

Cultural Activities and Local Pride: Evidence from the Born in Bradford Age of Wonder Study 2023 - 24

Overview

The Born in Bradford Age of Wonder study is one of the largest, most comprehensive longitudinal research study with teenagers in the UK. This executive summary presents paper findings on arts and cultural engagement, and pride in place, among teenagers in Bradford – one of Britain's most ethnically diverse cities and the UK City of Culture 2025.

Methodology Note

Quantitative component:

Cross-sectional survey conducted in the 2023/24 academic year across 25 secondary schools in Bradford. 9,003 pupils in school years 8–10 (ages 12–15) completed questionnaires. Survey questions were co-produced with young people, teachers, and the Bradford City of Culture 2025 evaluation team.

Qualitative component:

Semi-structured interviews and group discussions with 106 adolescents, exploring hobbies, interests, neighbourhood perceptions, and community belonging. Topic guides and themes were co-produced with young people.

Sample characteristics

62% Living in the most deprived quintile of neighbourhoods nationally

Pakistani British **40%**

White British **35%**

Other **25%**

Significance of Research

Currently the UK's **largest study of adolescent cultural engagement**, with a uniquely diverse sample (40% Pakistani British compared to 5% nationally)

Data collected immediately before Bradford City of Culture 2025 creates a rare **opportunity for longitudinal impact assessment**

By including religious services and digital content creation alongside traditional arts, the study **captures forms of cultural participation often overlooked** in national surveys

Key Findings

Cultural engagement is high and diverse

90% Attended at least one cultural event in the past month

86% Participated in at least one artistic or cultural activity

Most common activities and events

- Digital content creation **51%**
- Religious services **51%**
- Art **50%**
- Reading for enjoyment **48%**
- Parties/dances **40%**

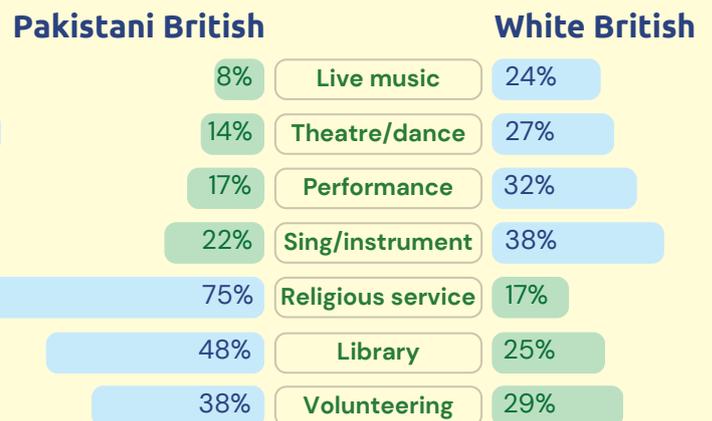
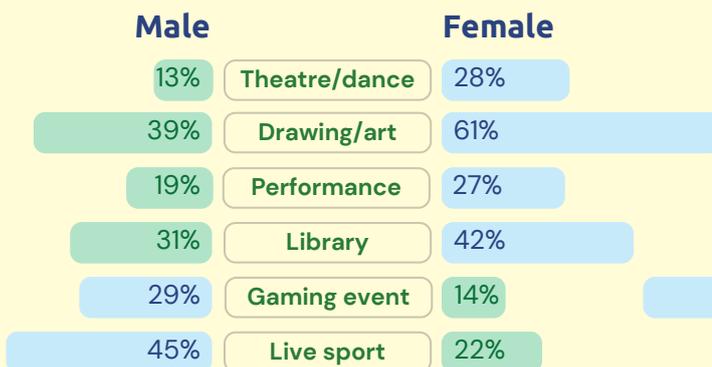
Least common activities and events

- Political gatherings **9%**
- Scouts/Guides **10%**
- Poetry/rap **11%**
- Live music **16%**
- Performance **21%**

Similarities



Inequalities



Pride in place is strong and not driven by deprivation:

60% Proud to live in their local area

Pride is linked to:

- Community
- Belonging
- Familiarity
- Safety

Pride is highest in:

- Central Bradford**
More deprived, larger Pakistani British population
- Ilkley**
More affluent