



Historic England

# Inquiry into the social impact of participation in culture and sport

## DCMS Select Committee

### February 2018

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Historic England is pleased to submit written evidence to the inquiry into the social impact of participation in culture and sport. The evidence and case studies presented here focus on the wellbeing impact of historic environment participation and strategies for achieving greater participation and workforce diversity. This submission has also largely focused on findings from the Culture and Sport Evidence programme which has proved to be an effective example of a successful government co-ordinated effort in the culture and sport sector.

## Summary of Key Points

1. Historic environment participation is widespread and extensive in England. This is reflected in the levels of adult participation and levels of heritage organisation memberships. Nonetheless, there remains a need for government and historic environment organisations to encourage and remove barriers to participation.
2. Through the Culture and Sport Evidence (CASE) programme, DCMS arms-length bodies have been successful at co-ordinating research to establish a high-quality, cross-cutting, social and economic evidence base for the heritage, cultural and sporting sectors. The relevant evidence pertaining to the wellbeing benefits and diversity issues are presented here. There is, however, more scope for CASE partners to develop co-ordinated policies and responses to the evidence emerging from the programme.
3. The CASE programme has demonstrated positive associations between historic environment participation and levels of wellbeing. This includes insight into how a decline in participation is associated with a decline in wellbeing measures even when other situational variables are controlled for, suggesting a causal link.
4. There has been a small but significant improvement in black and minority ethnic (BME) participation in the historic environment participation in the last decade but there remains a need for policies and action to address the issue.
5. The CASE programme has specifically identified an issue with retaining BME participation in the historic environment when contrasted with the profile of consistent visitors. Historic England is directly engaging with this issue via a number of projects. These include projects aimed at identifying and promoting buildings and places of interest to BME groups, traineeship schemes targeting BME students and graduates, and increasing local heritage engagement in schools.

## 1. The Value of Heritage Participation

- 1.1. England's historic environment is a unique and valuable asset to the nation and its citizens. This is reflected in the scale of heritage participation with almost three quarters of adults (74%) in England having visited a historic site in the last 12 months.<sup>1</sup> This is also demonstrated by the levels of heritage membership which have increased significantly over the last 10 years, with

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/taking-part-survey-april-to-september-2017-provisional>



English Heritage memberships alone exceeding political party memberships in the UK.<sup>2</sup>

- 1.2. This extensive interest in heritage and the historic environment stems from our deep attachment to the past, both as individuals and as communities. There still remains a need for research to better understand the complex ways in which engagement with heritage and the historic environment affects us.
- 1.3. A major project by Arts and Humanities Research Council to understand the value of arts and culture found that cultural engagement can help shape reflective individuals, facilitating greater understanding of themselves and their lives, increasing empathy with respect to others, and an appreciation of the diversity of human experience and cultures.<sup>3</sup> This is of significant value at an individual level – which has been extensively associated with wellbeing effects – as well as at a societal level through greater community identity and cohesion. The challenge for the government and the heritage sector is to ensure that the various benefits of heritage participation are as open and accessible to all.

## 2. Heritage Participation and Wellbeing

- 2.1. There is a wealth of evidence linking heritage participation and positive health and wellbeing effects. Historic England fully recognises the social value of heritage and is working with the What Works Centre for Wellbeing to expand its understanding of how participation and engagement with heritage affects wellbeing. The Centre's latest research paper on the 'drivers of wellbeing inequality' highlighted evidence linking heritage and outdoor recreational activities with lower wellbeing inequalities in local areas.<sup>4</sup> Natural England research from 2015 found that a higher level of engagement in heritage activities and the use of green space for health or exercise is associated with lower wellbeing inequality in local authorities.<sup>5</sup> This is a seemingly counter-intuitive finding as one might expect those engaging in heritage and using green spaces are those from upper socio-economic groups who are already likely to be satisfied with their lives, and so increase wellbeing inequality. A possible explanation for this interesting trend is that participation in heritage and green space activities has a greater wellbeing effect on those with lower wellbeing. Indeed, the 'drivers of wellbeing inequality' paper also highlights

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<sup>2</sup> English Heritage membership exceeded 1 million for the first time in 2017 (1.09m), exceeding estimated political party membership in the UK (1.00m)

<http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN05125>

<sup>3</sup> Crossick, G. Kaszynska, P. (2017) *Understanding the value of arts and culture*, Arts and Humanities Research Council. <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/documents/publications/cultural-value-project-final-report/>

<sup>4</sup> Abdallah, S. Wheatley, H. and Quick, A. 'Drivers of wellbeing inequalities', October 2017 Research paper. <https://www.whatworkswellbeing.org/product/drivers-of-wellbeing-inequality/>

<sup>5</sup> Natural England. (2015). Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment: The national survey on people and the natural environment. Annual Report from the 2013-14 survey. Joint Report JP009.



evidence suggesting a positive correlation between heritage, volunteering and wellbeing – with greatest gains for those with lowest wellbeing.<sup>6</sup>

2.2. Historic England has also commissioned quantitative studies into heritage participation wellbeing effects through the Culture and Sport Evidence programme (CASE). CASE is a joint programme between DCMS and its arms-length bodies to develop a high-quality, cross-cutting, social and economic evidence base for our sectors.

2.3. Over a number of projects, CASE analysis of the Taking Part survey has produced the following findings:

- People who have visited a heritage site in the last 12 months are significantly happier than those who had not, even when other factors are controlled for.<sup>7</sup>
- On average, DCMS Taking Part respondents who had visited a heritage site in the last 12 months reported happiness scores 1.6% greater than those who had not.<sup>8</sup>
- The longitudinal aspect of the Taking Part survey enables insight into how changes in participation affect wellbeing. Adults who reported a lapse in visits to heritage sites over time also reported declines in health, significantly so for mental health and life satisfaction. Those who visited heritage sites in 2010/11 but were no longer doing so in the year before the 2013/14 survey, had a decline of 1.4 points in their mental health score. These results remained significant after controlling for other factors including age and financial circumstances. Although it is not possible to fully establish patterns of causality, these results are suggestive of a situation where declining ability to participate in former activities could have a negative impact on well-being.<sup>9</sup>

2.4. In 2017, the CASE programme commissioned NatCen to analyse data from the Understanding Society survey, a major longitudinal study of households in the UK. This exercise also provided valuable insight into how heritage participation affects various aspects of wellbeing<sup>10</sup>:

- Happiness: visitors to theatres, museums and galleries, heritage sites and libraries were all more likely than non-visitors to report high levels of happiness and less likely to have low happiness levels. This was the case for boys and girls.
- Self-esteem: Young people who visited theatres, museums and galleries, heritage sites and libraries were also more likely than non-visitors to report high levels of self-esteem, and less likely to have low levels of self-esteem, or to feel that they did not have much to be proud of.

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<sup>6</sup> Heritage Lottery Fund and BOP consulting (2011). *Assessment of the social impact of volunteering in HLF-funded projects: Yr 3*

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/culture-sport-and-wellbeing-an-analysis-of-the-taking-part-survey>

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/research-library/findings-understanding-society-surveys>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/research-library/findings-understanding-society-surveys>



- The only health and well-being variable that varied significantly with changing patterns of cultural participation for young people between the ages of 10/11 and 13/15 was whether or not they felt that they did not have much to be proud of. Those who had not visited heritage sites or theatres, or who had stopped visiting them after age 10/11, were more likely than those who visited at 13/15 to feel that they did not have much to be proud of.

### Case study - Operation Nightingale

2.5. Operation Nightingale is a recent and practical example of the positive social impact of heritage participation. Operation Nightingale is a military initiative established in 2012 'with the intent of utilising both the technical and social aspects of field archaeology in the recovery and skill development of soldiers injured in Afghanistan and other warzones'.<sup>11</sup> To evaluate the efficacy of this programme, quantitative psychological assessments were carried out with a group of early-returned injured infantry requiring post-tour group activity psychological decompression (GAPD) for symptoms of anxiety, depression and trauma. The assessments found that soldiers reported a mean of 13%-18% improvement across the self-reported domains.<sup>12</sup>

2.6. This project serves as a model to be explored for future projects aimed at inducing positive wellbeing effects.

## 3. Ethnic and Cultural Diversity in Heritage

3.1. Evidence from the DCMS Taking Part survey demonstrates that ethnic and cultural diversity in heritage has improved in recent years, but work remains to be done. The latest Taking Part results show that there has been a statistically significant increase in adult heritage engagement for both the White ethnic group and the Black and Minority Ethnic group, between 2005/06 and 2016/7.<sup>13</sup> There has been a 2.8% narrowing of the gap in participation between white and black or other ethnic minority groups since 2005/06. However, there remains an 18.5% difference in participation (76.7% vs. 58.1% respectively).<sup>14</sup>

3.2. Longitudinal Taking Part data shows that the vast majority of heritage participants (54%) are "consistent" visitors (visit heritage each year).<sup>15</sup> New visitors and former visitors are similar in profile, but are significantly different from consistent visitors in that they are more likely to:

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.opnightingaleheritage.com/>

<sup>12</sup> Finnegan, A. Nimenko, W. and Simpson R. G. (2014) Rear Operations Group medicine: a pilot study of psychological decompression in a Rear Operations Group during Operation HERRICK 14', Journal of Royal Army Medical Corps; 160:295-297

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[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/664933/Adult\\_stats\\_release\\_4.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/664933/Adult_stats_release_4.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

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[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/519629/Taking\\_Part\\_Year\\_10\\_longitudinal\\_report\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/519629/Taking_Part_Year_10_longitudinal_report_FINAL.pdf)



- live in urban areas
- live in deprivation areas according to the Index of Multiple deprivation (IMD)
- have a young age profile aged 16-24
- come from a black or minority ethnic group

3.3. This evidence suggests that there is a need for the heritage sector to specifically target new and former visitors, focusing on both attracting and encouraging continuing engagement.

3.4. There is a body of existing research that examines the drivers of sport and culture investigation, but further evidence is required to better understand the gap in heritage participation. In 2010, the CASE programme investigated the drivers of engagement in culture and sport by conducting regression analysis of Taking Part data. The statistical analysis confirmed the importance of a number of socio-demographic factors identified in the initial literature review as influencing demand for culture and sport more broadly, including education, socio-economic status, and childhood experience of culture and sport.<sup>16</sup> It is likely that these variables are affecting the gap in participation between ethnic groups. Therefore, any policies aimed at addressing this gap should also consider these factors. The 2010 CASE report on drivers of participation concludes with policy recommendations to remove barriers to and to increase interest in engagement which are considered in the following case studies.

### **Case Study: English Heritage and Google Arts and Culture Collaboration**

3.5. English Heritage's recent collaboration with Google Arts and Culture is an example of an innovative solution to removing physical barriers by making their sites and collections more accessible via the internet. The partnership with Google Arts & Culture has involved photographing and cataloguing thousands of rooms, objects and artworks and telling their stories told through new and immersive online experiences such as 360-degree tours.<sup>17</sup>

### **Case Study: Another England**

3.6. Increasing interest in heritage is predicated on making it relevant and accessible to individuals and communities. Through its Another England Black and Asian heritage project, Historic England is working to develop a more inclusive account of England's history in order to enable more people to take an interest in and enjoy the historic environment.<sup>18</sup> The Another England project aims to identify and champion a more diverse range of historic buildings and places by using an interactive map and asking the public to identify the places that are important to them through a series of workshops and engagement on social media,.

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<sup>16</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/88445/CASE-DriversTechnicalReport- July10.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/88445/CASE-DriversTechnicalReport- July10.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/about-us/search-news/google-arts-and-culture>

<sup>18</sup> <http://anotherengland.co.uk/>



3.7. The aim is to enrich well-established and understood histories of England with more diverse, open accounts that have been curated by people of colour. The project follows the histories of people of colour and the places they lived, worked, organised, prayed and socialised in over the last century. It will draw attention to the individuals and communities of Black and Asian descent that have made their mark on the places and buildings around us in these last 100 years. Another England finishes in June 2018 after carrying out 8 regional workshops and producing an online web exhibition telling this story. Following the project we will be running a V&A Late event and hosting an exhibition at the Now Gallery, as well as commissioning further research and partnership work on black and Asian heritage in England.

### **Case Study – Historic England Positive Action Training Placement Scheme**

3.8. Long-term changes in participation diversity can only be achieved if workforce diversity is also achieved within the heritage sector. Policies to affect change in both public participation and the heritage work force would likely foster a virtuous circle of greater diversity. Historic England is addressing this challenge through its Positive Action Training Placements scheme.<sup>19</sup>

3.9. The Positive Action Training Placements scheme is the key component of Historic England's Workforce Diversity Strategy – a response to the 2016 Culture White Paper. It is aimed at attracting undergraduates and recent graduates with Black, Asian or other Minority Ethnic Heritage to take part in paid-placements within the organisation and with other organisations across the sector. Historic England will act as lead organisation and co-ordinating body in this scheme but the overall objective is to encourage other historic environment sector organisations to join in to create a more representative and more relevant workforce. The scheme began in 2016 with four placements in London and expanded to 12 placements across Historic England offices in London, Birmingham, Manchester, York and Bristol in 2017. A further role out of the scheme across other organisations within the sector is currently underway.

### **Case study: Heritage Schools**

3.10. Historic England's Heritage Schools programme was developed as a response to the government's report on cultural education in England and is funded by the Department for Education.<sup>20</sup> The Heritage Schools programme works with schools and teachers to help school children develop an understanding of their local heritage and its significance. The focus on local heritage and local modes of delivery means that the programme is well-suited to ensuring that content is relevant and interesting to local communities, including children from black and minority ethnic backgrounds.

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<sup>19</sup> <https://historicengland.org.uk/services-skills/training-skills/work-based-training/paid-training-placements/>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cultural-education-in-england>



3.11. The specific aims of the Heritage Schools programme are to ensure that:

- Children develop a sense of pride in where they live
- Children understand their local heritage and how it relates to the national story
- Teachers are more confident in making effective use of local heritage resources in delivering the curriculum
- Local historic context is embedded in the school's curriculum
- Heritage providers are more connected to the needs of local schools
- Parents are engaged in their children's learning
- Communities are more deeply involved in the life of the school

3.12. By fostering an interest and appreciation for local heritage at a young age, the programme is responding to the evidence from the 2010 CASE research which found that childhood experience of visiting a museum is positively associated with visiting a museum as an adult.<sup>21</sup> This study found the same positive associations for all types of childhood cultural engagement, therefore, the intended long-term impact is to continue heritage participation in later life.

3.13. The evaluation of the 2016-17 Heritage Schools Programme surveyed participating teachers and cultural partners reported impacts for participating pupils<sup>22</sup>:

- 99% agreed learning about local heritage improved pupils' sense of place
- 97% agreed learning about local heritage improved pupil's sense of pride
- 89% of teachers surveyed agreed that their pupils have an increased knowledge and understanding of local heritage
- 92% of teachers agreed that their pupils are more connected to the place they live in

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<sup>21</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/88445/CASE-DriversTechnicalReport- July10.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/88445/CASE-DriversTechnicalReport- July10.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> <http://content.historicengland.org.uk/content/docs/education/heritage-schools-2016-2017-evaluation-executive-summary.doc>