlad and C. Hamilton, *Toolkit for Evaluating Arts Projects in Social Inclusion Areas* (Edinburgh: Scottish Arts Council, 2001); ACE, *Research Brief: National Evaluation Toolkit for Measuring the Impact of the Arts* (tenders due to be submitted by 22 March 2002); M. Reeves, *Measuring the Economic and Social Impact of the Arts* (London: Arts Council of England, 2002): <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publications/docs/measuring.doc>; Resource, *Inspiring Learning: A Framework for Access and Learning in Museums, Archives and Libraries* (2001): <http://www.resource.gov.uk/action/learnacc/insplearn.asp>; Resource *A Learning and Access Standard for Museums, Archives & Libraries*, final stage paper (2001): <http://www.resource.gov.uk/reports/learnacc.html>.

45 I am grateful to Fred Coalter who identified these broad categories in a workshop, 'Mission for Measurement' at the 'Mainstreaming the Arts' conference, Belfast: Arts Council of Northern Ireland, September 2001.

46 P. Hewitt, *Beyond Boundaries: The Arts after the Events of 2001*, speech given at the National Portrait Gallery (London: Arts Council of England, 2002); M. Evans, *The Economy of the Imagination*, New Statesman Arts Lecture (2001): <http://www.resource.gov.uk/information/newstat01.html>.

47 GLLAM, *Museums and Social Inclusion: The GLLAM Report* (Leicester: Department of Museum Studies, University of Leicester, 2000).

48 Resource, *Inspiring Learning*.

49 RMTF, *Renaissance in the Regions*, 64.

50 Resource, 'Embed to Unlock: Using Museums, Archives and Libraries to Develop a Learning Community' (unpublished, 2001).

51 Resource, 'Embed to Unlock'.

52 Resource, *Inspiring Learning*; Resource, *A Learning and Access Standard for Museums, Archives & Libraries*; Resource, 'Embed to Unlock'.

53 Resource, *Inspiring Learning*.

54 S. Bitgood, 'The Hein-Miles Debate: An Introduction, Explanation and Commentary', *Visitor Behaviour*, 12:3 and 4 (1997), 3–7; R. Miles, 'No Royal Road to Learning: A Commentary on Constructivism', *Visitor Behaviour*, 12:3 and 4 (1997), 7–15.

55 RMTF, *Renaissance in the Regions*, 43; DCMS, Examples of Good Practice.

56 M. Wright, S. Selwood, C. Creaser and J. E. Davies, 'UK Museums Retrospective Statistics Project' (unpublished report for Resource, 2001): http://www.resource.gov.uk/information/evidence/ev-stats.asp

2.8 'The Politics of Data Collection: gathering, analysing and using data in the subsidised cultural sector in England' (2004)

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The Politics of Data Collection: gathering, analysing and using data about the subsidised cultural sector in England

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Abstract

The gathering of 'evidence' about the impact of the sector has assumed centre stage in the management of the subsidised cultural sector in England. It is closely associated with an extension of government control over the sector, and the tendency to value culture for its 'impact' rather than its intrinsic value.

This chapter of *Cultural Trends* considers what has been driving data collection, and how valuable its pursuit has actually been. While not disputing the importance of accountability within the public sector, the chapter observes that much of the data produced about the workings of the cultural sector have been criticised as methodologically flawed and that these say more about policy intentions than about actual impact. Until the collection and analysis of data is carried out more accurately and objectively, and until the evidence gathered is used more constructively, it could be argued that much data gathering in the cultural sector has been a spurious exercise.

2. The Politics of Data Collection: gathering, analysing and using data about the subsidised cultural sector in England

Sara Selwood, University of Westminster

Introduction

> *'Facts about the Arts' sets out to bring together some of the available statistics on the arts. Anyone who has the temerity to try to do this invites the scorn of those who believe that the concept of the arts itself is elusive and indefinable and any attempt to measure it cannot begin to represent its essential quality. Others, however, believe that the considerable body of material which does already exist can be gathered together and presented in such a way as to lead to a better understanding of the extent to which the arts contribute to the quality of life of the country. Amongst those potential users are parliament, the media, the general public, and the many who have the power to influence and make decisions about the arts.*
>
> (Nissel, 1983:1)

The first attempts to collect and analyse statistics about the arts in Great Britain were made 20 years ago by the Policy Studies Institute (Nissel, 1983; Myerscough, 1986). Theses sought to quantify what was spent on the arts; how many people they employed; what they earned; the number of events provided; and who went to see what. Moreover, they did so with the intention that the empirical evidence produced might usefully influence policy and funding decisions about the sector.

In one sense, at least, not much has changed. Attempts to collect and analyse data on the cultural sector are still derided by many – including political commentators – as being 'no way to measure the true value of the arts' (Marr, 2001). But, in another sense, everything has changed. Driven by the New Labour government's 'modernising' agenda, the subsidised cultural sector has been pressed into delivering on a number of government objectives which include contributing to the economy and combating social exclusion.

The aspirations ostensibly held by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) for data collection are far more sophisticated than the Policy Studies Institute's initial pragmatism could have ever allowed for. In its attempt to make cultural provision accessible to 'the many, not just the few' and to cast cultural institutions in the role of 'centres for social change' (DCMS, 2000a), the department has not only increased the scale of its 'investment' in the sector (DCMS, 2003f: 76), but has insisted on monitoring the efficiency of those organisations which it funds; measuring the extent to which its ambitions are achieved; and evaluating the precise impact that they are having. Consequently, data collection has become central – theoretically pivotal, even – to DCMS's operations.

Such machinations are, however, indicative of rather more than an interest in 'value for money'. They are symptomatic of the politics of data gathering. Despite the mass of primary data claiming to measure the impact of cultural policy and manifest improvements in the quality of that data over the past two decades, much data collection in the UK cultural sector is a long way off being a disinterested and objective pursuit. Data collection and analysis appear to have little to do with directing policy. Funding decisions appear to be made on the basis of expectations rather than 'evidence', and, whatever the rhetoric, the blurring of the relationship between advocacy and evidence suggests that the implementation of 'evidence-based policy' in the cultural sector is some way off. Serious criticisms have been made of the data being collected to measure impact in particular, as recent

reports commissioned and produced by DCMS acknowledge; it may even be that the department's emphasis on evidence is diminishing.

This chapter of *Cultural Trends* considers what has been driving the pursuit of data and how valuable it has actually been to the English subsidised cultural sector. It is organised in five parts.

By way of background, Part 1 reflects on some of the origins of the current preoccupation with the economic and social impact of the cultural sector, and its accountability. In particular, it considers how the Office of Arts and Libraries (OAL) and its successor, the Department of National Heritage (DNH), encouraged the collection of data about the cultural sector and how the production of evidence about the sector influenced certain policy and funding initiatives.

Part 2 pursues these issues chronologically. It considers DCMS's priorities and what has informed them. It looks at how the department has sought to extend its influence to create what it describes as 'a coherent and effective voice for the department's cultural and economic sectors'. It provides an overview of those systems of accountability that cover the department as well as its sponsored bodies and other players in the subsidised cultural sector.

Part 3 examines claims made by the department and other advocates as to the sector's success in delivering on the government's social agenda in particular. It also considers ways in which attempts have been made to construct evidence of its impact.

Part 4 looks at the limitations of the data. In doing so, it describes the conventions of data collection that DCMS inherited as well as the perceived shortcomings of current data collection.

Finally, Part 5 speculates on what it might take to improve data collection and the quality of evidence produced by the UK cultural sector. It also considers what might be hindering it at a more profound level – not least, whether the political process itself might be a major barrier.

Scope

This chapter primarily focuses on the development of data collection as promoted by DCMS from 1997. It refers specifically to the subsidised arts, museums and galleries in England. By way of background, it covers the activities of DCMS's predecessor departments, the DNH and OAL.

Approach

The research for this chapter primarily draws on various published and available unpublished documents, particularly those pertaining to the development of cultural policy. Key sources include documents produced by, or on behalf of, DCMS and its sponsored bodies, as well as several Culture, Media and Sport Committee reports. The chapter also draws on interviews with individuals who have either been involved in the exercise of data collection or the politics that informed it.

Definitions

Given the subject matter of this chapter, and the sources it draws upon, the jargon of cultural politics is unavoidable. The semantics of New Labour's 'modernising' agenda, combined with the lexicon of the cultural bureaucracy, mean that DCMS, for example, uses terms like 'investment' and 'sponsorship' in preference to 'subsidy', which presumably resonates too much of welfarism. Precisely because it signifies aspects of the political agenda that inform cultural policy, the use of such terminology has deliberately been retained in this chapter –

albeit flagged up by the use of quotation marks. References to 'social exclusion' exemplify the point. Its use is fairly standard throughout what DCMS refers to as its 'family' (DCMS, 2003e). The term derives from a Social Exclusion Unit policy document, which defines it as:

> *A shorthand term for what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown.*
>
> (Cabinet Office (2000) The Social Exclusion Unit leaflet, cited by Bridgwood, 2002: 7)

Unfortunately, not all terms in current usage are clearly defined – not least 'modernisation', which is used in a number of different contexts including: 'Modernising Government' (Cabinet Office, 1999); and 'Modernising Local Government' (DETR, 1997). In general, 'modernisation' can be described as a long term programme 'central to the government's programme of renewal and reform', intended 'to make life better for people and business'. It hinges on 'ensuring that policy making is more joined up and strategic'; 'making sure that public service users, not providers, are the focus by matching services more closely to peoples' lives'; and 'delivering public services that are high quality and efficient' (Cabinet Office, 1999).

While the term itself was relatively little used in DCMS's early published iterations about its rationale or activities, the concept of 'modernisation' has increasingly informed (and been used to describe) the department's 'reform' of the 'cultural framework'; its abolition of 'cumbersome funding structures'; the creation of 'new streamlined systems'; and its pursuit of 'evidence-based policy'. It constitutes the rationale for the government's investment in regional museums under the Renaissance in the Regions initiative (DCMS, 2002b);[1] the 'bringing together of the Regional Arts Boards and the Arts Council' (ACE, 2001; DCMS, 2001f); and, the development of DCMS's own research strategy (DCMS, 2003e).

Defining other aspects of cultural sector terminology is even more vexatious, as Resource: the Council for Museums, Archives, Libraries acknowledges in a recent attempt to ensure 'consistent descriptors' (Resource, undated: Appendix 1). There has been, for instance, little consistency in the organisation's use of the terms 'impact' and 'outcomes'.[2] Despite being central to evaluations of the effectiveness of the sector in delivering government policies, their meanings are often inferred, rather than defined.

Other terms used in this chapter, and which may require explanation, include:

- The 'cultural sector'. This is primarily used here to refer to the arts, museums and galleries which are funded through DCMS's funding stream. In this context, it is not used to cover libraries, the historic environment, film or broadcasting.
- 'Data collection' is used as a form of shorthand to embrace the gathering of raw data, its codifi-

1 The report of the Regional Museums Task Force (2001) highlighted the lack of capacity which restricted English museums ability 'to provide opportunities for learning, inspiration and enjoyment'. The report proposed the likely cost of implementing the new framework would be in the region of £267 million, although in the event only £70 million was made available.

2 See overleaf.

cation, enhancement, analysis and presentation. It covers a range of quantitative and qualitative data as used in compiling statistics and outcome-based evaluations.

- 'Evidence' is commonly used to refer to 'facts or testimony in support of a conclusion statement of belief', in that sense may be 'for' or 'against' a case being made. According to the rhetoric of the cultural bureaucracy it constitutes the foundation upon which 'decisions, policies and actions are based' (http://www.resource.gov.uk/information/evidence/00ev.asp, accessed 23.08.02). This chapter challenges the relative simplicity of both meanings. The paradigm of evidence that it implicitly refers to is that upon which a case, or a policy, might be constructed, and which might point to an 'unfavourable' truth – not something which necessarily supports a case per se.
- 'Evidence-based policy' is defined in a number of ways. At its simplest, the term refers to the government's emphasis on securing a range of 'evidence' to help in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of policy. The 'evidence' itself is likely to be drawn from academic research, practice-generated impacts and professionally-mediated 'best practice' information (Information Management Associates, undated).

Part 1: background

The national profiles of the cultural sector, constructed in the 1983 edition of *Facts about the Arts*, drew on a host of basic information including ad hoc surveys conducted on behalf of arts organisations, the annual reports of government-sponsored bodies (such as the Arts Council of Great Britain (ACGB), and the Crafts Council), those carried out by CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy), the tourist boards and trade associations – with various degrees of reliability (Nissel, 1983: 3). But it was not until the late 1980s that dedicated, regular, national data collections by policy and funding bodies added to the intelligence provided by those sources.[3]

The Arts Council started buying into the Target Group Index – an omnibus survey that tracks arts attendance – in 1986; OAL published comparative data on visits to the national museums and galleries

2 For example, one report commissioned by Resource (Wavell et al, 2002:7), defines 'outcomes' as '*... the positive or negative engagement with planned outputs by an intended or unintended user. Outcomes can be short or medium term (for example, books read, visitor interaction with a website, user satisfaction with answer to an enquiry, recollection with a memorable event)*'. The same source defines 'impact' as '*...the overall effect of outcomes and conditioning factors resulting in a change in state, attitude or behaviour of an individual or group after engagement with the output, and is expressed as 'Did it make a difference?'. Impact can be short, medium or long term; direct or indirect; intentional or unintentional; critical or trivial; simple or complex.*' A second document (Resource, undated: 20) defines 'outcomes' as '*The actual or intended long-term effect or consequence of a decision, action or initiative*' and 'impact' as '*Long-term anticipated and unanticipated changes to the situation of intended beneficiaries, also those not belonging to the beneficiary group, including negative effects.*' A third document, commissioned by Resource (Research Centre for Museums and Galleries, undated: para 3.4), defines 'outcomes' as being understood 'in relation to individuals (including both short and long-term outcomes)' and 'impact' to be seen as 'both cumulative and broader in relation to social structures and organisations (... generally in the long-term)'.

3 The English Tourist Board, concerned with the draw of high spending tourists, began collecting trend data earlier. Data used in *Sightseeing in England*, for instance, goes back to 1996, and *Heritage Monitor* to 1984.

in 1989; ad hoc economic impact studies took off after the publication of Myerscough's study of *The Economic Importance of the Arts in Britain* in 1988. Other series that appeared in the early 1990s included DOMUS (the Museum & Galleries Commission's Digest of Museum Statistics) and the Arts Council's publication of its funded organisations' performance indicators.

This section considers what prompted these data gathering exercises, and what kinds of data about the cultural sector were conventionally, if not regularly, being collected by the time New Labour established the DCMS in 1997. It points to the fact that the collection of cultural data was driven by the top-down demands made of the sector by successive Conservative governments via OAL and the later DNH. Indeed, as the next section shows, many of the requirements that these departments made of their sponsored bodies foreshadowed those of the DCMS.

The kinds of demands made of the cultural sector from the early 1980s pertained to the public sector in general. These included greater accountability, the introduction of strategic management and improvements in the quality of public services. The need to justify subsidies in economic terms, which led to the cultural sector's identification of itself as a wealth creator, dates from this period as does the call for greater 'access', which encouraged the promotion of participation in cultural projects, particularly those relating to community development.

The story is familiar enough. Since the Conservatives came to power in 1979, successive administrations have sought to introduce the principles of what became known as the 'new public management' as well as 'value for money' auditing within the public sector.

These assumed prominence for several reasons. According to Power (1999: 41ff), these included: the need for financial restraint, as expenditure on public services looked increasingly unsustainable for demographic and other reasons; the ideological commitment to the reduction of state service provision; and the success of political discourses which demanded improved accountability of public services both in terms of conformity to legally accepted processes and in terms of performance. Put most simply, the new public management constituted 'a desire to replace the presumed inefficiency and the hierarchical bureaucracy with the presumed efficiency of markets'. As a way of making the state more entrepreneurial, it was regarded as a way of transforming public services from what were perceived to be

> *...expensive, inefficient, wasteful, fat, self-seeking, insensitive bureaucracies into fitter, leaner, more efficient and effective organisations which are closer to their customers and more accountable.*
>
> (Clarke, 1991: 3)

Local government was selected as a particular target.

> *Within weeks of taking office, local government was strongly criticised by ministers who claimed it was wasteful, profligate, irresponsible, unaccountable, luxurious and out of control*
>
> (Newton and Karran, 1985: 116; cited by Stoker, 1991: 12)

In practice, the new public management embraced a cluster of initiatives that covered cost control, financial transparency, the decentralisation of

management authority, the creation of market and quasi-market mechanisms; the 'contract culture'; and the enhancement of accountability to customers for the quality of service via the creation of performance indicators.

Underlying all these was the concept of 'value for money'. Value for money was assessed in relation to three indicators – efficiency, effectiveness and economy (known as the three 'Es') – and its evaluation was required to be independent and 'politically neutral'. From the early 1980s onwards, this was marked by the rise of 'the audit society', whose major institutions included the National Audit Office (NAO; established in 1983 to oversee government departments and other bodies) and the Audit Commission (established 1982 to oversee local government).

These circumstances impacted on the cultural sector in various ways. The advent of the contract culture, for instance, was manifest in local authorities from 1979 as 'compulsory competitive tendering'. This meant that local authorities were required to put specified services or functions, formerly carried out in-house, out to competitive tender – with the contingent monitoring of performance and value for money. This was intended to improve efficiency, generate choice and diversity, increase market competition and produce greater effectiveness.

A subsequent initiative, the Citizen's Charter (Major, 1991), focused attention away from inputs – in the shape of product-determined services – to outputs, taking account of customer needs. Its political imperative was to ensure

> *...a better say to people who use our public services... We all pay for our public services through our taxes. We therefore have a right to expect that they will do what their name suggests – serve the public.*

In terms of the cultural sector, the Citizen's Charter's primary focus on the users of services encouraged the focusing of attention on audiences – aka the 'consumers' of cultural provision – and the quality of service they received.

The Department of National Heritage

The DNH was established following John Major's 1992 election victory. It assumed responsibilities previously held by the OAL[4] and a number of other government departments[5] as well as the lottery. Its rationale was to improve quality of life, the economic importance of the department's sectors, and to encourage access across them (HoC, 1996: 2).

Unlike its predecessor departments, the DNH was accorded the status of a department of state with representation at Cabinet. Its elevation signified a growth in political interest in the cultural sector and the sector's greater proximity to government.

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4 The OAL was established as a Ministry in the Privy Council Office in 1983. Its objectives included the promotion of 'public access to and appreciation of the arts and cultural heritage'and the expansion of 'total resources by encouraging partnership with the private sector'(OAL, 1991a: 1).

5 The DNH subsumed responsibility for the arts, museums and galleries, government art collections and libraries from the OAL; export licensing of works of art from the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI); film from the OAL and DTI; broadcasting, press regulation and safety at sports grounds from the Home Office; the built heritage from the Department of the Environment; tourism from the Department of Employment; sport from the Department of Education and Science; and, from 1996, the voluntary sector from the Home Office (HoC, 1996: Appendix 1).

The arm's length principle

Accounting for its effectiveness was central to the department's attempts to dismiss its initial reputation as the 'Ministry of Fun' and 'the Department where Nothing Happened' (HoC, 1996: 14). Nowhere were the implications of its bid for control of the future of the cultural sector more keenly felt than in the struggle around the continued existence of the arm's length principle in relation to the arts in particular.

In its final annual report, the ACGB still set great store for the future of the arts in England on the basis of the fact that the government had 'wholeheartedly endorsed the principle of an independent Arts Council empowered to determine – and implement – arts policy at arm's length from government'(ACGB, 1994: 4).

In April 1994, however, just over a year after the establishment of its successor body, the Arts Council of England (ACE), the signs were that the department might be reneging on that commitment. According to first Secretary of State for National Heritage, David Mellor's evidence to the House of Common's National Heritage Committee,'some analysis' of the arm's length principle was needed not least because its persistence was 'actually stunt[ing] the growth of the department'(HoC, 1996: 21).

> *There is no doubt that the arts wanted to be represented at the Cabinet table... [but] the arts, when they get a Cabinet Minister, then do not particularly want one, what they really want is someone who gets them the money but does not have a view about how it is spent... If you have a minister of some significance, you have to expect him to have a view...*
>
> *... it is not self-evident in my view [that] the Arts Council ... is necessarily the only place at which decisions should be taken about the future direction of culture in this country. I personally think there is a role here for the Secretary of State, accountable to Parliament...*
>
> (HoC, 1996: 16,19)

The then Secretary of State for National Heritage, Virginia Bottomley, recognised the inevitability of political intervention and ministers' ability to lever in their objectives:

> *I think it's only right to expect that as time goes by I shall wish, or the holder of my office will wish, to establish further coherence across the sectors ... by producing policy documents... Similarly, in relation to the bodies, the introduction of funding agreements I hope will progressively mean that there is an understanding, an explicit understanding, about what the aims and objectives are for the government funding that comes through for that particular body in the financial period ahead.*
>
> (HoC, 1996: 39)

While it could be argued that, in principle, the continuing existence of the department's non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) is indicative of some degree of 'arm's length' – the diminution of the principle became synonymous with the increasingly interventionist role of the department and the requirement of those bodies to deliver on the government's agenda. One aspect of that was the imposition of greater accountability.

Accountability and strategic management

Attempts to introduce increased accountability and strategic management to the arts and the rest of the

cultural sector were inevitable, if slow. Ten years after the 'three Es' were first introduced, the Secretary of State was still mooting their importance.

> *I am convinced that priority must be given to increase economy, efficiency and effectiveness in public funding for the arts.*
>
> (Peter Brooke, 1993 cited by Morgan, 2002)

In the event, their introduction to the sector was mediated by the DNH, whose own operations were determined by its need to 'act as a catalyst for effective action' (DNH, 1994: 8).

A key feature of the DNH, which distinguished it from most other government departments, was the fact that up to 95 per cent of the monies voted to it were expended on its range of sponsored bodies, on whom it depended for the achievement of its aims and objectives. These included the Arts Council and the national museums and galleries, etc (DNH, 1993a: 5). Consequently, when the department came to describe itself as 'in-part policy orientated and strategic, and in-part supervisory' (DNH, 1994: 12), it followed that a fundamental principle of its relationship with its sponsored bodies was vested in their 'accountability and value for money' (DNH, 1994: 11). The fact that the number of such sponsored bodies has increased over the years implies that the department's 'control regime' has inevitably assumed even more importance. Whereas DNH's annual report for 1996 listed 35 NDPBs (HoC, 1996: 3), DCMS's 2002 annual report nearly doubled that.

Not only was the DNH itself encouraged to make effective use of the corporate planning process and to demonstrate greater efficiency (HoC, 1996: 2), but it passed similar demands on to its sponsored bodies. These were also required to develop 'consistent standards of analysis and planning' while reflecting their individual circumstances (DNH, 1994: 11).

The department, consequently, oversaw a number of initiatives intended to improve the organisation and management of those organisations' services to the public. These included the introduction of corporate plans, support for the development of staff training, and the devising of a range of performance indicators which touched on measures of access and use, income generation and financial management. These were intended to provide objective benchmarks against which organisations' progress in achieving the aims and objectives identified in their corporate plans and elsewhere could be measured, and to identify areas of relative strength and weakness which would inform decision-making (Selwood, 1999).

In 1996 the department also introduced funding agreements as a way of further developing the scrutiny of its NDPBs. These were intended to clarify 'what sponsored bodies will secure for the grant-in-aid that the taxpayer provides' and 'stand as a concise and public statement of what we and the taxpayer should expect for the grant-in-aid' (HoC, 1996: 2). Based on the annual Public Expenditure plans,

> *The aim is to make transparent the key elements of the work that the bodies are funded to do and the outputs that will be used to measure the work. In this way it is hoped to focus on the progress being made in encouraging the participation and development of audiences, enabling innovation to blossom and excellence to prevail, and in ensuring that departmental funding enhances the competitiveness and performance of the national economy.*

> *...Funding agreements will focus on the important work that the department is enabling to take place and the benefits that work is delivering.*
>
> (DNH, 1996a: 52)

The desire to reduce the costs of the arts bureaucracy and increase its accountability inevitably had a number of implications for DNH's NDPBs. From the mid-1980s, the Arts Council, for example, went through a series of internal and external corporate reviews and subsequent reorganisations to determine its priorities and the efficacy of its grant allocations. These included the Wilding Review, which was commissioned by OAL and was prompted by the Minister's concern with accountability for spending within the arts funding system, its lack of coherence in the formulation and delivery of policy, its unwieldy business structures and the administrative costs of the whole system (Wilding, 1989). Another review, which the DNH commissioned from Price Waterhouse, specifically reported on the Arts Council's effectiveness, efficiency and economy (Price Waterhouse, 1993).

Between the mid-1980s and the mid-1990s, the Arts Council devised two major strategies for the arts funding system. One, *The Glory of the Garden* (ACGB, 1984) was prompted by the high profile exposure of the inequitable balance of funding between London and the regions, which was highlighted by reports from a House of Commons Select Committee on Education, Science and the Arts and the Policy Studies Institute (Hutchison, 1982). The other, the *National Arts and Media Strategy* (ACGB, 1993a), was written in response to the Minister's requirement that it should consider 'whether money spent on the arts and media has been used to best effect, and how those responsible can do better in the future' (ACGB, 1992: Introduction). Against this background, the recent joining together of the regional arts boards and the Arts Council to form a new, single organisation (April 2003) can be seen to be just the latest in a long line of reforms.

While doubts have been raised as to the extent of the savings made as a result of such reorganisations (Morgan, 2002), the consistent pressure to reform profoundly impacted on the culture of ACGB. Towards the end of its life, it not only explicitly acknowledged the need 'to establish a stronger and more strategic style of management' but the political necessity of giving

> *... government reliable evidence of the fruits of our labours, while demonstrating progress towards the realisation of our corporate plan's primary objectives – that is, access, excellence, the growth of the arts economy and improvement to our efficiency and quality of service.*
>
> (ACGB, 1996b: 4)

Alongside these reviews of itself, the Arts Council had already introduced periodic in-depth appraisals of its clients' operations with a view to such a 'body of reports being built up... to demonstrate to government (and the taxpayer) the value for money that the Council received from its clients...' (ACGB, 1987: 7–8).

National museums and galleries were similarly expected to demonstrate their increased economy, efficiency and effectiveness. From 1988, OAL – and subsequently DNH – introduced initiatives to improve the organisation and management of organisations' services to the public, including the introduction of corporate plans, performance

indicators and support for the development of staff training (NAO, 1993: 7). This was akin to what the Audit Commission had already recommended for local authority museums and leisure services (Audit Commission, 1991). While the British Museum may not have been typical, the findings of the fundamental review of its operations carried out in the second half of the 1990s, suggests just how long it was taking for changes to be introduced into an entrenched culture. The Edwards Review of 1996 recommended a 'change programme', highlighting the need for the appointment of a finance director, several accountants and a front-of-house manager amongst others, as well as the introduction of a wide-reaching training programme.

The OAL also commissioned Coopers & Lybrand to develop a range of performance indicators for use in the national museums and galleries, including measures of access and use, income generation and financial management. These were intended to provide objective benchmarks against which to measure progress in achieving the aims and objectives identified in their corporate plans and elsewhere, to help to identify areas of relative strength and weakness, to inform decision-making on the allocation of resources and to motivate staff (OAL, 1991b).

In addition to producing evidence to demonstrate value for money and to indicate organisations' progress in achieving their aims and objectives, there was an expectation that evidence should be used to formulate policy. The DNH regarded it as vital 'that policies are formulated in the light of the best available and most up-to-date information about the sectors in which they are to operate' (DNH, 1994: 9). It consequently commissioned reviews of existing data sources as a way of clearing the ground for its own initiatives (DNH, undated) and to review its need for statistical information (PE International, 1993).

Much of the responsibility for producing evidence fell to the department's NDPBs, however. It was no coincidence that by 1992 both the Arts Council and the MGC were proposing collections of time series data intended better to inform the management and the strategic development of their respective domains (Dwinfour and Selwood, 2001; Wright et al, 2001). The Arts Council began collecting performance indicator data from its regular and fixed-term funded organisations from 1994/95 in order 'to understand more clearly the economics of the subsidised arts sector' and 'to use as a management and planning tool' (Hacon et al, 1997: 1). The Museums & Galleries Commission (MGC) collected data from registered museums from 1994–1999 (when it was abolished) for a number of reasons, not least to

> *... help museums and galleries more effectively than before; for example, in presenting the sector to the outside world. More importantly, it has been designed to encourage museums to help themselves by giving them access to a wide range of basic information relating to collections and facilities as well as management, financial and marketing information. This allows them to compare their own performance with others, leading ultimately to a better understanding of their present position, and to improve strategic planning and better performance.*
>
> (MGC, 1995: 2)

The economic agenda

Back in 1983, Nissel had already noted that questions were frequently being asked about the economic importance of the arts (1983: 2). Indeed,

economic impact was to became a major focus of data collection. What initially prompted the interrogation of the sector's finances was the DNH's desire to break its reliance on public funding, but the importance attached to the presentation of data came from the sector's response which involved presenting itself as economically productive. Indeed, in the mid-1980s alone, the focus of arts advocacy is said to have shifted from 'special pleading' to 'higher ground'. Rather than depending on unquantifiable assertions about 'arts for arts sake', the kind of arguments that came to be deployed specifically related to what role the arts might have

> *... in an era of industrial restructuring characterised by the growing importance of the service industries (especially in the areas of finance, knowledge, travel and entertainment), and of industries based on new technologies exploiting information and the media. The success of cities in the post-industrial era will depend on their ability to build on the provision of services for regional, national and international markets.*
>
> (Myerscough, 1988: 2)

In was in the context of this 'new financial reality' that the Arts Council actively sought to increase its grant-in-aid on the basis of appealing to the political agenda, by making an economic case for increased public 'investment' in the arts (ACGB, 1985; 1986; 1988; 1989; undated). It directly responded to the government's inner city initiatives, which had been considerably expanded after the 1987 election and were intended to ease high unemployment, stimulate environmental renewal, encourage new jobs and give residents a better quality of life and new hope (Wilmott and Hutchinson, 1992).

The credibility of the Council's arguments depended on the acceptance of the arts' role within a wider policy framework. It was significant that the Cabinet Office's publication, *Action for Cities* (1988) endorsed the arts contribution to urban regeneration, and that it tacitly accepted that the arts constituted 'a cost-effective means of job creation' (Collard, 1988) – a principle which is still upheld and is manifest by tranches of urban funding being committed to arts projects (Symon and Williams, 2001).[6]

The credibility of the notion that the arts and cultural industries were grounded in economic reality was further boosted by John Myserscough's independent research into the *Economic Importance of the Arts in Britain* (1988). This estimated the total of the arts and the cultural industries' contribution to the economy as being in the region of £10 billion, and quantified its direct and indirect benefits to the economy – as an employer, its overseas sales, its role in the growth of ancillary industries, its stimulation of tourism and regional business – as well as identifying its further economic potential.

Myserscough's findings were regarded as extraordinarily persuasive by many. The fact that his report was based on data collection and analysis set the stage for a wave of audits and impact studies intended to make the case for investment in the sector. The latter, typically, measured

> *... the scale of the arts in terms of conventional economic measures, such as employment, sales,*

6 For a detailed account of perceptions as to the role of the arts within a wider policy framework see Selwood (1995).

foreign earnings and so on. [The] more sophisticated among them seek to take account of knock on effects in associated activities (for example, restaurants which benefit from the trade generated by the artistic activity), in the chain of suppliers (for example, stage-set manufacturers, and their suppliers) and in the wider economy as a result of the increase in the consumer incomes more generally (often referred to as 'induced' effects). These studies may consider displacement, that is the diversion of activity from other organisations.

(Johnson and Thomas, 2001: 203)

Many local authorities, in particular, were 'keen to get in on the act, and use the arts and related cultural industries to boost their own, often ailing, prospects' (Davison, 1988: 28). They invested in the arts and cultural industries as a way of encouraging employment and inward investment in cities suffering the effects of post-industrialisation. Moreover, economic impact studies became part of the package typically used to justify new capital funded projects. Tate St Ives and Tate Modern were no exception (Cornwall County Council, 1994; McKinsey, 1994). The role of cultural projects in transforming their localities continues to be celebrated, as in the Arts Council of England's overview of its £1 billion lottery awards, *Pride of Place* (Stetter, 2002).

In the event, however, the Treasury wasn't sufficiently convinced by Myerscough's methodology to increase cultural subsidies, there has been much criticism of economic impact methodology generally (see Part 4), and claims made for economically-led cultural regeneration projects have been questioned. Capital projects, which burgeoned during the early years of the lottery, for instance, were criticised as being very costly with most of the financial benefits going to the construction industry rather than the arts (Evans, 1998). Moreover, they often required substantial public sector support on completion; they may have been regarded as inappropriate for, and beyond the reach of, most smaller towns; and they did not necessarily connect with local people and their needs (Landry et al, 1996 cited by Chelliah, 1999: 8).

Some degree of scepticism was evident in research in the early 1990s into the effects of cultural developments in Glasgow (Booth and Boyle, 1993) and Birmingham (Loftman and Nevin, 1992). These highlighted the lack of benefits filtering down from prestige projects to deprived communities. Indeed, as early as 1993 urban renewal projects were criticised as masking, rather than solving, persistent economic and social inequities (David Harvey cited by Bianchini, 1993: 14). But such criticisms became much more commonplace after the first generation of capital funded lottery projects came to completion. Indeed, the growing body of evidence as to who was and wasn't benefiting from public subsidies to the cultural sector, and – indeed – what those benefits comprised, contributed to the development of interest in social as opposed to economic impacts.

Access

'Access' – in the sense of providing forms of cultural provision 'for the people', encouraging the widest possible involvement in those arts receiving public subsidies and using the arts to contribute to 'quality of life' – had been closely identified with the Labour movement from the 1970s (see, for example, TUC, 1979) and with local authorities in the 1980s especially.

The principle of access in the form of 'public service orientation' called for managers in local government to recognise that 'the activities of a local authority are not carried out for their own sake, but to provide service to the public' (Clarke and Stewart, 1985: 2 cited by Stoker, 1991: 125). This required authorities to consider their services from the perspective of the public rather than that of the organisations providing the services, and to recognise the role of the citizen as a participant in policy-making. At one level, this embraced local authorities' 'consulting neighbourhoods' and other communities of interest about social services, education, town planning, housing, leisure and the arts. At another level, it extended to their representing the interests of overtly political local interest groups and 'helping to relate the activities of service agencies more closely to the needs of the people they serve ... and facilitating citizen participation to give 'life to social democracy'' (Lees and Mayo, 1984: 3 cited by Stoker, 1991: 130). The commitment of local government provision in addressing social and economic ills, particularly amongst councils associated with the 'Urban Left', was closely associated with ideological opposition to central government and its reforms of local government.

From the beginning of the 1990s, however, access came to be regarded as a mainstream political issue at central government level. Its adoption within cultural policy was closely associated with the development of data gathering, since the public sector's collection of 'evidence' about who was and who wasn't accessing subsidised cultural provision.

The OAL's objectives, for example, included the promotion of 'public access to and appreciation of the arts and cultural heritage' (OAL, 1991a: 1). Its promotion of those causes was, however, patchy. It developed little in the way of a strategic approach to increasing access to museums. Its 1991 Annual Report implies that 'access' merely equated to the number of museum visits. But from 1986, it invested substantially in arts access initiatives designed to widen access to the arts, for which it allocated £5.5 million between 1988/89 and 1991/92 (OAL, 1990).

The findings of the Target Group Index, which ACGB subscribed to from 1986, doubtless played a part in moving access up the political agenda. This revealed a high degree of consistency from year to year of the percentages and social groupings of the UK population who said they attended arts activities. Given that the survey does not discriminate between subsidised, commercial and amateur events, this meant that the percentage attending publicly-funded arts events was actually smaller than the figures suggested.

The most substantial and comprehensive survey of the period to be made publically available was the 1991 omnibus survey, carried out to support the development of the *National Arts and Media Strategy*. This was based on a sample of 7,919 throughout the UK (ACGB, 1991). In addition to recording levels of attendance, participation and profiles (including social class and ethnic origin), it quantified the percentage of people who perceived cultural activities as an important focal point within their local communities: it also distinguished between participating in and attendance at arts events. It also investigated what image respondents had of the arts and cultural activities; what constrained their attendance; and their attitudes to public funding.

The early 1990s marked a period of concern among funders about people's attitudes to cultural

provision. A spate of audience and non-audience data was produced, which enabled the interrogation of which publics were being served; whether and how they personally valued cultural provision; and whether it did anything to improve their quality of life (for instance, Mass Observation, 1990; Robb, 1992; Trevelyan, 1991; Francis, 1990; Bicknell and Farmelo, 1993). Academic publications of the period, in particular, considered issues pertaining to the opening up of access to museums, the quality of visitors' experiences in museums and the sociology of museums' publics (for instance, the translation of Bordieu et al, 1991; Hooper-Greenhill, 1993; Merriman, 1991; Vergo, 1989).

It was, perhaps, not surprising that the establishment of the DNH should have been predicated on creating greater equity of 'access' to cultural provision. As the Prime Minister put it:

> *I strongly believe that man cannot live by GDP alone. A rounded life involves much more than economic security. A country can only be strong, healthy and contented if it burnishes its heritage, encourages its citizens to pursue excellence in sport, and cultivates widespread appreciation of the arts. I would like to see everyone in the country share in the opportunities that were once available only to the privileged few ... It was in that spirit that I set up the Department of National Heritage. Its creation was a sign that Government should take such activities seriously.*
>
> (John Major cited in HoC, 1996: v)

The new department's acknowledgement that 'the available statistics suggest that some areas are enjoyed by a relatively narrow section of the population' was, consequently, politically significant. DNH established a Strategic Access Initiative intended to ensure 'the opportunity for as many people as possible to benefit from the arts, heritage and sport', not least because 'the investment of tax payers' money brings with it a responsibility to ensure that those who pay have the opportunity to benefit' (DNH: 1994: 4–5). Anticipating its successor department's modes of operation, this was intended to function across departments, local authorities, the private and voluntary sectors, and to operate nationally and in the regions.

One result of these initiatives was the realisation that it was important to remove those barriers which were assumed to inhibit access to the arts. While this exposed a contradiction implicit in the government encouraging museums to charge,[7] it also furthered the causes of 'cultural pluralism' and 'diversity' within the mainstream and introduced the support of 'alternative' activities.[8]

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7 DNH encouraged its sponsored organisations to generate a proportion of their income through their audiences' spend on admissions, retail and catering services (NAO, 1993). The first national to charge was the National Maritime Museum in 1984 (Creigh-Tyte and Selwood, 1998: 158).

8 *The National Arts and Media Strategy*, for instance, acknowledged the needs of 'Black Arts', disabled people, women, children, young people, old people, lesbian and gay people in the arts (ACGB, 1993a). Despite the fact that the majority of DNH and that Arts Council grant funding was dedicated to portfolios of historically supported organisations, particular constituencies came to be regarded as having the right to a place within the funding mainstream – which theoretically signalled a cessation of privileging one form of cultural activity over another.

Community development and volunteering

'Community', 'participatory' arts and volunteering were among those 'alternative' activities. The importance with which such activities came to be regarded changed considerably over the 18 years of Conservative government. But, however valuable they were considered to be in terms of improving 'quality of life', quantifying that proved highly elusive.

In the 1970s, community arts, amateur arts and volunteering would have been regarded as strange bedfellows. Amateur arts – practised for the love of it – were traditionally regarded pejoratively by the arts funding system. They were perceived as fundamentally inadequate compared to the supposedly innate superiority and excellence of professional arts (Hutchison and Feist, 1991: 6–7). Community arts sat outside the mainstream for a different reason. They were essentially oppositional. They emerged from a concern with creating new and 'liberatory' forms of expression; were characterised by the movement of fine artists out of the galleries and onto the streets; and embraced the emergence of political activists who believed that creativity was an essential tool in any kind of radical struggle (Kelly, 1984: 11). Consequently, when the Artists Placement Group was founded in 1962 to introduce artists as paid employees in workplaces with the intention of influencing society, it was categorically opposed to the principle of state funding (Stephens, 2002: 44). Some voluntary activity was also motivated by politics, although of a different kind. In the 1960s it had come to be recognised as a way of pressuring government for change, delivering services that people believed the state was failing to deliver or was delivering badly (Howlett, 2003).

By the mid-1980s, the political development of community arts is said to have been 'crippled' (Kelly, 1984: 2). A sense of liberal pragmatism had allowed them to be embraced by the arts bureaucracy. By appropriating the concept of 'arts and the community' arts funding bodies reinforced their perception of themselves as 'development bodies' charged with furthering individual and group creativity and partnerships through participation and consultation. The number of artist-in-residence programmes supported by the bureaucracy multiplied.[9] By 1991, the concept of 'arts in the community' had come to be associated with political expediency – emphasising access, and seeking 'to make links with social issues such as disadvantage, the environment, health, anti-racism and human rights' (Community Development Foundation, 1992: 3).

At about the same time, research into volunteering and amateur, or 'voluntary', arts revealed the sheer scale of people's involvement in them (Hutchison and Feist; 1991; Mattingly, 1984; Lynn and Davies Smith, 1991). Having once been regarded as peripheral or otherwise insignificant, the implications of their potential for developing social capital and overcoming social exclusion came to be appreciated. Other factors further conspired to bring about the appropriation of such activities into the mainstream. While the Arts Council had largely neglected issues of access and community art, its promotion of the arts as an economic catalyst to regeneration meant that – encouraged by the DNH – it found itself advocating

9 'The Year of the Artist' (2000/01), funded by the Arts Council, supported as many as 977 artists' residencies (Stephens, 2002:56).

a broader social regeneration and embracing participatory community projects. Its initiative, *An Urban Renaissance*, implicitly acknowledged that people were central to regeneration, and that the provision of 'a focal point for community pride and identity' and building 'self-confidence in individuals' were the cornerstones of urban renewal (ACGB, 1989). The findings of empirical research led Collard (1988) and Hutchison and Feist (1991: xv) to report on the increased self-confidence, motivation and personal discipline of individuals who participated in arts activities. Communities were also seen to benefit by gaining a focus, greater awareness of their own needs and the ability to respond positively to local and national initiatives (Landry et al, 1993: 2).

The government's *Make a Difference* report (Home Office, 1995) set out its action plan for the promotion and development of volunteering. Its rhetoric focused on the notion that voluntary and community-based activities 'help build a better society and improve individuals' sense of participation and achievement' (DNH, 1997a: 51). Inspired by the idea, imported from the US, that the overall social health of a society reflects the strength of voluntary and community associations within it' (Robert Putnam cited by Bottomley, 1996: 3), its rationale was to 'help people to help themselves'. By contributing to (for instance, investing of themselves in) the improvement of services, people would see a return as services became 'more locally responsive and flexible' and 'economically efficient'. The creation of 'healthy, vibrant communities' would build civic pride and association; and community development would contribute to people's 'quality of life'. Moreover, community development programmes would 'deliver' in the sense of supporting programmes of crime reduction; and, local communities owning programmes to improve health and diet.

The fact that, in 1996, DNH assumed responsibility for voluntary organisations, volunteering and community development, boosted the formal adoption of these ideas by the cultural sector. The department self-consciously took to developing the links between 'quality of life, community and enjoyment'. It perceived that issues around volunteering had a close synergy with the department's original rationale, in particular its commitment to widening access. As the then Permanent Secretary put it:

> *The work of volunteering and community development fitted rather well with a portfolio, which, including the lottery, is now reaching out right across the country and having an effect on a vast array of communities.*
>
> (Haydon Phillips cited in HoC, 1996: 6)

In was in this context that lottery funding, intended for the 'public good', was perceived as 'the best opportunity for many years for communities to gain financial help to make hopes and aspirations a reality'. Revisions to the lottery directions issued in April 1996, meant that the focus of lottery funding was shifted away from prestigious capital projects to local community projects – thus making more opportunities available for voluntary and community organisations to access lottery funding dedicated to the arts and heritage (Selwood, 2001b). The department also initiated a set of projects which encouraged participation as a way of fostering 'pride, satisfaction, and self-confidence' (DNH, 1996b; 1996c).

Many of the social and economic concerns that had underpinned DNH's initiatives were

taken to an entirely new level with the election of New Labour in 1997. But, it was DNH's late preoccupation with 'quality of life' that ultimately proved important in the subsequent development of interest in evidence about the cultural sector.

The difficulties implicit in assessing the impact of cultural sector funding on 'quality of life' were already apparent before the DCMS was established. Whereas Peter Brooke, as Secretary of State for National Heritage (1992–1994), had been content to claim that the arts could help deal with problems of unemployment and alienation in the inner cities, as well as contributing to the creation of a classless and tolerant society (DNH, 1993b), his successor but one, Virginia Bottomley, who was also responsible for 'community development', acknowledged the very considerable difficulties implicit in the government's concern with assessing 'quality of life'.

> *Some of the indicators I have in mind are those with which I was particularly concerned when Secretary of State for Health – levels of disease, life expectancy, quality of diet. Other indicators are within my current remit – opportunities for artistic expression and sporting activity, access to libraries and the media. Such attempts to access quality of life may well only be partially successful.*
>
> (Bottomley, 1996: 7)

The task that lay ahead for the Secretaries of State who succeeded her was even more difficult. Quantifying 'opportunities' for artistic expression was one thing, but from 1999, cultural providers were expected to provide evidence of their contribution to combating social exclusion by such prescribed measures as 'lowering long-term unemployment, less crime, better health and better qualifications' (Policy Action Team 10, 1999: 3) – ambitions reiterated in the department's current Strategic Plan (DCMS, 2003a).

In attempting to bring culture closer into line with government policy, the DCMS required the cultural sector to justify its funding by demonstrating the impact it was making, particularly in the area of social inclusion – and particularly as a result of access initiatives, participatory and community development projects. As the following sections of this chapter suggest, one of the most substantial difficulties that the sector encountered under this new regime was providing robust evidence to support what had, by then, become standard claims.

Part 2: the Department for Culture, Media and Sport

From its establishment in 1997, shortly after Labour's election victory,[10] one of DCMS's most striking characteristics – and one which set it apart from its predecessor departments – was its very explicit concern to contribute to the government's manifesto commitments.

In line with the government's overriding ambition to 'modernise' public services in general, the department set about 'reforming' the subsidised

10 The DCMS was established in July 1997. Building on the remit of the DNH, the department become closely associated with what it referred to as the 'creative industries'. Following the 2001 general election, it acquired several additional policy areas including gambling, licensing, film and video classification, horseracing and planning for the Queen's Golden Jubilee.

cultural sector in particular. While its concerns were driven by New Labour's agenda, DCMS also developed and massively accelerated many of DNH's initiatives – not least, its economic and social agenda and its push for greater accountability.[11] The roles it assigned to data collection and performance indicators could be said to be indicative of the links between New Labour and Thatcherism.

DCMS's programme for reform can be tracked through the unprecedented number of cultural policy and review documents that it published during the government's first term in office and during Chris Smith's tenure as Secretary of State.[12] During this period, the department increased its own accountability as well as that of its sponsored bodies. It sought to transform the sector from being 'an evidence-free zone' to one in which evidence could be used to inform policy and planning a propos of *Modernising Government*'s focus on evidence-based policy (Cabinet Office, 1999) and the Cabinet Office's promotion of improved analysis (Cabinet Office, Performance and Innovation Unit, 2000b). Consequently, the collection, analysis and use of data came to assume considerable importance.

This section sets out DCMS's priorities and, following the structure of the previous section on the DNH, goes on to consider its economic as well as its 'new' social and 'reforming' agenda. It closes by describing another priority – the department's requirement for evidence and the systems of accountability that it put in place to ensure its delivery.

Priorities

Given the doubts that had existed as to the seriousness of the DNH, DCMS was insistent that it should not be perceived as a Cinderella department (Smith, 1998: 2).[13] From the start, it committed itself to playing 'a full part in "joined-up government"', not least because the government was said to place a high value on culture, media and sport: 'They are central to what it wants to do, whether on the economy, quality of life or tackling exclusion' (*Modern Public Services for Britain: Investing in Reform*, 1998 cited in DCMS, 1999a: 8).

DCMS's first annual report described its aims as being

> *... guided by four central themes: the promotion of access, for the many not just the few; the pursuit of excellence and innovation; the nurturing of educational opportunity and the fostering of the creative industries, which provide a growing proportion of Britain's employment and wealth ... aims which resonate across every other department of government.*
>
> (DCMS, 1998b)

11 DCMS initiatives inherited from DNH, but not described here in any detail, include: the nurturing of young talent (DNH, 1996b); the encouragement of good arts practice in schools and their collaboration with cultural organisations (DNH, 1996c); the promotion of access to Culture Online (DNH, 1997b); and an emphasis on the 'learning' power of museums (Anderson, 1997; 1999, see also note 18).

12 Since 2001, under Tessa Jowell as Secretary of State, the department's priorities have shifted to licensing, gambling and the Communications Bill (http://www,culture.gov.uk/global/publications/archive, accessed 30.6.03).

13 Far from being the lowest spending department, as has often been assumed, the Treasury's Public Expenditure Analysis (2002c) suggests that, from 1997, DCMS's total managed expenditure (in real terms), consistently exceeded those of Housing and International Development and, occasionally, Agriculture, Fisheries, Food and Forestry – accounting for 0.6 per cent of GDP.

Well into the government's second term, DCMS is still seeking '... to maximise the contribution that culture, media and sport make to the government's wider social, education and economic objectives' (DCMS, 2002a: 28). In spring 2002, the department adjusted its priorities to cover what are colloquially referred to as 'kids, community, economy and modernising delivery'. These involve 'enhancing access for children and young people and giving them the opportunity to develop their talents to the full'; 'opening up ... institutions to the wider community to promote lifelong learning and social cohesion'; 'maximising the contribution which tourism and the creative industries make to the economy'; and 'modernising delivery by ensuring our sponsored bodies are set, and meet, targets which put the customer first' (DCMS, 2003a: 18–19).

Despite a change of emphasis, the parameters of the department's priorities have remained relatively consistent – with access, education and the creation of opportunities, inclusion, economy and modernisation still predominating:[14] together with its emphasis on 'meeting targets' and its calls for the production of evidence, these themes constitute the major focus of this section.

The economic agenda

A major concern of DCMS is that its sectors 'achieve their economic potential' (DCMS, 2003a). It encourages projects funded under the Public Finance Initiative (PFI; DCMS, 2002f) and looks 'beyond subsidy, in encouraging links between the publicly supported and privately financed initiatives, and in promoting the wider sectors' (DCMS, 1998c).

At the core of DCMS's economic initiatives was its objective to foster the 'creative industries' – indeed for a while the department was virtually synonymous with the promotion of the creative industries. The Creative Industries Taskforce was announced at the same time as the department's own new name (DCMS, 1997). It sought to raise the profile and mainstream the concept of the creative industries into the policy agenda of most public sector bodies; to assess the economic contribution of the creative industries; and to explore the key issues impacting on their development and future success (see 'Instituting reform beyond DCMS's sponsored bodies' below).

Quantifying the economic value of the sector depends on data collection, and it is significant that the department published two 'mapping documents' on the creative industries, which sought to quantify their productivity, employment, revenue generation and exports, and to 'identify and introduce improvements' (DCMS, 1998e; 2001c). While the interests of the Taskforce are currently not as high profile as they were, a major concern of its Regional Cultural Data Framework is to capture evidence as to the sector's employment and economic performance (DCMS/RCCs, 2002).

Like its predecessor department, the DNH, DCMS has concerned itself with regeneration – but rather than stressing economic impact (arguably) at the cost of social impact, it has looked to the wider range of impacts associated with capital- and revenue-funded cultural projects including 'health,

14 DCMS refers to its action plan, devised in response to the *Modernising Government* White Paper, as being designed to improve the way policy is made; improving the responsiveness and quality of services offered to the public; promoting better use of IT; and focusing on leadership and management (http://www.culture.gov.uk/about_dcms/open_government/default.htm (accessed 30.06.03).

education, transport, crime and community renewal opportunities' (DCMS, 2003b). Indeed, the government perceives economic and social regeneration, community and citizenship development as mutually dependent (http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/comrace/active/index.html; accessed 21.01.04).

The social agenda

In its early years, DCMS's desire to establish a social purpose for its funding stream, rested on its aspiration for greater access to and take-up of cultural 'provision'.

> *We wish to make the best available to everyone, and to do it not by making rhetorical speeches but by enforcing funding agreements that require arts institutions to reach out to the communities around them. Isn't that what any civilised society should aspire to do? And if the arts are a civilising influence shouldn't we seek to extend this to every housing estate, every primary school, every old people's home? That seems to me an entirely appropriate function of government in a modern democracy.*
>
> (Smith, 1999: 14)

This aspiration was continually repeated in the mantra, 'for the many, not just the few' (DCMS, 1998a; 1999b) – a slogan also used by other government departments, including the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES).

Reasons for increasing access include its role in 'economics and audience development as well as equality of opportunity, social justice and compliance with legislation' (http://www.resource.gov.uk/action/learnacc/00 insplearn.asp, accessed 27.11.03). Research showed that cultural provision is relatively underused by people from ethnic minority backgrounds, those with disabilities and those on lower incomes. DCMS's preoccupation with access manifested itself in the construction of targets for the sector, such as '300,000 new chances to experience the arts. 200,000 new educational sessions' (DCMS,1998c) and increasing 'by 500,000 by 2004 the numbers of people experiencing the arts' (DCMS, 2002a: 31).

The department's current strategy, which covers the period 2003/06, calls for specific access targets to be met by museums. Its Strategic Priority 1, 'Enhancing access to a fuller cultural and sporting life for children and young people and giving them the opportunity to develop their talents to the full', calls for regional and national museums to deliver education programmes in partnership with schools and to meet a target of 6.85 million participants. By way of contributing to this, the nationals are expected to increase the numbers of visits by children and young people by 7 million by 2005/06; and the regional hub museums to increase their contacts with children by 25 per cent (DCMS, 2003a: 26). The department's Strategic Priority 2 is about 'Opening up our institutions to the wider community to promote lifelong learning and social cohesion'. This requires national and regional museums to increase visitors from under-represented groups against two targets: '8 per cent increase in adult C2DE visitors to sponsored museums and galleries' and '500,000 visits by new users to regional hub museums, including 100,000 from ethnic minorities' (DCMS, 2003a: 27).[15]

15 This is at some variance from Resource's target for *Renaissance in the Regions*, which is 'to attract an additional 500,000 visits to Regional Hub Museums by new users predominantly from social classes C2DE and ethnic minorities by the end of 2005/6'.

The development of initiatives intended to stimulate 'greater participation' is described as having been shaped by an 'overreaching structure' which encompasses free admission to the previously charging national museums and galleries; Creative Partnerships'[16] and the nationals' partnerships with regional museums and the department's joint initiatives with the Department for Education (HoC, 2002: Ev 38, para 131).[17] As this implies, access is often taken to be synonymous with education.

Within the museums sector, 'learning' is being championed by Resource.[18] It has developed a 'vision' for 'accessible learning' in museums, archives and libraries entitled Inspiring Learning for All (http://www.resource.gov.uk/action/learnacc/00 insplearn.asp, accessed 27.11.03). This assumes that the common purpose shared by institutions across all three domains is that of 'supporting and enabling learning through making accessible their various resources and collections'. The initiative is intended to encourage them 'to question what they do, why they do it and to assess their effectiveness against what is widely agreed to be best practice'. The *Learning Outcomes Toolkit* (due for publication in early 2004), based on a system for describing learning and quantifying data, will also cover 'generic learning outcomes'[19] and guidance on measuring learning.

If learning is subject to measurement, so too is social inclusion. This represents a major interest of this chapter, partly because 'finding ways of reducing the incidence of social exclusion is currently at the heart of British public policy' (Matarasso, 2003: 11), but also because of the alacrity with which DCMS and its 'family' has sought to quantify, if not qualify, the impact they are making on social exclusion.

Within months of the 1997 election, the Cabinet Office had established a Social Exclusion Unit, which reported to the Prime Minister on ways in which government departments could work together to create a more equitable and inclusive society predicated on reducing the incidence of social exclusion. It identified social exclusion with problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown.[20]

16 A government-funded project launched in 2002 that aims to give school children in deprived areas throughout England the opportunity to develop 'creativity' in learning and to participate in cultural activities.

17 This included publications such as DCMS/DfES (2000) and a number of joint funding initiatives such as the Museums & Galleries Education Programme, Creative Partnerships and the Education Programme Delivery Plan associated with *Renaissance in the Regions*.

18 The term 'learning' is used here as distinct from 'education'. While the latter implies a society-wide system with common standards, the is used to emphasise individual learners, learning processes and learning outcomes (Research Centre for Museums and Galleries, 2003).

19 These are characterised as: an increase in knowledge and understanding; an increase in skills; a change in attitudes or values; evidence of enjoyment, inspiration and creativity; evidence of activity, behaviour, progression' (Research Centre for Museums and Galleries, 2003: 11).

20 It has been suggested that this definition doesn't go far enough, and that it overlooks the notion that social exclusion can be seen as the 'powerful, if unintentional side-effect of how majorities organise to meet their interests': 'a social process within a whole society rather than a way of categorising individuals and groups within that society'. According to this analysis, social exclusion goes further than the everyday experience of poverty and that 'social isolation and a *de facto*, if not *de jure*, disenfranchisement from participation in the political and economic life of the country' should be added (Matarasso, 2003: 11).

The Social Exclusion Unit proposed that successful neighbourhood renewal would depend 'on communities themselves having the power and taking responsibility to make things better' (Policy Action Team 10, 1999: 2). It recommended the formation of a number of Policy Action Teams to look at different areas of public policy and propose ways in which social exclusion might be tackled head on – producing what was referred to as a 'joined up solution' to a 'joined up problem' (Cabinet Office, 1998). DCMS's response was to report back on how

> *... art and sport can not only make a valuable contribution to delivering key outcomes of lower long-term unemployment, less crime, better health and better qualifications, but can also help to develop the individual pride, community spirit and capacity for responsibility that enable communities to run regeneration programmes themselves.*
>
> (Policy Action Team 10, 1999: 2)

The department subsequently established its own Social Inclusion Action Plan, designed to ensure that social inclusion objectives were incorporated across the whole of its remit – often through 'cross-domain' initiatives. Each museum, gallery, archive and library, for example, was expected to 'recognise its social responsibilities and to be considering and reaching informed decisions about how it can best meet the needs of its communities' (DCMS, 2001a).[21] The latest idea from DfES is for museums to run 'city academies' (Kelly, 2003).

The sector's support of community projects was further enhanced by a series of reforms which shifted the distribution of lottery funding 'away from grand plans towards smaller "micro" projects for local communities' and voluntary organisations (Woolf, 2002). Such issues informed DCMS's 2003 Lottery Review in particular (http://www.culture.gov.uk/global/publications/archive-2003). They reflect the government's vigorous cultivation of volunteering and 'active citizenship', which is perceived as empowering, and creating a stake in the community for people as well as enhancing their sense of citizenship (Howlett, 2003).

The department's requirement for evidence

> *We must always be looking at the outcomes of policies – the benefits in people's lives.*
>
> (Tony Blair, Foreword to HM Treasury, 2002a).

DCMS's concern with evidence is fundamental to its being seen to deliver on its economic and social agendas. Indeed, one of the ambitions of Labour's first administration was to enhance the actual and perceived integrity of all official statistics (HM Treasury, 1999). The government also committed itself to evidence-based policy (Cabinet Office Strategic Policy Making Team, 1999; Performance and Innovation Unit, 2001; Bullock et al, 2001), which is concerned with basing 'policies on demonstrable evidence of effectiveness' (Walker, 2000).

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21 This also informed other initiatives, including: the department's publication of access standards for museums' and galleries' policies (DCMS (1999b); policy guidance on social inclusion for museums, galleries and archives (DCMS, 2000a); and encouragement for libraries, museums, galleries and archives to co-operatively tackle social exclusion (DCMS, 2001b). Similar proposals have been made for the built and historic environment (DCMS, 2002e).

Since 1999, various Cabinet Office initiatives related to the modernising of the government's agenda have been predicated on the principle of creating 'the conditions within which rigorous analysis is routinely demanded and delivered' across Whitehall.[22] Those effectively called for a fundamental change in the culture by requiring that 'good analysis' should be 'placed at the heart of policy-making'; that the 'best available evidence from a wide range of sources' should be used; that it should inform the development and reform of policies and services; that research should be used to understand broad policy contexts and complex policy areas; and that forecasting should be used to contribute to policy implementation.

It could reasonably be argued that previous attempts to collect data were associated with the introduction of strategic development rather than assessing impact – not least given the absence of policy related to the cultural sector. On its establishment, DCMS found that decisions about expenditure were largely taken outside the department; that there was 'little strategic direction from the centre; and only limited knowledge of how public money has delivered government objectives' (DCMS, 1998c).[23]

In practice, much of DCMS's publicly available work around data collection has been concerned with establishing a baseline understanding of its sectors, in particular the creative industries (DCMS, 1998; 2001c) and, more recently, establishing a framework for gathering data at a regional level (DCMS/RCCs, 2002). It continuously monitors its sponsored organisations to ensure the delivery of its priorities and, by way of furthering the evaluation of its policies and programmes, it has also encouraged the production of evidence as to its sectors' continuing contribution to combating social exclusion (http://culture/gov/uk/global/research, accessed 30.6.03). Its pursuit of evidence-based policy, however, remains at an early stage (DCMS, 2003e).

DCMS's framework for 'reform'

> *We will give direction; we will set targets and chase progress; and where appropriate we will take direct action to make sure that our objectives are achieved.*
>
> (DCMS, 1998a)

Given that the department's own accountability depends on the performance of its sponsored bodies, it devised what it described as a reforming 'approach to investment in culture', predicated on how it saw the cultural framework functioning in the future. This:

- Defined a new strategic role for the department, in the delivery of cultural policy and funding;
- Set out the terms of a new relationship between the department and the bodies that it funds to ensure the delivery of the appropriate outputs

22 See, for instance, the Cabinet Office's *Modernising Government* White Paper (1999); Cabinet Office Strategic Policy Making Team (1999); and Cabinet Office, Performance and Innovation Unit (2000b).

23 This recalls the situation highlighted by the Rayner Scrutiny of the museums funded by the then Department of Science (1982) cited by Cossons, (1985: 43): 'If government is going to be the major funder, then government has to subscribe to some defined aims, to a plan, and not to paying for what the director or the trustees happen to think they should be doing when they wake up in the morning in a certain mood'.

Table 2.1 Department for Culture, Media and Sport's resource budget, 1998/99–2005/06

	1998/99[a]	1999/00[a]	2000/01[a]	2001/02[a]	2002/03[b]	2003/04[c]	2004/05[c]	2005/06[c]	Total
Annual budget									
Museums and galleries (£millions)	241	270	294	323	353	378	383	389	2631
Year-on-year percentage change		12.0	8.9	9.9	9.3	7.1	1.3	1.6	
Arts (£millions)	193	230	239	254	297	337	367	412	2329
Year-on-year percentage change		19.2	3.9	6.3	16.9	13.5	8.9	12.3	
Increase over 1998/99 baseline									
Museums and galleries (£millions)		29	53	82	112	137	142	148	
Arts (£millions)	37	46	61	104	144	174	219		

Note: a) out-turns;
Note: b) estimated out-turn;
Note: c) plans
Source: DCMS, 2003f: 76

and benefits to the public to be articulated through the introduction of three-year funding agreements, 'placing clear responsibilities on those bodies to deliver against demanding targets';

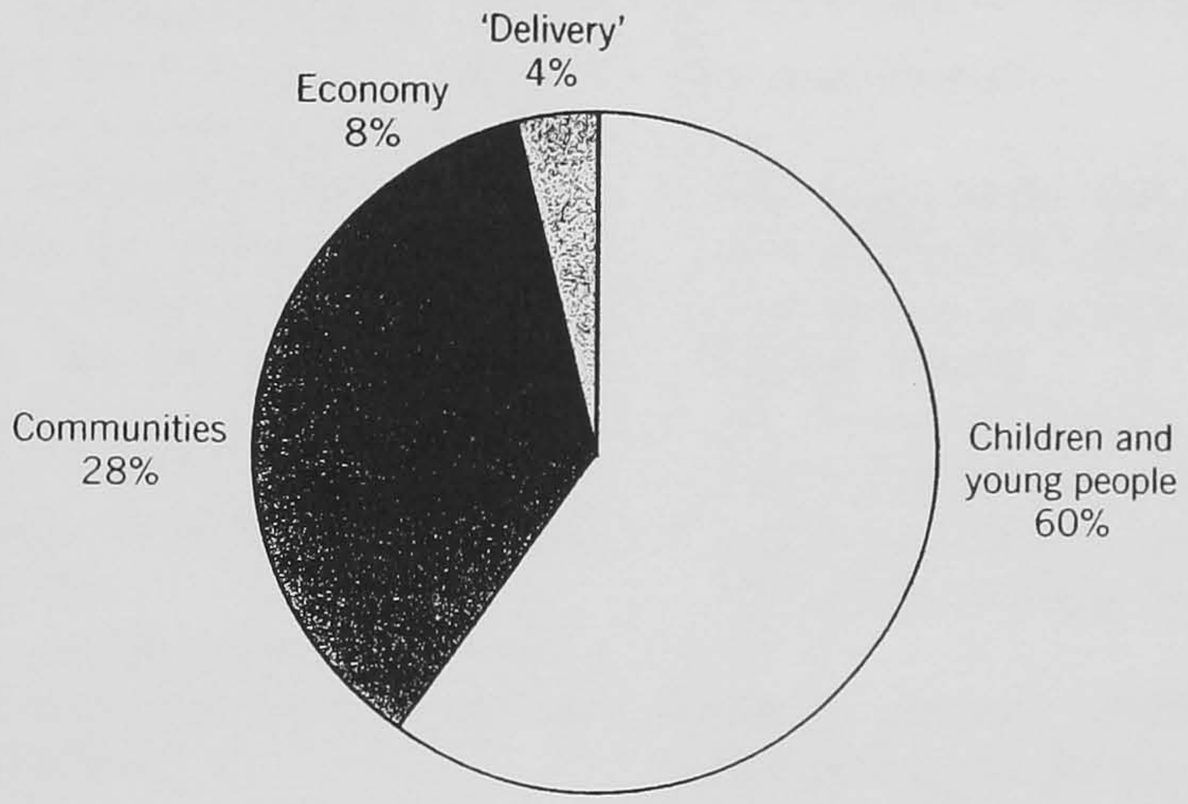
- Streamlined the way policies and programmes are delivered – not least, through the establishment of new strategic sectoral bodies; and
- Sought to raise standards of efficiency and financial management across all its sectors, this was reinforced by the establishment of a new watchdog, QUEST (the Quality, Efficiency and Standards Team), intended to work alongside the NAO, the Audit Commission and sponsored bodies' own auditors 'to monitor and improve standards of efficiency and promote quality across our sectors' (DCMS, 2000b; DCMS, 1998a).

This infrastructure was ultimately driven by DCMS tying its expenditure to its objectives and needing to be 'assured that public money is being used appropriately to meet public objectives' (DCMS, 1998a). For the cultural sector, this signified closure on any possibility of 'grants for grants' sake' (Smith, 1999: 14). As the Secretary of State insisted:

> *This is not something for nothing. We want to see measurable outcomes for the investment which is being made. From now on there will be real partnership with obligations and responsibilities.*
>
> (DCMS, 1998d)

'Investing for reform' as the rhetoric has it (DCMS, 2001d: 39), is based on the notion that the 'more money invested, [the] more results are required' (HM Treasury, 2002a: Foreword). Having initially stuck to spending plans inherited from the

Figure 2.1 Approximate breakdown of 'new' expenditure (above 2002/03 base units) as set out in the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's Strategic Plan, 2003–2006



Source: DCMS, 2003a: 33

Conservatives, the incoming Labour government initially planned a £290 million boost for its sectors for the period 1999/00–2000/02 (DCMS, 1998a), and has subsequently increased its revenue funding to museums, galleries and libraries and the arts substantially. Table 2.1 shows DCMS's out-turns and plans up to 2005/06.

Those increases in funding to the sector have tended to be earmarked for specific DCMS 'themes' – largely predicated on, for example, the expectation of

> *... outcomes which reflect our four central themes ... They will be linked to the delivery of increased outputs, improved access and efficiency and increased private sector support, reflected in the funding agreements from 1999.*
> (DCMS, 1998a)

Consequently, some of that increased funding was tied to rewarding 'better service delivery'. DCMS could, therefore, report that

> *Between 1999–2000 and 2000–2001, attendance at arts organisations funded by the Arts Council increased by nearly 2 million*[24]*. This impressive achievement will be further enhanced by the largest ever increase in arts funding from government. By 2003–2004 funding for the arts will have increased by £100 million in comparison to 2000–2001.*
> (DCMS, 2002a: 45)

24 The key performance indicators published by DCMS (DCMS, 2002a, Sponsored Bodies: 12) show that attendance at ACE's regularly funded organisations increased by 779,000 between 1999/00 and 2000/01. While this was over target, attendance at educational sessions was stable over the two years and remained marginally under target.

Actually quantifying the amount of funding dedicated to delivering policy initiatives is remarkably difficult – partly because it entails identifying new monies (as opposed to monies already committed); partly because it implies disaggregating sums allocated to particular themes rather than core activities; and partly because of the time of over which monies are committed. The DCMS Strategic Plan 2003–2006 breaks down its new expenditure (above the 2002/03 baselines) as follows: children and young people, £176 million; communities, £83.5 million; economy, £24.2 million; and 'delivery', £12.8 million (see Figure 2.1) (DCMS, 2003a: 33).

Since 1999/00, central government commitments of additional funding to museums and arts programmes have included:

- £70 million, earmarked for 'modernising regional museums', 2003–06 (DCMS, 2002c; 2003d). DCMS has indicated that as much as £10 million of this settlement should be allocated to delivering an education programme over the spending review period, 2003/04–2005/06.
- £5 million in 2001/02 and subsequently £6 million set down as a recurrent sum to preserve free access to Tate Modern from 2001 (DCMS, 2000d);
- £83 million to compensate the previously charging national museums and galleries for free access,1999/00–2003/04 (HoC, 2002, Ev 88: Annex 3);
- £3 million for Phase 1 Museums and Galleries Education programme funded through DfES (correspondence with Julie Street, Resource, 10.07.03), followed by £1 million for Phases 2 and 3 (Resource, 2002a);
- £2.5 million for national museums to deliver children's education in partnership with regional museums (DCMS, 2003d).

Plus some share of:

- £20 million for the New Audiences programme, 1998–2003 (ACE, 2002: 5);
- £13 million for Culture Online 2002–2004 (DCMS, 2002d);
- £40 million for Creative Partnerships phase 1, 2002–2004 (DCMS, 2001e), followed by £70 million for subsequent phases (DCMS, 2003c). This includes funding from DfES.

Spending Reviews: DCMS's Public Service Agreement and its funding agreements with its sponsored bodies

The Treasury's Spending Reviews drive the processes of accountability to which DCMS and its sponsored bodies are subject. Since the 1997 election, there have been three – in 1998, 2000 and 2002. A fourth is scheduled for 2004. These are extremely important for all government departments and the NDPBs within their areas of responsibility, in that they focus the need for departments to provide cogent arguments to justify their budgets, not least in the sense of competing with other departments of state for funding. Departments are theoretically required to demonstrate the effective delivery of their objectives, based on the resources they are given, if they are to receive enhanced budgets in subsequent rounds. Consequently, the pressure to collect and present evidence is paramount. This has a knock-on effect for those departments where a large part of their budget is distributed via NDPBs, such as DCMS. Another example is the

Table 2.2 Reconciliation of the Department of Culture, Media and Sport's Public Service Agreement targets from the 2000 Spending Review with the 2002 targets

Targets at SR 2000	Reconciliation to SR 2002 targets	Targets at SR 2002
1. Ensure all public libraries have internet access by the end of 2002	Not rolled forward into new PSA. Should have been met by end 2002	1. Enhance the take-up of sporting opportunities by 5–16 year olds. Joint target with DfES
2. Introduce at least 12 Creative Partnerships by March 2004 targeted on deprived areas. Ensure that every school child in the Partnership area has access to an innovative cultural programme and create opportunities	Not rolled forward into new PSA. Should have been met by end 2002 and become an output for cultural participation	2. Increase significantly the take-up of cultural and sporting opportunities by new users aged 20 and above from priority groups
3. Raise significantly, year on year, the average time spent on sport and physical activity by those aged 6 to 16	Superceded by Target 1	3. Improve the productivity of the tourism, creative and leisure industries
4. Increase the numbers of children attending museums and galleries by a third by 2004	Partly met; will continue to be monitored	4. Improve significantly the value for money of the department's sponsored bodies measured by a matrix of NDPB indicators
5. Increase by 500,000 the numbers of people experiencing the arts by 2004	Superceded by Target 2	
6. Conduct a value for money study of the bodies sponsored by the department by April 2002, and significantly improve the average performance by 2004	Superceded by Target 4	
	New Target 3	

Source: HM Treasury, 2002b

Office of Science and Technology, which is responsible for distributing the science vote to the Higher Education Research Councils.

Spending Reviews, thus, inform DCMS's will to enforce the accountability of its funded organisations and demonstrate progress in delivering improvements in public services, articulated via its Public Service Agreement (PSA). According to the Treasury, PSAs constitute 'a clear commitment to the public on what they can expect for their money', but another official source suggests that they are, in effect, departments' contracts with the Treasury (HoC, 1999: para 21). Either way, such agreements were introduced through the 1998 Comprehensive Spending Review and essentially function by motivating departments to deliver on the government's agenda. They are tied to biennial Spending Reviews, and outline each department's aims and objectives and its specific and measurable targets for the following three years,[25] thereby enabling

25 Thus, the 1998 Comprehensive Spending Review carried PSA targets for 1999–02; the 2000 Spending Review, targets for 2001-04; and the 2002 Spending Review, targets for 2003-06.

government to monitor whether they are indeed delivering 'better public services' and how effectively its resources are being used. Each department is responsible for monitoring progress against each element of their PSA and publishing the results in their annual reports.

While bound to a PSA, departmental objectives and targets necessarily evolve. Once met, targets drop off the agenda, or are superseded. Those that have only been partly met continue to be monitored within the context of the next PSA. Table 2.2 shows how DCMS's targets, for example, changed and were reconciled between the 2000 and 2002 Spending Reviews.

Given that DCMS's targets are ultimately delivered by its NDPBs, responsibility is passed on to them through their funding agreements, which are similarly subject to revision (HoC, 1999, Part 11: para 15).

> *We wish to make the best available to everyone and to do it not by making rhetorical speeches but by enforcing funding agreements that require arts institutions to reach out to the communities around them.*
>
> (Smith, 1999: 14)

These funding agreements set out funding commitments and targets for a three-year period, which parallels the fixed three-year spending plans implemented under the Comprehensive Spending Review. In pragmatic terms, they

> *... set out the overall aims and objectives of the department, any particular aims for the sector in question and the aims and objectives of the quango. They then set out what are viewed by the department as 'explicit and challenging statements of the outputs and levels of performance expected of sponsored bodies over the funding period'.*
>
> (HoC, 1999 Part 11: para 11)

So, leaving aside questions as to how challenging the targets actually are and whether they represent the long-term interests of the sponsored institutions (HoC, 2002. Ev 21: para 73), funding agreements constitute the tool through which DCMS 'gives direction'; sets targets and chases progress; and 'where appropriate will take direct action to make sure that its objectives are achieved' (DCMS, 1998a; HoC, 1999. Part 11: (i), 21–22).

The regional agenda

While DCMS primarily depends on its sponsored bodies to deliver policy, it has been concerned that they extend their influence throughout the regions. This reflects the importance that government attaches to the regions in the light of its plans for devolution and its new 'constitutional' agenda, as set out in the White Paper, *Your Region, Your Choice* (ODPM, 2002a). The Heritage Lottery Fund, for example, which had already devised strategies and devolved funding to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (HLF, 1999: 7 and 10) opened a number of offices in the English regions in May 2002 as a way of bringing about a more equitable spread of its grants across the UK (HLF, 2002: 25–26). Resource was also asked to establish cross-domain regional agency arrangements in each English region by April 2004, with the intention that these will provide 'strategic leadership' enabling museums, archives and libraries to 'participate fully in wider regional developments (Resource, 2002b: 21).

While DCMS primarily depends on its sponsored bodies to deliver policy, it has also been concerned

to extend its influence beyond its immediate remit to the regions and to local authorities. This reflects the government's overall desire to establish better integration of its objectives at regional and local levels and to modernise local government (Cabinet Office, Performance and Innovation Unit, 2000a).

The regions

The situation that DCMS found in the regions around the time of the 1998 Comprehensive Spending Review was that the 'subsidised' sectors were represented by a range of structures including regional arts boards, regional tourist boards, regional offices of English Heritage and the English Sports Council, area museum councils and voluntary regional library structures. There were also Regional Cultural Forums – informal groupings of regional bodies which primarily functioned as talking shops (DCMS, 1998c). The department recognised these regional agencies as having considerable strategic potential, not least because their interests often overlapped and were complementary. Indeed, DCMS maintained that they shared its own key cultural objectives:

> *promoting access, pursuing excellence and innovation, educational opportunity and fostering creative industries' as well as its desire 'to maximise the contribution of the sector to broader social objectives such as tackling social exclusion, cutting crime and improving health.*
> (DCMS, 1998c)

As small and fragmented bodies, however, they were often ineffective at turning these shared activities into 'joint practical action'.

As a consequence, the department's *New Cultural Framework* (1998a) proposed a 'joined-up' approach[26] to the regions, through the establishment of 'new strategic bodies'. Building on the existing Regional Cultural Forums, these would bring together regional agencies, including local authorities, and empower them with executive functions for grant-in-aid and lottery monies. In short, they would serve as cohesive structures for the planning and delivery of DCMS policy at regional level. In that capacity, they would work alongside the new Regional Development Agencies, whose remit was to further the economic development and regeneration of the regions and the proposed regional assemblies.

In 1999 Regional Cultural Consortiums (RCCs)[27] were established in each English region except London, where the Mayor established a Cultural Strategy Group. The remit of the RCCs is to 'advise and inform' central and local government, lottery distributors and regional development agencies and other regional partners. Their chairs are appointed by the Secretary of State and they receive nominal funding from the DCMS (about £150,000).

Regional Cultural Strategies for the RCCs, published in 2001, were launched by ministers. These strategies set out regional 'visions' for periods of between five and ten years. While

26 The then Regional Arts Boards were cited as an example of bodies acting in each region on behalf of ACE, the British Film Institute and the Crafts Council; ACE and English Heritage were delegating more power to the regions; the pilot for the lottery 'Awards for All' (a cross-distributor initiative) constituted a model for joint working; and local authorities were perceived as having moved to integrated structures 'for the delivery of cultural, leisure and tourism services'.

27 They are: Living East, East Midlands Cultural Consortium, Culture North East, North West Cultural Consortium, South East England Cultural Consortium, Culture South West, West Midlands Life and Yorkshire Cultural Consortium.

'responding to the needs of the local communities', these also provide a 'strategic overview' and outline attempts to tackle the wider objectives of social inclusion, regeneration, lifelong learning and safer communities.

From 1999, DCMS also established a presence in all the regional government offices which coordinate the work of central government departments. Its regional officers are charged with overseeing 'the achievement of better quality and more accessible cultural and sporting programmes and projects in the regions' and with providing support for the RCCs.

Local authorities

The government's agenda on local authorities is characterised by a continuing, centrally driven attempt to improve the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of local authorities – first inaugurated by the Audit Commission and since then continued through various pieces of legislation and initiatives under the banner of 'modernising local government' (Travers, 2001). A major component of that has been 'Best Value' – part of the first tranche of public policies concerned with quality management introduced after the 1997 election.

From April 2000, local authorities were required to 'achieve Best Value' and, in doing so, to comply with a set of national performance indicators determined by government, which necessitated that they make 'arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which [their] functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness' (Local Government Act, 1999). While local authorities' non-statutory cultural provision had largely escaped the Audit Commission's previous attempts to introduce performance indicators (Selwood, 1999), this was no longer the case under Best Value.

In much the same way that it has sought to work through the regions to create a 'a coherent and effective voice for the department's cultural and economic sectors', DCMS also regarded local authorities' cultural services as ideally placed to contribute to its objectives – their importance being manifest in the fact that local authorities support the cultural sector to the tune of some £2 billion annually (DCMS, 2002a. Review: 94). In terms of its specific remit, the department was able to impose accountability through local authorities' Annual Library Plans (outside the parameters of this chapter) and Local Cultural Strategies, which are discussed below.

DCMS's guidance on Local Cultural Strategies explained that these were intended to 'promote the cultural well-being of the area' in response to the needs and aspirations of the local community, while simultaneously relating to national and regional strategies and taking the aims and objectives of government departments – including DCMS – into account. On that basis, they were seen as a way of

> ... *increasing sustainable growth and employment, promoting fairness and opportunity and modernising public services. These include the cross-cutting agendas of: public heath, community safety, social inclusion, environmental sustainability, regeneration, the 'Active Community' initiatives and lifelong learning.*
>
> (DCMS, 2000e: 11)

The strategies, which were expected to be in place by December 2002 (DCMS, 2002a: 94), were intended to complement the 34 or so other govern-

ment initiatives to which local authorities were subject (DCMS, 1999a: 46).

Local Cultural Strategies were never statutory and the only external manifestation of their monitoring and review was a Best Value performance indicator, 2002/03 (ODPM, 2002b: BV 114). Anecdotal evidence suggests, however, that local authorities complied with their production partly because of the advantages managerially, but also because of the financial opportunities likely to arise from compliance. These include, for example, the department's PFI credits, pump priming grants available for authorities to meet targets set out in their local PSAs, the 'freedoms and flexibilities' to be won from being seen to be 'stretching their performance', and the fact that Local Government Teams need to approve applications for funding from European Regional Development Funds, which fall within DCMS's remit (http://www.culture.gov.uk/about dcms/local regional and international policy/Local/htm, accessed 01.07.03).

There is clearly a certain amount of pragmatism at work here. Cultural organisations need to take account of the policy environment in which they operate. Government support is inexorably bound up with demands for accountability. By bringing local authorities into the fold, DCMS lends itself to being perceived as a controlling bureaucracy. Its removal of admission charges to the national museums and galleries, for instance, has been criticised as forcing museums to become more dependent on government (HoC, 2002. Ev 46: paras 5.3–5.4), and although its funding of regional museums was in response to a highly pragmatic call for support (Regional Museums Task Force, 2001), it can be seen as bringing them closer to the centre (Selwood, 2002: 67). In many respects, such observations echo those made about the way in which Best Value has come to be regarded as an 'increasingly centralised approach' (Maile and Hoggett, 2001: 511), along the lines of criticisms made of Labour's reputation for 'control freakery' in general (Jones, 2002).

The way in which the cultural sector has responded to this varies, and attitudes to DCMS's agendas are divided. These are considered in Part 3.

Part 3: delivering on the agenda

In some quarters, the dominance of the government's agenda and the notion of the arts and museums as a panacea for various social ills is regarded as an anathema. So, too is its concern with targets and accountability. Despite the fact that this has been deployed to achieve what Chris Smith referred to as a 'profoundly democratising agenda' (Smith, 1998: 3), data collection has come to be regarded by some as undermining the integrity of the sector. 'To hell with targets' as Nicholas Hytner of the National Theatre put it (2003).

Numerous initiatives by DCMS's constituencies, nevertheless, suggest that many cultural sector bodies are not only amenable to the government's concerns to establish a social purpose for its cultural funding, but that they believe in and are more than ready to advocate their domains' potential to deliver. Indeed, swathes of the subsidised cultural sector – which are only now being mainstreamed – claim to have been delivering on social issues for years.

This section considers attitudes to the notion that the cultural sector should be delivering on a social agenda; the claims made as to its success; and, its attempts to construct an evidence base.

The 'new orthodoxy'

Both the arts and the museums sector have been accused of apathy in the face of the 'new orthodoxy' – 'the monotonous whine' of 'vacuous slogans of relevance, accessibility and inclusiveness' (Ryan, 2001: 8). This is probably most clearly articulated in the litany of claims attributed to the arts by DCMS: 'the arts are good for your health'; 'the arts have a key role in making our society a better place to live'; 'the arts ... can help tackle crime' (DCMS, 2000c; 2001b; 2002b).

Belief in the transformatory power of the arts, in particular, pervades the funding system and informs any number of policy documents and project descriptions. Assertions range from the general to the particular. The new Arts Council England, for instance, claims that:

> *... being involved with the arts can have a lasting and transforming effect on many aspects of people's lives. This is true not just for individuals, but also for neighbourhoods, communities, regions and entire generations, whose sense of identity and purpose can be changed through art.*
>
> (ACE, 2003)

Its predecessor, the Arts Council of England, rather more specifically cited its concerns as including: 'improving the quality of life for patients and staff' in health care; 'challenging negative stereotypes' of refugees; supporting work with young people at risk of offending; and coordinating 'a cultural response' to the 'crisis in agriculture'– namely, foot and mouth disease, genetically modified foods and BSE – through a National Arts and Agriculture Policy Forum (ACE, 2001: 12,13). Descriptions abound of projects dedicated to curing social ills or effecting social benefits.[28] One such project, based at Tate Liverpool, attempted to reduce violence towards women and children. 'Spending two hours in the gallery helps [participants] learn empathy, say probation officers, who see the session at the Tate as key to the programme' (Davis, 2003: 22).

While there are clearly distinctions to be made between the government establishing a social purpose for subsidised cultural activities and seeking to impose a social agenda on it, the sector's standard reflex tends to assume the latter. There are clearly pragmatic problems facing organisations expected to deliver on such agendas, not least that '...audience development, which is specifically designed to include the excluded, is so expensive and time consuming that it is in danger of bankrupting the arts' (Maitland and Roberts, 2002). Many people working in the cultural sector have taken issue with what they perceive to be the government's paternalism. Cultural policy makers have been compared to 'missionaries' and questions asked about whether 'benevolence' is actually capable of problem solving or removing the structural conditions that cause deprivation and exclusion. Critics have also taken issue with the ethics of imposing 'modes of behaviour on the poor, which the rest of society has rejected' (as in community centres, self-help groups, etc); the desire 'to transform the culture of studied communities and make them more similar to their own culture and values'; and the implications of changing, if not 'emancipating the researched' (Merli, 2002:

28 This is also true in the US. Deasy (2002), for instance, brings together numerous studies by way of demonstrating that the arts can 'enable all students to reach high levels of academic achievement', that they can contribute to improvements in overall school performance and create 'contexts... most conducive to learning'

112–113). Even consultants employed by DCMS have taken a dim view of the fact that much of the extant sectoral work they have reviewed on its behalf is 'redolent of social engineering' (Leeds Metropolitan University, 2002: 87).

The Institute of Ideas, which developed out of *LM* (*Living Marxism*) magazine and whose mission is to 'expand the boundaries of public debate', prompted discussions within the cultural sector by asserting that its compliance with government injunctions was unconsidered. Although it has since moved on to 'cultural diversity' (http://www.spiked-online.com/culturaldiversity, accessed 03.07.03), its questioning of the value of 'museums for "the people"' raised several issues which are considered here.

It argued, for instance, that reconfiguring 'museums for "the people"' had led the sector to dumb down; it disputed the government's recruitment of museums, galleries and other cultural organisations to combat social exclusion; and it cast doubt on such organisations' ability to deliver on 'joined up' policies. The Institute's main point of contention was that

> *... turning museums towards 'The People' ... is a total reversal of the meaning and the purpose of the museum and puts in question the existence of the museums as such ... the collection, preservation and study of objects deemed to be of artistic, historic or scientific interest.*
>
> (Appleton, 2001: 15)

It attributed blame for the development of people-centred museums and their emphasis on social activities to those 'new museum professionals', who enthusiastically grasped the tenets derived from the combined ideologies of the economic right and the cultural left, and whose objectives were 'empowerment, inclusiveness, diversity and customer satisfaction'.

David Fleming, the then director of Tyne & Wear Museums and convenor of the Group for Large Local Authority Museums (GLLAM), was singled out – not least because of his ambition 'to change the world' (Appleton, 2001: 17), but doubtless also because of his reputation for having turned around the visitor profile of Tyne & Wear Museums to include over 50 per cent C2DEs (Regional Museums Task Force, 2001: 43). The GLLAM report on *Museums and Social Inclusion* (Research Centre for Museums and Galleries, 2000), which offered case studies of museums 'which now function as composite health, education and social service centres' was also castigated, as was the Museum Association's then draft Code of Ethics, *Museums for the People*. The Institute demeaned the spectre of museums vying with each other to attract target groups – the young, ethnic minorities and the economically marginalised – as a result of prompting from the DCMS, and dismissed the notion of museums as sites of 'social bonding – meeting places for people in an increasingly diversified, fragmented and unequal society' (Appleton, 2001: 22).

The Institute of Ideas was far from being alone in its criticisms of what it regards as the imposition of a social agenda on the cultural sector. Nicholas Hytner, for instance, has denigrated the 'relentless and exclusive focus on the nature of our audience' (2003).

The published responses to *Museums for 'The People'?* did little to contradict the accusation of a lack of robust debate within the sector. Indeed, one museums person observed that the

> *... complacent belief among a still powerful group that curatorial indifference will win out in the end. This view has no wish to engage in debate and by definition has no interest, intellectual or otherwise, in justifying itself.*
>
> (O'Neill, 2002: 20)

The sector was rather less willing to accept that the absence of debate – even the 'lack of confidence' that it was accused of – related to its universal and uncritical acceptance of the principle of access, however. Contributors to *Museums for 'The People'?* accused the Institute of using arguments which were over-simplified, overstated and misrepresentative.[29] Others castigated it for having overlooked museums educationalists' longstanding work around access and inclusion in particular (Cox and Sillis, 2002).

Even through museums were committed to promoting social inclusion before the advent of the DCMS, however, some element of opportunism subsequently informed the sector's attitude. The Regional Museums Task Force's case for additional funding for major regional museums was inevitably made on the basis of enabling them to deliver on the government's agenda (Regional Museums Task Force, 2001). The Local Government Association similarly advocated the strength and sophistication of local authority cultural services' ability to deliver 'cross-cutting' community activities in compliance with much of the government's guidance for local authority reform (Local Government Association, 2002). Some part of the acquiescence of DCMS's sponsored bodies to the government's agenda doubtless also constitutes a pragmatic response to the commitments formalised in their funding agreements. Resource's *Annual Workplan and Budget 2001/02*, for example, commits the organisation to demonstrate

> *... the long term impact of the museums, archives and libraries sector on society and the economy, by publishing reports, evaluating the sector's impact on the government's learning, access and inclusion agendas.*
>
> (Resource, 2001a: 5)

For its part, the Arts Council of England identified five ways in which it would take forward work on the arts and social exclusion – through advocacy; examining the work of its regularly funded organisations; evaluation; multi-agency working; and targeting resources. These commitments, reinforced by the changes brought about by the developments in lottery legislation and directions since 1996 (Selwood, 2001b), constituted a radical change of direction for the Council. Even if it could claim that access had 'always been a concern of the arts community', it had to admit that 'advocating the role the arts can play in addressing social exclusion, was a new departure' (Bridgwood, 2002: 4).

If the arm's length principle is about independent policy making, it could be argued that compliance to DCMS policy represented another nail in its coffin. Although the department still claimed to be convinced that the principle remained valid – and, indeed, continued to operate though its NDPBs – its 1998 review of the 'cultural framework' observed that

29 See, for example, the contributions by David Lowenthal, Maurice Davies, Sue Millar and François Matarasso in Institute of Ideas, 2001.

> *... the arm has different lengths, and sometimes it is too long. It has become a substitute for the strategic leadership which only a department of state can provide.*
>
> (DCMS, 1998c)

But while the department continued to comply with the rhetoric of maintaining an arm's length relationship with its NDPBs, and to acknowledge the advantages of doing so,[30] witnesses to the 1999 Select Committee enquiry (HoC, 1999. Part 1: i) described a rather different situation. One proposed that 'direct patronage from the government of the day would at least be more honest that the present situation'. Another noted that the arm's length principle

> *...now embraced ministers setting the financial, administrative, legal and overall policy framework for the public bodies', with the bodies themselves retaining 'a considerable measure of independence in individual decision making.*

For Tony Banks, then a minister in DCMS, at the crux of the matter was the issue of control and responsibility – the fact that 'we ... have to take all the collateral damage here when it goes wrong' (ibid). This issue clearly informed the department's requirement for evidence of the impact of the cultural sector.

Claims

Chris Smith's assertion that the arts and sport deliver key outcomes in terms of combating social exclusion (Policy Action Team 10, 1999: 2) not only echoed a number of claims made by other politicians (Leeds Metropolitan University, 2002: 1), but inspired a cascade of similar declarations by government-sponsored, local government and other sectoral bodies. Indeed, the recent literature of the cultural sector is replete with publications asserting the vital contribution of the arts and museums to various aspects of the government's social agenda. In the wake of the publication of the Policy Action Team 10 report, in particular, other accounts produced by or on behalf of funders and organisations within the funding system have advocated the cultural sector's role in renewal and regeneration (Parker et al, 2002; Chelliah, 1999; Stetter, 2002; Dwelly, 2001; Kay and Watt, undated). Others focus on learning (Resource, 2001b; Research Centre for Museums and Galleries, 2003); on social impact and inclusion (Research Centre for Museums and Galleries, 2000); and on health (Health Education Authority, 1999). Other publications – Coalter (2001), for example – professed to local authorities' cultural services contributing to the wider social, economic and environmental objectives of national and local government. They also advocate future policy direction in partnership with the health, education,

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30 The rationale given for quangos was that 'arm's length' bodies can make decisions

> *... of a scale, range and complexity which would swamp ministers were they called on to make such decisions themselves. ... the existence of quangos enables policies to be established and decisions taken by people on the governing bodies of quangos who can be expected to have relevant knowledge and skills. They can also be advised by quango staff with very considerable expertise. ... quangos can exercise their judgement independently of the political preferences of the Government of the day, a matter of some importance in such fields as arts funding. Another element in the rationale for quangos is that such bodies can be an effective and independent voice for a particular sector.*
>
> HoC, 1999. Part 1: i.

community safety, social inclusion and regeneration bodies.

What does the case for the social benefits of cultural activities rest on, though? Whatever its political and historic origins (Jensen, 2002), the case for the social benefits of cultural activities has been closely associated with Labour – as its 1977 policy document on *The Arts and the People* suggests. During the last ten years, the impetus to consider social impact has, in some part, constituted a reaction to the then prevailing emphasis on economic impact – often associated with 'prestige' cultural regeneration projects. While social impact has subsequently come to be seen as complementing economic impact, in the mid-1990s the benefits of small scale, arts-based neighbourhood community and participatory projects – which were often temporary and event- or process-driven – were still largely neglected and received little support beyond project funding.

The Comedia consultancy, in particular, began lobbying in 1993 to prove the effectiveness of 'investing in socially orientated arts initiatives'.

> *All kinds of arts projects can have a social impact, be that a neighbourhood project to increase commitment and involvement with a local community; a project with disabled people to increase skills and life choices; an arts in hospital project to increase the quality of that caring environment; an initiative with prisoners to prepare them to re-enter the outside world; or a community play to create common ground between people of different ages.*
>
> (Landry et al, 1993: Executive Summary)

In its series of publications around social impact, including Williams (1997), Moriarty (1997) and François Matarasso's *Use or Ornament? The social impact of participation in the arts* (1997), Comedia challenged the political thinking that emphasised the economic importance of the arts in the economic life of the country. It regarded this as flawed on two counts: it tends 'to focus on financial issues rather than on economics in its deeper sense as the management of society's resources'; and misses 'the real purpose of the arts, which is not to create wealth but to contribute to a stable confident and creative society' (Matarasso, 1997: v).

Comedia distinguished arts-based projects from other social programmes on the basis of their uniqueness – the fact that they can engage people's creativity; are about meanings, and enable dialogue between people and social groups; encourage questioning and imagination of possible futures; offer self-expression and essential characteristics of the active citizen; and that they are 'unpredictable, exciting, fun'. More importantly, they set out arts-based projects' credentials as a tool for social renewal – in that they enhance social cohesion; improve local image; reduce offending behaviours; promote interest in the local environment; develop self-confidence; build public/private sector partnerships; explore identities and visions of the future; enhance organisational capacity; and support independence (Landry et al, 1996; cited by Chelliah, 1999: 10).

In the same way that Myerscough had influenced attitudes a decade earlier, Matarasso's work did much the same in the late 1990s. The kinds of claims that Comedia made for cultural projects, particularly those carried out in deprived areas, have become fairly standard. It is generally asserted, for example, that by participating in cultural projects, individuals stand to increase their self-esteem; improve their personal performance;

raise their aspirations/self-confidence; increase their employability, interpersonal skills and control over their own destiny; acquire a greater sense of ownership/'stakeholding'; better establish relationships with 'establishment' groups, 'peer' groups, and 'other cultural' groups; celebrate their own culture; get involved in decision making; and participate in active citizenship (exercising rights and taking responsibilities).

Such projects are also perceived as encouraging social cohesion – including social connectedness (relationships between individuals); community cohesion (people and groups operating in concert to secure common interests); civic pride (identification with and pride in the local community for its own residents); the addressing of community needs, such as aesthetically improving areas or contributing to environmental regeneration; tackling social exclusion through the promotion of involvement and participation in projects (Leeds Metropolitan University, 2002; Hall and Robertson, 2001: 16). Box 1.1 summarises claims as to the impact of the cultural sector from selected reports.

Despite, or perhaps because of, this prevailing orthodoxy, it has become increasingly pressing for the sector to distinguish between advocacy and evidence, between identifying potential and what has actually been realised. Moreover, it has to contend with the danger of social policy objectives being seen to be delivered more cost effectively by other areas of activity (Belfiore, 2002: 99). While there is a large body of research, including documented case studies and anecdotes – all of which are employed to illustrate its impact, the sector is under increasing pressure to provide what is considered to be 'robust' evidence.

Constructing the evidence base

DCMS has never doubted the need for robust evidence. As Mark Fisher, Minister for the Arts before the first reshuffle, put it:

> *Every time I am asked to discuss some aspect of the cultural sector, the first question I want to ask is: 'Where are we now? What is the current position?' So often, the answer is not in the form in which we need it. So often, we don't have a reliable answer...*
>
> *We cannot do very much about developing a cultural policy unless we have statistics to inform it. Statistics are the bedrock of everything we are attempting to do as politicians.*
>
> (Fisher, 1998: i)

Five or so years on, DCMS is still having to make the case.

> *It is increasingly important that we identify and articulate evidence to demonstrate the value of what we do, both in cultural trends and in contribution to wider social and economic development. We need a sound basis for evidence-based policy making in all sectors. We need sound research and hard evidence in areas where this is not always easy. We must build up knowledge and understanding of the impact of our polices and fill the many gaps in our evidence base.*
>
> (Brand, 2003)

The department has now formulated a research strategy (DCMS, 2003e) and is concerned to establish a baseline understanding of the sector (DCMS/RCCs, 2002), as well as encourage project monitoring and evaluation and the promotion of

Box 2.1 Summary of claims as to the impact of the cultural sector by select research reports

	General	Benefits to individuals	Community benefits
Matarasso, 1997		*Participation in the arts is an effective route for personal growth, leading to enhanced confidence, skill-building and educational developments, which can improve people's social contacts and employability'*	*It can contribute to social cohesion by developing networks and understanding, and building local capacity for organisation and self-determination. It brings benefits in other areas such as environmental renewal and health promotion, and injects and element of creativity into organisational planning. It represents a flexible, responsive and cost-effective element of a community development strategy*
PAT 10, 1999	*Arts and sport, cultural and recreational activity, can contribute to neighbourhood renewal and make a real difference to health, crime, employment and education in deprived communities*	*... they appeal directly to individuals' interests and develop their potential and self-confidence*	*They relate to community identity and encourage collective effort; help build positive links with rapidly growing industries*
Coalter, 2001	*... cultural services are an important part of the civic infrastructure of communities, providing a social focus and contributing to their quality of life ... diversity of cultural services enables them to provide 'something for everyone' – offering a wide range of opportunities for people to realise their potential, to feel a sense of achievement, to increase social contacts and develop a sense of well-being*	In terms of *'personal capital'*, they are perceived to deliver: *social contact; development of confidence and self-esteem; education and life-long learning; health and well-being*	In terms of *'social capital'*, they are perceived to deliver: *economic and employment effects; social cohesion and community empowerment; community safety; environmental improvements*
Research Centre for Museums and Galleries, Leicester University, 2000	*There is now increasing recognition that the museum can act as a catalyst for positive social change, that it can deliver a range of social outcomes, at both individual and community levels, aimed at tackling social inequality, discrimination and disadvantage*	*Personal growth and development (the impact that involvement with museums has had on the lives of individuals at risk of exclusion) ... enhancing educational achievement and promoting lifelong learning*	*Community empowerment (the impact that museum initiatives have had in regenerating and empowering disadvantaged) communities; the representation of inclusive communities (the impact that museums have had through representing diversity and celebrating plural identities, in challenging negative attitudes towards minority or marginalised communities and in providing a sense of place and enhanced community identity for groups at risk of exclusion); promoting healthier communities; tackling unemployment; tackling crime*

Sources: Matarasso, 1997: v; PAT 10, 1999: 8; Coalter, 2001: 2–5; Research Centre for Museums and Galleries, Leicester University, 2001: 23–24

evidence-based policy. But, in practice, much of the responsibility for the production and use of statistics and other forms of evidence is carried by the burgeoning research capacity of the department's sponsored bodies, and is manifest in the number of research reports and strategy documents they commission. Those bodies are acutely conscious of the political agendas they need to satisfy (David Haynes Associates, 2002). Even organisations at some distance from DCMS have seen fit to focus on what 'real difference' cultural services can, or could, make (Coalter, 2001: 1).

Two of DCMS's sponsored bodies – the Arts Council and Resource – sought to approach the problem along broadly similar lines (Box 2.2). Both organisations' research agendas list their commitments to ground clearing exercises – scanning what data already exist and critically assessing it in the light of its potential value to the establishment of an evidence base for informing strategic initiatives.

Both are also concerned to disseminate the principles of 'good practice' to their constituencies. They have also sought to involve their constituencies in capturing evidence of the impact of their projects – not least by providing

> *... more information about how to measure the impact of the work that they do on the quality of life, creativity, attainment, skills, motivation, self-confidence and enjoyment of the people who use or could be using their collections and resources.*
>
> (Resource, 2001b: 12–13 cited by Wavell et al, 2002: 72)

Like DCMS, both organisations employ professional researchers; have disseminated project evaluations, which are regarded as providing evidence of social and learning impact as well as raising awareness of what can be achieved and how; and published toolkits, guidelines, frameworks and standards (Dean et al, 2001; Woolf, 1999; Matarasso, 1999; Local Government Association, 2001).

So, given this kind of interest in and commitment to gathering data, what does the evidence base look like?

Part 4: the evidence base and its limitations

Despite authoritative research reports by DCMS's and ACE's own researchers, the shortcomings of data on the cultural sector, including quantitative data, are generally acknowledged. DCMS, for example, admits to the paucity of robust data, noting the 'limitations of the data sets that are available', 'just how few national data sets relevant to the cultural sector provide meaningful information at a regional level' and 'the scale of the problems we face if we are to get accurate data on the sectors' (DCMS/RCCs, 2002 *A User's Guide*: ii).

But, the problems of quantitative data are as nothing compared to the issues implicit in attempting to evaluate impact. Resource's current drive to measure 'learning outcomes', for instance, as part of its 'Inspiring Learning for All' initiative (described above) has taken three to four years to develop. The implicit difficulties are reinforced by the organisation's experience, which points to the fact that mining extant data for evidence of social impact, in particular, is relatively unproductive. One recent statistical report, for example, considered what evidence could be derived from existing regularly collected data sets in the public domain. Although quantitative methodologies can be used, for example, to ascertain something of users' and non-users' perceptions of the impact of services, this not only found that

Box 2.2 Research agendas

Using exiting data, to ...

- Establish what evidence about impact already exists and how useful it is[a]
- Identify and evaluate what data are currently available[b]
- Identify bodies that are collecting such data[b]
- Gather evidence which can be used to inform policy and advocacy initiatives[c]
- Assess the comprehensiveness and quality of the existing evidence base[d]
- Collate and review existing research[d]
- Evaluate different models of initiating and delivering projects[d]
- Share understanding of methodologies and measures used for assessing the impact of arts projects, facilities and programmes, as well as the creative industries[d]
- Identify characteristics of successful initiatives, as well as approaches that do not work and why[c]

Undertake strategic initiatives, to...

- Share understanding of methodologies and measures used for assessing the impact of arts projects, facilities and programmes, as well as the creative industries[d]
- Identify key research needs to improve the robustness of research methods and evidence demonstrating the contribution of arts and culture to the social and economic objectives of national and local government, and other key partners[d]
- Establish the needs for data about the sector[b]
- Establish what the needs are for information about impact – in particular the government's needs and the sector's needs[a]
- Identify gaps in existing provision[a]
- Identify gaps in data provision and prioritise the filling of them[b]
- Develop and, where practical, implement methods and mechanisms for filling those gaps[a,b]
- Develop and test appropriate methodologies for evaluating arts initiatives with aims relating to social inclusion[c]
- Gather evidence to be used to inform policy and advocacy initiatives[c]
- Help to ensure that the relevant data are pulled together to present a coherent, workable, consistent and sustainable system that satisfies stakeholders[a]
- Inform the future agenda for impact research within the sector, and support evidence-based policy making[d]

Disseminate findings throughout the sector

- Provide a practical resource to assist those working in the field[d]

Sources:
a) Resource's vision for its Impact Evaluation Programme (http://www.resource.gov.uk/information/evidence/ev_impev.asp, accessed 16.12.03);
b) Resource's vision for its Statistics Programme (http://www.resource.gov.uk/information/evidence /ev_stats.asp, accessed 16.12.03);
c) Overall objectives of the ACE research exploring models of social inclusion work, cited by Jermyn, 2001;
d) Reeves, 2002

> *... the existing system for collecting quantitative data ... is patchy, inconsistent and incomplete, but also that it is failing to generate any useful information on the outcomes of the services or on the impact they make. As a result, it is impossible to provide quantitative data on the sector's contribution towards the achievement of the government's learning, access, inclusion and economic development agendas.*
>
> (Cultural Heritage Consortium, 2002)

These findings comply with a growing consensus of opinion that 'the scientific model of research is unlikely to provide the kind of assessment required'.

> *Convincing hard data are also difficult to come by beyond the (perhaps not so) simple monitoring of participants from different groups. Sometimes through despair and frustration and sometimes through natural inclination, some have dismissed a naïve faith in the validity and reliability of quantitative measures of participation as indicators of conclusion.*
>
> (Leeds Metropolitan University, 2002: 29)

On the basis of the widespread acceptance of the value of qualitative data in understanding and assessing impact, another piece of research, commissioned by Resource, pulled together the available evidence from a varied range of evaluations based on 'soft' (qualitative) indicators related to social impact, learning impact, economic impact and access (Wavell et al, 2002). This identified a number of different forms of data collection including: pre- and post-visit interviews; personal reflection; mind/concept mapping of visitors/users; observations; and discussion/focus groups involving users, non-users, sector staff, project workers and/or other stakeholders. It found that a number of research techniques were used, including social audit, case studies, project evaluations, critical incident techniques, impact studies, large scale organisational surveys, surveys of the general public and surveys of staff and project workers (ibid: 70–71). Moreover, it identified the most frequent approaches to presenting the information as the aggregation of case studies, project evaluations, cameos,

> *pen portraits of particular projects or initiatives, brief accounts of the types and levels of engagement with specific groups in the community, and illustrative quotes from staff, project workers and (less frequently) project participants*
>
> (ibid: 12).

Such approaches and techniques broadly characterise a number of advocacy cum policy documents published by DCMS, the Arts Council and other bodies. But how good is the evidence being gathered, and what value can be attributed to it? The following paragraphs consider criticisms prompted by the requirement to base policy development on an impartial and robust evidence base.

The shortcomings of the data

The sheer concentration of effort dedicated to identifying and extracting evidence of impact across the whole of the sector is such that it has been described as tantamount to

> *...the huge search to find the 'holy grail' – the answer to the question why fund the arts or more*

> *precisely show us why funding the arts will cure the sick, raise the dead and eradicate world poverty.*
>
> (Hamilton, 2002)

As this implies, the evidence is elusive. In fact, commentators have been remarking on the lack of a serious and robust evidence base for the arts and museums for some time. Twenty years ago, Muriel Nissel questioned the value of the data that she had accumulated, observing that 'it can tell us nothing about the quality of artistic experiences hidden in the cold statistics' (1983: 66). A decade later, it was observed that

> *... these evaluations [of arts projects] rarely go far enough in quantifying how much, say, a community play has, in real terms, increased the sense of community or what effect a performing arts programme with young people has had on the group's skills profile. As a consequence there are many publications with project descriptions, which although useful in themselves do not provide sufficient evidence that others can use as a way of proving the effectiveness of investing in socially orientated arts initiative.*
>
> (Landry et al, 1993: Executive Summary)

A number of relatively recent reports produced by cultural agencies themselves have highlighted similar issues. The DCMS Policy Action Team 10 (1999) report and its background paper (Shaw, 1999a), for instance, both noted the relative absence of hard evidence as to the regenerative impact of the arts. Elsewhere the department has acknowledged that 'demonstrating the impact of activities to combat social exclusion is not easy, and it may be some time before the benefits are fully evident' (DCMS, 2000a: 27). It has noted a lack of robustness in the evidence on cultural activities generally in relation to wider social and economic polices (DCMS, 2003e: 37).

Various documents published by the Arts Council of England picked up on deficiencies in the available data (Shaw, 1999b; Reeves, 2002; Bridgwood, 2002; Jermyn, 2001). The Council's 1999 plan, *Addressing Social Exclusion: A Framework for Action*, observed that although there were many arts projects working to combat social exclusion,

> *...we lack the evidence to support this. Evaluation is taking place on an ad hoc basis... there is a need for longitudinal studies and a coherent overview.*
>
> (cited in Jermyn, 2001: 6)

Beyond DCMS's immediate funding stream, an independent review identified 'gaps in the robust evidence base' that local authorities' cultural services need to address. While there were good stories to tell about the performance of cultural services, it noted that these tended to be based on anecdote 'rather than hard evidence through monitoring and evaluation' (Coalter, 2001: 1).

So, given its very evident frustrations with the lack of evidence, what has the sector been doing to improve the situation and move beyond the rhetoric? How is it bridging the gap between advocates' enthusiasm to show what difference the sector is making and the cassandras who have argued that it was making little or no difference whatsoever.

> *The evidence, such as it is and it is limited, seems to indicate that museums have had really very little impact on their communities. No research results are available that prove that museums have an impact upon the problems of social exclusion.*
>
> (Newman and McLean, 2000: 7 cited by Wavell et al, 2002: 12)

Over the past couple of years several critical reviews of the available evidence on the social impact of cultural projects have been published. They range from meta-analyses to critiques of single studies (Merli, 2002; Belfiore, 2002). By definition, the meta-analyses cover a mass of individual documents – sometimes in the hundreds (Leeds Metropolitan University, 2002; Wavell et al, 2002; Reeves, 2002; Jermyn, 2001; Coalter, 2001; DCMS, 2003e). Like earlier literature reviews (such as Shaw, 1999a), they tend to have been commissioned in response to the government's priorities around education, employment, crime and health, and focus on the robustness of the existing evidence and the methodologies employed. The consensus is that much of the evidence presented is invalid – although the reasons cited for this differ. They include the non-substantiation of claims; the antagonism of cultural institutions towards the collection and use of data; the fact that projects have limited jurisdiction and limited potential to influence outcomes; the lack of robustness of the methodologies used; the quality of evidence gathered; and a failure of reporting of methods.

Why, then, should the data on the sector be characterised like this? This section considers the kind of data collection that DCMS inherited, and perceptions as to its limitations.

The critical legacy

> *There have been limited funds to spend on research, not least because until 1992, the UK did not have a minister of arts or culture at cabinet level and there was no political push for cultural statistics and for primary research. Another reason is that there have been relatively few people working in this field; we have had only limited expertise, and some of the work produced is of poor quality.*
>
> (Feist, 1998: iv)

While the professionalism of cultural researchers and analysts has increased, data on the cultural sector is still conventionally collected in a variety of ways – through surveys, audits, performance measurement, time series, economic impact studies and audience and non-audience research. Much is quantitative, focussing on inputs and outputs, and is delivered in statistical form.

Although it was never much of a priority, as cultural organisations' research capacity has increased and as data gathering and analysis are perceived as standard bureaucratic tools, flaws have became more apparent. Old habits die hard. The following paragraphs consider the current state of play as to the nature of collations, the identification of trends and the use to which that data is actually put.

The conventions of collating and reanalysing extant data on the cultural sector – precisely what Nissel pioneered at the Policy Studies Institute in the early 1980s – persisted for a number of reasons: it is cost-effective and the lure of credible government statistics is a major factor. But, it has its limitations:

- reanalysed data are almost invariably out of date, for example, the Arts Council of England's analysis of the 1991 census was only completed in 1995 (O'Brien and Feist, 1995);
- existing data are not always fit for purpose (Feist, 1998: iv);
- collations create patchworks based on data sets of variable reliability; and
- there may be difficulties of alignment in terms of periods covered and the sectoral definitions used.[31]

A particular problem for the creative industries is that existing data sets tend not to cover activity at the micro-level – small enterprises, sole traders, freelancers etc – which is more predominant than elsewhere in the economy.

Given the attention paid to trend data – not least in terms of the aspiration to track the effectiveness of increased funding and other forms of intervention – difficulties have been identified in making meaningful comparisons over time. Attempts to create snapshots based on aggregates of secondary data, for instance, thwarted even the highest profile attempts to track changes in the creative industries, as the two DCMS *Creative Industries Mapping Documents* revealed (DCMS, 1998e; 2001c). Comparisons made on the basis of what appeared to be consistent year-on-year time series have been found to be subject to changes in methodology and presentation (Selwood, 2001a: Appendix 1). There is, of course, also the issue of how long it might take for trend data to show meaningful trends.[32]

Once data is collected, there are questions about how it is used. Since the late 1980s at least, economists, for example, have attacked the use of conventional economic impact studies as advocacy tools intended to encourage private or public sector spending on the arts or to discourage cuts in funding:

> *Interpreted as they too often are by arts administrators or perhaps policy makers, as sufficient or even necessary evidence for additional public financial support, they are an abuse of economic analysis.*
>
> (Seaman, 1986: 45)[33]

It is rather less clear how – or even if – other kinds of data are being used. While DNH's sponsored bodies were encouraged to collect their own time series data as a way of positively informing strategic decisions within their sectors, it is unclear quite what difference having the data has actually made beyond its occasional use for advocacy. There is, for example, no evidence that DOMUS, the statistical database for museums managed by the Museum & Galleries Commission, ever informed its decisions about strategy or policy (Wright et al, 2001). Accounts by former Arts Council of England officers suggest that, in the past, research was

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31 The first DCMS Mapping Document, for instance, acknowledged that the Standard Industrial Classifications and the Standard Occupational Classifications had not kept pace with industrial change (DCMS, 1998e), and that this created extreme difficulties in disentangling creative industries' activity and employment from other classifications.
32 It was only after six years of collecting performance indicator data that the Arts Council could report that the analysis of data collected through the annual survey of performance indicators had yielded, as opposed to merely promising, 'essential information for assessment and planning purposes' (Hewitt, in Dwinfour et al, 2001: iii), although it is not stated what difference this made.
33 See also Van Puffelen (1996) and Hughes (1989).

> *... kept back from policy making. It is often used for the post hoc justification of decisions, but not in the formation of those decisions. It is very rare that ... internally focused research ... informs or evaluates policy.*
>
> (Andy Feist cited in Shaw, 1998: vi)

And that the Arts Council and the arts world were afraid of data.

> *The bigger issue ... is that as a sector we've been very bad at wanting to try and measure the impact we have. We've resisted measurement and said 'It's about quality, instinct and gut reaction. That's the basis on which we make decisions, and that what gives quality to the arts. That quality can't be measured.' I think that's misguided, and it's been extremely unhelpful in making it possible to make a case for the arts.*
>
> *The other factor is, just in very practical terms within parts of the funding system ... people don't want to use research or data as the basis for decision making and funding allocation. Funding allocation will be made on the basis of historic patterns. This is an endemic, not necessarily a wilful, process.*
>
> (Arts Council of England officer cited in Selwood, 1999: 120)

Recent research commissioned by the Arts Councils of England, Scotland and Wales highlights the continuing the lack of use of audience data in the arts. It puts this down to:

- *...a clear lack of a business planning culture within most arts organisations, which manifests itself in a lack of demand for audience data which would otherwise have been needed to inform planning. Conversely, those managers who are keen to have information about audiences often find it difficult to access what they need.*
- *...[a lack of] training (both in skills and understanding), and mechanisms for sharing information and knowledge.*
- *audience data is frequently pigeonholed as only relevant to marketing, which means that it is not considered useful for any wider tasks such as business planning or programming.*

(Aplin et al, 2003)

The research also notes that 'the same problems are encountered by organisations over and over again and that lessons are not learnt' (Aplin et al, 2003). However, this is changing.

Part of this reluctance to use data is associated with what Matthew Evans (the former Chair of Resource) described as the 'over-regulation' of our publicly-funded cultural institutions. The requirements made by the 'micromanagement' from 'the centre' are associated with what has come to be perceived as a kind of reductionism, which diminishes 'the very free spirit that the monies are aimed at' (Evans, 2001: 5). Echoing the words of John Maynard Keynes nearly 60 years after his Chairmanship of the Arts Council of Great Britain,[34] the current Chief Executive reacts by arguing

34 Keynes, maintained that the Council's responsibility was to support a culture, rather than plan or direct it, and that the task of the official body was neither to teach nor censor, 'but to give courage, confidence and opportunity' to the artist *(continued overleaf)*.

... for the artist and the artistic process, for creativity, for freedom of the imagination and for recognition that art is often unplannable, often unmeasurable and very often untargettable.

Art can live under pressure, in repressive societies, but it cannot be prescribed. It thrives in open spaces where it has room to breathe, where people are free to explore. It is by nature resistant to instruction or targeting. The whole point of creativity, as with all forms of innovation, is that it is impossible to know the outcome in advance. This can at times run counter to the instinct of policy makers in Government and in funding bodies like ours, who, in their keenness to uphold accountability, are inclined to detailed targets, leading inevitably to micro management and, at its worst, the shifting of initiative and innovation. I say to them relax, let go, entrust.

(Hewitt, 2002: 13–14)

A common strategy used in accounting for what differences cultural initiatives actually make has been to collect examples, which are often anecdotal and are described variously as 'case studies', 'examples of good practice' or 'innovative approaches' (DNH, 1996b). But, these still suffer from all the difficulties around 'quality of life' issues, which have been evident for some time. As the last Secretary of State for National Heritage acknowledged, any indicators used for assessing improvements in 'quality of life' would need to be considered in terms of 'the complexity of modern life' and in the light of 'suspicion of easy answers' (Bottomley, 1996: para 25). Research carried out for Policy Action Team 10 highlighted the elusiveness of the processes whereby 'relative to the volume of arts activity taking place in the country's poorest neighbourhoods, the evidence of the contribution it makes to neighbourhood renewal is paltry' (Shaw, 1999a: 6). The degree to which recent attempts at qualitative assessments have been regarded as substantive is explored below.

The shortcomings of current data collection

The following paragraphs consider four themes that characterise recent criticisms of assessments of the impact of the cultural sector – namely, the failure to substantiate claims, institutional attitudes which mitigate against data collection per se, the limited jurisdiction of project evaluations and the methodologies used.

Unsubstantiated claims

It has been suggested that:

Rather than illustrating actual impact, these studies tend to provide evidence of engagement with the local community and of the organisa-

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Note 34 continued

At least the public exchequer has recognised the support and encouragement of the civilising arts of life as a part of their duty. But, we do not intend to socialise this side of social endeavour. Whatever views may be held about ... socialising industry, everyone, I fancy, recognises that the work of the artist in all its aspects is, of its nature, individual and free, undisciplined, unregimented, uncontrolled. The artist walks where the breath of the spirit blows him. He cannot be told his direction; he does not know it himself. But he leads the rest of us into fresh pastures and teaches us to love and to enjoy what we often begin by rejecting, enlarging our sensibility and purifying our instincts (Keynes, 1945: 142).

tions' belief in their potential to make a social impact.

(Wavell et al, 2002: 31)

Despite the prevalent use of project evaluations as a way of providing 'evidence', there is said to be nothing to suggest that these 'provide the most effective or efficient means of demonstrating impact to satisfy policy makers' (Wavell et al, 2002: 68).

Institutional attitudes

Several factors have been identified as impeding institutions' ability to move forward with the collection of relevant data, such as 'staff availability; staff education and training; access; opening hours; knowledge of critical success factors; cultural barriers; and public perception' (Wavell et al, 2002: 58). A major factor, particularly within the museums sector, has been said to be senior managers' uneasiness at the implications of visitor-centeredness, not least the prospect of dumbing down (Fisher, 2001).

The Arts Council accepts Moriarty's (1997) observation that artists implicitly evaluate all the time 'as part of the creative process' in order to inform and improve their work (see, for instance Bridgwood,2002: 14; Jermyn, 2001:8). This is different from evaluation which explicitly sets out to measure whether objectives have been achieved. And it also accepts that practitioners regard such evaluation of the impact of their work as antithetical (Matarasso, 1996; Moriarty, 1997; Shaw, 1999b; Bridgwood, 2002: 14) and fear that evaluations of what they do may detract from their achievement by losing

...something very precious ... that the complexity of an experience which includes relationship, enjoyment, learning, exploration, expression will be destroyed, diluted or reduced.

(Moriarty, 1997 cited by Jermyn, 2001: 9)

Project organisers are regarded as having little or no incentive to collect data – and many lack the resources to do so. They may have little understanding of evaluation processes (Shaw, 1999a: 6) and what has been done may have been carried out in a haphazard manner. Even when data are collected, they may not be analysed (Research Centre for Museums and Galleries, 2000 cited by Wavell et al, 2002: 65).

Given that institutions prioritise casting projects in a good light to key stakeholders (Leeds Metropolitan University, 2002: 82), evaluation tends to be regarded as a way of generating feedback necessary for management purposes and to satisfy funding agencies. Consequently, outputs (such as participants' continued involvement) often suffice for outcomes, and users are effectively bypassed in the process (Wavell et al, 2002: 62). So, despite the Policy Action Team 10's recognition of the importance of identifying who benefits (as opposed to what benefits have accrued), it has been observed that relatively few projects even identify the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants (Leeds Metropolitan University, 2002: 81).

Limited jurisdiction

Despite the desire for a comprehensive picture of the cultural sector's impact, in practice, the remit of individual project evaluations has been observed to be fairly limited. Given that project evaluations are limited to particular domains – such as schools – or determined by the duration of the project (Leeds

Metropolitan University, 2002: 82), many manifestations by which the success of projects might be judged – increased self-esteem, employment, social inclusion – actually fall outside their jurisdiction. It follows that evaluations tend to focus on immediate effects rather than long term or sustained impacts (Leeds Metropolitan University, 2002: 83).

It has also been suggested that projects are liable to raise expectations beyond what they can deliver – not least in order to increase their chances of securing funding (Leeds Metropolitan University, 2002: 83). In practice, some can only offer a limited sphere of influence. Projects may simply be 'self-fulfilling' and satisfy participants' needs by definition, whereas others may only have limited success in 'opening doors' to 'people typically seen to be disenfranchised'. Moreover, in a strictly pragmatic sense, the remit of individual project evaluations is fairly limited, and the manifestations by which the success of projects might be judged – such as increased self-esteem, employment and social inclusion – tend to occur outside their jurisdiction (Leeds Metropolitan University, 2002: 82–83).

Appropriate methodologies

A key issue affecting the quality of current evaluations is the lack of, and need for, appropriate methodologies to examine impact (Wavell et al, 2002: 86–88). Criticisms focus on the lack of systematically gathered hard evidence (Wavell et al, 2002: 32), which might, for instance, enable projects' effectiveness against their proposed outcomes to be assessed, causality to be attributed, or long term – as opposed to immediate – impacts to be examined. So, while there may be evidence of actual impact for particular individuals at a specific point in time – something reinforced by an emphasis on 'critical incidents'– the methodologies being used cannot reveal long-term or sustained impacts. And although longitudinal research is generally regarded as fundamental to assessing impact, the present funding cycle mitigates against it (DCMS, 2003e: 10; Shaw, 1999a: 27). Consequently, there is little chance of understanding what difference childhood participation in arts activities might, for instance, have made to someone's life.

It is also the case that little consideration is paid to securing baseline data against which change might be measured (Leeds Metropolitan University, 2002: 86).

Other shortcomings identified refer to the reference groups used for evaluations. In general, these tend to refer to staff and project workers rather than project participants, which undermines the theoretical validity of user-based evaluation (and which has been used, for example, by Dodd and Sandell, 2001). Another frequently cited shortcoming is the identification and use of appropriate and meaningful indicators of impact (Wavell et al, 2002: 32).

It has been said that 'interpretation problems plague studies' (DCMS, 2003e: 39) and that the over-determined use of 'project evaluations by policy makers may even be distorting the true picture of an impact or deflecting attention away from the more significant areas of impact' (Wavell et al, 2002: xi). Commentators have called for a culture of more 'balanced' research, in which the reporting of specific examples of people who have achieved something valuable through projects rises above the status of 'pure happenstance' by a more compelling case being made by the inclusion of counter examples (Leeds Metropolitan University, 2002: 29).

The lack of reporting of methodologies themselves introduces another layer of doubt. Arts

Council england is now seeking to address this, and now includes a methodological section in its reports. It has prepared a guide to writing and assessing research reports principally for internal use (Ann Bridgwood, personal communication, 21.01.04). Credibility as to the validity of evidence and its analysis is undermined by the absence of such details as the number of participants surveyed, how data were collected, what techniques or procedures were used and the presentation of detailed results (Wavell et al, 2002: 86).

Finally, the general lack of robust evidence simply serves to frustrate the possibility of meeting the political aspirations of building up a comprehensive picture of the social impact of the sector, measuring change and indicating its relative value for money. There are real problems in aggregating existing data. As DCMS observes, neither case studies, nor research based on small samples can be generalised from, and given that 'reliable' studies tend to vary in design and assessment, 'the evidence they provide is often inconsistent and even contradictory' (2003e: 39). Whatever the benefits, the lack of identifiable outcomes means that 'we do not have enough information to judge whether such gains are enough or are efficiently and effectively gained' (Leeds Metropolitan University, 2002). All this has a desultory effect on the organisations which are supposed to gather the data, and can understandably extend to 'a rejection of the idea that there is any point in engaging in evaluation at all', not least given that 'the feeling that ideas of confidence, esteem, community cohesion etc are not amenable to quantitative measurement may be perfectly correct' (Leeds Metropolitan University, 2002: 29).

'Use or Ornament?'

While the generalisations cited above refer to the mass of impact studies, many of these same criticisms have been levelled at François Matarasso's work, in particular. They are summarised here.

Matarasso's *Use or Ornament?* (1997) not only claimed to be the first report to specifically identify and assess evidence of the social impact of participation in the arts (Matarasso, 1997: vi), but – along with other work by same author for the Comedia consultancy, which sought to develop a methodology to evaluate the social impact of the arts – it informed approaches to qualitative research on the impact of the cultural sector. It made the case, for example, for surveying participants rather then institutions, and for addressing outcomes (as in lasting impacts) rather than the short-term outputs. Like *The Economic Importance of the Arts in Britain* (Myerscough, 1988) a decade earlier, *Use or Ornament?* exerted considerable influence, and consolidated what has been described as a 'near-consensus in Britain amongst cultural policy makers' (Merli, 2002: 107).

Much of the appeal of Matarasso's work lay in the fact that it complemented Labour's cultural agenda. It was 'relevant' in that it set out 'to identify evidence of the social impact of participation in the arts at amateur or community level'; it was intended 'to be helpful and workable for policy-makers and those working in the arts ...' (Matarasso, 1997: vi); and it sought to contribute to decision-making (Merli, 2002: 107). Doubtless, the long-standing relationship between writers associated with Comedia and the Labour Party during its years in opposition contributed to the government being open to its ideas (see, for instance, Bianchini et al, 1988; Mulgan and Warpole, 1986).

The publication of *Use or Ornament?* was particularly timely – more or less coinciding with the establishment of the DCMS. As Matarasso himself put it, it was 'the right moment to start talking about what the arts can do for society, not what society can do for the arts' (Matarasso, 1997: iv). So, at a time when DCMS was promoting the idea that culture would play an essential role in reversing the doctrine that 'there is no such a thing as society' (Smith, 1998: 15), Matarasso was asserting that 'the real purpose of the arts' is 'to contribute to a stable, confident and creative society' (Matarasso, 1997: v).

Matarasso's work has recently come under considerable criticism, however, and the extent of his influence raises questions about the interests of policy makers who promoted approaches to evaluating social impact based on his findings. DCMS, as already implied, aided and abetted the successful dissemination of his work through citation in the Secretary of State's speeches (Smith, 1998: 134; Merli, 2002: 107) and by involving the writer in initiatives set up by the department and its various bodies.[35]

While not doubting the 'conceptual' importance of *Use or Ornament?* (Leeds Metropolitan University, 2002: 29), Matarasso's critics have tended to focus on more practical aspects of the report, particularly its methodology and the validity of its findings. Their criticisms are important because they cast doubt on the project of evidencing the social impact of the cultural sector in general. The following paragraphs summarise several of the issues that have been raised.

In an earlier work, *Defining Values, Evaluating arts programmes*, Matarasso proposed a five stage evaluation model which embraced planning, set indicators and determined the execution of the evaluation, its assessment and reporting (1996: 25). While this is said to have informed all the reports that made up Comedia's social impact programme, Belfiore (2002: 98) suggests that *Use or Ornament?* was, nevertheless, 'flawed in its design, execution and conceptual basis'. A major point of contention is Matarasso's default to what might be described as intuition in the face of not being able to attribute causality:

> *The biggest problem, in relation to this evidence, is showing that a particular outcome is the result of an arts activity – ie establishing a causal link. Those involved say that something happened as a result of an arts project; we, as outsiders, may believe them: but is it so? This, in miniature, reflects one of the central issues not just of this study, but of social research itself, and each reader must reach his or her conclusion. However, it cannot be denied that there is a cumulative power in the hundreds of voices we have heard over the past 18 months, in vastly different circumstances, explaining again and again how important they feel participation in arts projects has been for them. How many swallows does it take to make a summer?*
>
> (Matarasso, 1997: 6 also cited by Wavell et al, 2002: 14 and Belfiore, 2002: 99).

35 Many of Matarasso's social impacts (1997: x), for example, fed directly into the work of DCMS's Policy Action Team 10. These included the findings that 'participation in the arts could contribute to'... people's employability (points 8 and 9); the development of their skills and work experience (point 7); helping offenders and the victims of crime (points 18 and 19); and improving the quality of life, especially in relation to poor health (point 49).

This kind of account has given rise to questions as to whether the findings of *Use or Ornament?* were, in any way, 'determined'.[36] Matarasso admits that the work 'does not aspire to objectivity' which he considers 'an inappropriate aspiration in evaluation of social policy' (Matarasso, 1997: 4). But critics have questioned the extent to which the work may have been politically driven, and the degree to which it was conceived in the light of New Labour's instrumentalism. Perhaps the most damaging assertion is that the data collected cannot support the conclusions reached (Merli, 2002: 107; Belfiore, 2002: 99). Merli, for instance, suggests that it is by no means certain what the research has actually measured – greater happiness or satisfaction gained as a result of participating in the project, or the social desirability of abstract concepts of happiness, satisfaction etc raised by the questionnaire. It is suggested that the questions asked of respondents were leading, that they implied a development from indifference to positive attitudes (as in: 'Since being involved, have you felt happier?'), and that little was done to ensure that the researchers' values and ideas were not imposed on respondents. No control groups were used; the independent variable of arts participation was not manipulated, since the questionnaire was only distributed once; no attempt was made to identify causal relationships; no distinction was made between transitory and lasting results, which belies Matarasso's findings that participation in such projects can have life-changing effects on participants (Belfiore, 2002); and no generalisations can be deduced from the results, because the sample is not representative of the wider population. Finally, there is the question of balanced reporting: although negative impacts were reported by 21 per cent of the adult respondents (Matarasso, 1997: 76), these are not discussed in detail.

Matarasso lists 50 positive social impacts of the arts amongst his research findings (1997: x). But Merli points out that these are expressed as abstract concepts – as in: participation in the arts '... can help people extend control over their own lives' (number 22) – and as such are neither observable nor measurable (Merli, 2002: 110).

Finally, Matarasso's stated intention was to develop 'ideas and techniques which others can adapt to their own use': in the event, it was assumed that his principles were applicable to the cultural sector generally. *Use or Ornament?* specifically addresses participatory arts, however, it makes no reference to the social impact of the professional arts (which account for the vast majority of arts funding).

> *Indeed, in the only research that Matarasso has conducted on audiences at an arts event (rather then participants in an arts project) the impact of the arts on people's lives appears substantially less remarkable.*
>
> (Belfiore, 2002: 99–100)

Matarasso himself noted that 'arts programmes can be used to achieve social objectives, even if the arts themselves cannot' (Matarasso, 1997: 86).

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36 The research that lies at the core of the report is based on a 'close' study of 60 projects, with another 30 being involved peripherally (Matarasso, 1997: 7). Some 600 people contributed to interviews and discussions and many others were observed or took part informally. A questionnaire, comprising 24 questions (with three possible responses 'yes/no/I don't know'), was self-completed by 243 adult participants (aged 15 plus) and 270 children (Matarasso, 1997: 96).

Part 5: reflections

Given the consensus about the limitations of the data described in Part 4, it could be argued that the solution involves improving the quality of the data and ensuring that it is better used to account for the spending of public money and monitoring the fulfilment of strategic and policy objectives. DCMS's research strategy, for example, includes a notional guide to 'robustness'. It identifies 'good quality, reliable policy evidence' as needing to:

- *Cover large representative samples without inherent biases, so that the research results can be generalised to the whole population;*
- *Randomly assign participants to receive the 'treatment' or not (ideally in a 'double blind' situation – where neither the investigator/assigner nor the subjects know whether the treatment or even a non-active placebo is actually going to be delivered);*
- *Control fully for all influences other than the 'treatment', so that the treatment effects can be isolated (ie other things held constant); and*
- *Allow adequate time within the study for the treatment to be fully administered and for any post-treatment impacts to fully develop and be measured.*

(DCMS, 2003e: 41)

For Arts Council researchers, improving the evidence base has been seen to require: the clearing up of conceptual confusion (including the definition of 'social exclusion'); identifying where to intervene; developing appropriate measures and indicators; identifying long term versus short term outcomes and changes; attributing causality; establishing research methodology including the size of samples; encouraging evaluation; and making assessments about the quality of work (Bridgwood, 2002: Jermyn, 2001).

QUEST's proposal for 'solid evidence' involved setting up a 'new analytical framework', a set of standard issues and limited number of performance measures, as well as establishing a research forum. It observed that the research

> *... carried out by a range of organisations – sponsored bodies, academic institutions, voluntary and charitable organisations, funding agencies, research councils, consultants – is nowhere pulled together to provide the sector with a clear view of current knowledge or the ability to influence future research priorities. Emerging policy and practice cannot therefore benefit from this research.*
>
> (QUEST, 2002: 2)

It proposed helping DCMS's sponsored bodies to clarify what they are trying to achieve by setting clearer objectives and aligning those 'with greater accuracy to activity, measurement, evaluation and research'; to identify a set of issues around which 'sectoral standards' could be developed; and to instil a greater consistency of process across the department's sponsored sectors, spread good practice; and devise a limited set of performance measures that could be used in its funding agreements, which could conceivably be extended to all organisations within the funding system (QUEST, 2002: 3).

In practice, however, measuring the difference that public funding makes may require more than just better data or a more efficient data collection framework. QUEST suggested that the fundamental issue was 'that rhetoric, practice and evidence

gathering are only rarely heading in the same direction' (QUEST, 2002: 2).[37] Its former Chief Executive illustrated this by informally observing that organisations supposed to provide data about their social impact are locked into a 'nightmare cycle' in which the funding bodies need to be seen to be making a difference to the social agenda; in which organisations themselves are cast as agents of social change; and in which evaluation needs to be carried out over a long timescale which doesn't accord with funding rounds (Suter, 2002). The same set of circumstances presumably also accounts for the sector's reluctance to engage with forecasting.[38]

QUEST's reference to 'rhetoric' and 'evidence gathering' reinforces a constant theme of this chapter, namely the relationship between advocacy and evidence, which are theoretically treated as separate functions by policy bodies. It is generally recognised that advocacy based on evidence is 'a good thing', and few would admit to the pursuit of 'policy-based evidence'. But, as QUEST implied, a major determinant of DCMS's approach to collecting evidence was its need to comply with the requirements of spin. Indeed, the authors of one of the department's research reports note that, as consultants, their work was specifically intended to counter the realisation

> *... of how small a part cultural activities play in wider, official considerations of social inclusion ... Hence the current initiative to identify available information that might secure cultural activities a more prominent position on the agenda.*
>
> (Leeds Metropolitan University, 2002: 3)

A peer review of DCMS undertaken in 2000 recommended that the department might engage in more effective data collection by reconsidering and possibly lightening up on its data requirements. It should 'sit down' with its NDPBs 'and review what data are really useful and are actually used' in order 'to determine what is necessary in terms of data gathering'. The peer review team also noted that the risk implicit in 'the struggle to produce easily measurable targets could lead to the adoption of targets which have perverse effects' (DCMS, 2000f: 18). Within two years, the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee implied that the department was also being less than stringent when it accused it of presiding over the likely diminution of the evidence base at the formerly charging nationals. Following the loss of a paid ticketing, it considered that

> *DCMS should certainly have taken the lead in establishing appropriate methodologies for the collection of visit and visitors data. The department should now work towards establishing a common framework to improve the accuracy and consistency of the counting and profiling of visitors for the purposes of improving policy.*
>
> (HoC, 2002: para vii)

To give DCMS its due, the publication of the Committee's proceedings more or less coincided with the consultation periods for the department's research strategy and its regional data collection infrastructure. Both documents suggest that the department is working towards assuming a more active role in the collection of data. But they also imply that it will be working cooperatively with, if

37 Indeed, the issue of how evidence is used in policy making has been raised in a recent report by the NAO (2003).
38 Exceptions include the reports by the Henley Centre (1995; 2000) and Hewison (2000) for the Arts Council.

not outsourcing its data collection to, its extended 'family' including the Regional Cultural Consortiums.

Such difficulties suggest that there may be a question mark over how much value the department actually attaches to data, its collection and its use, and the extent to which it is prepared to invest directly in its own knowledge base. This is a pertinent question given a recent NAO report, which pointed to the fact that not enough of the research commissioned by government departments to help improve the delivery of services and develop policies is getting through to policy makers (NAO, 2003). In respect of the cultural sector, the considerable costs of longitudinal primary research might, of course, be seen as pre-empting resources that could be spent on cultural activities or on the 'sharp end' of policy developments. But it may just be that the acquisition of evidence is actually regarded as more peripheral to DCMS's operations than it gives out – a scenario that is said also to apply to other government departments (Walker, 2001a).

In 2002, the Treasury noted that some government departments were having difficulties in meeting their targets and providing evidence of their successes (HM Treasury, 2002b). So, it was perhaps not surprising that at the time of the last spending round the Chief Secretary to the Treasury implied that government was adopting a rather softer approach to the non-delivery of targets than was previously assumed, by announcing that

> *...the system of targets aimed to deliver value for public money out of public spending ... carried no sanction for departments that failed to hit them...*
>
> *There was never any question that: 'Oh if we don't meet this target, our money's going to be cut. The purpose is to focus minds, and get people to work together better.*
>
> (Paul Boateng cited by Blitz and Crooks, 2002).

Whether these comments were indicative of backtracking or were merely intended to clear up a misconception is unclear. Either way, it was denied that the targets were a way for the Treasury 'to extend its writ across Whitehall'. 'The very reverse is true: it's about making sure the responsibility is held where it belongs, on the part of the spending department and on the front line' (ibid).

So, where does this leave DCMS, which, to all intents and purposes, granted data collection a central and strategic role in its operations? Despite being subject to the Treasury's *Green Book*, which provides guidance on how proposals should be appraised before significant funds are committed and how past and preset activities are being evaluated (http://greenbook.treasury.gov.uk accessed 17.12.03), the department proposed adopting a 'lighter touch' when it came to demonstrating how its funding and initiatives are ultimately 'changing lives'. Its 2001 proposals for the next 10 years – doubtless prompted by the previous year's peer review – described how

> *...where they have established good track records of artistic success, achievement and efficiency over time, we should seek to establish a new relationship of trust and freedom between funder and funded, by getting rid of the bureaucratic box-ticking that has bedevilled too much of the arts funding system for too long.*
>
> (DCMS, 2001d: 15)

It is also indicative of a change of heart that by 2003/04, after three years of funding, the department gave up on QUEST, leaving it – as one of its former officers put it – 'to whither on the vine' (personal correspondence). This 'tough new watchdog' had been intended to report directly to the Secretary of State, to 'monitor' and 'improve standards of efficiency' and financial management, and to 'promote quality' across all the department's areas of responsibility (DCMS, 1998c).

Even in terms of local authorities, DCMS appears to be stepping away from the centralised processes it previously sought to pursue. The requirement for local authorities to produce local cultural strategies will cease (the requirement for Annual Library Plans has already done so). More generally, the importance of Best Value and its performance indicators is diminishing and the service-specific scrutiny of Audit Commission inspections are giving way to cross-sectoral inspections. The White Paper, *Strong Local Leadership: Quality Public Services*, marked a shift in the government's modernising agenda towards forging more constructive 'partnerships' with local authorities. Under this, local authorities are being offered incentives for 'good performance in delivery of local services'. According to the rhetoric, this also involves a 'lighter touch', less 'ring-fencing', 'greater freedoms', 'flexibilities' and 'creativity' as well as 'a package of deregulation'[39] (http://www.culture.gov.uk/about dcms/local regional and international policy/Local.htm, accessed 01.07.03). The DCMS is, however, concerned to ensure that cultural services are represented in Comprehensive Performance Assessment, rather than allowing them potentially to be neglected at the cost of resource allocation. The department is currently working towards identifying what constitutes 'excellence' in this context. Indeed, 'all Whitehall departments with responsibilities for local service delivery are responding by seeking to influence the way in which 'excellence' is defined in their areas. If DCMS declines to follow suit, then its sectors will be increasingly marginalised' (correspondence with Roger Stratton-Smith, DCMS, 11.07.03).

The aggressive tone that DCMS originally adopted in relation to the adherence to its targets has also mellowed somewhat. Although its initial PSA stated that its funding of NDPBs would 'be conditional on quantified improvements in outputs', and that its funding agreements assumed that 'success in meeting the targets ... will inform the way in which the Secretary of State will approach future funding decisions with the Treasury and future provision for sponsored bodies' (HoC, 1999: para 21), these principles haven't necessarily been consistently applied across the board. In 2002, for instance, when the issue of baling out the British Museum – which had a £6 million cash deficit – came up, a Treasury spokesperson suggested that this would be counter to its rule of rewarding 'excellence and not incompetence' (HoC, 2002: Ev 35, para 113). The department's 'enhanced' investment in the Arts Council, on the basis of the arts organisations it funds having increased their attendance by nearly 2 million between 1999/00 and 2000/01 (DCMS, 2002a. Review: 45), was somewhat undermined by

39 The success and failure in terms of what's right for the community will be accounted for via Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). This will be based on a combination of national PSA targets and those agreed by the local authorities themselves, which will sit alongside a 'streamlined' Best Value regime.
(http://www. audit-commission.gov.uk/cpa/whatiscpa.asp, accessed 02.07.03).

the fact that the key performance indicators DCMS itself published alongside this announcement showed an increase of only 779,000 (DCMS, 2002a. Sponsored Bodies: 12). Moreover, sums for particular initiatives, such as the accumulated £100+ million for Creative Partnerships, are more clearly tied to expectations than results.

The DCMS's thinking about evidence-based policy is most clearly presented in its research strategy in a discussion about the technical issues and problems involved (2003e). The department proposes that 'systematic reviews', originally used for medical decisions and policy making (DCMS, 2003: 23–26), and improvements to the baseline understanding of its sponsored sectors could be combined 'to build an integrated picture of relevant trends in an accessible form'. It acknowledges that 'new longitudinal analyses will need to be developed in the (many) cases where "gaps" are likely to be found', and that 'such expensive long-term commitments underline the need for increased resources to underpin policy research' (DCMS, 2003e: 8). The sophistication of the approaches it describes in respect of 'identifying "what works"' and assessing impact based on robust 'evidence of cultural/creative/sporting effects' make it clear that evidence-based policy depends on highly specialised assessments which may well be beyond the capacity of most cultural sector organisations.

In many respects, DCMS's notion of evidence feeding into policy decision making at the initial design stage runs counter to the 'evidence paradigm', which is assumed by the systems of accountability used by the department and its agencies, as well as those critiques which 'evaluate the evaluators'. This model is based on the notion that

> *...the accountability of those spending public money necessarily depends on the demonstration of direct and tangible cause–effect at the granular level of funding. Allied with the notion of target setting, it is implied that the delivery of missions and objectives is reducible to normative, reductionist and empirically-based results.*
>
> (Steve Morgan, AHRB, personal correspondence 22.09.03)

Whatever the shortcomings of the data, the model itself appears to be failing. At one level, the methodology only tends to extend as far as measuring the producer end of the equation. This means the standard evidence paradigm, such as it is, focuses on benefits which are perceived to have accrued, rather than on those expressed by the end-beneficiaries. At another level:

> *The non-substantiation of claims only remains a problem if the claims stand as absolute measures of the views of multiple other agencies. But, if claims are taken as indicative of individual perceptions or beliefs at a point in time and taken in tandem with other data, they can be legitimate variables in a multi-variable landscape. In this sense 'robustness' might not just refer to data collection, but to conceptualisation of a target reference frame, mode and appropriateness of analysis adopted, interpretation and presentation of the composite picture produced by the overall impact evaluation.*
>
> (Steve Morgan, AHRB, personal correspondence 22.09.03)

For Chris Smith, the problems of the evidence base were incidental in relation to the objective of increasing funding to the sector:

> *Spare a thought ... for the poor old Minister, faced with the daunting task of getting the increased funding out of the Treasury to start with. The Treasury won't be interested in the intrinsic merits of nurturing beauty or fostering poetry or even 'enhancing quality of life'. So, I acknowledge unashamedly that when I was Secretary of State, going into what always seemed like a battle with the Treasury, I would try and touch the buttons that would work. I would talk about the educational value of what was being done. I would be passionate about artists working in schools. I would refer to the economic value that can be generated from creative and cultural activity. I would count the added numbers who flock into a free museum. If it helped to get more funds into the arts, the argument was worth deploying ... Such a method however has two drawbacks. The first is that it ignores the fundamental life-force of the cultural activity that gives rise to educational or economic value in the first place... The second drawback is that any measurement of numbers, quantity or added value by figures is necessarily going to be inadequate.*
>
> (Smith, 2003)

In a funding culture in which

> *... funding patterns are skewed towards the marginal cost of marginal programs and peripheral capital infrastructure, whilst core activities remain under-funded and core responsibilities inadequately or grudgingly recognised...*
>
> (Ellis, 2003: 2)

neglect of the 'fundamental life-force' of creative activities and frustrations prompted by the inadequacies of data collection and its use have become very apparent. As Estelle Morris, currently Minister for the Arts, has acknowledged:

> *We live in a political climate and economic climate in where we all want a return for public investment. Money spent, time used, priorities awarded, all have a return. That's not the problem. It's how it should be.*
>
> *The problem of course comes in measuring the return...*
>
> (Morris, 2003)

At the same time as making a case for the social purpose of the sector, accounting for its returns and pushing 'the right buttons' with the Treasury, DCMS still claims to be supporting art for its own sake, 'nurturing the creative impulse' and pursuing 'excellence'. At the 2002 Labour Party conference, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport noted that in addition to being a way of achieving 'our promises, our policies and our values', investment in the arts is 'an end in itself' (Tessa Jowell, cited on the DEMOS website, http://www.demos.co.uk, accessed 13.06.03). In June 2003, she was publicly considering policy reverting back to 'core' cultural values.[40] Perhaps this was in response to the Cabinet Office floating

40 Unpublished keynote speech to *Valuing Culture*, hosted by Demos, the National Gallery, the National Theatre and AEA Consulting, June 2003.

the idea of 'Public Value' – a way of thinking 'afresh about how best to clarify and articulate our ultimate objectives' (Douglas Alexander, Foreword to Kelly and Muers, 2002: 2). But, as Part 2 of this chapter of *Cultural Trends* suggests, the amount of funding specifically earmarked for the achievement of what the department identified as its objectives has actually been relatively small. Apart from the £40 million allocated to Creative Partnerships (located in areas of social and economic deprivation) the majority of the £100 million uplift to the arts awarded in 2000 – 'the largest ever increase in funding for the arts' – was to be invested in theatre and for the core funding for arts organisations (ACE, 2002: 1).

Whatever the adequacy of evidence about the impact of the cultural sector, the importance assigned to it has had the effect of raising a number of questions: what are the government's motivations for funding the cultural sector, what do we know about its effectiveness, how reliable is that information and what use is it being put to?

Ultimately, the value assigned to the evidence comes down to how government works. There are any number of dilemmas implicit in, say, the relationship between investigation and political decision making; between politicians' receptivity to new research and determined ideology; between rational, evidence-based policy and intuitive politics; between the timescale required to research impact and politicians' immediate requirements for information – and, by implication, the production of results for announcements (Walker, 2001b).

The pursuit of data on the cultural sector has exposed the culture of making claims for it. The production and use of so-called 'evidence' remains contentious. The whole subject is also acutely politically sensitive – so much so, that public debate about the problems of data collection in the sector is considered by some to put Treasury support at risk (Bailey, 2001). Until the data being collected are widely regarded as robust, until their analysis is considered meaningful, and until the evidence gathered is seen to be being used constructively, it could be argued that much data gathering in the cultural sector has been spurious.

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Chapter 1

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Chapter 2

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