



Research digest  
**Everyday Creativity**

**CENTRE** FOR  
**CULTURAL VALUE**

## 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 in order to build a more diverse, equitable and regenerative cultural sector.

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 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 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 everyday creativity

This research digest summarises current evidence relating to the many and diverse creative and cultural activities that people do at home or in their communities.

Specifically, it explores the value of activities facilitated by amateur or voluntary groups in shared community spaces and self-initiated activity that takes place at home. This review does not cover everyday creativity facilitated by professional artists.

The review explores what we already know in this area, including the complex factors that might affect or enable people's access to, or participation or inclusion in, everyday creative experiences.

It also identifies what we know about:

- the effects of everyday creativity on community building
- the motivations for engaging with everyday creativity
- the impact of everyday creativity on individual and collective wellbeing.

## Further information

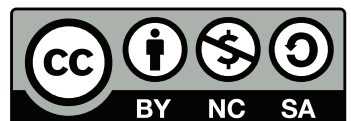
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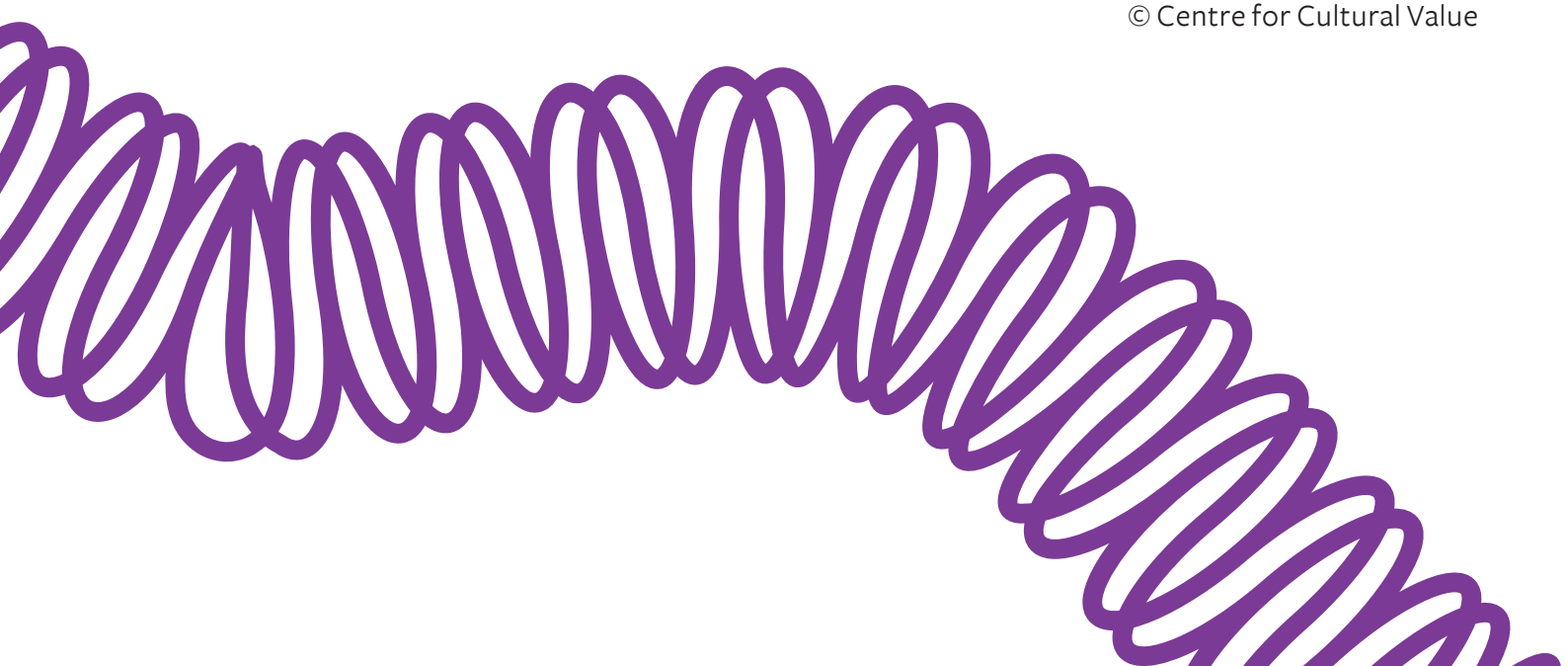
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# Contents

<b>Highlights</b> .....	5
<b>Background</b> .....	6
<b>Methods</b> .....	6
<b>Review shaping</b>	
<b>What we included</b>	
<b>What we didn't include</b>	
<b>What questions did we ask?</b>	
<b>Findings</b> .....	8
<b>Section 1 What we know</b> .....	7
<b>Everyday creativity resists neat categorisation</b>	
<b>Motivations for engaging in everyday creativity</b>	
<b>Disincentives for engaging in everyday creativity</b>	
<b>Section 2 Implications for research and policy development</b> .....	11
<b>Cultural Democracy</b>	
<b>Health and wellbeing</b>	
<b>Section 3 What we know works now</b> .....	13
<b>What we don't know and what needs to change</b>	
<b>Representation</b>	
<b>Focus on home environments</b>	
<b>Culture, health, wellbeing and everyday creativity</b>	
<b>Conclusions and implications</b> .....	14
<b>Next steps</b> .....	14
<b>Studies included in this review</b> .....	15

# Highlights

- Studies looking at people's daily routines are important and show that participants do not always make clear distinctions between activities in the way that many arts professionals do. The value for participants is more intrinsic and is related to how cultural engagement makes them feel, as opposed to the specific output or product.
- Creative self-expression is a key factor in individual everyday creativity. Studies cite participants' strongest motivation as enjoyment. Crucially, they find a significant correlation between positive emotional states and everyday creativity.
- Studies point to family time and capacity constraints as limiting factors in engaging in everyday cultural participation. These are particularly prevalent among families with caring responsibilities but are not exclusive to that group.
- An obstacle to everyday creativity highlighted in several of the studies is conflicting access needs to shared public spaces or resources.
- There is an important trend towards creative activity in the home being shared beyond the immediate social circle of its participants and producers.
- We found that everyday creativity can and does inspire forms of cultural democracy at community, local and even regional levels.
- Self-organised cultural activity by communities can lead to an increased sense of ownership by local people.
- There is clearly a gap in both research and policy understanding of everyday creativity in the home.
- The evidence suggests that a joined-up localised and personalised approach from policymakers, together with communities and individuals, can make a difference.

## Background

In 2008, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) commissioned a report which provided an in-depth study of voluntary and amateur arts groups in the UK (Dodd, Graves and Taws, 2008). This was the first major policy report on this topic, and it estimated that 9.4 million UK citizens were participating in the arts in either a voluntary support capacity or directly as members. This highlighted that a significant percentage of the UK population participate in formal amateur arts activity, which in turn points to a large proportion of the population who engage in everyday creativity beyond these formalised arts activities<sup>1</sup>.

The significant scale of participation in cultural activity within everyday contexts has prompted ever-increasing attention in this area. The importance of everyday creativity has been recognised by a diverse set of stakeholders, from governments and arm's-length bodies to researchers in various fields.

This digest distils this research and offers a comprehensive overview of what we know about everyday creativity and where significant gaps in our knowledge remain.

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1. Formal amateur arts activity is categorised in the report as members belonging to registered charities or voluntary groups.

## Methods

We conducted a rapid review of the peer-reviewed primary and secondary research, using a systematic approach to identify the relevant literature. This was accompanied by a search of the 'grey' or unpublished literature (including academic theses and dissertations), identified through consultation with expert stakeholders, searches of key websites, and a limited Google search. Analysis was carried out through a narrative synthesis of findings from both sources.

There are two elements to this review. The first takes a detailed look at the motivations and disincentives for everyday creativity; we examine what we know about participation in creative and cultural activities that people do regularly at home or in communities. The second explores policy implications of this research.

We also investigate what types of participation are represented within the literature, the cultural spaces and places used by communities, and which types of participants are currently represented within the literature. This enables us to present what we currently know in this area and highlight where there are evident gaps that future research should address.

## Review shaping

The research questions were framed in consultation with representatives from the voluntary and third sectors and researchers working in the field, using a consultation survey and research shaping workshop held in October 2021.

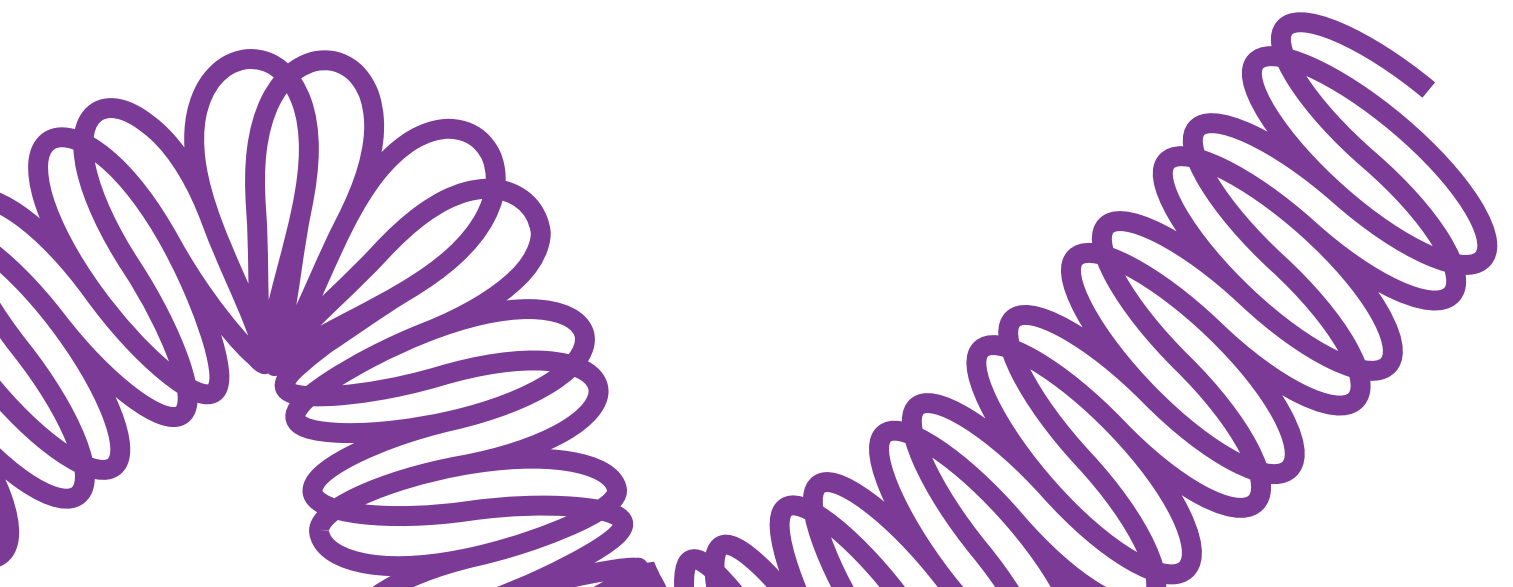
Stakeholders involved in this process helped us to narrow the focus of the review and prioritise our research questions to ensure the review was as accessible and relevant as possible to address the questions the sector had about this topic. You can read more about our engaged research process [here](#).

## What we included

We included peer-reviewed, primary and secondary research that was published in English between January 2012 and March 2022. We also included reports from the voluntary and third sectors, which captured snapshots of everyday creativity. Based on our consultation, we looked specifically for literature which had a focus on everyday creativity in non-professional contexts.

## What we didn't include

We did not include everyday creativity in professional contexts or activities led by artists and arts professionals. We also excluded everyday creativity within museums and galleries and in educational institutions such as primary and secondary schools, as there is significant research that already exists in these areas. Our focus was primarily on arts activities and so excluded other associated areas such as sport, amateur cooking and horticulture that have been included in other reviews on the topic.



## What questions did we ask?

**Based on our consultation exercises, we asked the following questions to help guide our analysis.**

- What types of arts and cultural experiences and activities are represented in the literature?
- What evidence is there to support or challenge assumptions about the value of everyday creativity in the home and community?
- What are the disincentives/enablers/motivations for engaging with everyday creativity at home and in the community?
- What evidence is there to support or challenge assumptions about the value of everyday creativity in supporting community-building?
- What is the relationship between everyday creativity and health and wellbeing both in communities and for individuals?
- What methods, philosophies and approaches are used to capture, evidence and articulate the impacts of everyday creativity on individuals and communities?

## Findings

### Section 1) What we know

#### Everyday creativity resists neat categorisation

We identified 65 primary research studies and 31 secondary research sources of everyday creativity, which represented a diverse range of cultural experiences and types of arts and cultural participation.

Analysing the different art forms within these studies revealed a complex picture that cannot be categorised by ‘what activity is undertaken’, as many of the studies took a holistic view of everyday creativity. These studies encompass more than simply one activity such as playing an instrument in the home or joining a knitting group. However, what is noteworthy is the broad scope of activity represented in the literature.

The literature documented at least 38 different forms of everyday creativity. In addition, 22 studies took a more holistic view and followed and observed participants’ creative activity throughout various timeframes and captured many more activities ([view everyday creative data](#)).<sup>2</sup>

These holistic studies focused on their participants’ daily routines using a well-understood method within psychology that takes a daily diary record of participants’ engagement and so encompasses many forms of creativity. These studies are important as they often argue that participants do not make clear distinctions what activity they are engaging in. The value for participants is more intrinsic, related to how it makes them feel, as opposed to the specific output or product (Benedek, Bruckdorfer and Jauk, 2019).

The significant forms of activities that are represented across the literature are music, craft and photography, which also expand into some of the other categories such as folk art, song and dance or amateur orchestras. The blurring of these artforms appears as a trend throughout the literature and reveals how people perceive notions of everyday creativity in different ways. Conversely, it also suggests

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2. It must be noted that many of these categories could be expanded further but for the purposes of this digest we have identified as closely as possible with the categories which the researchers have identified in their studies. Several studies were left out of this graph due to their focus on specific themes or concepts as opposed to an art form or activity.

that these boundaries between artforms are more relevant in professional and research contexts than in everyday creativity. Furthermore, we found that some cultures do not designate these categorisations. For example, one study highlighted that in some cultures, dance or music are not separate disciplines but part of storytelling in everyday life (Kaufman, 2016; Malcomson, 2014).

We found a growing field within psychology that is working to develop a scale or typology of creativity. These studies stem from the work of US and Australian psychologists and they build upon the work of James, Kaufman, and Beghetto's 4C model of creativity, which argues that there are different forms of creativity which are context dependent (Kaufman et al, 2016).<sup>3</sup> Of course, some of this research encompasses professional creative practice and creativity beyond the arts. However, there is significant data on everyday cultural activity of individuals' daily routines. This provides insight into not only what people are engaging with but also their motivations and disincentives.

Importantly, our systematic review has revealed a high level of rigour within many of the psychology-based peer-review studies of everyday creativity. The studies also provide rich data, in terms of activities observed and also global reach, with 28 countries represented in total.

The key finding from this analysis of the types of activity researched is that everyday creativity represents a complex set of values rooted in people's everyday lives. Therefore, it resists the professional preoccupation with categorisation into specific art forms.

### **Motivations for engaging in everyday creativity**

Our review shows the variety and depth of everyday creativity in the home and within communities. Across the literature we identified 63 primary and secondary studies that discussed everyday creativity in a home environment and 83 studies that engaged with everyday creativity in communities.

Importantly, many of the studies engage with everyday creativity in both the home and the community; out of the 96 sources, only 13 solely focussed on the home environment. However, they demonstrate the interrelationship between the two and highlight how and why a variety of motivations and disincentives affect everyday creativity in different contexts.

Wrapped up in this question are notions of participation in cultural activity, including what is valued and by whom. The Understanding Everyday Participation study (UEP) (2012 –2017) by Andrew Miles et al found that by reversing the deficit model and instead focusing on the 'demand' side to culture, researchers and policymakers can better understand the complexity of what people are engaged in. Importantly, they can also understand why it is important to them (see Appendix 1).

The UEP project offers several key findings about the home as a site of cultural activity. For example, Gibson and Edwards (2013) studied everyday participation in cultural and non-cultural activities of young people in care. Although the phenomenon of young people in care presents a unique set of circumstances, the study highlighted that freedom of expression, which includes creative expression, in the home environment can help young people develop an understanding of their own place in the world (p.12).

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3. Big-C creativity (internationally recognised, famous in their respective fields or globally significant and historically important), Mini-c creativity (personal to learning journeys it might not be revolutionary to human knowledge, but it is new and meaningful to learners), Little-c creativity (is an extension of mini-c but with external learning advancements are made and it might be important for others), Pro-c creativity (this is professional level or through many years of dedication level and output).



The researchers found that this can develop important life skills and help build ‘bridging capital’ between the cultural and the social realms. Bridging capital is important for children in care as it facilitates and encourages wider participation outside of the care system. Cultural activity can help foster wider peer networks and encourage individual development.

The importance of creative self-expression appears within many of the studies that focus on the home as the place where everyday creativity occurs. These studies cite participants’ strongest motivation as enjoyment, which is then linked to other factors such as emotional wellbeing and stronger mental health. Crucially, they find a significant correlation between positive emotional states and everyday creativity (Benedek, Bruckdorfer and Jauk, 2019).

These studies take a variety of approaches, including small-scale studies focusing on specific households, interview-based studies, researcher-embedded fieldwork and large-scale surveys of individuals and their daily creative activity. We found a focus on the experience of individuals in these specific studies on the home. However, studies which began to focus on activity outside of the home and in communities revealed other motivations.

Among these were several studies which looked at everyday creativity during the Covid-19 pandemic. These studies focused on everyday creative connections between people and began to shed light on the use of digital and online activity. From coping strategies to memes, these studies explored how people responded to the unique set of circumstances which led to whole populations spending much more of their time at home without physical (in real life) communications.

From the evidence we reviewed, acts of everyday creativity in the home appear to have taken on new social dimensions in light of the impact of the pandemic and increased social isolation. As a result, the boundaries between what we do in the home and what is seen by others outside have shifted. Pre-pandemic studies focused more on activity in homes and the blurring of the public/private division. However, there was a shift of emphasis in the literature during the pandemic, a re-positioning of the importance of everyday creativity in building social connections beyond the home through the power of sharing.

Notably, in these studies researchers consider both real-world situations and specifically designed or researcher-led situations; similar results were found across both types of study. We should note that these studies had small samples and they highlighted the nature of smaller friendship and community groups as opposed to wider population studies.

Nevertheless, there is an important indicative trend towards creative activity in the home being shared beyond the immediate social circle of its participants/producers. This finding reflects the increased prevalence and value of peer-networks which we found in our Covid-19 research.



Another key motivation we identified in the literature was acts of resistance to capitalist notions of economy. These became important driving factors for specific communities. We identified these groups as engaging in forms of activism across several of the studies but particularly in relation to craft. These studies suggest that ‘super-connected’ amateur makers have begun to emerge with access to a wealth of online and offline knowledge accomplished through forums, social media and citizen journalism.

These groups blend their own experiences and skills with others and have a keen understanding of the history of making and its counter-cultural politics. Researchers argue that these groups actively engage in making and supporting alternative economies through different forms of value and exchange. This value manifests both through exchange of goods and in social and emotional support.

### **Disincentives for engaging in everyday creativity**

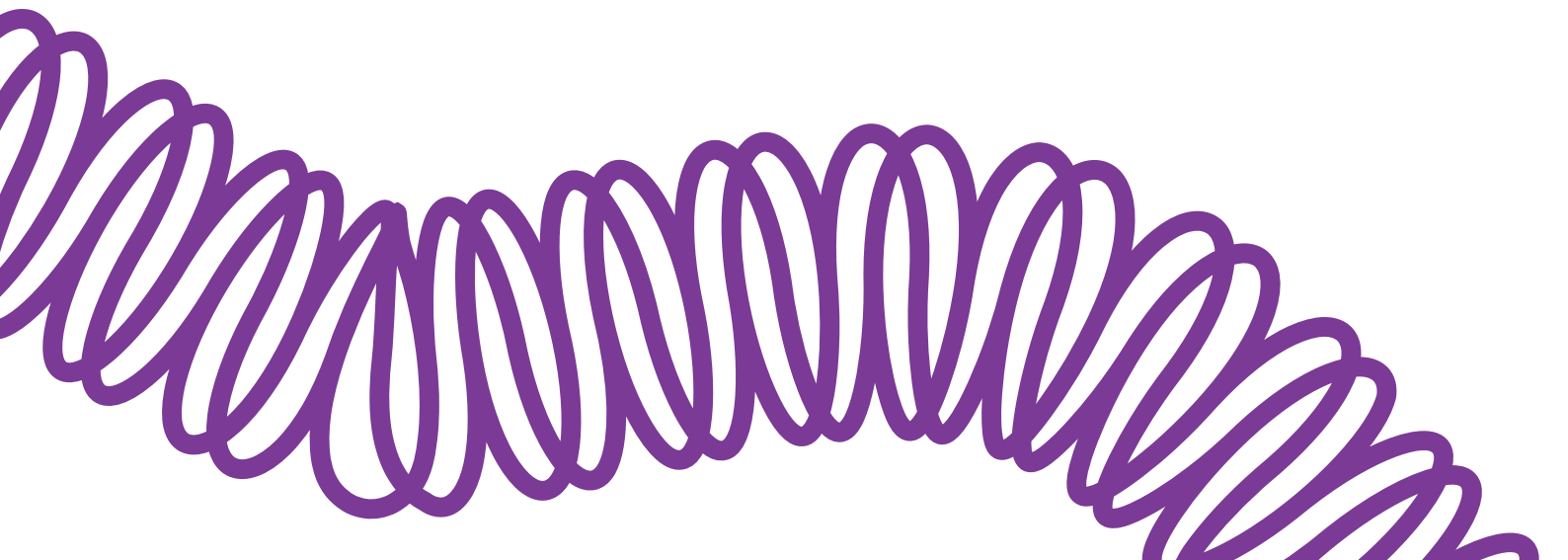
The studies we reviewed presented several disincentives that seemed to prevent or hinder everyday creativity. Some studies point to family time and capacity constraints in engaging in everyday cultural participation. These are particularly prevalent among families with caring responsibilities but are not exclusive to that group.

People’s proximity to amenities and venues is interrelated with capacity issues. For example, research suggests that having access to a private vehicle is necessary for many people to engage in everyday cultural activity (Wilson, Gross and Bull, 2017).

On an individual level, survey-based studies from psychology looked at the emerging field of emotions and creativity. These surveys investigated daily routines of various demographics, including young adults, teenagers and older adults across various countries. They found that positive and negative emotions can have a significant impact, and there is robust evidence to suggest that negative mindsets brought on by stress and anxiety can hinder everyday creativity (Conner and Silvia, 2015).

Another key obstacle to everyday creativity highlighted in several of the studies is conflicting access needs. For example, tensions in public spaces, such as parks, when different communities use them at the same time, can result in ‘no-go times’ or ‘no-go areas’, which disincentivises one group over another. Access to resources is a recurrent theme in terms of private and public space and access to appropriate buildings and facilities. Several of the embedded fieldwork studies highlighted how groups were forced to move venue because it was not fit for purpose.

Studies looking at music and festivals (gatherings) in a DIY (Do It Yourself) context make the broader argument that commercialisation and gentrification of real-estate are constantly eroding alternative spaces for non-wage labour-based cultural activity to occur. Researchers in this field set out how the steady enclosure of common land and the temporary privatisation of urban space are reducing the places where this form of festive ‘commoning’ through creative activity can take place (Woodman and Zaunseder, et al).



## Section 2) Implications for research and policy development

### Cultural Democracy

We considered what methods, philosophies and approaches are used to capture and articulate the impacts of everyday creativity on individuals and communities. In doing so, we identified cultural democracy as a key theme. There is a growing body of literature exploring everyday creativity in the context of cultural democracy and its ramifications for cultural policy. We identified six studies in the literature review that specifically focussed on cultural democracy in terms of everyday creativity and a further 41 studies that engaged debates within cultural democracy.

In general terms, cultural democracy encompasses a set of values and principles which promote the rights of all to access culture on their own terms. Cultural democracy actively engages everyone in decision-making about what counts as culture, where it happens, who makes it and who experiences it. In a recent report by King's College London (Wilson, Gross and Bull, 2017) the researchers described cultural democracy as “when people have the substantive social freedom to make versions of culture” (p.3).

Echoing the UEP study into young people in care, this report suggests that one of the main constraints to everyday creativity in the UK is the dominant top-down funding model with an over-emphasis on cultural organisations. The report advocates for a shift towards policies that would help foster cultural capabilities “by engaging in a deep and sustained way with how the large majority of people actually go about their cultural lives (not, principally, by attending publicly funded organisations)” (p.5).

Although each study uses different terminology, a distinct language emerges from the literature that is not limited to the anglosphere. For example, Danish researchers found that “[e]xposure to high culture is still considered an educational way to foster children into capable, creative, and adaptable citizens” and that this instrumentalist approach is central to the Danish model (Juncker and Balling, 2016, p. 233). Instead, the researchers advocate for a new form of cultural democracy which is expressive and “not only acknowledges different tastes and cultures, but also includes the central perspective of giving voice and expression across interests and taste” (p.232).

Importantly, this cultural democracy attempts to open a dialogue where all of us contribute meaning and value to culture in our everyday lives as opposed to the professional holding the power and authority through one-way communication between an artist or cultural organisation and an audience.

A Chinese study exploring performance in outdoor public spaces by grassroots groups in Guangzhou found that “[p]ublic leisure is actualized through shared needs, intentions, and emotions as well as collective investment of labor[sic] and energy, rather than the purchase of marketed fun through economic capital” (Qian, 2014, p.27). Interestingly, Qian relates much of this activity’s motivation to collective enjoyment and pleasure. It is also noted that it has developed over generations despite state intervention in culture and is not exclusively the preserve of China’s burgeoning middle classes. This evidence suggests that everyday creativity can and does inspire forms of cultural democracy at community, local and even regional levels.

Belfiore and Hadley (2018) trace the contested history of cultural democracy, including its overt political-ideological manifestations in the 1970s and 80s community arts movement. They suggest that the movement recognised the revolutionary nature of cultural democracy as a bigger debate about societal inequalities and fundamental structural change. They argue that a “historically informed yet present- and future-oriented theoretical elaboration of cultural democracy for the twenty-first century” is needed to approach questions of fairness, equity and equality within all cultural lives beyond the hierarchy of publicly funded culture (pp.221–222).

There are signs that things are starting to change. Many of the authors highlight the work of Arts Council England (ACE) and their attempts to engage with everyday creativity through the Creative People and Places programme (CPP). It should be noted, however, that there is considerable criticism of the programme in practice, as the arts sector and ACE’s lead partners still hold considerable influence over the governance of the programme rather than non-arts experts and local non-arts funded organisations (Jancovich, 2017).

Cultural democracy can play a significant role in rebalancing resources, infrastructure and management, which are vital to everyday creativity at both individual and community level. Yet there is a danger that this becomes about mediated culture through the lens of organisations and institutions, which can disincentivise those involved in everyday creativity in the first place.

## Health and wellbeing

Another key question within this digest is the relationship between everyday creativity and health and wellbeing, both in communities and for individuals.

We have so far touched on certain aspects of wellbeing in relation to the motivations and disincentives behind engaging in everyday creativity. Yet again, enjoyment and a link to positive emotional states come to the fore. However, several studies articulate this further. A recent research project concluded that “[p]ositioning the arts as a sub-category of everyday creativity [...] advances the proposition that everyday creativity is an essential component of human experience, rooted in self-reflection and emotional connection to others” (Nick Ewbank Associates, 2022).

The project is looking to establish a scientific framework for health in everyday creativity to help create a strong methodological base for future research and evaluation. At the heart of the project is an exploration between self-reflection and emotional connection. Ewbank argues that this process shifts us from ‘egocentric individual experience, through self-reflection, to intersubjective emotional participation in other people’s lived experience and the external world, and thereby to health-giving benefits’ (Ewbank, 2022).

A recent evaluation report commissioned by East Sussex County Council offered a systematic attempt to explore the potential health and wellbeing benefits of everyday creativity (Plowman and Spencer-Hughes, 2022). The project evaluated seven creative projects over five different populations using a Re-AIM framework (see Appendix 2). The researchers found an overall positive shift towards a sense of community and a notable improvement in wellbeing following creative engagement.

Notably, the report highlights qualitative experiential data from the participants, which suggests that research that relied on virtual platforms (because of the pandemic) often posed disincentives to engagement. This is because the screen acted as a ‘barrier’ and so ranked lower on participants’ overall effectiveness for wellbeing scores.

The methods we found in the studies included experience sampling using online questionnaires on a twice-daily basis for six months, participant observations, and informal interviews. These studies vary in size and scope from several hundred participants to interviews with a small number of people, with only 9% of the studies we reviewed focusing on health, wellbeing and everyday creativity. As we have demonstrated in previous digests, such as [Culture on Referral](#), much more research needs to be undertaken to produce a stronger evidence base and develop deeper understanding of the relationship between everyday creativity, health and wellbeing.



## Section 3) What we know works now

Throughout the studies, researchers emphasise the social or extrinsic effects of everyday creativity. They often focus on activity that connects people through shared experiences. Whether through online events and forums, social media platforms, homes, community centres, pubs, bars, clubs, charity shops, parks and gardens, public squares, libraries, village and town halls, research demonstrates that people and their everyday creativity shape public places and spaces. As a result, there isn't a one size that fits all in terms of a top-down policy approach. However, where everyday creativity occurs in communities and at home, a set of interdependent factors emerge highlighting how and where different policy interventions could make a positive difference to people's lives.

The overwhelming recommendations from across the studies in this review suggest that a joined-up, localised and personalised approach from policymakers can make a difference. This is typified in the application of the national government-funded scheme Pupil Premium Plus fund, which helped young people in care access facilities and encouraged cultural activity after school. This approach has proven successful and could be opened out much further (Gibson and Edwards, 2015, p.6).

The researchers stated that the fund's strength lay in how local leisure services worked with schools and young people to encourage cultural participation. The researchers recommended that policymakers look at supporting more of this activity which can lead to wider engagement in everyday creativity beyond facilitated cultural activity.

Away from the UK context, this focus on localism is strongly reflected in the literature. Returning to the Guangzhou public space research, we can see that self-organised cultural activity by communities can lead to an increased sense of ownership in their local public spaces. As a result, it could be argued that local authorities and governments have a civic duty to help maintain these spaces in collaboration with grassroots cultural groups, as is the case in Guangzhou.

Despite the differences between policy in the UK and China, these parks and public outdoor spaces remain vital for everyday creativity and are valued by a diverse set of people. Again, researchers across these studies have found that a detailed understanding of these spaces and the sometimes-competing needs of individuals who use them is vital in managing and developing new participation policies. The evidence suggests that policy interventions only work through close collaboration from the ground-up where more stakeholders have a voice.

### What we don't know and what needs to change

There is a clear policy implication from this research which identifies that new resources and infrastructures are needed for everyday creativity to occur and flourish. Access to fit-for-purpose spaces and facilities is vital for everyday creativity, and several studies in this review have highlighted this issue as a constraint for certain groups (Hackney, 2015; Milling et al, 2014; 64 Million Artists, 2015).

However, it is important to understand how the specific activity, and who is engaged in it, plays out in different environments. It is not enough to say we need to build more community hubs or that we need to make sure everyone has access to superfast broadband in their homes. The research we reviewed points to a much more nuanced and contextualised understanding of people's needs. For example, what works for a women's knitting group will not work for young people in care.

We found that everyday creativity will happen despite cultural policy decisions, so the real question is how policy can best work with communities and individuals. To move towards this deeper understanding, policymaking could benefit from adopting some of the approaches carried out by the researchers in this review. These studies often embed researchers in communities and work with them in developing projects which have tangible benefits.

## Representation

The issue of representation was identified by Belfiore's work on the UEP project, which fed into the Warwick Commission's report *Enriching Britain* (Neelands et al, 2015). The report stated that "in England, on average, only 2% of amateur group participants are from a BAME background, with very little variance across the sector" (p.36). The report also stated that only 3% of people surveyed in the DCMS *Our Creative Talent* report considered themselves disabled (compared to around 18% of the population in 2008). The report highlighted that just 6% of amateur participants were unemployed, suggesting that a large number of people involved in amateur or voluntary arts activity were from comfortable socioeconomic backgrounds.

The report highlighted under-representation as systemic within UK society and argued that culture and the arts alone cannot change the status quo. However, the report has subsequently fed into work on cultural democracy and influenced cultural policy scholars and practitioners to question what is valued as culture and by whom. This, of course, is one of the key questions at the heart of the Centre for Cultural Value.

This under-representation is reflected in the studies we looked at. For example, only two of the studies specifically focused on LGBTQ+ participants. However, other protected characteristics such as age and gender appear more frequently throughout the studies.

Although many of the population studies have captured individuals' experiences from different backgrounds, such as international surveys on daily creative behaviour, only one study in the literature specifically set out to research the experiences of Black people: *Watching Me Watching You: Black Women in Britain On YouTube* (2017) by Francesca Sobande. This study captures the creative ways participants utilise YouTube as a space to self-educate and collectively develop their own self-awareness and resistance through vlogging (p.665). The research focuses on one cohort of young Black women and highlights the urgent need for a greater and more equitable representation of the complexities of everyday human experience through class, race, disability and gender.

## Focus on home environments

Many of the studies advocate for policies that would have impact in communities rather than on home environments. However, some of the studies do highlight useful insights, such as the social dimension to creativity in the home or the interdependence between the home and communities in terms of the private/public nature of everyday creativity. There is clearly a gap in both research and policy understandings of everyday creativity in homes.

## Culture, health, wellbeing and everyday creativity

Only a handful of studies focus specifically on the relationship between health and everyday creativity. Although there is more to come from ongoing studies, particularly from Nick Ewbank Associates, there remains insufficient data and evidence to draw any clear conclusions about how and why everyday creativity can benefit health and wellbeing beyond its relationship to positive mindsets. This is particularly acute on a broader community or societal scale as most studies to date have focused on target groups or individuals.

There is also a real question of instrumentalisation of everyday creative activity and its perceived positive benefits to society. Many of the researchers in this digest agree that creative and cultural activity alone cannot 'fix' societal problems and that social, economic and environmental policies need to be considered in joined-up approaches.

## Conclusions and implications

Although there is a significant and growing body of high-quality literature on everyday creativity, both in the peer-reviewed and 'grey literature', there remain gaps in the research. This is particularly true of representation, everyday creativity in the home and its relationship to health and wellbeing. However, there is sufficient evidence to address some of the research questions we ask in this digest, particularly regarding the motivations and disincentives.

- A broad range of art forms and activities have been considered by researchers. There is a clear sense that the benefits of everyday creativity are not limited to certain art forms, and participants in the studies do not generally differentiate between them.
- Researchers take an integrated approach to studying everyday creativity, often observing participants through a broad range of ethnographic methodologies such as daily diaries and forms of participatory action research (PAR). Future research may consider expanding this further by developing embedded methodologies such as 'deep hanging out' (Walmsley, 2018) to work with communities. Further quantitative research needs to be done to get a better national picture of what activity is being engaged in and who is taking part.
- Evidence for the interconnected nature of everyday creativity in the home and community paints a picture of how engaging in different cultural activities can provide a space for community building through sharing of skills, knowledge and ideals. This was particularly acute in the studies of the effects of the pandemic on people's lives.
- Understanding more about what people are engaged in and why they value these activities can address important debates on cultural policy, participation and cultural democracy. More needs to be done to study these issues in home environments.
- The literature represents a concerted effort to move beyond an unhelpful historical binary opposition between 'high' and 'popular' culture. Understanding that creativity is situated in, and inseparable from, factors such as place, class, race, gender and disability can help inform more clear-sighted future policies.

## Next steps

Our research and evidence base for cultural value needs to respond to what we know 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 2023 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 2023 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](#).

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# Appendix

## Appendix 1

The Deficit Model: for the last 70 years or so the UK has had arms-length arts councils with the central aim to fund ‘great’ art and to increase participation in the arts and culture more widely. To reach what has been perceived as ‘cold spots’ or hard to reach communities resources have been continuously funnelled into organisations and institutions to deliver this ‘great’ art to the people. This top-down approach to cultural policy may have come from a genuine place of moving towards inclusivity. However, it has failed to understand and engage with everyday cultural activity away from the institutions and arts organisations of what public and private funding ‘legitimise’.

## Appendix 2

The RE-AIM framework is a framework to help plan and evaluate different types of programs, practices, policies and environmental changes. It tends to be used in public health initiatives. The following table outlines the framework (sourced from <https://methods.sagepub.com/case/hybrid-adaptation-re-aim-framework-impact-multiagency-patient-care-transfer>)

RE-AIM dimension	Addresses
Reach	Define participants across the organizations involved
Effectiveness	Define benefits that are trying to be achieved and identify positive and negative consequences
Adoption	Where is the pathway being applied and who is applying it?
Implementation	How consistently the scheme being applied, what are the barriers and enablers, and how will best practice be shared?
Maintenance	When did the scheme become operational in each locality and what can be shared to inform development of sustainability?

## Term Description

Bridging capital	Ties between individuals which cross social divides or between social groups.
Citizen journalism	The collection, dissemination, and analysis of news and information by the general public, often by means of the internet.
Counter-cultural politics	Indicating a point of dissent between dominant or mainstream ideologies and values and alternative value systems.
Cultural democracy	When people across society, from different cultures and backgrounds, have the freedom to participate in cultural life and therefore define what culture is. The celebration of co-existing cultural traditions in human society and the rejection of an “official” singular culture.
Disincentive	A factor that discourages a particular action.
Ethnographic methodologies	Research approaches which look at people in their cultural settings, with the aim of producing a narrative account of that particular culture through a theoretical lens.
Gentrification	The process whereby the character of an area is changed by the influx of wealthier, often middle-class people.
Grassroots cultural groups	Organisations that take collective action at a local level to bring about cultural change.
Grey literature	A term used to describe the wide range of different information that is produced outside of traditional publishing and distribution channels.
Holistic	An approach which considers the whole of something, as opposed to a solely singular focus on a specific part of it.
Infrastructure	The set of internal and fundamental facilities that support the functionality of a system.
Instrumentalisation	The treatment of an idea as an instrument that functions as a guide to action.
Intersubjective	The relation or intersection between different perspectives.
Methodological	Relating to the system of methods used in a particular area of study.
Narrative synthesis	An approach to reviews and data synthesis that focuses primarily on the use of words and text to explain its findings.



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