

ADUK resource sheet



Learning more about your catchment area – a brief introduction to area profile reports

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Introduction

Living or working in a place for any length of time usually lends us some insight into the characteristics of the local population. It might seem obvious, for instance, that many of the people on your local high street are elderly, or that a particular part of the city centre attracts a young, affluent clientele after office hours. For audience-focused cultural organisations, however, hunches based on observation are insufficient grounds on which to base important business planning or audience development decisions. Accurate information is required about the market place they are operating in and the people within that market place they might wish to engage with.

Understanding your local population can therefore help you:

- spend your limited time and money in the most cost-effective way,
- check your priorities i.e. should we focus on the Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi communities?
- Identify potential groups you might not have considered e.g. an area with a large number of single parent families,
- Help you understand how well you are doing i.e. if you know you've got X number of visitors attending from within 30 minutes drive of your venue, you also need to know how many people live within 30 minutes drive to check your penetration level [link to A-Z term] and know what the potential is for further audience development from that area,
- Set realistic targets i.e. aim to attract 5% of the 25 - 44 age group to attend at least one event by the end of March 2009, based on knowledge of likely income levels in the area and interest in specific art forms from that age group.

Area Profile Reports can provide much of this information, they are **free** to many arts organisations and are available at the drop of an e-mail.

What is an Area Profile Report?

Area Profile Reports (APR's) are compiled from a number of sources, including the 2001 UK Census, <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census/default.asp>, and provide:

1. Demographic statistics (who they are) [link to A-Z term]:

Basic demographic information contained in the reports includes:

- Total population
- Age profile of population
- Social grade
- Ethnic origin
- Occupation and employment status
- Educational attainment
- Household composition (e.g. children/dependents)

2. Behavioural statistics for your chosen area (what they are like, how they live their lives) [link to A-Z term]

APR's profile the local population using ACORN <http://www.caci.co.uk/acorn/> - a lifestyle classification system which segments households into key categories and groups (for example 'Ageing Greys' or 'Asian Heartlands').

[link to Leo's report for more on this]

3. Behavioural statistics related to cultural activity (what they currently engage with):

Perhaps most importantly for cultural organisations, APR's provide information on the proportion of current arts and museum attenders within the specified area. Based on the annual Target Group Index, <http://www.tgisurveys.com/about/about.htm>, (TGI) survey data, estimated audience potential for the following categories is included in the report:

- Plays
- Opera
- Ballet
- Contemporary Dance
- Classical Music
- Jazz
- Art Galleries/Art Exhibitions
- Cinema
- Pop/Rock
- Museum visit in last 12 months
- 'Any performance in a theatre'

Data is provided for different frequencies of attendance (e.g. 'plays twice or more a year'), for attendances within London specifically, and for aggregated newspaper readership habits (e.g. 'popular tabloids').

How is this information presented?

Area Profile Reports (APR's) are produced by Arts Council England, www.artscouncil.org.uk, and provide statistical information about any area *within England, Scotland or Wales* (they are not currently available for Northern Ireland). The area covered can be defined by the person requesting the report

- Drivetime (e.g. the area lying within 30 minutes drive of a venue)
- Distance from a specified location (e.g. a 50 mile radius from a town centre)
- Local authority or administrative boundary
- A collection of relevant postcode sectors (e.g. LS1-LS9)

The following documents are supplied:

- A map of the specified area ([click here to view a sample map](#)).
- An overview summary, with figures given as real numbers, as a percentage for the chosen area, and as an index to illustrate variance from the national average ([click here to view a sample overview summary](#)).
- Two spreadsheets giving numbers and percentages for each postcode sector within the specified area ([click here to view a sample page](#)).

What are Area Profile Reports used for?

APR's are a useful long-term resource for any organisation's research library, however they are often specifically requested to help inform:

- Business planning
- Marketing and audience development planning (see 'understanding your local population' above)
- Capital re-development/feasibility studies
- Funding applications

An example of their use might be a small arts centre in a market town which is seeking to expand its current audience. An APR might help illustrate that, though the population within 30 minutes drive are largely wealthy, retired homeowners, there exists a larger population of

young families slightly further afield, on the edges of the nearest city. The centre could use this data to inform a campaign, encouraging family visitors to attend on weekends and during school holidays. In addition, by commissioning a mapping profile of their existing database, the organisation could estimate their existing penetration of this audience and set a baseline by which to measure future progress.

This sounds great! How do I get hold of one?

Reports should be requested directly from the national Arts Council of the country within which your chosen area lies. You will need to fill in a request form (attach as pdf) specifying the area you wish the report to cover and giving your organisation's details. Contact details for the three councils are as follows:

Arts Council England – Peter Verwey, areaprofiles@artscouncil.org.uk, 0207 973 6885

Arts Council Wales – Ann Kellaway, ann.kellaway@artswales.org.uk, 0292 037 6543

Arts Council Scotland – Fiona Sturgeon, fiona.sturgeon@scottisharts.org.uk, 0131 226 6051

The relevant arts council will then pass on your request to one of the three audience development agencies who produce reports on their behalf (Audiences Yorkshire, amh and Arts About Manchester) (link to websites). As well as offering help with interpretation of the reports, these agencies can also be contacted directly about a range of additional mapping and ACORN profiling services which could help you compare your own organisation's data against that contained in an APR.

How much do they cost?

As APR's are funded by Arts Council England, they are available free of charge to English arts organisations which produce or receive work subsidised by Arts Council England, or which operate as not-for-profit organisations with arts provision as their core purpose.

APR's are available at a charge of £25 per report to the following organisations:

- Arts organisations based in Scotland or Wales
- Museums in England, Scotland or Wales

Local authorities in England may request up to three free reports, after which the £25 charge per report applies.

Reports are also available to consultants working on behalf of arts organisations or museums, provided the request is made by the organisation in question. Reports are *not* available to commercial sector organisations, unless they also receive work funded by Arts Council England.

