



Research digest  
**Older people –  
culture, community,  
connection**



connecting  
through  
culture  
as we age

**CENTRE FOR  
CULTURAL VALUE**

This research digest has been produced as part of a collaborative review between the Centre for Cultural Value and Connecting Through Culture As We Age project (University of Bristol)

## About the Centre for Cultural Value

The Centre for Cultural Value is building a shared understanding of the differences that arts, culture, heritage and screen make to people's lives and to society. We want cultural policy and practice to be shaped by rigorous research and evaluation of what works and what needs to change. To achieve this, we are working in collaboration with partners across the UK to:

- make existing research more relevant and accessible so its insights can be understood and applied more widely
- support the cultural sector and funders to be rigorous in their approaches to evaluation and to foster a culture of reflection and learning
- foster an evidence-based approach to cultural policy development.

Our approach is primarily pragmatic: we want empirical research to drive decisions about cultural funding, policy, management, engagement and evaluation.

Based at the University of Leeds, the Centre's core partners are The Audience Agency and the Universities of Liverpool, Sheffield and Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh. The Centre is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (part of UK Research and Innovation), Paul Hamlyn Foundation and Arts Council England.

## About the Centre's research digests

Our research digests are based on a rapid assessment of published literature to present a 'snapshot' of cultural value research across a number of core themes.

Our research reviews are shaped in consultation with practitioners, researchers and policymakers to make sure they are as useful and relevant as possible. We invite people to take part through surveys, interactive workshops and policy round tables. This helps us to develop research review questions that we can find answers to in the literature.

The reviews present an overview of key findings, what we know for certain, where there is emerging evidence and where further research is needed. We use the evidence gained through the review process to make conclusions about the current state of the evidence, and what implications this has going forwards.



# About Connecting Through Culture As We Age

*Connecting through culture as we age* is a co-produced research project that explores how and why we take part in arts and culture as we get older. The aim of the project is to increase participation in social, digital and cultural life and to improve the quality of life for older populations, particularly those that are disabled, and/or racially or socio-economically minoritised.

The project arose as a response to four issues that impact the wellbeing of older people:

- digital exclusion and social isolation
- arts and cultural participation dropping dramatically in older populations, particularly amongst disabled, and racially and socioeconomically minoritised people
- inequalities relating to accessibility and content of digital arts and cultural provision
- the need to put older people at the centre of the design of services, technologies, products and experiences.

At the centre of the project is an inclusive digital innovation process that aims to put the voices, lived experiences and expertise of older people at the heart of the design process. Working alongside older adults who play an active role in the project as ‘co-researchers’, the project will foster cross sectoral collaborations in designing new products, services and experiences for older people, while supporting creative industries to grow and better understand diverse older adults.

Based at the University of Bristol, the project is funded by the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) [Healthy Ageing Challenge](#) programme. The collaborating partners are West of England Centre for Inclusive Living, Black South West Network, Alive, Knowle West Media Centre, Knowle West Health Park Company, Age UK Bristol, Creative Ageing Development Agency, Age of Creativity, Bristol Culture, Pervasive Media Studio and the Centre for Cultural Value.

## Further information

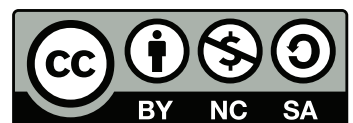
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# Highlights

In recent years there has been growing interest in the role that cultural participation can play in older people's wellbeing and sense of connection to other people. This interest has been noted within the cultural sector, as well as the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors (e.g. AgeUK, The Baring Foundation). We are all growing older, and so it is important to consider what the cultural landscape looks like for older people and how it can support people to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives as they age. This research digest presents a collaborative review of the literature relating to the value of cultural participation on wellbeing and feelings of social connection as we age.

We identified 70 peer-reviewed studies which examined the role of cultural participation in supporting feelings of wellbeing and social connection for older people (aged 60+). Across these studies, music experiences (i.e. community choirs; community bands) were the most commonly reported within the literature. The older people represented in the literature were largely women, white, and aged 65-75.

The strongest evidence is currently represented within the qualitative literature. For methodological reasons, it is not possible at this point in time to draw any firm conclusions from the quantitative literature. This is because of the limited studies that explored social connection as a primary outcome, and because of the wide range of self-report questionnaires that were used within each individual study, preventing comparison across studies.

The qualitative literature showcased a wide range of benefits for engaging with culture for wellbeing and feelings of social connection. Older people had increased opportunities for social interaction and developed a sense of belonging and/or inclusion. Older people were also able to share exchanges of experience, knowledge and skills with each other and their wider communities (including intergenerational programmes). Theatre and dance programmes led to older people developing a more positive relationship with their bodies, allowing them to see what they could do rather than what they couldn't do.

In relation to wellbeing, cultural participation afforded older people a range of positive emotional experiences, making them feel happier and helping them to cope with negative life events such as bereavement. Engaging with culture also led to older people feeling a sense of achievement through opportunities to experience challenge and learn new skills. Older people also reported feeling more of a connection with their own personal identity, as well as building a collective identity, which led to increased confidence and self-esteem.

Given the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, we sought to explore the role of digital technology for the participation of older people in arts and cultural experiences. Unfortunately, we were unable to answer this question due to only identifying three studies that used digital technology as part of the cultural experience. However, we anticipate that there will be more publications in due course which focus on digital forms of participation during the pandemic.

Overall, while there is promising evidence for the value of cultural participation for older people's wellbeing and feelings of social connection, there are concerns about the quality of literature within this research area, particularly mixed-methods research. There is clearly a need for methodological development in this area so that older people can have more agency, voice, and involvement in the research process.

## Background

In recent years there has been growing interest in the role that cultural participation can play in older people's wellbeing and sense of connection to other people. This interest has been noted within the cultural sector, as well as the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors (e.g. Age UK, The Baring Foundation). We are all growing older, and so it is important to consider what the cultural landscape looks like for older people and how it can support people to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives as they age.

In order to evaluate the evidence around the value of arts and culture in supporting the wellbeing and social connectedness of older people, we synthesized and appraised literature published since 2011. This rapid review of the literature was conducted between May and October 2021. This review is part of the Centre for Cultural Value's synthesis of research within the wider theme of cultural participation.

## The collaboration

This review is a collaboration between the Centre for Cultural Value and Connecting Through Culture As We Age project (University of Bristol). This is the Centre's first collaborative review, and it provided an opportunity to engage with and inform a live research project. By coming together, we have been able to deploy a range of experts to examine and appraise the literature, which we hope will make this review as relevant and useful as possible for those who are seeking to understand more about the value of cultural participation for older people.

## Methods

We conducted a rapid review of peer-reviewed academic literature that has been published since 2011 to present a snapshot of the recent evidence. We used a systematic approach to identify literature, using academic databases as well as the Repository for Arts and Health Resources and the Center for Arts in Medicine (University of Florida) Research Database. We also engaged with experts working in the field to ask them to make suggestions for literature that had not been identified within our database searches.

## Review shaping

The research questions within this review were shaped in consultation with cultural practitioners and organisations as part of our collaborative research survey and shaping event in May 2021. Stakeholders involved in this research-shaping workshop helped us to narrow the focus of the review to ensure it was accessible and relevant to the questions the sector had about this topic. You can read more about our engaged research process here.

What we included

We included peer-reviewed, primary research that was published in English between January 2011 and June 2021. We looked for research where the focus was on older people (aged 60+) who were living at home within the community, with outcomes relating to social connection (including loneliness and social isolation) or wellbeing.

## What we didn't include

We didn't include studies which included a population of dementia or Parkinson's disease, and older people living in care home settings as there is a significant body of research within these areas to date. Furthermore, we didn't include studies which focussed on creative arts therapies. While we recognise the vital work of creative arts therapists, the focus of this review was on impacts or outcomes relating to work produced or supported by the arts and cultural sectors.

## Critical appraisal

In order to assess the quality of the studies we reviewed, we engaged in a formal process of appraisal using the **Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool Version 2018**. A formal process of critical appraisal allowed us to explore whether studies presented clear aims and research methods, as well as examine recruitment processes, ethics, researcher reflexivity and appropriateness of analysis strategies.

We excluded 14 studies on the basis that they were too poor quality to include within the review. These studies did not state clear aims nor outline how their methods would address these aims.

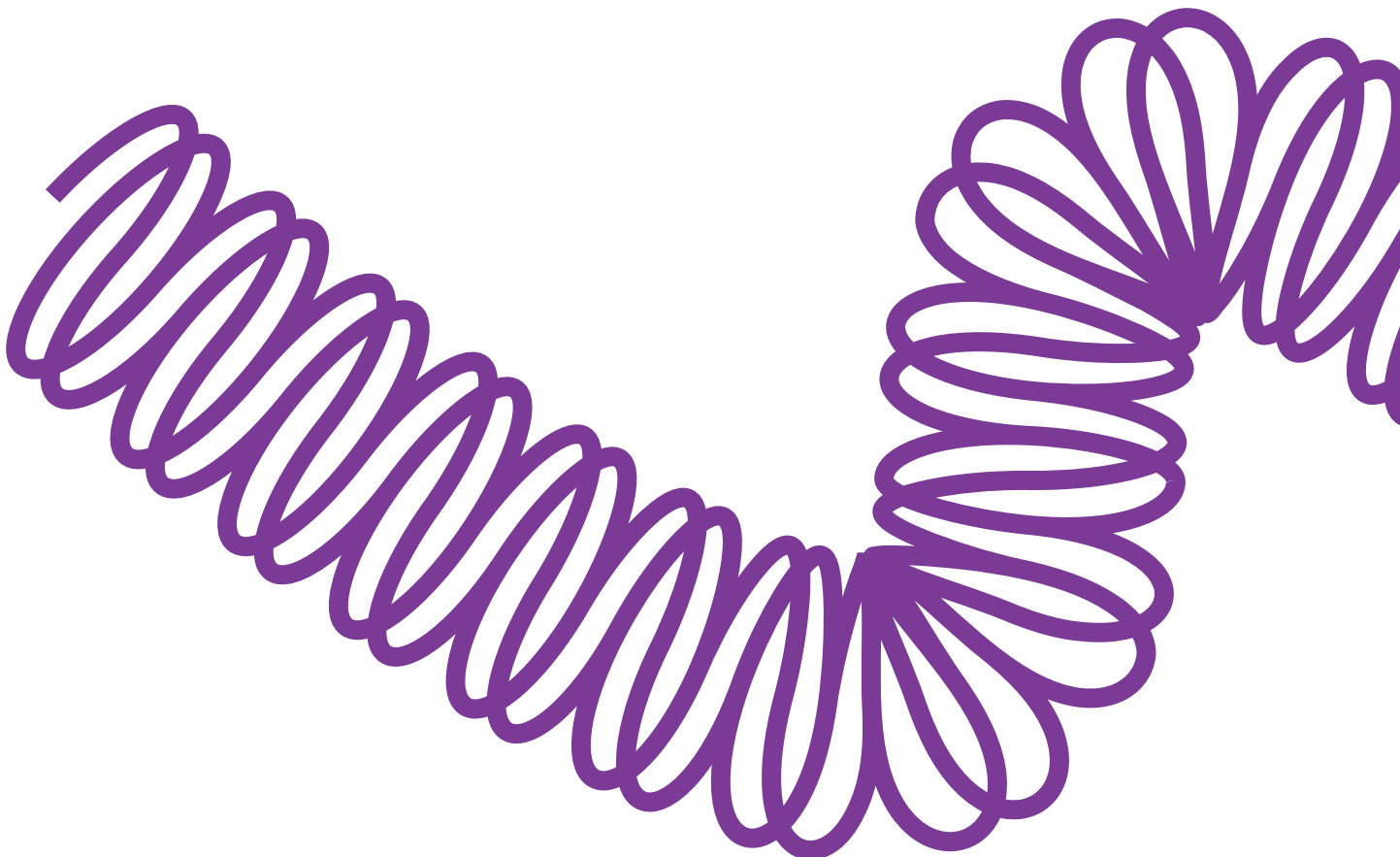
## What questions did we ask?

### Our broad review questions

1. Which types of arts and cultural experiences are represented in the literature?
2. How is the value of cultural participation researched or evaluated in this area?

### Questions raised by the sector

1. What is known about the effects of cultural participation on social connectivity for older people?
2. What is the relationship between older people's cultural participation and wellbeing?
3. What is known about the role of digital technology for the participation of older people in arts and cultural experiences?



## Findings

We identified 70 peer-reviewed studies which investigated outcomes relating to older people’s cultural participation, social connection and wellbeing (see the Table of studies on page 15 for more information). Of these studies 19 were conducted in England, 12 in Canada, 11 in Australia, 8 in the United States of America, 3 in Finland, 2 in Hong Kong, and 1 from Brazil, Crete, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Scotland, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, Sweden and Wales (see Figure 1).

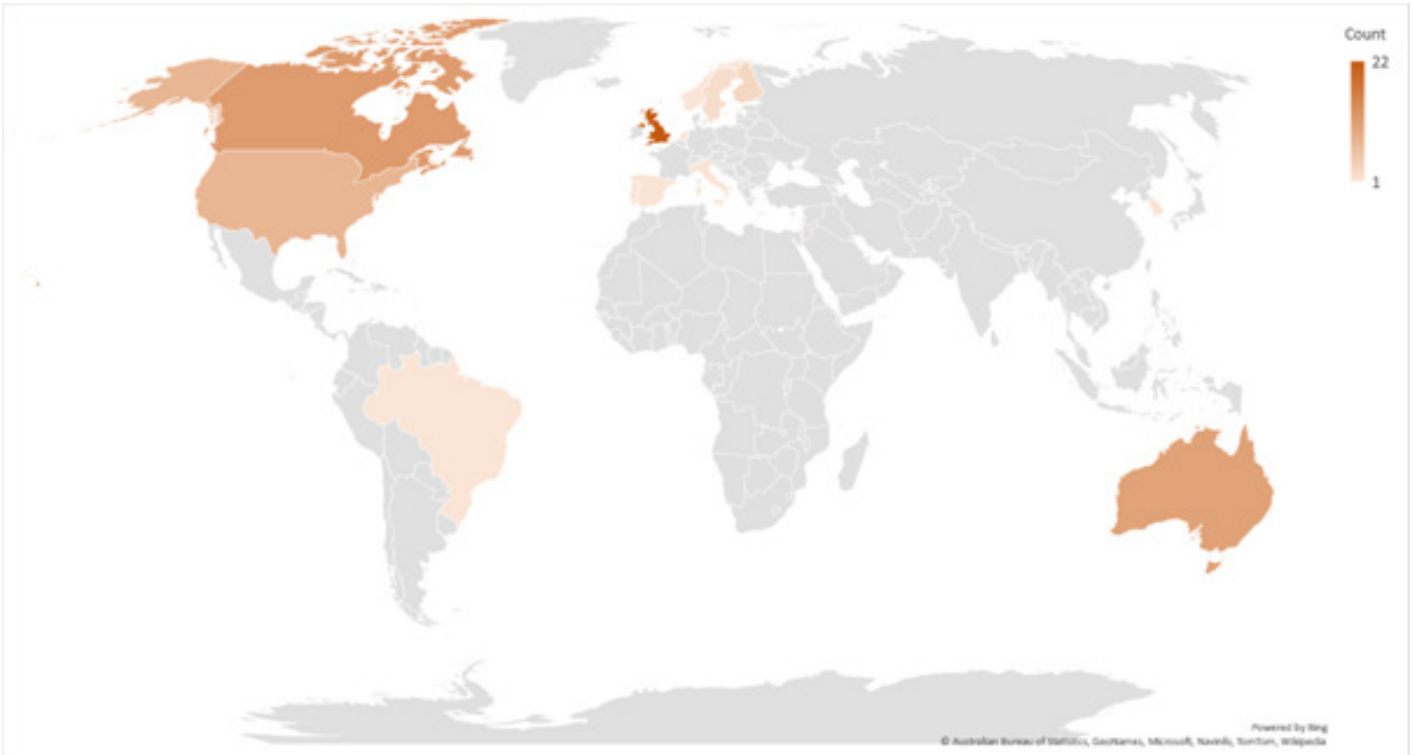


Figure 1: Geographical heatmap of studies represented in review

The total number of participants represented across studies was 29,264 older people. There were high percentages of female participants, compared to male, and the average ages of participants tended to fall within the 65-75 age range. A large number of studies had predominantly white participants, though a high number of studies did not report participant demographics beyond age and gender.





## Which types of arts and cultural experiences are represented in the literature?

Figure 2 presents an overview of the different arts and cultural experiences represented within the literature

### CULTURAL EXPERIENCE

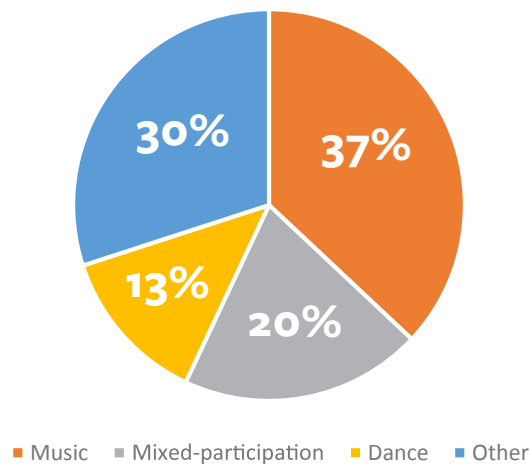


Figure 2: Types of cultural experiences represented in the literature

Music participation was the most commonly reported cultural experience reported within the literature (37 per cent of studies), with community choir singing being the most commonly reported experience-type. Music participation also included community orchestras, learning a new instrument as part of a group, intergenerational music-making programmes, and listening to religious music.

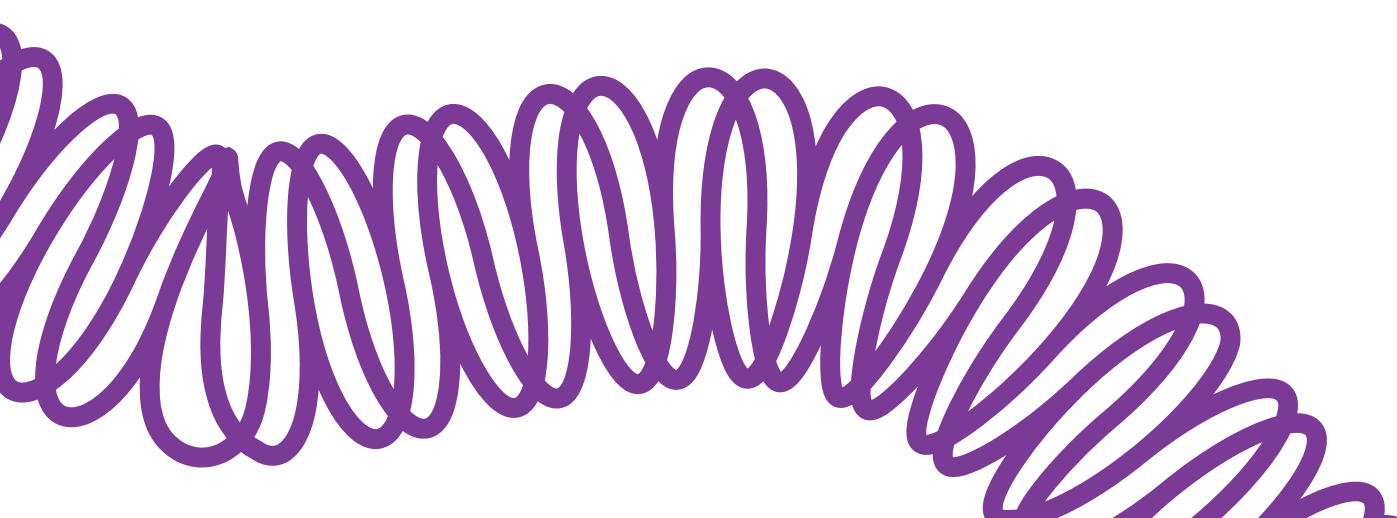
Mixed cultural participation was the next most commonly reported cultural experience (20 per cent of studies), with older people taking part in a wide range of cultural activity. These experiences tended to include a range of participatory arts activities that were engaged with in a group.

Dance was the next most commonly reported experience (13 per cent), with a wide range of dance practices reported (including line dancing, ballroom dancing, burlesque and square dancing). All literature that included dance-based participation was group-based.

Less frequently studied participation types included: museum and gallery-based experiences, festivals, heritage focussed experiences, libraries, radio and theatre-based experiences.

Only three of the 70 studies included a digital element within the cultural experience. One focussed on digital storytelling, one on the use of digital music technology and the other on the creation of digital content for YouTube and other social media.

For a full list of cultural experiences and participation types see Appendix 1.



## How is the value of cultural participation researched or evaluated in this area?

Qualitative approaches were the most commonly used method to understand the value of cultural participation for older people's sense of community connection and wellbeing (49 per cent). These studies largely used interviews or focus groups, combined with observation. There were a handful of studies which used more participatory methods, including documentary making, photo elicitation and 'world café' approaches.

The quality of the qualitative literature was varied. When implementing the quality appraisal tool it was clear that quality was significantly impacted by: (1) a lack of consideration about the relationship between researcher and participants, (2) very little reporting of the ethical considerations needed when working with populations of older people, and (3) some poor approaches to data analysis and reporting of findings. It should also be noted that many of the interviews/focus groups were very short in duration (i.e. 10-20 minutes), and so there are questions as to whether the depth of older people's experiences has truly been captured.

Quantitative methods were the second most commonly used to understand the value of cultural participation for older people's sense of community connection and wellbeing (30 per cent). Largely, these studies used standardised measures related to wellbeing and mental health, with the most commonly used measures being: **Geriatric Depression Scale** (6 studies); **World Health Organisation Quality of Life assessment** (WHOQOL-Bref; 5 studies); **Positive and Negative Affect Schedule** (4 studies). There were fewer examples of measures that looked specifically at social connectedness but scales such as the **Multidimensional Perceived Social Support Scale** and **UCLA Loneliness Scale** were used in two studies.

The quality of the quantitative literature was also varied. In scoring these studies via the quality appraisal tool, it was clear that the limitations of the quantitative literature lay in approaches to recruitment and whether they were appropriate to answer the research questions (i.e. self-selecting samples), as well as whether the interpretation of evidence was consistent with the data presented (i.e. overstating findings).

Fifteen of the studies used a mixed-methods approach to understand the value of culture for older people's sense of community connection and wellbeing. The approaches used tended to be a combination of interviews or focus groups with questionnaires. Mixed-methods literature was appraised as being of a particularly poor standard - there was little justification or rationale for the methods chosen, and poor integration of quantitative and qualitative findings.

## *What is known about the value of cultural participation on social connectivity for older people?*

Overall, we observed a wide range of benefits to older people's sense of social connectivity across the different types of literature examined as part of this review. As previously mentioned, there were not many quantitative studies that focussed solely on social connectivity as an outcome, but the five that did showed that cultural participation had a positive impact on social engagement (1 study), interaction (1 study) and integration (i.e. the feeling of being welcomed into a new community) (1 study), as well as a reduction in feelings of loneliness (2 studies). However, due to the differences in focus for each of the quantitative studies that focussed on social connectivity, as well as the different outcome measures used, it is difficult at this moment in time to draw any definitive conclusions from the quantitative literature.

The following section presents the key themes that were developed by the research review team from the qualitative literature that address outcomes and impacts relating to social connectivity.

## Increased social interaction

Cultural participation provided older people with **opportunities for (increased) social interaction**. In the literature, this was shown to enable older people to build new or strengthen existing friendships and other kinds of social connections and to develop or improve confidence and social skills. These factors were often linked to decreased feelings of loneliness or social isolation.

Cultural participation may also lead to increased activity and connectivity in other ways. For example, studies showed how interaction with others during a cultural activity can lead to giving and receiving peer support during difficult times (i.e. during experiences of bereavement or personal illness), to accessing other resources or services, and improving relationships with friends and family.

## A sense of ‘belonging’ and/or inclusion

Cultural participation in groups was observed to enable older people to feel a **sense of ‘belonging’ and/or inclusion**. Study participants sometimes described feeling as if they had found an alternative family. Some studies showed how activities such as singing regularly in a choir or dancing as part of a club can lead to the development of a sense of collective identity through which individuals come to feel bonded together.

Positive feelings were generated through processes that included regular social interaction, pride and enjoyment in participation and collaboration towards a shared goal. Participants also reported feelings of ‘being seen’ or valued by others in the group or outside it as a result of taking part in activities such as public performance or exhibitions of artwork. The literature also contained examples of activities conducted in gendered groups, sometimes experienced as liberating for those involved.

However, similar processes can also lead to **experiences of exclusion** when participants are not or do not feel accepted within a group. Studies show that **feelings of rejection and anxiety** can result.

## Exchanges of experience, knowledge and skills

Cultural participation often involves **processes that facilitate exchanges of experience, knowledge and skills** with others. These can allow older people to construct shared meanings and foster reciprocal relationships with people who are like and sometimes also unlike themselves. Cultural activity involving these kinds of processes is often described as being capable of **building feelings or skills of compassion, empathy and understanding** in those who take part.

In the studies in this review, exchanges of this kind included those creating connections between generations, activities that promoted exploration of shared cultural heritage, nostalgia or life events (for example through learning about and handling cultural artefacts or in storytelling) and activities that sought to build links within and between different communities.

## Embodied experiences

Certain kinds of cultural participation such as dance or theatre, or the handling of cultural artefacts, were shown to **provide older people with positive embodied experiences**. As a result, participants felt a stronger connection to their bodies and senses, as well as engaging in physical activity that allowed them to transcend the limitations of the ageing body or which actively improved how they felt their body worked. The improved relationship with their ageing bodies was sometimes linked to theories of healthy ageing.

Overall, the qualitative literature points to there being a wide range of benefits of cultural participation for older people’s sense of community and connection to others. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this was particularly the case for group-based cultural experiences such as community choirs or intergenerational heritage programmes.

## *What is the relationship between older people's cultural participation and wellbeing?*

Twenty-five studies used direct or indirect (i.e. depression, quality of life, mood) measures of older people's wellbeing. Overall, these studies largely pointed towards the positive impacts of cultural participation on older people's mood, levels of anxiety or depression, life satisfaction, and psychological needs. Similar to the social connection literature, a wide range of outcome measures were used and they were largely indirect measures of wellbeing. Therefore, at this moment in time it is difficult to draw any strong conclusions from the quantitative literature.

The following section presents the key themes developed by the research review team from the qualitative literature which may underpin the positive findings relating to wellbeing observed across studies.

### **Positive emotional experiences**

Cultural activity was perceived to be enjoyable by older people. They described participation as making them feel happiness and joy, producing a sense of euphoria, and they often described laughing with members of the group. This reflects the quantitative findings relating to mood, which suggested an increase in positive moods and emotions as a result of taking part in cultural activity.

A number of studies reported that cultural participation helped older people to cope better with bereavement, as noted in the previous section. The knowledge that there was peer support available helped older people to cope with the negative experiences of losing a partner and created opportunities for experiencing more positive emotions.

It is important to note that emotional experiences were not universally positive. There were examples in the literature of increased anxiety as a result of unfamiliar environments, or frustration from activities perceived to be too challenging or too easy.

### **Sense of achievement**

Participation in arts and culture was reported to offer older people opportunities to experience challenge and learn new skills and to feel a sense of broadened horizons, things that are generally seen as positive at a time when some might feel as if their opportunities are narrowing. Such experiences were seen as helping to counter stereotypes around ageing that may be held both by the older people themselves and by society in general.

Sometimes this can also act as a motivator for continued participation or a bridge to other kinds of activity, resource or support within a community. However, when experienced negatively, it led to **feelings of inadequacy, failure or sadness** (for example, if activities were too difficult, or when performing in public created anxiety). This impacted on participants' desire to participate further and in some cases, caused them to withdraw.

The skills developed by older people across the duration of their cultural participation was often acknowledged by other members of the group, or members of the wider community if they shared works outside of the core group.



## Strengthening of personal and collective identity

Arts and cultural participation led to older people developing greater self-esteem and building their sense of confidence, particularly social confidence. This confidence helped older people to try new things and to share their experiences with friends and family.

Older people were able to share their life stories through what they created or performed. This allowed other people to understand the rich lives of older people, particularly in projects with an intergenerational focus. In one study of indigenous older women in Canada, younger people reported that they saw older people as sources of wisdom and keepers of cultural heritage, which led to the women feeling a sense of being valued.

## Building a more positive relationship with the ageing body

Older people reported that taking part in cultural activities, especially dance and singing groups, allowed them to develop a more positive relationship with their bodies. A number of older people reported that they felt more flexible and had more energy as a result of taking part in dance classes, as well as being surprised by what their bodies were still able to do given some of the physical challenges they experienced. A handful of studies also discussed the ways in which engaging with dance helped older women feel more beautiful and sensual through this renewed connection to their bodies.

However, there were also reports that arts and cultural participation could heighten older people's awareness of the physical constraints of their bodies, especially in dance, singing and craft studies. For example, older people were impacted by stiff joints when crafting, or could feel out of breath when singing for long periods of time.

## What is known about the role of digital technology for the participation of older people in arts and cultural experiences?

Unfortunately, this is a question we are currently unable to answer due to only identifying three studies that used digital technology as part of the cultural experience: one focussed on digital storytelling, the other on content creation for YouTube and the other social media. While we cannot determine any clear conclusions from this literature, we observed that engaging with culture through digital means had many of the same benefits as in person participation including, feeling a sense of connectedness and sharing life stories. Two of these studies were intergenerational in nature, and older people reported that they valued being able to learn new skills from younger people and share skills with the younger people. There were some concerns reported about data privacy but the benefits of engaging with culture digitally were more consistently reported. Overall, while there are similarities between the digital and face-to-face experiences, more research is needed to understand the differences between these experiences and any barriers or facilitators for this type of cultural participation.

This question was rated particularly highly as a priority for the cultural sector during our research shaping workshop for this review. This was primarily motivated by the context of the Covid-19 pandemic when face-to-face activity with older people was extremely limited. While we only identified three studies when we ran the searches for this review, we anticipate there will be more publications in due course on digital forms of participation that took place during the pandemic, which can be examined at a later date.



## Conclusions and implications

There is a clear interest globally in the role that cultural participation plays in the wellbeing and social connectivity of older people. The qualitative literature in this area in particular illuminates the role that cultural activity can play in empowering older people to feel more connected to their communities, especially when performing or showcasing their creative works. It also contributes to their sense of wellbeing, through affirming their sense of identity and facilitating positive emotional experiences. Although these findings reflected across these studies indicate an overwhelmingly positive benefit to the role that cultural participation plays in the wellbeing and social connectedness of older people, we have some significant concerns about the quality of a high proportion of the studies represented in this review. With this in mind, we can therefore draw the following conclusions:

- 1. Group-based cultural activities lead to an increase in wellbeing and sense of social connectedness for older people.** The strongest evidence for this is from music-based participation in community choirs. There was much less research relating to individual cultural pursuits. Future research could therefore examine the role of both group-based and solo activities to understand more about impacts on individual wellbeing and social connectivity.
- 2. Older people who are female, white and aged 65-75, are the most commonly represented group within the literature.** There is far less research relating specifically to men, the oldest-old, and taking into account race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, disability etc. In order to understand the reach of cultural participation for older people, it is essential that research widens its focus to ensure that these populations are represented within the literature in the future.
- 3. There appears to be a need for methodological development in this area.** Older people's responses across a lot of the literature were very surface level, with some interviews reported to only last 10-20 minutes. There is a need to consider the methods that are most appropriate within this research context, as well as an acknowledgement of the ethical considerations of working with older people in a research capacity – something that was made apparent during the quality appraisal of the literature. There was also a notable absence of participatory and co-produced approaches to research, which offer older people more agency, voice and involvement in the research process. Given the cross-disciplinary nature of this research area, there is great potential in the use of well-designed mixed-methods research that brings together larger scale data with older people's lived experiences across time.
- 4. A large body of the literature frames older people as a 'burden'.** A large proportion of studies frame the use of cultural participation as an intervention to prevent the need for social care services for older people. It is important to acknowledge the role of arts and culture beyond keeping older people more 'independent' for longer, and to consider the broader role that cultural participation in maintaining older people's roles as active and engaged citizens within their communities.

## Next steps

Our research and evidence base for cultural value needs to respond to what works now and what needs to change in the future, so that we can support practitioners and policymakers to develop models and practices that are more robust, equitable and sustainable.

We will review this publication in Winter 2022 to reflect relevant research and evaluation that was published after the first edition of this digest.

If you are aware of new publications or feel we have missed a vital piece of research or evaluation that should be included in our 2022 update, please get in touch at: [ccv@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:ccv@leeds.ac.uk)

## Studies included within this review

The full table of studies with further information on each study can be found here.

- 1 Ali-Haapala, A., Moyle, G. and Kerr, G., 2020. Pleasurable challenges: competing with the ageing body and mind through Ballet for Seniors. *Leisure Studies*. 39(4), pp.532-544. DOI: 10.1080/02614367.2019.1670720
- 2 Anderson, S., Fast, J., Keating, N., Eales, J., Chivers, S. and Barnett, D., 2017. Translating knowledge: Promoting health through intergenerational community arts programming. *Health Promotion Practice*. 18(1), pp.15-25. DOI: 10.1177/1524839915625037
- 3 Barbeau A-K, Mantie R., 2019. Music Performance Anxiety and Perceived Benefits of Musical Participation Among Older Adults in Community Bands. *Journal of Research in Music Education*. 66(4):408-427. DOI:10.1177/0022429418799362
- 4 Barbeau A-K, Cossette, I., 2019. The effects of participating in a community concert band on senior citizens' quality of life, mental and physical health. *International Journal of Community Music*. 12(2), pp. 269-288(20). DOI: 10.1386/ijcm.12.2.269\_1
- 5 Beauchet, O., Bastien, T., Mittelman, M., Hayashi, Y., Hau Yan Ho, A., 2020. Participatory art-based activity, community-dwelling older adults and changes in health condition: Results from a pre–post intervention, single-arm, prospective and longitudinal study. *Mauritas*.134, pp. 8-14. DOI: 10.1016/j.maturitas.2020.01.006.
- 6 Bernard, M., Rickett, M., Amigoni, D., Munro, L., Murray, M., & Rezzano, J. , 2015. Ages and stages: the place of theatre in the lives of older people. *Ageing and society*, 35(6), pp.1119-1145. DOI:10.1017/s0144686x14000038
- 7 Bradshaw, M., Ellison, C.G., Fang, Q., Mueller C. 2015. Listening to Religious Music and Mental Health in Later Life. *Gerontologist*. 55(6):961-71. DOI: 10.1093/geront/gnuo20.
- 8 Brustio, P.R., Liubicich, M.E., Chiabrero, M., Rabaglietti, E., 2018. Dancing in the golden age: a study on physical function, quality of life, and social engagement. *Geriatric Nursing*. 39(6), pp.635-639. DOI: 10.1016/j.gerinurse.2018.04.013.
- 9 Burns J, Oliver S, Karkou V., 2021. Creativity in retirement: psychosocial experiences of recently retired people participating in a creative arts project. *Perspectives in Public Health*. 141(5), pp.295-302. DOI:10.1177/1757913920919449
- 10 Collard-Stokes, G., 2020. Recreational burlesque and the aging female body: challenging perceptions. *Journal of Women and Aging*. DOI: 10.1080/08952841.2020.1839319
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# Appendix 1

A full list of cultural experiences and participation types included in the studies.

<b>Cultural category</b>	<b>Participation type</b>
Craft	Community-based craft groups
Creative writing	Library-based guided writing group Autobiographical writing
Dance	Square dancing Couple dance Ballroom dancing Line dancing Ballet Group dance Burlesque dance Creative dance
Digital content creation	Digital video production for YouTube and Facebook
Digital storytelling	Creating multimedia stories
Festival	Creative arts festival for older people
Gallery	Group visits to contemporary art gallery Group visits to gallery venues
Heritage	Voluntary activities involved in preservation and restoration of historic ships
Library	Group-based reading club
Mixed activity	Creative hobbies (arts, craft) Painting or playing musical instrument Ballroom dancing and music social groups Community-engaged art making Receptive arts activities Intergenerational programme of dance and photography Visits to range of cultural venues Arts programme as part of social prescribing initiative Museum-based art making programme
Museums	Object handling in museum context Group museum visits
Music	Intergenerational music-making programme Community concert band Community choir Composition residencies Range of active music activities and performances Music tuition Operatic singing Intergenerational rock band Religious music listening
Participatory arts	Museum-based participatory arts programme
Radio	Radio listening
Theatre	Intergenerational community theatre Theatre attendance Community-based theatre
Visual arts	Community-engaged art making Participatory painting programme



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