



TAKING UP SPACE

RESEARCH INTO THE DIVERSITY OF ARTISTS
IN WORKSPACES IN LONDON

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INTRODUCTION

When Arts Council England embarked on funding this research they did so because research into the diversity of artists in workspaces in London did not exist and more importantly that research was needed.

This research report should become vital to all workspace providers in understanding how they can create a more inclusive and stable environment for all artists but especially for Black and People of colour, artists with different abilities, parents who are pregnant or have children and those aged over 60 who are too often left out. In conducting this research it's uncovered what is missing, what exists that is great for artists and how we keep getting better and better.

I hope you become invested in thinking about why funding inclusive and affordable studio spaces is paramount to the preservation of creativity in London. I hope that you commit to cultivating space for the diversity of artists that exists and become committed to improving not just the practical aspects of your space but also the overall comfort of the environment you're bringing artists into - train staff, host open studios, offer rent reductions, grants and commission artists when possible for well paid opportunities. I hope you become more invested in thinking about what funding not just projects but space for artists to work from to deliver their projects and this is just as important.

OUR TEAM

This research has taken a little over 2 years to complete. We'd like to thank Arts Council England for engaging this research and to all the participants who gave their time and energy to support its research aims.



K Bailey Obazee
Lead Researcher + Writer

K Bailey Obazee is Founder and Director of PRIM, a platform for storytelling which produces OKHA, a monthly queer + Black book club and a variety of events and pop-ups.

K has collaborated with brands and institutions such as Burberry, Aesop, The Institute for Contemporary Art, and NOW Gallery curating events, workshops, libraries and more. She also works as a Project Coordinator at Serpentine Galleries.



Ijeoma Uzuokwu
Research Assistant

Ijeoma Uzuokwu is a non-binary, London-based Nigerian artist, making space for collective introspection through performance, moving image and sound.

Their multifaceted practice channels personal and speculative contributions to esoteric ontologies, and to the ancestral Ọdịnani database of their Igbo heritage.



Emma Courtney
Consultant

A brand and marketing strategist across the public, private and not for profit sectors, Emma combines a dynamic approach and practical appreciation of the marketplace to ensure she adds value to your project from day one.

Previously Head of Marketing, Audience Development and Research at ABL Cultural Consulting. She was responsible for a dynamic team of sixteen staff, an exceptional associate network and led the company in achieving its Investors in People Award.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

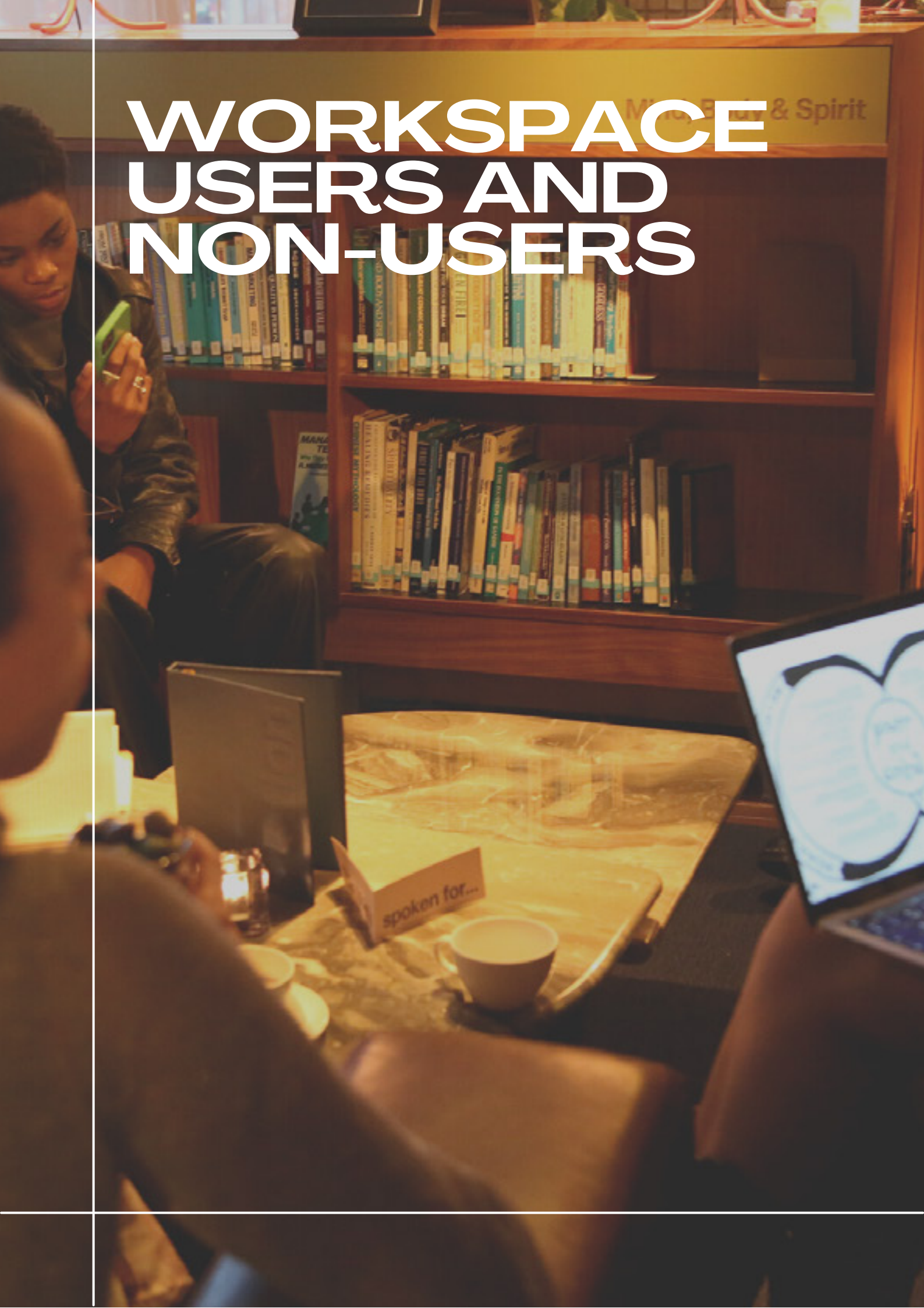
Project Summary: This research project aimed to identify and review the diversity of the artists that are currently based in studios and workspace provision in London, as well as outlining the barriers faced by these artists in order to be able to make recommendations for change.

Commissioned in Jan 2020 to explore the diversity of the artists that are currently based in studios and workspace provision in London, as well as outlining the barriers faced by diverse artists in order to make recommendations for change.

Project Driver: There is currently no research that looks specifically at the various protected characteristics and socio-economic status of artists in London's studio spaces. Recent reports into workspace provision did not look at the cultural, ethnic, gender, sexual identity or disability of the artists in London's workspaces. Very broadly; queer spaces are closing, studio rents are rising and rapid regeneration of parts of the City means that those with most barriers are at most risk of exclusion in the creative industries. There is a clear gap in understanding, representation and evidence of need for spaces created, programmed and owned by and for diverse communities.

Project Constraints: Our initial project brief included speaking with workspace providers, given the COVID-19 pandemic and London going into Lockdown in March 2020 it was not possible to reach out to workspace providers until February 2022. We also found challenges in finding artists over 75 years and this search was only exacerbated through the pandemic, to address this we reduce the age of artists to 50+ as the minimum for older artists.

WORKSPACE USERS AND NON-USERS



METHODOLOGY

USERS AND NON-USERS

We held 1:1 consultations with a series of mostly open-ended questions that we asked users and also non-users of artist workspace. The focus was to identify and explore spaces they worked in currently or previously, or places that they considered for workspace. Participants were predominately creatives working in the visual arts such as performance, film, art, or design, and from protected characteristics included in the Equality Act 2010 as well as from a disadvantaged socio-economic background.

Identify participants based on protected characteristics

Drawing from people in the community, we created a list of potential participants from each characteristic to reach out to.

Characteristics included:

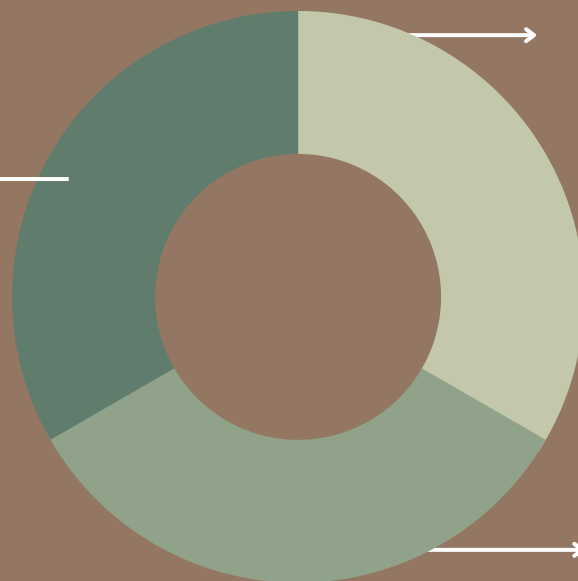
Gender : 10 | Race : 10
Disability : 8 | Sex : 10
Sexual Orientation : 10
Socio-economic Status : 10
Religious Belief : 3
Age (under 21 & over 50 / 75 : 5



Research Report

A report with our findings on the experience of using or finding a workspace that suits their needs within these communities.

Alongside recommendations for tangible improvements.



1:1 Consultations

40 - 60 minute video conversation with participants.

Participants asked a series of questions about the experience of using and/or searching for a workspace in London.

Users - 13 questions, non-Users 12 questions

RESEARCH PROCESS

We began by collating a comprehensive list of artists and creatives who in our view fit the required protected characteristics. Through this we compiled a list of over 100 artists and sent them an initial email detailing the research, its aims and asking if they would be interested in taking part in a short consultation, for which they would be compensated £25 for their time. All participants were also advised that their identity would be kept anonymous.

For those who agreed to take part, we held 1:1 consultations via zoom with a series of mostly open-ended questions that we asked users and also non-users of artist workspace. Please see appendix 1A-F.

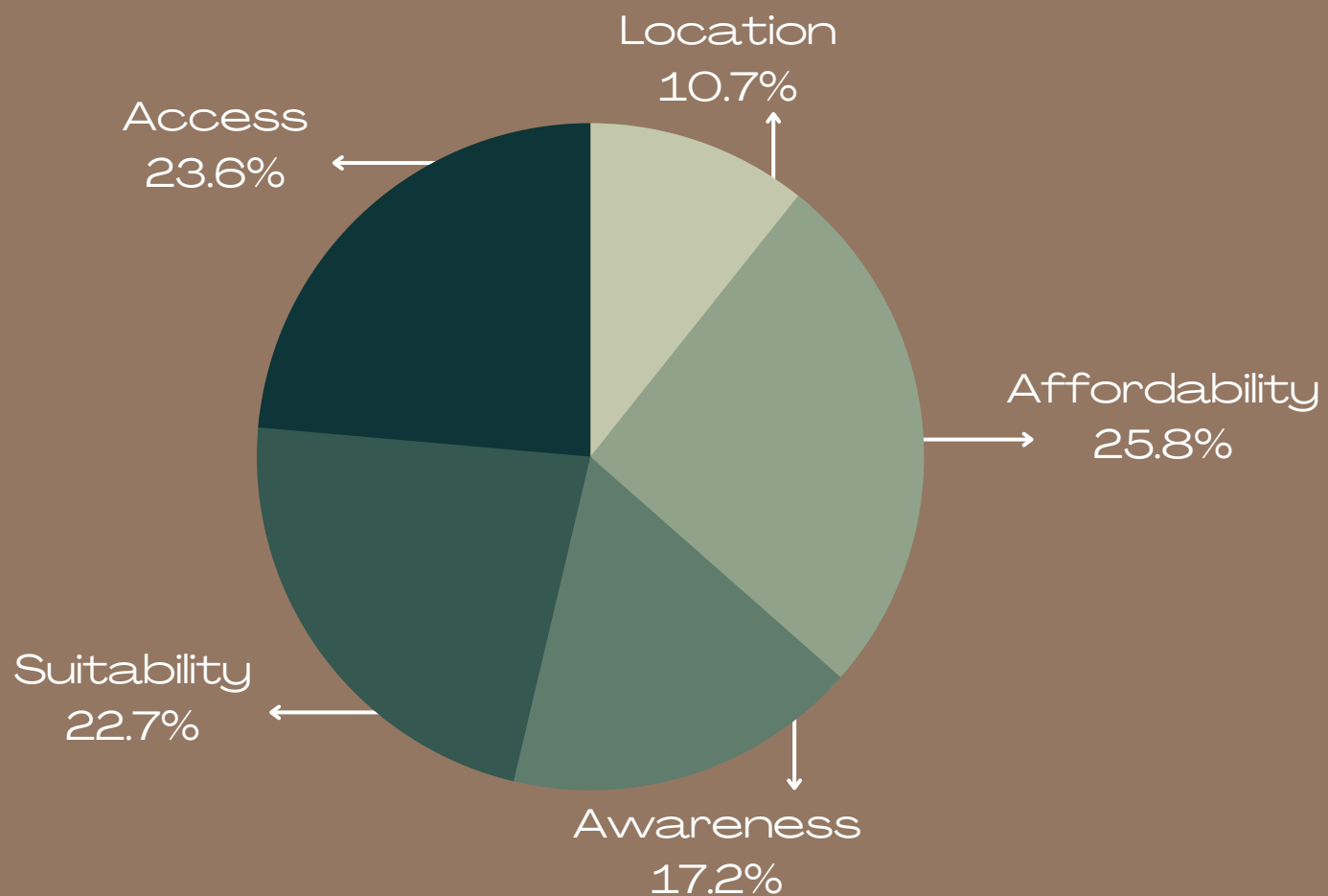
The aim was to identify and discuss the workspace they rented or had a membership at - currently or previously, or places that they had considered for workspace. Participants were predominately creatives working in the visual arts such as performance, film, art, or design, and from protected characteristics included in the Equality Act 2010 as well as from a disadvantaged socio-economic background.

KEY INSIGHTS



WHY DO SO MANY OF US NOT HAVE WORKSPACE?

The below factors were mentioned by both users and non-users throughout this research project as the key barriers to accessing a workspace that suited their needs. The chart below shows this breakdown by % and is followed by more in depth insight into what the research found in regards to these barriers.



KEY INSIGHTS: AFFORDABILITY

The below factors were mentioned by both users and non-users throughout this research project as the key barriers to accessing a workspace that suited their needs. The chart below shows this breakdown by % and is followed by more in depth insight into what the research found in regards to these barriers.

Across all protected characteristics what was clear is that affordability presented the biggest barrier.

Currently in the UK, on average a studio space costs between £200 and £1500. For artists such as choreographers, painters, photographers and sound artists the type of space they need requires often good lighting, ample space and room to be a little noisy at times. These requirements often leave them with an average cost of £450 per month for a suitable space for their practice. Consider this against house renting prices, general utility bills and the cost of travel and choosing between paying for a space and just working from home quickly becomes a no brainer. And so what you have is more and more artists working from home, or in search of subsidised space which are few and almost always with long waiting list.

For this barrier, many of the participants felt there was a clear remedy to combatting affordability and increasing access. Such as **grant funding for space;** and **workspace providers taking steps to provide** more affordable space to show that they are considering socio-economic barriers which put certain groups at a greater disadvantage.

Third largest was fit for purpose, many practices felt that spaces could not accommodate the nature of their practice, especially in dance, sound, music and/or collective working.

AFFORDABILITY EXPLAINED

During the course of this research we found the most pressing barrier across all characteristics to be **affordability**. 99% of participants cited funds as either a reason for not having a workspace, not taking up a workspace or having to leave a workspace.

In particular, participants who identified **Race**, **Sexual Orientation** and **Socio-Economic** status noted affordability as a primary barrier to accessing workspace. Many of whom had benefited from residencies or shared a space which made it possible them to have a space.

“It’s a case of choosing between paying your rent and paying for a workspace.”

“I don’t think it’s possible for someone like me, especially when my work means I can’t rely on a set amount each month”



“Anyone trying to make their workspace more diverse needs to factor in the financial disadvantages experienced by the communities they’re trying to appeal to. Your prices can’t be the same for us”

Access & Culture

KEY INSIGHTS: ACCESS

Common issues noted by all protected groups also showed that their commonalities are also what sets them apart.

Participants who were Black and Asian expressed more concern over access to space than White participants in the same or similar fields. Intersections across Race and Disability showed more significant barriers to their access.

We also found that for our participants with socio-economic barriers, finance was a key issue in accessing a workspace that suited their needs. In addition to this however, culture, and being in a safe space was equally important for them.

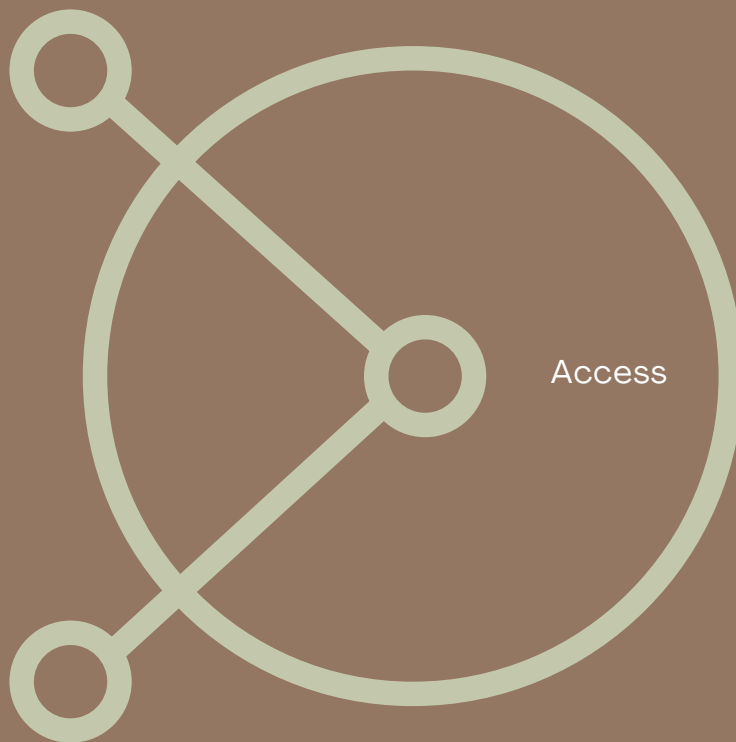
Another consistent mention, was knowledge of spaces in London that could cater to their needs, especially where residencies are concerned for certain artist practices doesn't feel easy to attain. It was clear a more useful directory or database with suitable or fit for purpose workspace is needed and we will include an appendix with a list of spaces that can support artists specifically, although we are not able to provide a list that is certain of the cultural fit in these spaces as well.

The results of lack of access appear to culminate from a number of factors. The aforementioned, affordability, knowing where to search for suitable spaces, is it fit for the creatives purpose and also would the culture of the space feel accessible to them. These factors, in particular, and physical access were high contributing factors to why many people with protected characteristics felt unable to access workspace.

ACCESS EXPLAINED

Race, Sexual Orientation, Religion and **Gender / Sex** especially had a significant impact on participants who felt cultural access was especially important to them and to the growth of their practice. For those with a Disability the access needs were a requirement, especially for mobility impaired and neurodivergent artists, they would not be able to work or even get into a space without necessary provisions being met.

Information



Access & Culture

“Most studios don't have lifts - I always need a ground floor because of my large pieces”

“When I moved in there was just one other black person, and when they left for quite a while I was the only Black artist in the space, and I definitely could feel that”

“[My] space don't make provisions for disability and [I] was asked to leave space for not using it even though the space wasn't suitable.”

“Often I am the first queer and person of colour in a space but then it does give room for others - this is challenging and exhausting”

KEY INSIGHTS: SUITABILITY

The third largest barrier identified is the suitability of a workspace and it's 'fit for purpose', many of our participants felt that spaces could not accommodate the nature of their practice, especially in dance, sound, large scale artistry and collective working.

As with all workspaces it must cater to the need of the creative who takes up the space.

This is the primary intention for taking up a workspace. Many participants especially those with practices that required ample space, secure space or space where noise limitations were not imposed found that their requirements were often not met.

Whilst this was not often a factor that prevented participants from taking a space, it did present as something creatives (users especially) regularly had to compromise on. The need for a space often meant whether you would be comfortable had to take a back seat - especially if the space was ultimately 'fit for purpose'.

SUITABILITY EXPLAINED

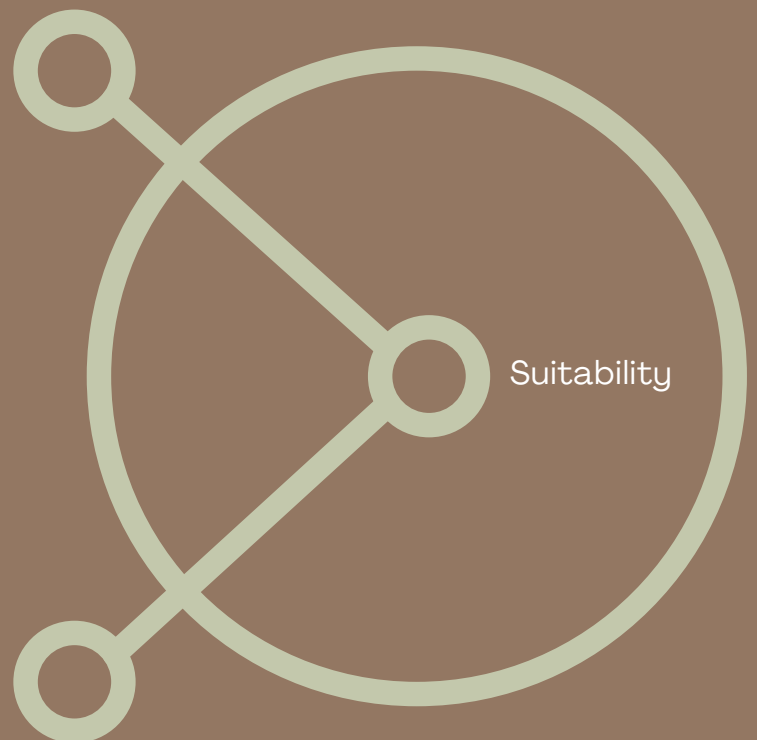
100% of user participants said they have felt a very positive impact of having a space to work from and **83% of non-users** believed there would definitely be increased productivity if they had the right space to work from. There is a lot of cross-over between suitability as a barrier which comes as a result of access also being a barrier as the unsuitability of spaces in turn creates limited access to a number of groups but especially those who note **Pregnancy and Maternity, Religion and Belief, Disability, Race** and **Sexual Orientation** as their protected characteristic.

“Space is great because it is huge. Being big has a positive impact on our projects. Space big enough for big projects and great for encouraging group projects.”

“The space is very bare minimum. Even though we have space, we do not have basic facilities like printing or any stationery, or kitchen.”

“I didn't initially want this space but felt like the only option. We also applied for space at Somerset House because it's more equipped, but although it was at a discounted rate, it was still expensive. Dazed was the better option as it's free”

Fit for Purpose



Affordability
Access &
Culture

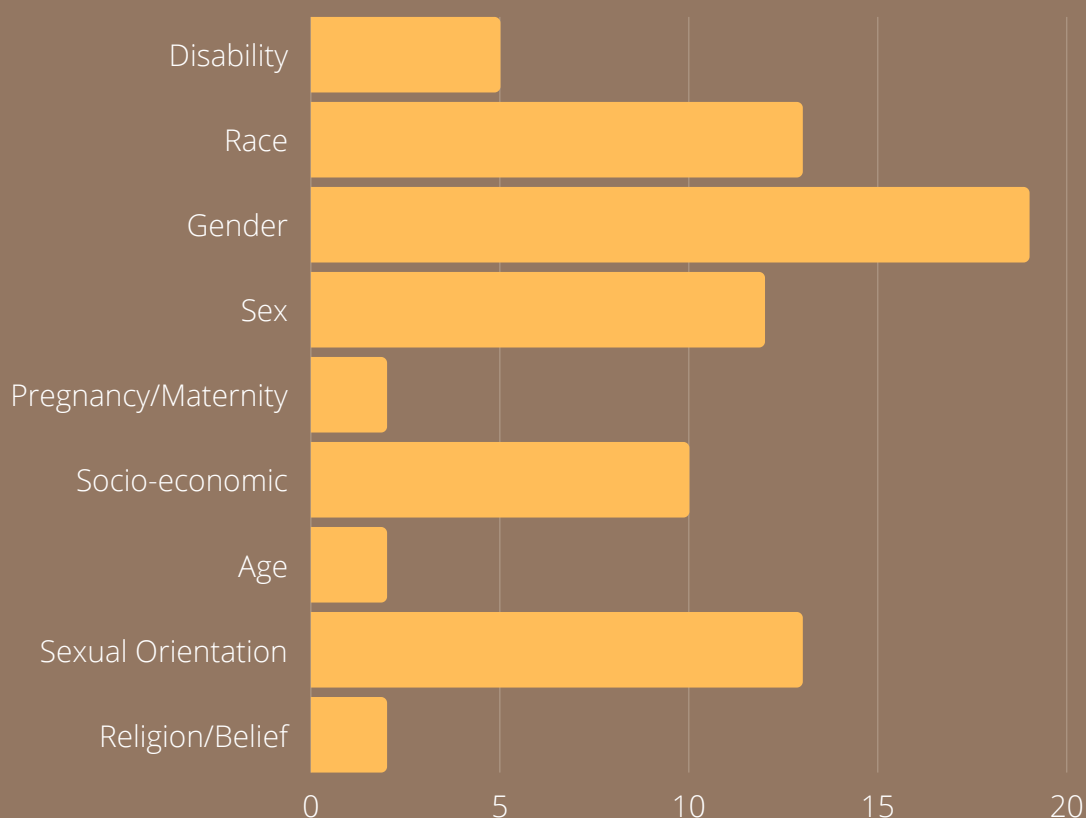
WORKSPACE OCCUPANCY



WORKSPACE USER

A key tenant of this research was for us to have a clear understanding of the current diversity of workspace occupancy. In order for us to truly identify and remedy the issue we needed to know if there was in fact an issue with diversity in workspace. In our 1:1 consultations we sought to determine how many of those we spoke to considered themselves a protected characteristic with barriers that had an impact on their access to a workspace that suited their needs.

Through speaking with 28 participants in total who were current users of workspace in London. We found that **20.8%** identified themselves as having a Disability, **54%** a barrier based on Race and Sexual Orientation respectively, **50%** based on Sex, **79%** based on Gender, 8.3% on Age, **8%** Pregnancy/maternity, with **8.2%** noting their Religion or Belief created barriers to accessing workspace for them.

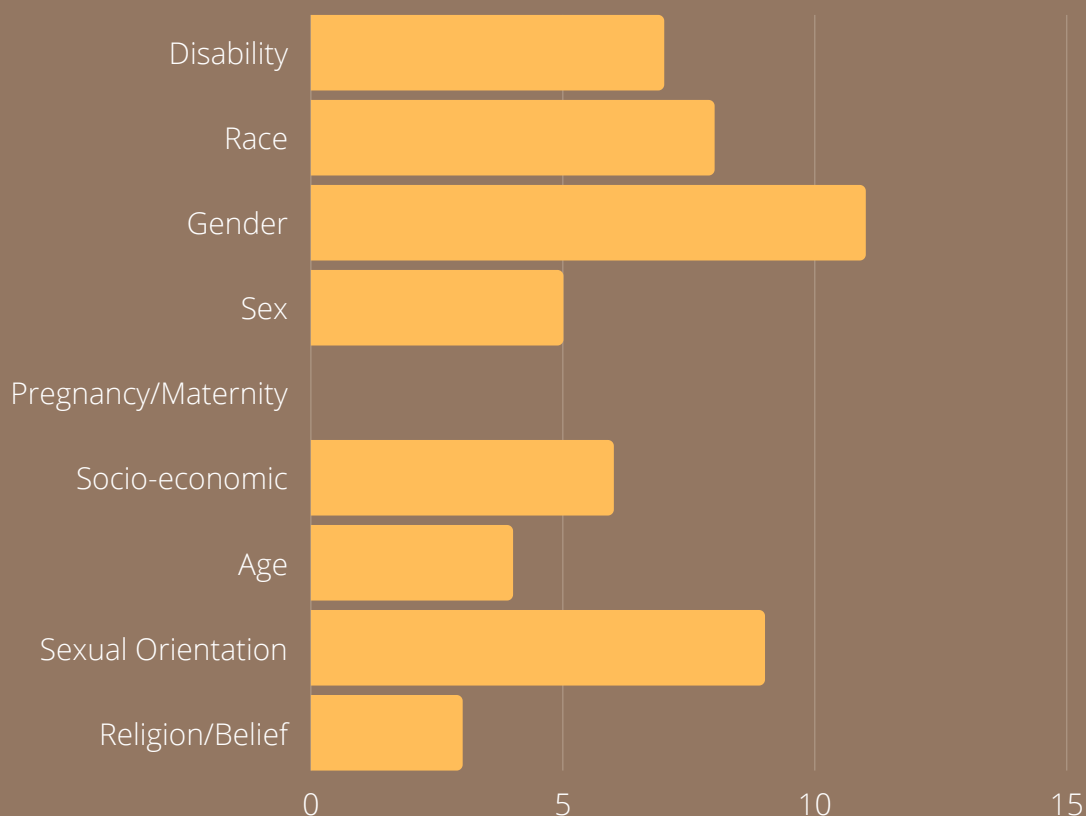


WORKSPACE NON-USER

Additionally, we felt it useful to know the diversity of participants not currently in a workspace.

Through speaking with 20 participants who were non-users of workspace in London. We found that **35%** identified themselves as having a Disability, **40%** a barrier based on Race and **45%** based on their Sexual Orientation, **28%** based on Sex, **55%** based on Gender, **20%** on Age, with **15%** noting their Religion or Belief created barriers to accessing workspace for them. We were unable to speak with any participants not currently in workspace who were pregnant or currently on maternity.

This insight further speaks to the challenges in finding workspace users who specifically worked in visual arts in London.



KEY INSIGHTS: CONCLUSION

“Take peoples intersections into consideration when advertising or offering space.”

Our key learnings are that for almost all participants in **Race**, **Sexual Orientation** and **Socio-Economic** status categories the main challenges were often identical – affordability, access and suitability. These 3 concerns were most pertinent but equal to this was the understanding among them that this is all expected.

It is well known and felt for creatives we spoke with that **“renting in london is not cheap and then factoring in studio rent on top of rent - it’s a lot”** and when you couple this with the understanding that there are **“clear biases towards Black people from the other artists”** within some of these spaces it becomes almost impossible to have a space.

This note on bias however was also felt by those with disabilities, and other people of colour. It was clear to see the thread that ran through, the same barriers came up time and time again and with it, the call for a space that centred on communities who struggle to find spaces that are created with them in mind.

From these conversation we can say definitely that key barriers to accessing workspace for both users and non-users are **Affordability**, **Access**, **Suitability** and **Location**. These four consistently mentioned as key challenges, considerations or factors that contributed to not taking up or having a space for their practice.

Additional reasons were, not needing a space right now or feeling their home space was suitable for the nature of their work.

FINDINGS



FINDINGS



**AN AVERAGE OF 65%
OF USERS AND NON-
USERS CITED GENDER
AS A BARRIER.**

**80% OF NON-USERS HAD
INTERSECTIONS WHICH INCLUDED
RACE, SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND/OR
SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS.**



**MOST WORKSPACE USERS REGULARLY
HAD TO COMPROMISE, AS OFTEN THEIR
REQUIREMENTS WERE NOT MET.**



CHARACTERISTIC BREAKDOWN

For most of our participants we found that they identified themselves and felt identified by more than one characteristic. For example, if you were Black and female presenting, then race and gender were barriers. Similarly, for race and sexual orientation and in a few cases Race, Gender, Sex, Sexual Orientation and Socio-economic status all presented significant challenges and barriers to finding a space that was a suitable working environment.

As the research focused on people with protected characteristics it made it useful to see what barriers were shared concerns for participants and also which they did not share concerns over.

It also presented us with areas where more focused research will be required, especially where participants were not possible to locate or speak to due to time constraints, the pandemic and simply more research being required to locate some users.

Disability - Access for those with mobility impairments is the first barrier. An understanding of other disabilities such as hearing impairments, ADHD, neurological impairments such as Narcolepsy and other 'invisible' disabilities was often found to be lacking for both users and non-users.

Workspace User, age 42 - "My previous space couldn't cater to my needs...I was later asked to leave the space for not using it enough...I explained it wasn't suitable but this made no difference to them, there was no effort to support my needs so I **could** make use of the space."

CHARACTERISTIC BREAKDOWN

Race - For users and non-users who were Black and people of colour this was especially challenging. In many cases this is not because of hostilities from the workspaces themselves but rather from the feeling of being other. Where race is concerned this is where we see cultural fit become increasingly important, alongside representation from those running and leading the workspace. Additionally, fellow workspace users exhibiting behaviour from micro-aggressions to clear discrimination with no measures in place to tackle such instances or support those affected.

Workspace User, age 26 - "Think about who you have in your space and think about if that reflects the inclusivity you try to capture."

Gender - For users and non-users using he/him, she/her or they/them pronouns to identify their gender. Many noted how staff and other users could or would perceive their gender created a barrier. Additionally, often being the only one in a space, meant 'carry the torch' for a whole community of people which often left people feeling exhausted and reluctant to use their space.

Workspace Non-user, age 26 - "The challenge sometimes is finding out what's accessible and affordable, this is a big one for me as a trans person. Simple things like using the toilets can be a problem in the wrong environment."

Sex - This barrier was most common among users and non-users who identified as women and also identified Pregnancy and Maternity as a barrier to finding or using a workspace. This characteristic created some concerns for trans and non-binary participants, a few found the question of identify Gender and also Sex triggering.

Workspace User, age 28 - "Diverse staff is the advice I would give - just really think about these protected characteristics."

CHARACTERISTIC BREAKDOWN

Sexual Orientation - Participants who identified as Queer consistently cited this as a barrier to accessing a space and feel 'safe' in that environment. The call for a 'community-led' space was made by just shy of 100% of participants who identified as queer, gay or LGBT. Community-led meaning specifically run by a QTPOC, LGBT or queer + Black person.

Workspace Non-User, age 29 - "It would be really important to add grant systems that allows people from diverse backgrounds more access. This would help with meeting people's needs, especially people who don't feel they have the funds to access these spaces."

Age (under 21 & over 55 (lowered from 75)) - We had trouble identifying workspace users and non-users over 75 and as such lowered this has been lowered to 55. It still proved difficult to find creatives within this bracket we could speak with. We believe it would be useful to dedicate an additional research piece focusing specifically on older artists. We did however speak with artists under 21 however and core challenges were affordability and culture of a space where key concerns.

Workspace Non-user, age 20 - "Advertise on socials, but [needs] a collective focus on creating a good environment."

Socio-Economic Status - this linked directly to affordability. The majority of participants especially of Black and Asian heritage identified this characteristic as a key factor in their decision-making for or against taking up workspace and having to compromise was often anticipated by non-users and users.

Workspace User, age under 30 - "Take people's intersections into consideration when advertising or offering space....have conversations with different creatives to better understand how you can assist marginalised people

CHARACTERISTIC BREAKDOWN

Pregnancy and maternity - For those whom we spoke to challenges in their area were expected, especially for those reliant on freelance work. A key note was that 'flexibility' was important, being able to pause memberships or sublet it.

Workspace User, age 42 - "it was important to have a studio that catered to my working patterns, I need a space that would allow evening use."

Religion or belief - From those we have spoken with those of Christian faith has fewer requirements or feelings of bias in this regard. Those where their faith is more 'visible' noted some anxiety when it comes to being able to practice their faith in the workplace. The need for prayers rooms was noted by some participants and also those who did not have a faith, could see and note that their space could be inaccessible to individuals with certain needs in order to practice their religion.

Workspace Non-user, age 19 - "Listen to the people you're trying to attract."

RECOMMENDATIONS TO SUPPORT WORKSPACE USERS



RECOMMENDATIONS

How we can ensure more communities are benefitting from a suitable working environment?

The focus of the research was to look into the diversity of artists that are currently based in studios/workspaces in London and what provisions are made by workspace providers for artists who are considered protected characteristics by the Equality Act 2010 and/or from a disadvantaged socio-economic background.

Through discussions with workspace providers and users and non-users we sought to find out what is provided and missing from workspaces in London. Following this, we can make recommendations based on these findings for tangible improvements.

For the recommendations we recognised this needed to be split into 2 parts;

- Recommendations for funding providers and other bodies
- Recommendations for Workspace providers

RECOMMENDATIONS

Funding Bodies and Institutions



FUNDING



DATA MONITORING



ADVOCACY + CULTURE



1. Funding

- * A funding stream carved out to **directly go to creatives** to fund / part-fund a workspace that suits their needs

- * A fund for **new workspaces** that are specifically designed for protected characteristics. A key note throughout this research is that getting current workspace to create room in a design already flawed will not achieve the desired outcomes for creatives where culture and access is concerned, this is better reached by the **communities themselves**.

- * A fund for current workspaces which allows them to adapt their spaces to **meet the needs of more diverse artists**. We recognise that a number of workspace providers are in old buildings requiring costly remodelling, there needs to be a consideration for current providers eager to make changes but who cannot afford it.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Funding Bodies and Institutions



FUNDING



DATA MONITORING



ADVOCACY + CULTURE



2. Requirements & Monitoring of Workspaces Funded

- * A focus on collecting **diversity data** from projects and workspaces funded by Arts Council England for example and other bodies. This includes mandating an outline strategy of how data will be collected as a condition of funding. Data must seek to monitor and begin to redress existing and potential imbalances with a view of ensuring their spaces cater to all protected characteristics.

- * Mandatory data on **affordable space** provisions which seek to attract more diverse artists and also reflect the demographic of the local area / community they operate in.

- * **Mandatory sharing of information and culture for review,** workspace providers should be looking at their internal structures -
 - * What is the diversity of staff? What is the diversity & inclusion training given to staff and to Members of their spaces? Do they have a dedicated team or ethos to ensure users from protected groups feel supported and safe in their environment? Answering these questions should be prioritised.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Funding Bodies and Institutions



FUNDING



DATA MONITORING



ADVOCACY + CULTURE



3. Advocacy & Improving Culture

- * Greater requirements placed on workspace providers funded by ACE for workspaces to ensure the internal culture of the space is suitable to diverse groups. It's important to **“Make people feel like they are included”** - this applies to all groups from a queer trans person to someone just coming from maternity leave or someone who needs crutches to be mobile. How are you ensuring all these people can have a safe and accessible space in your workspace?

- * Activities in the workspaces - can funders encourage or ensure workspaces host events, workshops and other activities that **positively reinforce their work to 'improve'**. These **should be community-led** and seek to increase diversity in program leaders invited in to their spaces, speakers and hosts to further attract more diverse artists and attendees.

- * Funders should seek to **provide materials** for improving awareness and advocacy of protected characteristics, following this as part of funding conditions, there should be a **requirement to report on activities** before final funding amounts are released.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Workspace Providers



AFFORDABILITY



CULTURE



ACCESS



1. Affordability

A challenging but essential remedy to this is to **lower your ask**. The steepest barrier to accessing your space is finance. Make an

- ✧ intentionally concerted effort to provide free or 50-60% minimum subsidised space - this is how you support and attract more diverse artists.

Work to **be community minded**. Consider the location you are in,

- ✧ does your pricing reflect the local community, does your pricing allow those from low socio-economic background who live locally to access your space?

Work to **be a solution**. If you want to attract more diverse artists, then be clear on the barriers to access, how are you contributing to or breaking down these barriers through your offering? Do not offer

- ✧ your worst spaces as your lowest rates, this only furthers the distance between you and diverse groups. Your focus should not be to make a profit from these artists but to redress the imbalance imposed on them through systemic failings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Workspace Providers



AFFORDABILITY



CULTURE



ACCESS



2. Culture

Create **a safe and inclusive environment** - even if you make your space affordable, what good is this if someone from a protected group does not feel safe, does not feel included? Consider how the behaviours and attitudes of people in your space can impact on these groups and work to improve it.

- * **Build supportive ways** to create the culture you need. **Be a revenue stream** for artists by commissioning their work or booking them for events. Consider expertise you can offer as an organisation to provide tangible support to artists, such as business support or networking opportunities.

- * Collaborate and **work with the really-local community**. Show that you are not just there for the benefit of shareholders and business-owners. Invite the local community in with events, workshops and other activities and ensure these are community-led. Be an active part of the community through the work you do and who you work with.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Workspace Providers



AFFORDABILITY



CULTURE



ACCESS



3. Access - Marketing, Location & Suitability

Artist studios that are a little more affordable are often cold, do not have a kitchen, or are poorly lit at night. Create a space that people can
✱ feel safe coming in or out of at night. Can you get some budget to provide tea and coffee or some kitchen equipment? Just because it's cheap doesn't mean it has to be uncomfortable.

Adapting **your advertising** to be in the right areas and on the right
✱ platform. Let it be known what you want to achieve and who you're looking for.

Consider **access to your location** for a variety of users. How close are you to a tube or train station is it step-free, if not what could you offer
✱ to someone differently abled coming to your space? What provisions can you make to make your building accessible to someone who is neurodiverse?

Constantly look at what your workspace provisions are so you can
✱ **continually improve.** The expectation for you to have all the answers would be unfair but a willingness to learn is paramount. What have you noticed might create a barrier, identify the support you need and work on it.

WORKSPACE PROVIDERS



METHODOLOGY

WORKSPACE PROVIDERS

Our focus for the workspace providers was to generate qualitative data that we could use to better understand the percentage of creatives from protected characteristics who are currently workspace in London. What data are some workspaces not recording or missing to help them ensure they are being inclusive and conscious of who their spaces are not catering for.

Identify workspaces based on their provision for the arts sectors

Working collaboratively with Arts Council England to identify workspace providers.

We approached a total of 15 workspace in London and received 10 responses to our questionnaire

Research Report

focusing on qualitative data pulled from the questionnaire we created a map to show the make up of creatives from protected characteristics currently in these workspaces..

Questionnaire

Using survey monkey we asked workspace providers to complete a data heavy questionnaire consisting of 8 mostly closed questions.



RESEARCH PROCESS

We began by listing all the workspaces in London that specialised in providing studios for visual artists. This help us get a clearer picture of which studios we'd like to approach for their data.

We settled on 12 workspace providers in total across London, spanning between 3years to 50+ years serving the creative community. Each workspace provider was emailed with information about the research project including the initial brief and asked to complete a questionnaire with information and additionally to send any further information they would like to share.

The aim in this part of the research process was to understand the make up of creatives in these workspaces and also understand if workspace providers are taking note of the diversity within their workspaces and the steps they are taking to ensuring their spaces are not just inclusive but culturally, physically and economically supporting artists with protected characteristics.

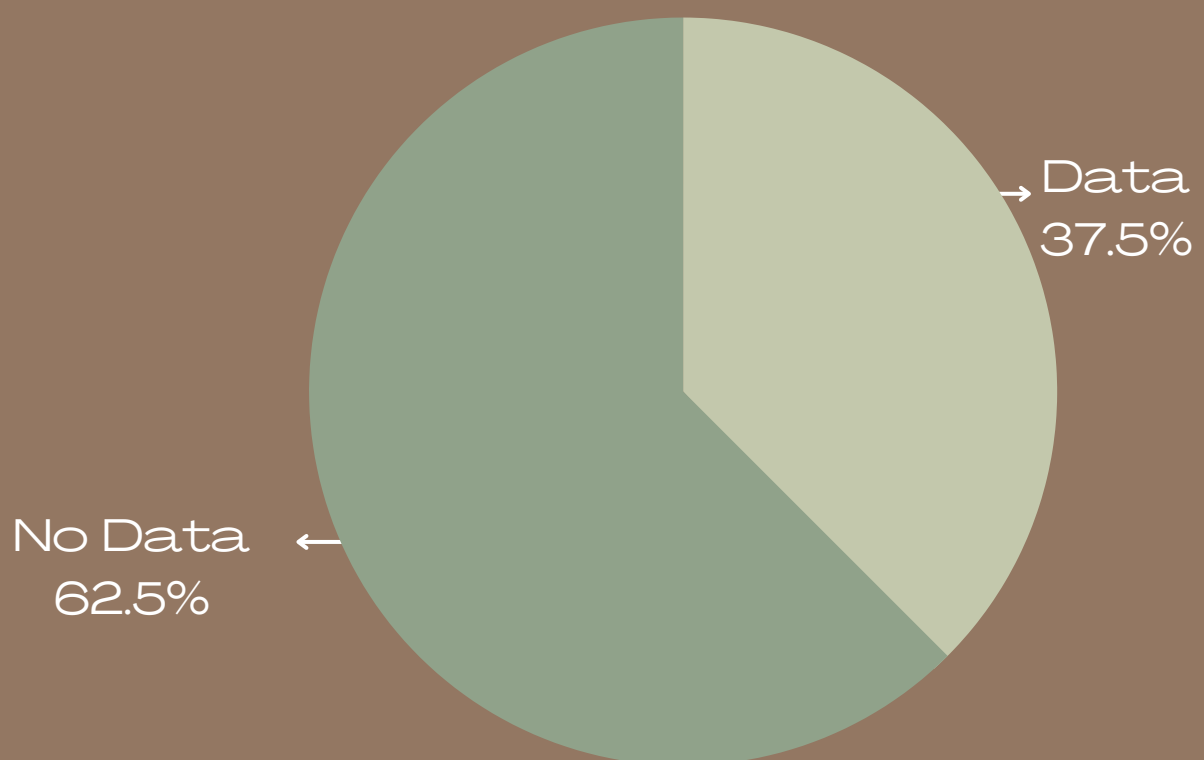
KEY INSIGHTS



HOW MANY STUDIOS TRACK DIVERSITY?

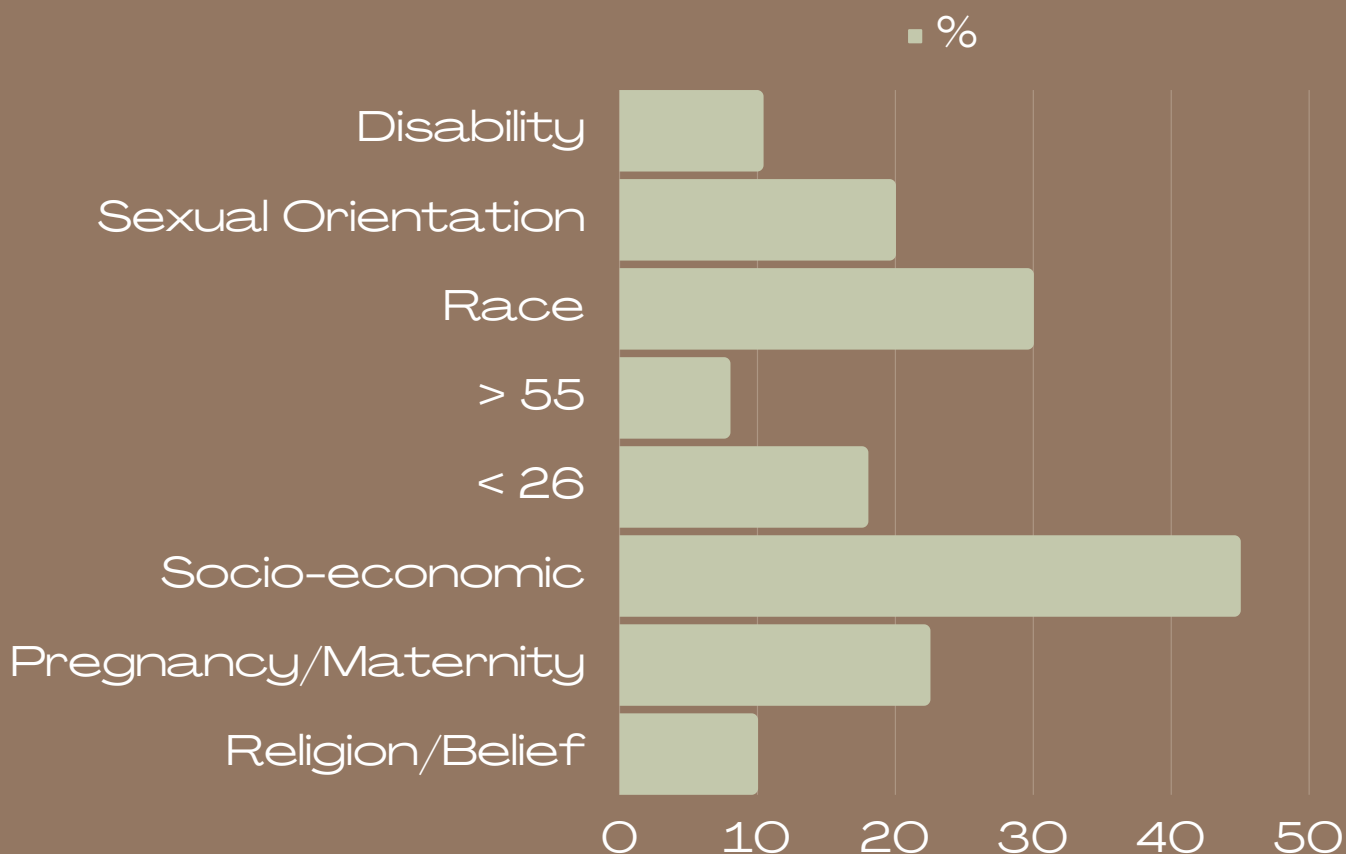
A key part of our survey, is to get a real understanding of the make-up of those with protected characteristics currently in a workspace. To determine this alongside our talks with users we asked workspace providers whether they collect or know the following diversity characteristics?

Disability, Gender, Race, Sex, Sexual Orientation, Age, Socio-economic status, pregnancy or maternity and Religion or belief.



In total 8 visual arts dedicated studios completed our survey and 4 did not have any data or opted not to provide any data. Of the studios who did 5 of these workspace providers did not collect any data on the diversity of the artists in their space beyond age, sex and on occasion disability and race.

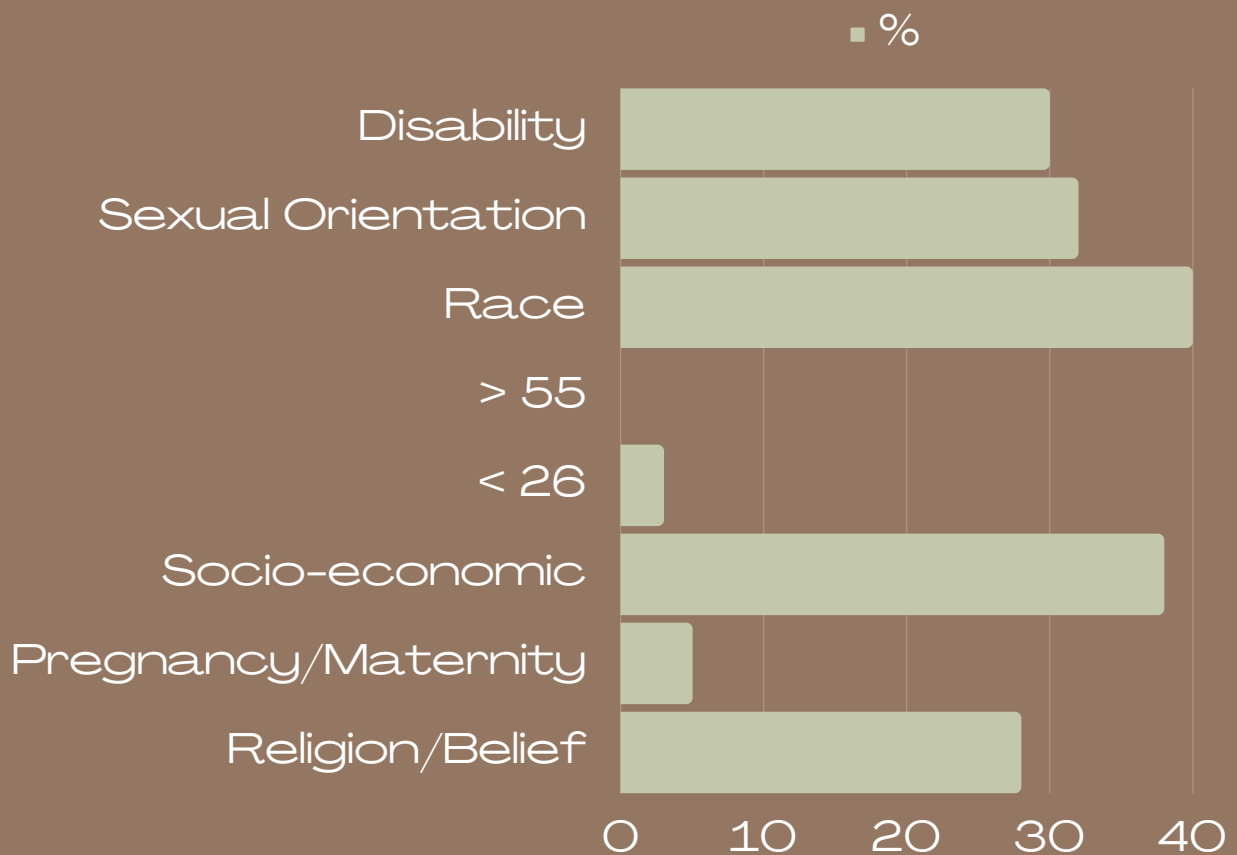
DIVERSITY OF ARTISTS ARE IN A WORKSPACE?



Of the workspace providers who had this information we've collated the data into the chart below. This shows, across the 8 studios combined, the percentage of artists with protected characteristics currently in these workspace.

Most studios had between **2-5%** users who were identified or identified as having a disability. **20%** queer, trans or intersex, on average about **30%** with a different racial background than white British, **under 8%** over 75 or under 21 years old combined. At least **45% or more** were from low socio-economic backgrounds in these workspaces and just 2 studios had **25%** users with pregnancy / maternity needs and finally, just **1 studio** had recorded artists with religious beliefs.

DIVERSITY OF STAFF IN WORKSPACE?



It became clear that workspaces held more information on their staff, this is likely due to their own staff monitoring and also requirements set for employers by Government and often investors. What we could see however is that many spaces did not have staff who could represent the artists with disabilities, who were over 55 or 75 or could relate or support those going through pregnancy/maternity. Whilst this does not mean these space did not have processes in place that could support this diversity of artists it does mean that for those artists with those needs they would more likely than not be unable to see themselves represented by staff in their workspace.

This lack of representation is what for many participants created a barrier in accessing or feeling their workspace had a culture that catered to their specific needs.

OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS

Alongside our qualitative data research we asked workspace members a series of open-ended questions to give them room to note if they are aware of the issues around workspace diversity, how they are addressing these issues and what the challenges are in their view. We spoke with spaces based in core London boroughs, Tower Hamlets, Kensington and Chelsea, Lambeth, Hackney, Islington and the City of Westminster.

Proactive Advertising

Partnering with collectives, organisations and groups who focused on specific characteristics through their work is one way workspace providers promoted their offering. Often using social media, asking certain groups to 'share' the space wither network is another avenue many spaces used. For some, programmes are the vessel with which they are most proactive and can use relationships with artists and educators they commission and the attendees to promote their studio offerings. A few spaces since 2020, through understanding the pandemic impact, launched incubators, studio awards and space grants providing spaces with low rents or in some cases free studios to attract artists facing barriers.

Case Study: a space in Kensington and Chelsea notes they do not proactively advertise or have any programmes designed to make their space more inclusive and equally did not hold any data on the diversity of users in their space. They also have locations in Newham, Essex and Tower Hamlets borough and their shared spaces start from as low as £85 per month.

A workspace provider like this, with spaces that are largely affordable is missing out on an opportunity to engage a variety of users, provide a space that could be greatly beneficial to a local artist in the areas they work in and also to better understand the community of creatives they are potentially missing out on.

OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS

Programmes and Commitments

Almost 100% of space we spoke to did have a programme or commitment in place to support specific groups facing barriers to access their spaces. Namely those within disability and /or socio-economic protected characteristics. This took shape as a specific residency cohort, sub-committee dedicated to Equality & Diversity, fair use policies, additional notes on inclusive and priority being given to diverse groups on application forms, recruitment of BIPOC board members and zero-tolerance policies and mandates.

The policies are there in terms ensuring that as an organisation, legally, they do have in place numerous policies to ensure inclusivity and diversity in their spaces, but there must be care given to ensure these policies are not just implemented but continually reviewed and improved.

Case Study: a space in Islington notes their 7 commitment actions to 'prioritise broadening the diversity of our membership'. These actions include ensuring non-Black colleagues are enlightened by providing resources and support, redistributing resources - platform, spaces and funding - to support the fight for racial justice in their wider community and proactively recruiting Black and people of colour to the board of trustees.

Again, these commitments a great demonstration of this workspace providers investment in these groups, but it must be implemented and monitored and adapted when and if need to ensure it's meeting qualitative goals to solidify its impact.

FINDINGS



FINDINGS



**1 in 3 WORKSPACES
DO NOT RECORD
DIVERSITY DATA**

**ON AVERAGE, WORKSPACES WERE MOSTLY
LED BY WHITE, CIS-HETEROSEXUAL
MALE/FEMALE PEOPLE UNDER 55, WITH NO
DISABILITY OR RELIGION/BELIEF**



**100% OF WORKSPACE PROVIDERS
RECOGNISED THERE WAS NEED FOR DATA
ON WORKSPACE USER DIVERSITY ON HOW
THEY CAN BETTER ATTRACT AND SUPPORT
THOSE IN PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS.**



CONCLUSION



OVERALL FINDINGS



Users and non-Users are especially keen to find a space that suits their needs. They want it to be affordable, fit for purpose in relation to their needs and also have a culture ethos that considers and supports them.

The impact of having a workspace for Users is that they could better facilitate meetings, they felt more productive, more confident showing clients around their studio to view their work. They were able to collaborate with other creatives in the space, in differing fields and often most importantly, they could separate their work space from their personal space.



For workspace providers a significant challenge was managing affordability for users, adapting their space to support a variety of users and their operational cost to run and deliver events and programmes to further support their users. They are aware of the problem, and for some they also know the solution but additionally without being pushed or supported financially to make the changes this easily left in a 'we would like to..' pile but is never acted upon.

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

BE PART OF THE SOLUTION.

READ THIS REPORT TO UNDERSTAND AND MAKE CHANGES.

WHAT IMMEDIATE ACTIONS CAN YOU TAKE TO START SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS TODAY?

The key barriers for these groups are affordability, access and suitability. This is the starting point, what can you, your space, your institution do on these areas? The answers are simple.

- Think critically about how to make your space **more affordable**.
- **Provide grant funding** dedicated to supporting workspace users and/or workspaces.
- **Consider the variety of access needs** that might be required, not just mobility - disability takes various forms and also includes neuro-diversity, narcolepsy, hearing impairments, light sensitivity and more.
- Culture, suitability of the space and other users within your space are of considerable importance. Ensure the makeup of your **staff is representative** and if not how do you ensure groups that are not represented are considered? Is there a **clear ethos and policy** that ensure queer and trans people can feel safe? That women and those with religious beliefs are respected and treated fairly?
- **Collect the data.** Know the diversity of users in your space so you can see the gaps and act on it. Ask the question who is missing and why?

The point of this research is to provide much needed data on the number of artists in workspace across London with protected characteristics. When we think of these groups and their ability to be productive, effective and feel able to make work they can feel happy with, do we feel they are adequately supported? If the answer is no then it's important we come together to create a workable solution to this issue and think critically about what you can do not just over the next 2-3 years that will have an impact for the next 10-20 years.



**THANK
YOU**