

Start Thurrock: Phase 1 Evaluation

Appendix 3: Full analysis report

April 2026

Here we provide additional information behind the facts we’ve presented in our evaluation report, including further charts and analysis.

Data is compiled across the phase unless otherwise stated.

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Start Thurrock events – what happened?

Most events (79%) in this phase have had a universal appeal to general audiences and nearly half (48%) were targeted at families.¹

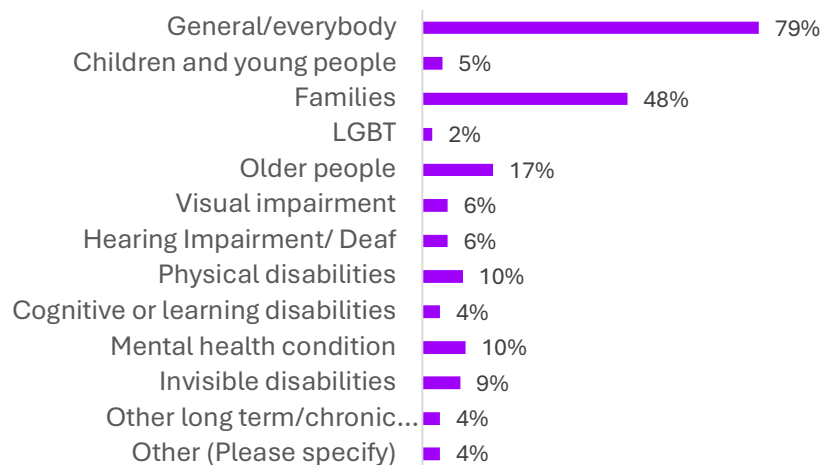


Figure 1: Target audiences. Base = 168 events

Common art forms² this phase include visual arts (18%), theatre (17%) and outdoor arts (14%) as well as other (11%), which includes panel meetings. Other popular art forms include craft, combined arts and dance.

¹ Please note this question is no longer included in Arts Council requirements, so there is no data for 25-26

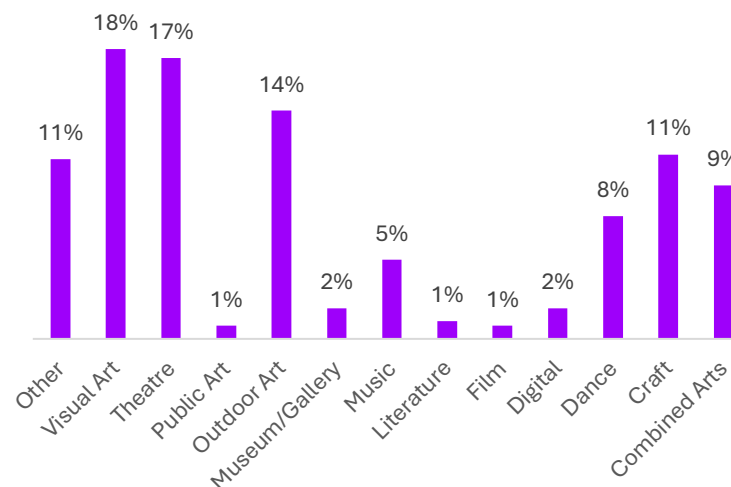


Figure 2: Main and secondary art form. Base = 276 events

The chart below breaks down the event types by phase year to show how the programme has shifted over the phase.

² The change to Illuminate has dropped secondary artforms so they are presented here as a single category

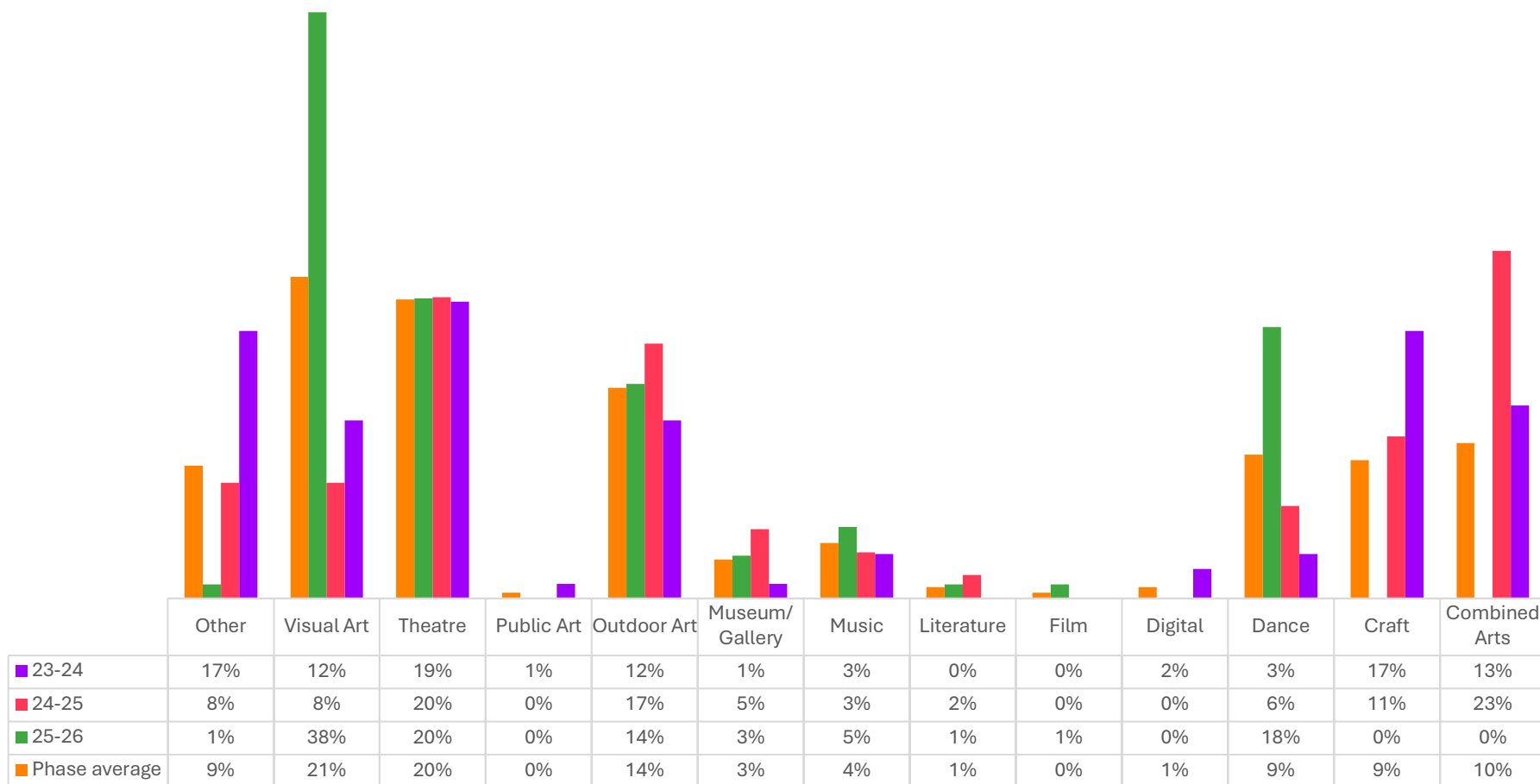


Figure 3: How art form of events has changed over the phase. Base = 276 events



Most events (79%) contained some digital content, most commonly for ticket sales (39%), artistic content (24%) and audience feedback (21%).

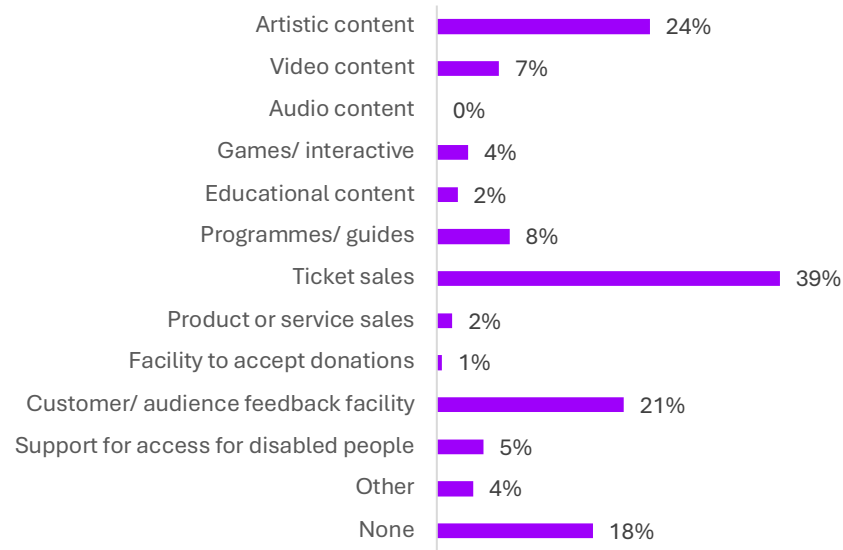


Figure 4: Digital content. Base = 169 events. Events could contain more than one element

Geographic reach

88% of audience members and participants came from Thurrock. Exploring the postcode data, we find that Start Thurrock have reached all wards across Thurrock over the phase.

The map here shows the full reach across the phase.



Figure 5: Map showing reach across the phase. Blue = 23/24, green = 24/25 and red = 25/26. Base = 6,309 postcodes

Demographics – who came along?

Here we present who came along to Start Thurrock CPP events over the phase.

Start Thurrock audiences largely tend to be female, but Start Thurrock are reaching progressively more people who identify as male, with 1 in 5 identifying as male in 25-26, for a phase average of 81% female, 18% male and 1% non-binary.

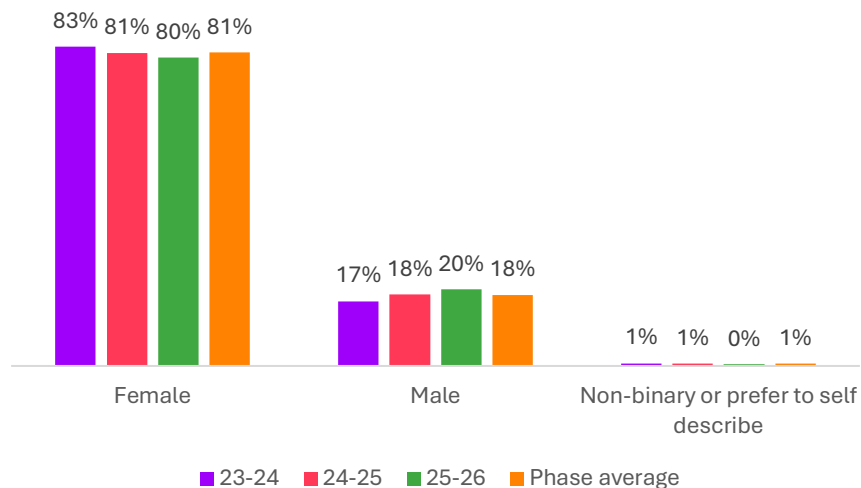


Figure 6: Sex/ Gender identity. Base = 1,445

On average, 7% of audiences during the phase identified as LGBTQIA+. This was highest during 25-26 at 10%.

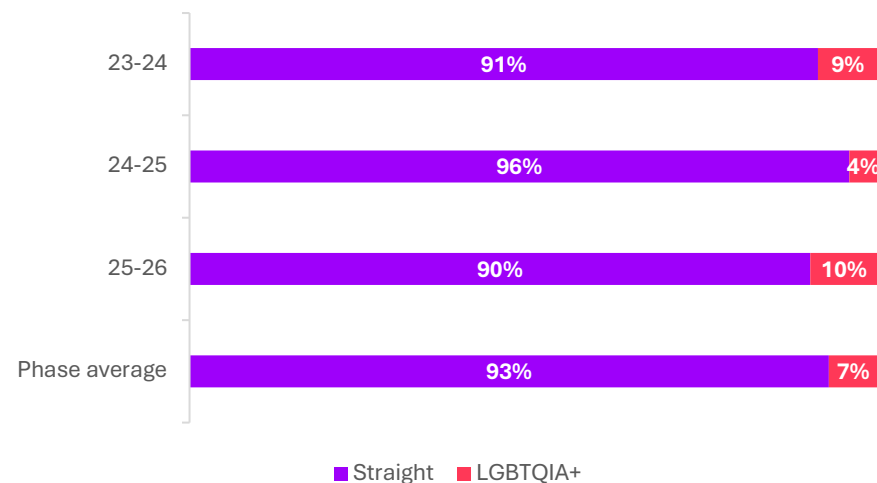


Figure 7: Sexual orientation. Base = 1,009

On average, audience members are far more likely to be aged 25 to 44 than the average for the Thurrock population. Many do attend with children (as shown further in the report), but the children themselves are unlikely to fill out the surveys, so we have limited the age chart here to adults 16+ to provide an accurate comparison. Some potential areas for growth in the new phase include 16-24 and 75+ groups.

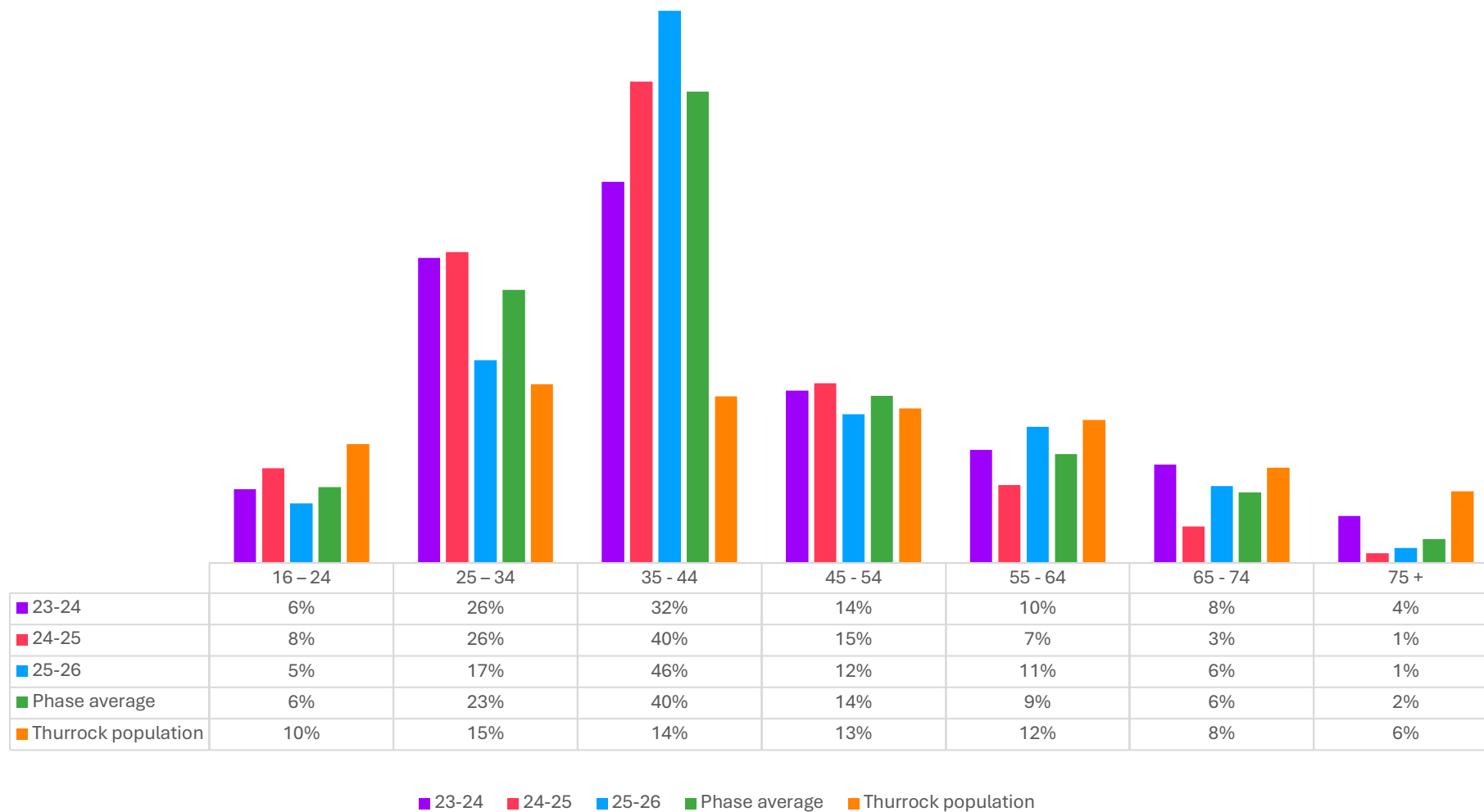


Figure 8: Start Thurrock audience adult ages. Thurrock comparator (ONS). Base = 1,455



Slightly fewer people from Start Thurrock audiences (10%) identify as disabled than from the general population of Thurrock (17%). Reach was highest during the 23-24 year.

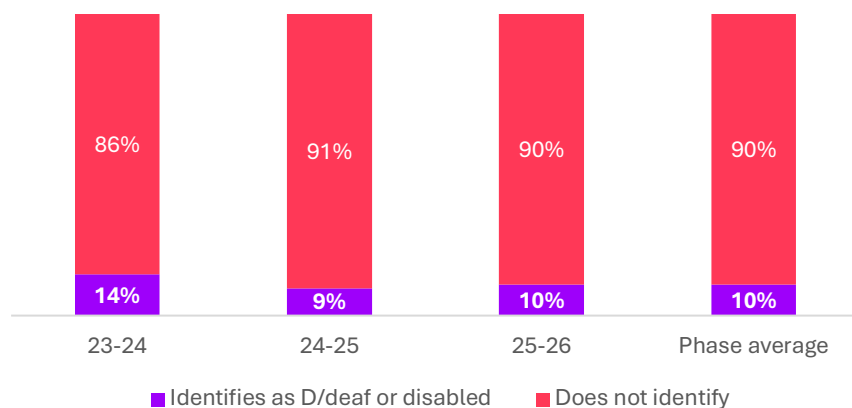


Figure 9: Do you identify as D/deaf, disabled or as having a long-term health condition? Base = 1,152

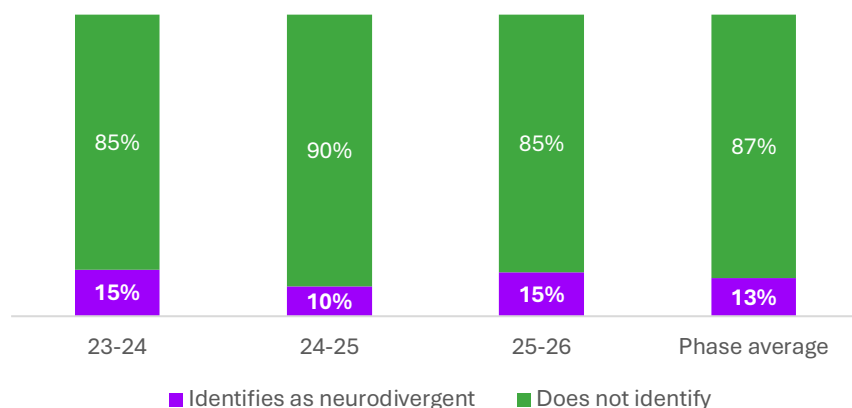


Figure 10: Do you identify as neurodivergent? Base = 1,144

A similar number of audience members identify as neurodivergent, 13% on average over the phase.

Start Thurrock audiences are most likely to come from managerial and professional occupations, and this is almost twice as likely as for the population of England. Start Thurrock have been increasing their reach into groups with intermediate occupations across the phase. Further targeted programming could help reach those with routine and manual occupations in the next phase.

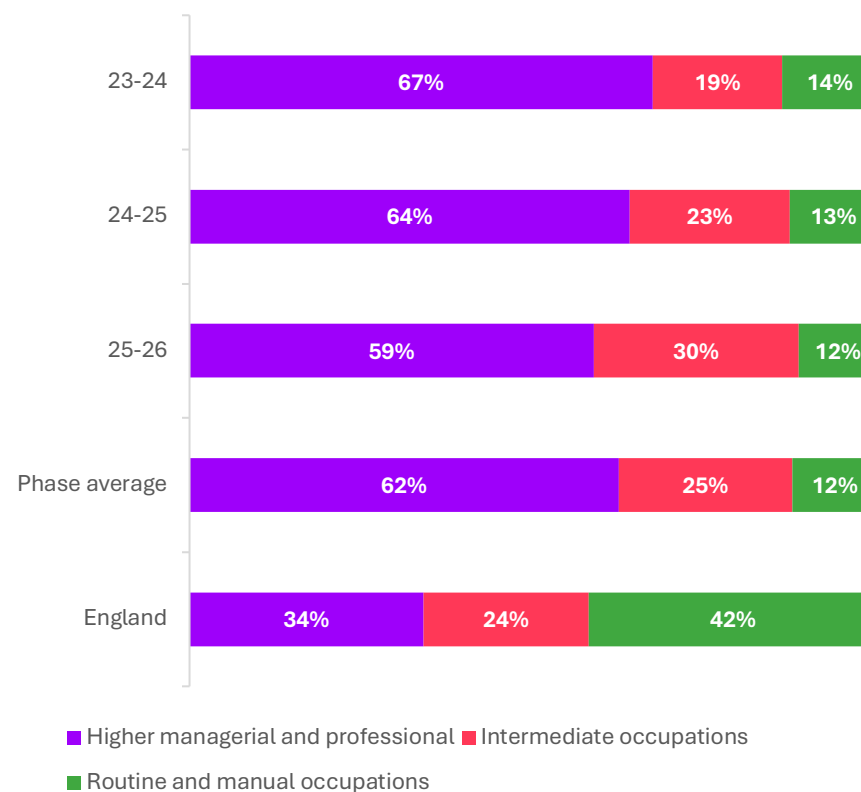




Figure 11: Socio-economic group of Start Thurrock audiences against average for England (ONS NSSEC). Base = 603

Start Thurrock audiences are typically less likely to be White and more likely to be Black/ Black British than the Thurrock population in general, although 25-26 figures show reach largely in line with the Thurrock population.

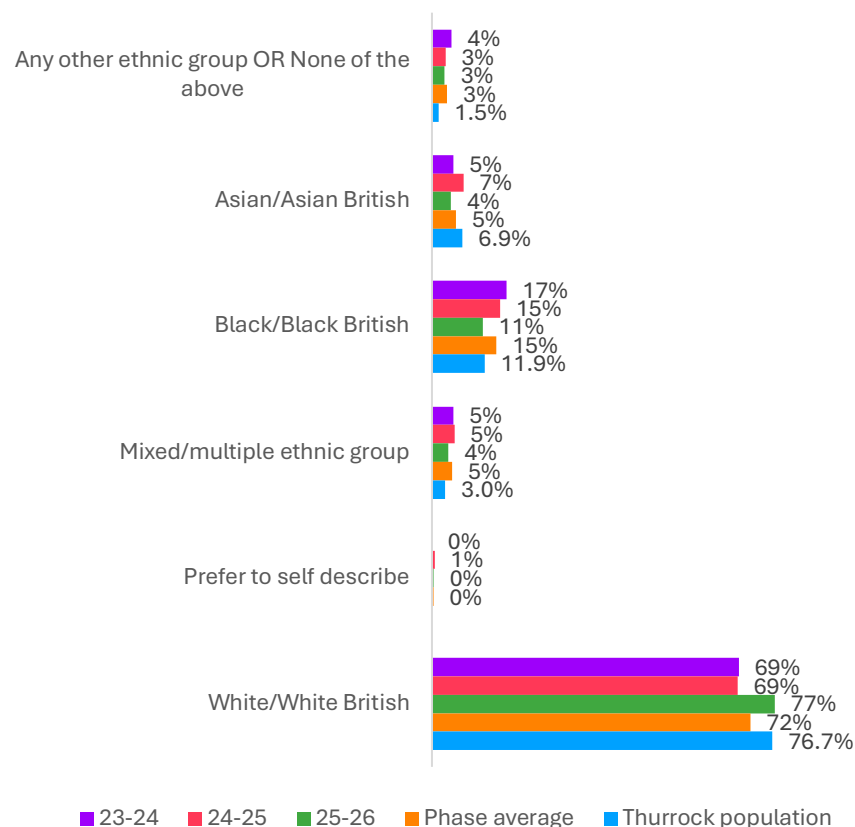


Figure 12: Start Thurrock audience ethnicity. Thurrock comparator (ONS). Base = 1,459

Across the phase, the large majority of audiences attended with their friends and family (84%), 11% by themselves, 3% through an organised group visit and 2% other. No one answered 'school/college/university visit', and this could be something to explore in the next phase.

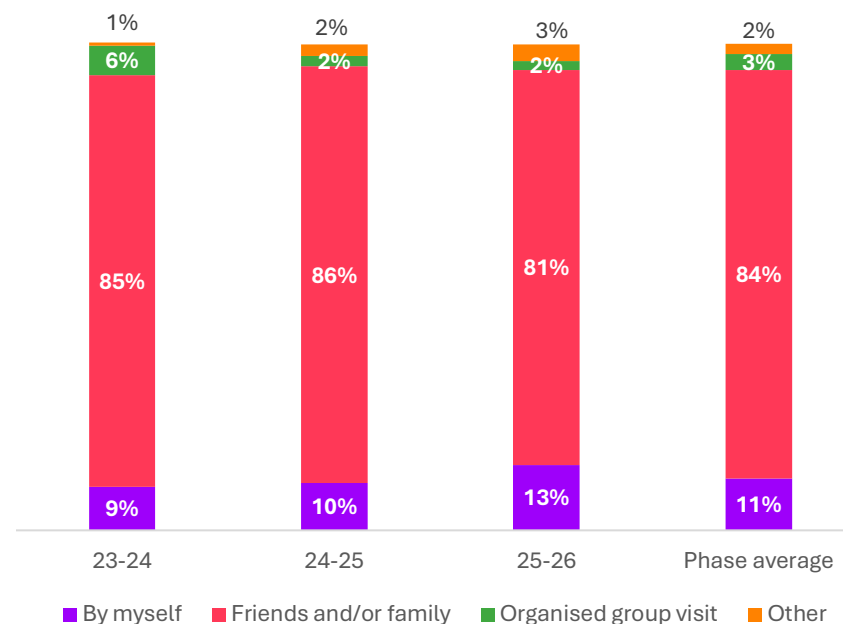


Figure 13: Who did you attend with? Base = 1,581

Of those who attended with others, around two-thirds came along with other adults (69%), 59% came along with children aged 5 to 11, around a third brought along very young children aged 0 to 4 and almost a fifth brought teenagers 12 to 15 as shown in the chart.

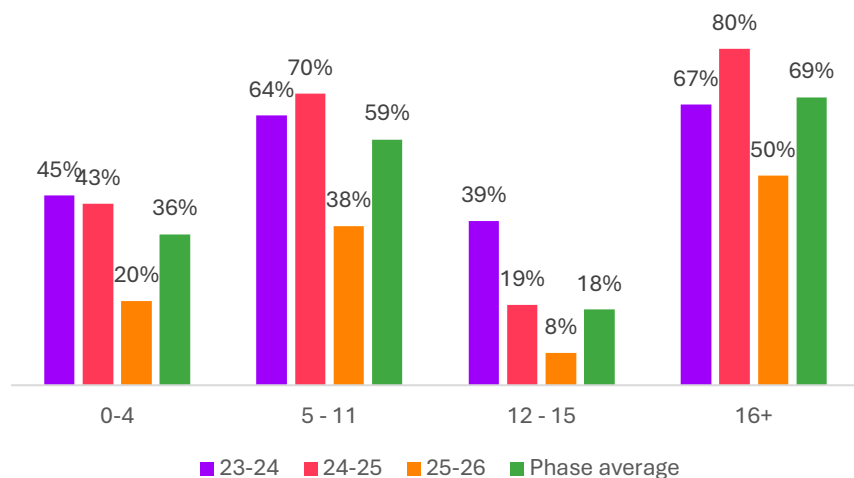


Figure 14: Proportion of audiences who attended with others, by age. Base = 875

On average during the phase, half of audience members hadn't been to a Start Thurrock event before. This category was naturally at its highest in the first full year of programming.

We also see a large amount of returning audiences – almost a third of people across the phase had been to at least one other Start Thurrock event in the last 6 months.

These results taken together show the success Start Thurrock has had not only at reaching new audiences, but also at creating lasting memories that leave people wanting more and inspire them to engage further.

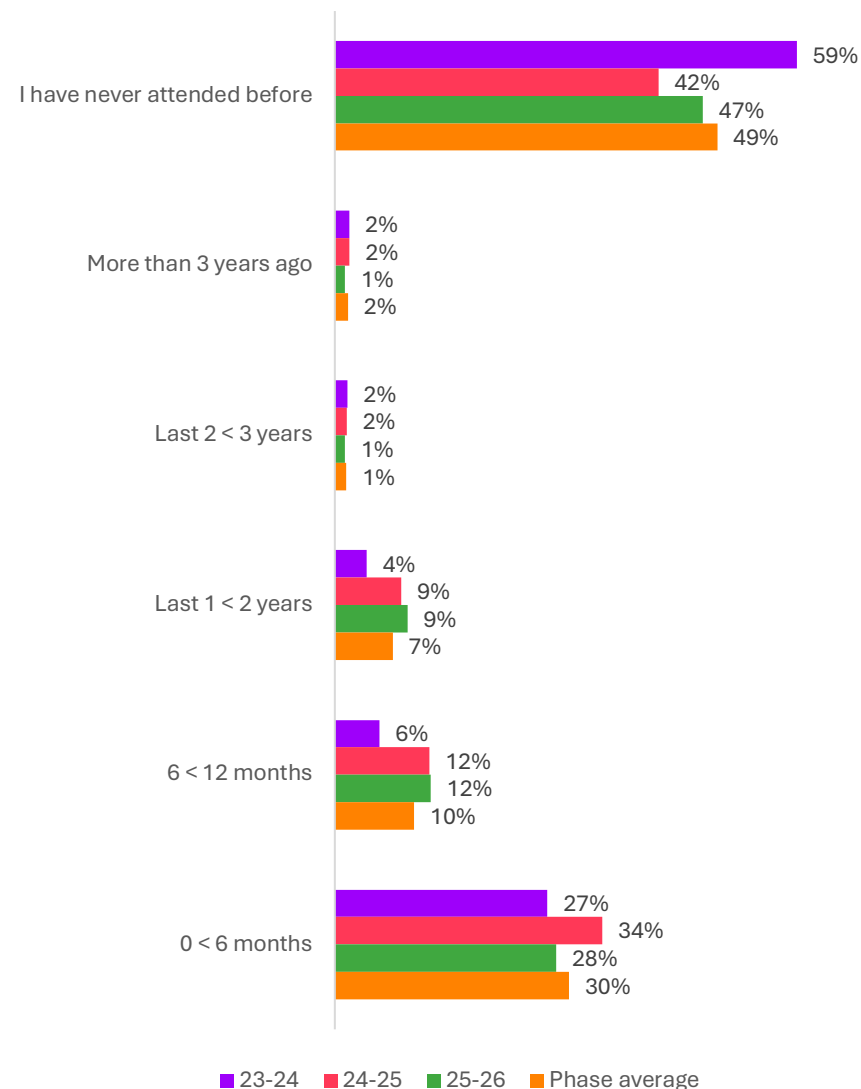


Figure 15: When did you last attend a Start event? Base = 1,549

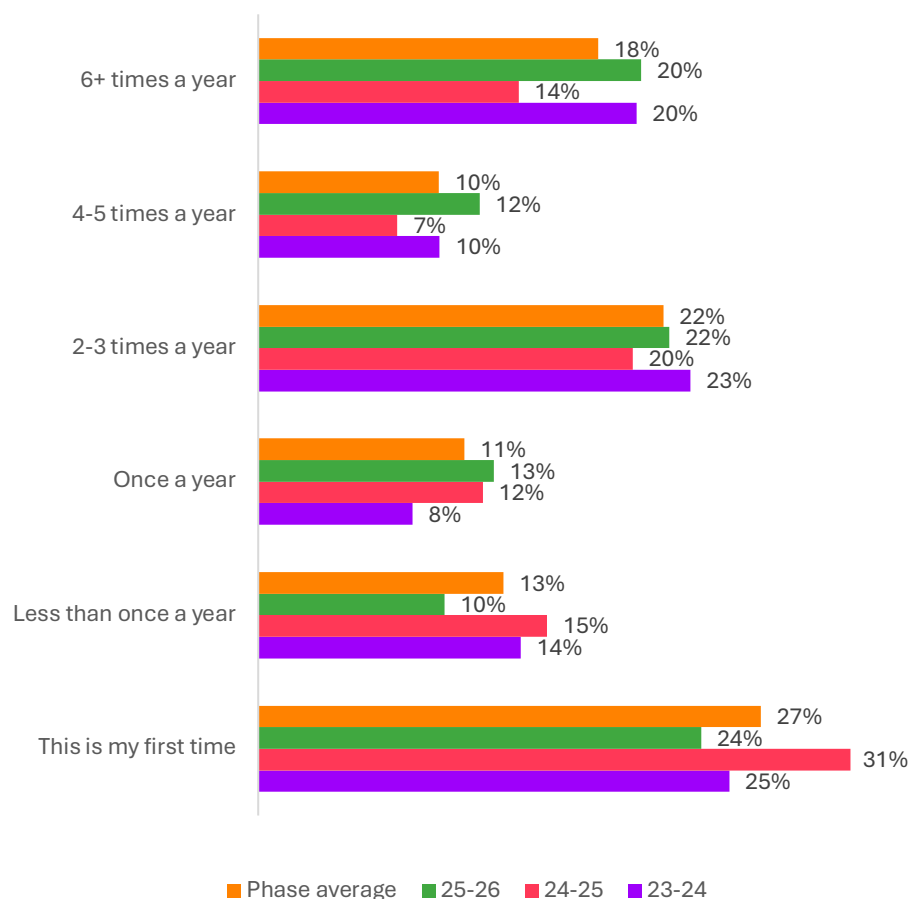


Figure 16: Previous arts engagement. Base = 1,549

³ Indices of deprivation are an official way of measuring levels of deprivation in local authorities in England. They rank local authorities using a number of metrics such as employment, income, health deprivation and crime. For more on

Across the whole phase, over a quarter of audiences had not been to a cultural event prior to attending Start Thurrock's event. When we look at those who attended 3 or fewer cultural events in a year or less for the entire phase, we find that 72% are not regular arts engagers. To explore this further, we conducted postcode analysis to understand the current engagement of Start Thurrock audiences.

Reaching those least likely to engage

Indices of Multiple Deprivation

Here we consider the extent to which Start Thurrock CPP have reached audiences who are traditionally least likely to engage in arts and culture activities. We present the results of two pieces of analysis of audience postcodes. The first is Indices of Multiple Deprivation analysis³.

The graphic below shows that Thurrock is in the more deprived half of the country, as it is more deprived than 61% of other local authorities in England.

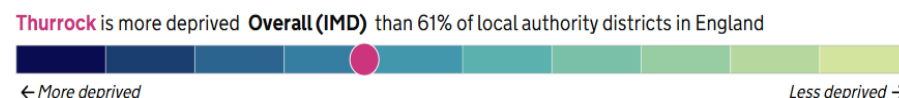


Figure 17: Source <https://deprivation.communities.gov.uk/maps>

Indices of Deprivation please see <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019>



The chart below shows the levels of deprivation for Start Thurrock engagements for the whole phase, compared with those for the Thurrock and England populations as a whole. It shows the proportion of people who live in each 'decile' – the lower the decile the higher the levels of deprivation, with 1 being the 10% most deprived areas of England.

This shows that levels of extreme deprivation are relatively low in Thurrock (4%) as well as for Start Thurrock engagements (4.2%) compared with the 10% most deprived areas nationally.

However, Start Thurrock audiences across the phase are substantially more likely to come from the 30% most deprived areas of England (36.1%) than the Thurrock population (25.5%). It is worth noting that this number is trending down as audience sizes

have increased year on year: 37.7% in 23-24, 36.9% in 24-25 and 33.7% in 25-26, as the reach into these groups that fall within the most deprived areas is 'diluted' by strong attendance in groups with less deprivation. Overall, this shows that Start Thurrock are doing well to reach those who will benefit most from their programming.

Audience Spectrum

Audience Spectrum⁴ analysis uses postcode data to categorise audiences into three levels of arts and culture engagement: low, medium and high.

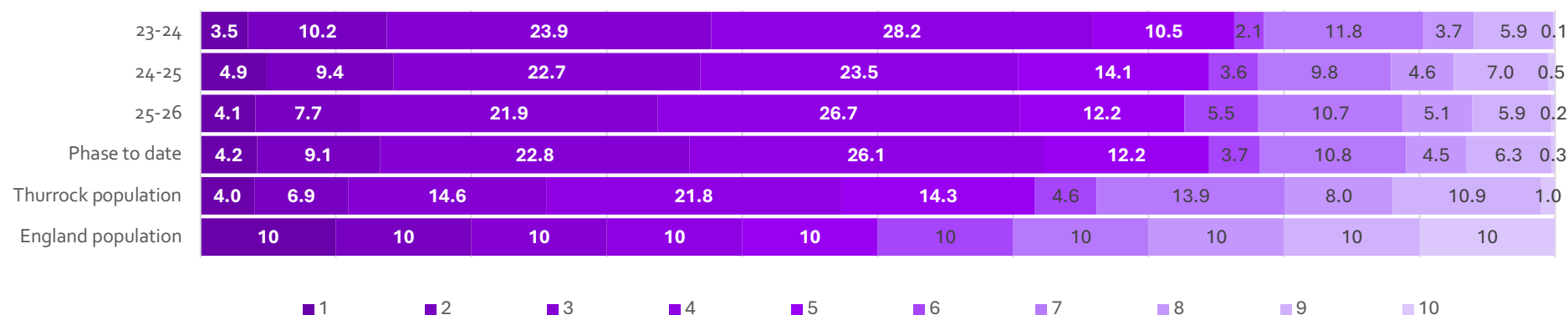


Figure 18: Indices of Multiple Deprivation analysis. Base = 5,056

⁴ For more, please see The Audience Agency's website <https://www.theaudienceagency.org/audience-spectrum>



Start Thurrock's four target audience segments are⁵:

- **Supported Communities:** Many people in these groups live in social housing and may rely on financial support or experience multiple types of deprivation or poor health.
- **Kaleidoscope Creativity:** Mixed-age and many working in public or service sectors, often preferring free and local community festivals and art to engaging with public cultural institutions.
- **Dormitory Dependables:** Regular attenders living in suburbs and smaller towns, interested in heritage activities and mainstream arts and less likely to be attracted by contemporary offerings.
- **Trips & Treats:** Mainstream arts and popular culture fans influenced by children, family and friends.

Overall, we find that 33% of Start Thurrock audiences come from groups least likely to engage in arts and culture activities, compared to 28% of the Thurrock population in general, meaning that Start Thurrock are successfully reaching those least likely to engage with their targeted programming.

In terms of the four target segments, Start Thurrock are reaching Supported Communities (6%) and Kaleidoscope Creativity (5%) at a slightly higher rate than the Thurrock population (5% and 4% respectively). The reach for Dormitory Dependables (15%) is slightly lower than the population (18%) and the reach for Trips & Treats (34%) is almost in line with Thurrock (35%). Reach in line

⁵ Taken directly from The Audience Agency, please visit <https://audiencespectrum.org/en>

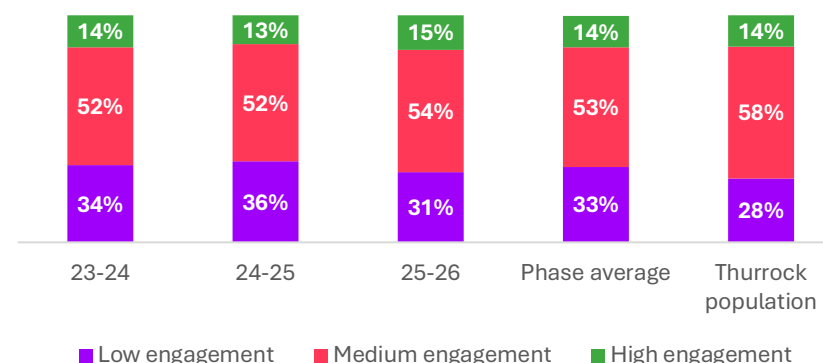


Figure 19: Simplified Audience Spectrum engagement comparison. Base = 6,230

with the population is a great start, showing that Start Thurrock are engaging residents across Thurrock. Although no longer a target group, Start Thurrock have far better reach with Frontline Families (18%) than the population (13%); these are one of the low engagement groups and this shows that Start Thurrock is continuing to achieve the ambition of reaching audiences from areas of least engagement.

The following chart shows the reach for Start Thurrock audiences (green bars) compared with the population of Thurrock as a whole (purple bars).

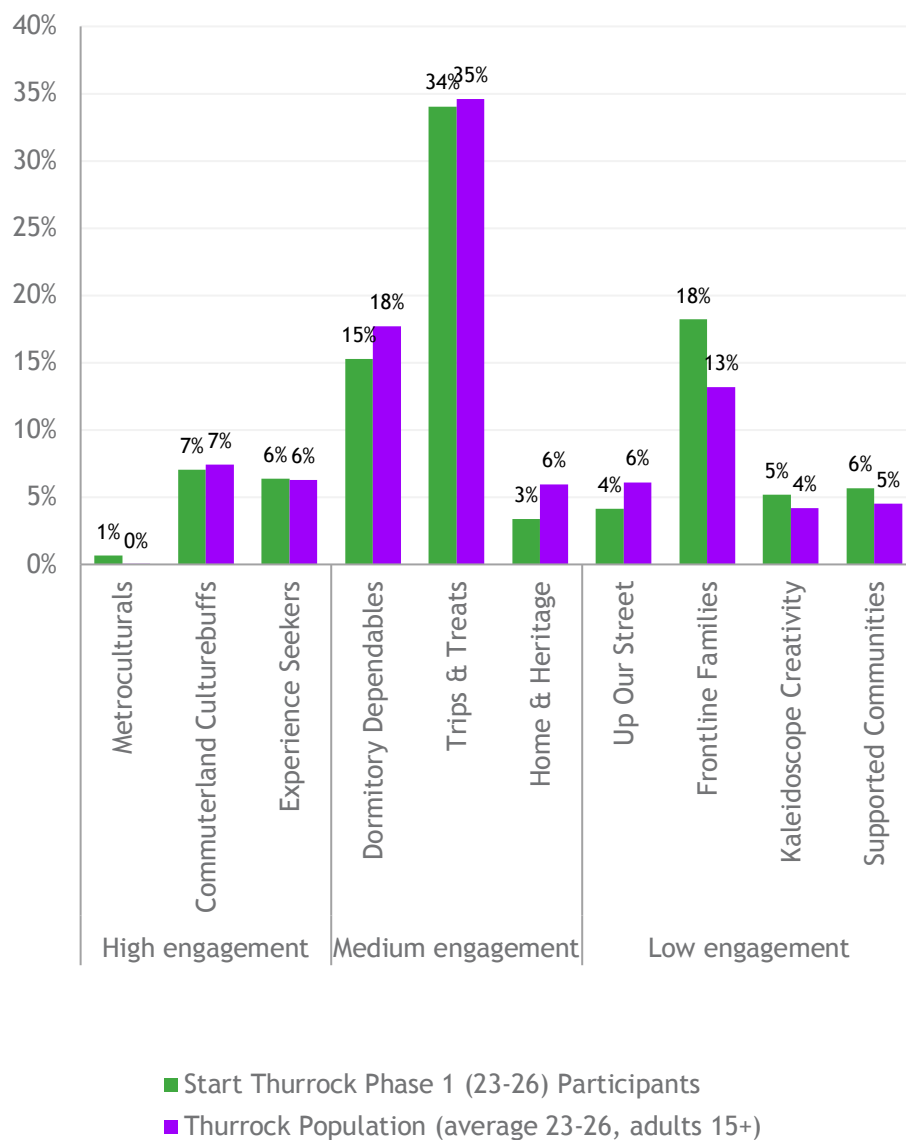


Figure 20: Audience Spectrum analysis. Base = 2,026

What did they think?

The atmosphere at events across all years of this phase has been one of **excitement and enjoyment**. Audiences have continued to rate events very highly – across the phase a whopping 97% said they were excellent (72%) or good (25%), with hardly any neutral or negative ratings.

Impressively, these ratings have been climbing year on year too. The chart below shows how **Start Thurrock have consistently been converting 'good' experiences into 'excellent' ones**.

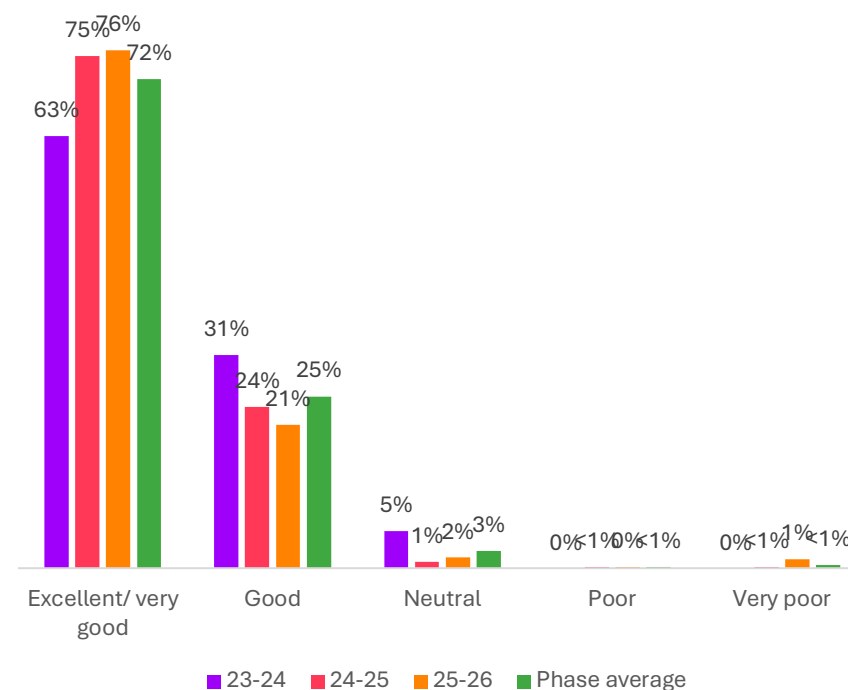




Figure 21: Audience Spectrum analysis. Base = 1,400

When asked if they **would recommend Start Thurrock events** to friends and family, 98% scored a 7 or above. We used this to calculate the Net Promotor score, taken as the percentage of promoters (those who score 9 or 10), less the percentage of detractors (those that score 0-6). Start Thurrock events have a Net Promotor Score of 81, which is ranked as **"World Class"**.⁶

Children have been encouraged to join in with events, and the Start Thurrock team have built good relationships with their audiences through their **warm, inclusive and friendly approach**.

I took my family to the circus at Blackshots today; we range from 64 years old to 3 years old and all really enjoyed it...was great to have something like this locally, very talented bunch of people making a fun afternoon.

Loved seeing my 5 year old amazed and excited by the performance.

The set up of the space was very accommodating for younger children; the songs and interactions with the children made this event extra enjoyable.

Audience members 23-26, via survey

Audience members enjoyed the chance to engage with their community and learn new skills or have new experiences. **93% felt the events helped them feel more part of their community.** Some were experiencing things for the very first time, such as tightrope walking and other circus activities.

[There were] highlights from all the events. I got to know my area more, learn new skills, visit venues I'd never been to, meet members of my community. I got to experience this with my kids.

Audience members 23-26, via survey

The chart here shows the outcomes reported by audience members and participants across the phase.



Figure 22: Which of the following benefits do you feel this experience has provided you with? People could choose more than one benefit, so numbers do not total 100%. Base = 57

⁶ "What's a good Net Promoter Score?" <https://www.qualtrics.com/en-gb/articles/customer-experience/net-promoter-score/>



As well as providing skills and good role models, events highlighted and **celebrated diversity, and felt inclusive.**

A lovely day out with family, and supporting all communities. As a returning gay resident who has not been home in years, it is reassuring to see the progress and support of the local community.

Impressive family show for all ages! Great role models especially for young girls! Great to see diversity in Thurrock.

A lovely selection of snacks provided – was great to see some snacks suitable for those with allergies/intolerances.

[The highlight of the event was] seeing my children enjoy getting involved with the experience. My son has autism and watching him get involved and being creative was so lovely to see. He enjoyed it so much [and] I could see he didn't feel too anxious of the event.

Audience members 25-26, via survey

The events also made audiences **see their local area in a new light** and **91% felt more pride in their local area.**

It was a lovely atmosphere – we live opposite the site, and it was lovely to have [the] big top on the field,

[and] look out of our front room to see it lit up with festoon lights.

As I walked around the Grays Park, I literally was thinking I could be anywhere – Paris, London, Milan or any culture city – not in a Park in Grays which quite frankly is a no-go area after dark! It was amazing, and what a turn out [of] people of all ages from every part of our community.

Audience members 23-26, via survey

People found the events **surprising and exciting:**

Very original performance, from music to artist.

I loved it. Didn't know what to expect but was blown away [by] the whole production.

I didn't really expect to enjoy it. However, I would recommend the show to absolutely everyone. It was gentle and inclusive

Audience members 25-26, via survey

Due to the high-quality events, people were excited to come back and **engage further.**

It was very well organised, and everyone was very welcoming. The ladies running the session were very helpful and patient. It was so good; we would



definitely be interested in attending other workshops in the future. Thank you.

Green Light Audience member 23-24, via survey

Overall, **88% of audience members felt the events met or exceeded their expectations.** A breakdown is shown below.⁷

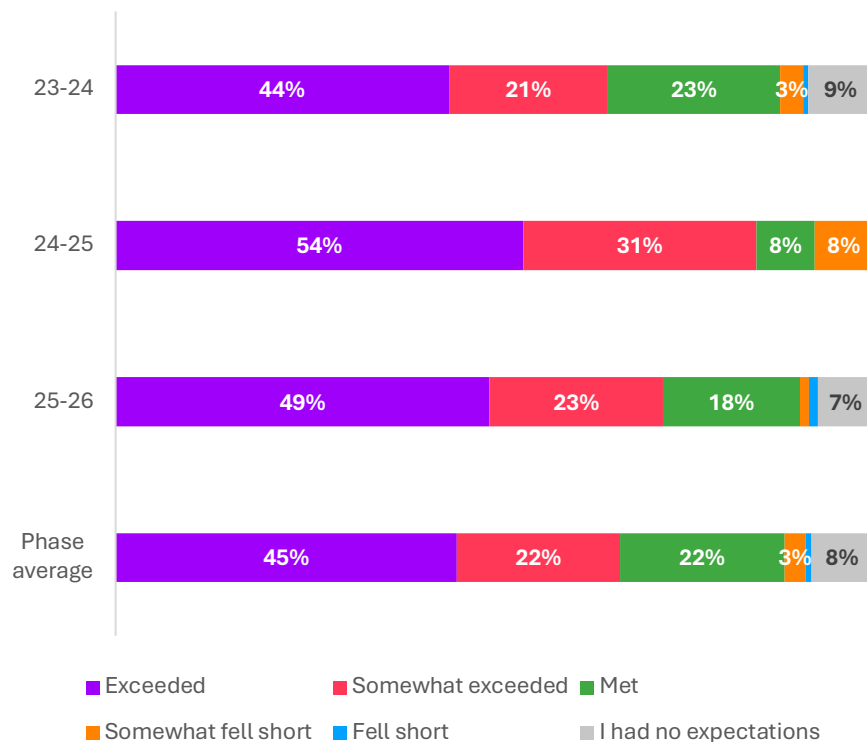


Figure 23: How did the event compare to your expectations? Base = 530

⁷ Scores below 2% have been removed for readability

As the phase has gone on, the most popular way audiences found out about events has increasingly been Facebook or other social media, with almost half finding out this way. A third find out through word of mouth, and the email newsletter is another popular option.

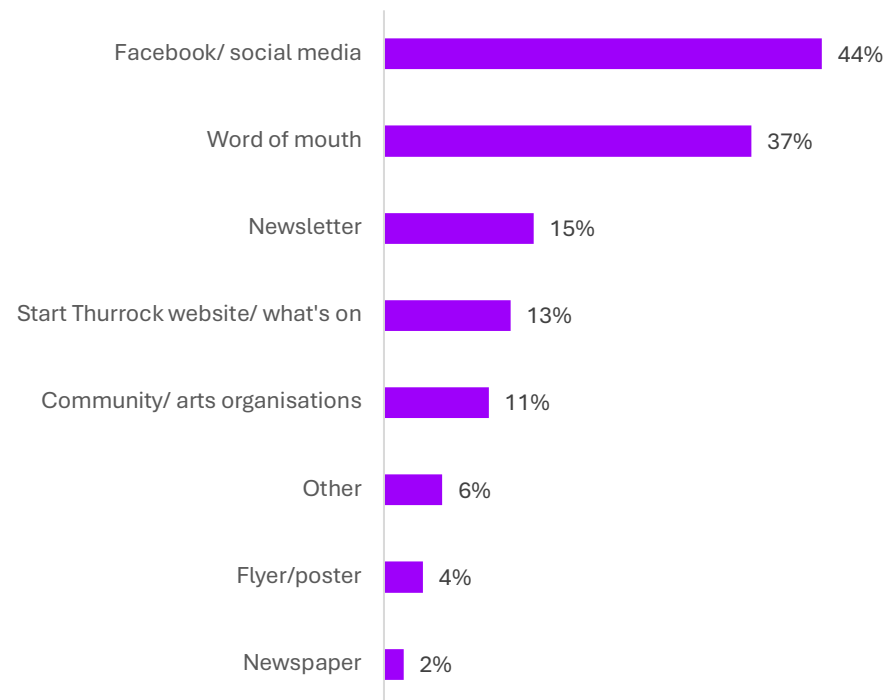


Figure 24: Audience responses to 'How did you hear about this event?' People could select more than one, so totals do not equal 100%. Base = 812 responses



People are really grateful for the experiences they have had through engaging with Start Thurrock.

Well done to all involved. A lot of effort and planning clearly went into this and [it was] brought together beautifully. Much appreciated.

Audience member 25-26, via survey

Start Thurrock's fun and welcoming atmosphere also extends to their data collection via methods such as 'Pots and Pebbles'. At events, Start Thurrock team members set up tents with a series of pots arranged on tables and posed a question to audiences: 'What type of activity would you like to see more of where you live?'. The chart below shows that Start Thurrock audiences most want Music and Dance, followed by Theatre, Magic and Carnival.

When comparing the requests via Pots and Pebbles to the event types Start Thurrock have put on over the phase we can compare the programming with audience appetite. While not all categories match closely enough for comparison, the chart below compares a few of the event types with audience requests.

This shows an appetite for further dance and music events. Craft was also a popular option chosen by audiences – although it only accounts for 5% of the votes overall, in reality this is 13% of the vote from 25-26 as it was only recently introduced, showing this is a popular request.

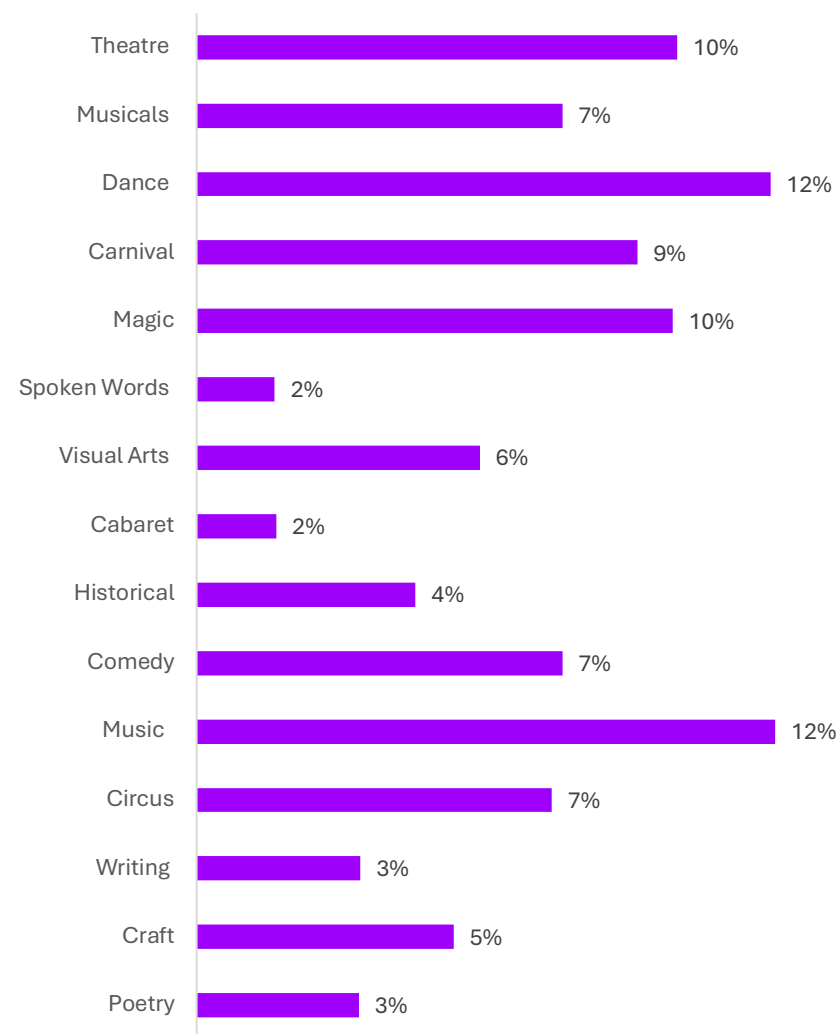


Figure 25: Audience responses to question on types of activities they want to see in their local area. Base = 3,188

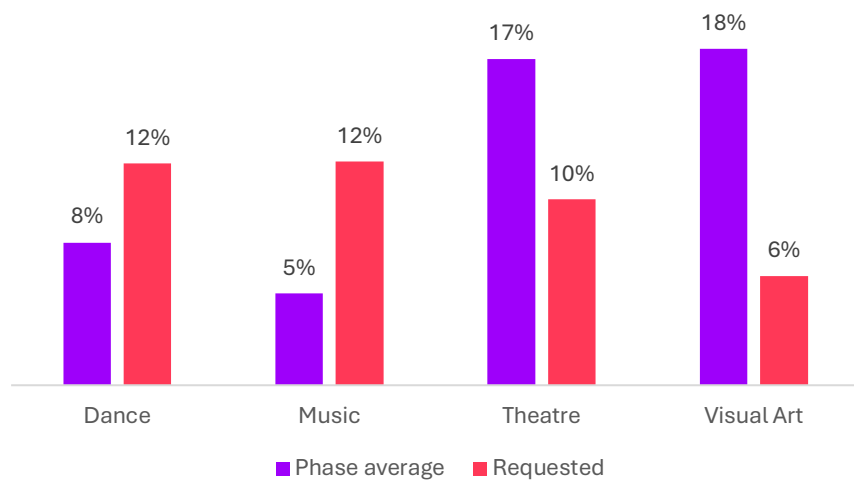


Figure 26: Audience responses to question on types of activities they want to see in their local area compared with event types programmed during the phase. Base = 3,188

This light-hearted, interactive data collection tool has proven very successful, with 3,188 responses over the phase, providing one of Start Thurrock's most 'engaged with' data collection methods. This confidence of their audiences to ask for what they want to see is covered more in the next section.